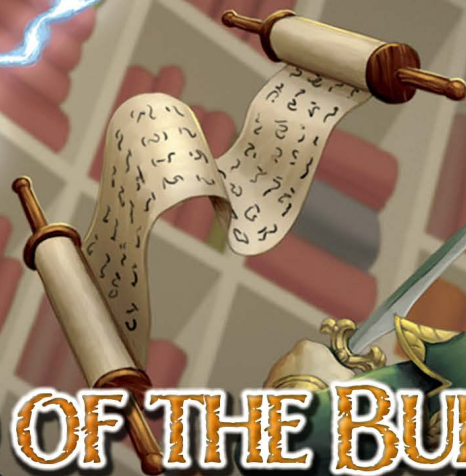


AEgis OF EMPIRES

AE04



LEGEND OF THE BURNING STAR

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE

BY STEVE HELT





LEGEND OF THE BURNING STAR

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WELCOME TO THE AEGIS OF EMPIRES ADVENTURE PATH

Welcome to the Lost Lands, the campaign setting of the adventures and books by Frog God Games and Necromancer Games before it! “But this is Legendary Games?” you say. Yes, yes it is, but as the principal developer of the Lost Lands setting — having the privilege and pleasure of combing through every single product, word-by-word, from those two companies’ considerable catalog of books to determine how it all fit together into a coherent whole — I had the opportunity to continue my work with the setting. By mutual agreement upon the end of my tenure with Frog God Games in 2018, I was able to provide them with the bible of Lost Lands material I had been collating since 2010 and was graciously allowed to retain the rights to continue to make my own contributions to the setting I had poured so much into in Lost Lands-compatible products. I also purchased the rights to the *Aegis of Empires Adventure Path* that had already been in the works for some time (though under the name *Ashes of Empires* at that time, and changed due to similarities in titles from other companies that were being released in a similar timeframe), so I could continue the development I had already started on it and nurture it through to the end. That Legendary Games was willing to adopt such a project, was icing on the cake and what has allowed me to put this product into your hands.

SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

We’ve hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to online resources like the [Archives of Nethys](#) and [p2.d2opfsrd.com](#)! If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn’t link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

ABOUT LEGENDARY GAMES

Legendary Games is an all-star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you, the Paizo fan, the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers 1st, and we believe that passion shows in our products. So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

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WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE THE *LEGEND OF THE BURNING STAR*

Aged documents discovered in a cathedral archive provide clues to the fate of a lost expedition of nearly a century ago. But the subsequent murder of the priest who discovered them and the connections between the expedition leaders and various competing nation-states that are hinted at within the documents give tantalizing implications of a treasure being sought as the expedition's ultimate goal and of a darker conspiracy to keep the whole matter from the public eye. Now the adventurers must follow the decades-old trail of secrecy and treachery to discover the truth of the Conroi Expedition while avoiding its deadly fate.

Legend of the Burning Star is a 10th-level adventure set in the Kingdom of Foere, the Grand Duchy of Reme, the Grey Citadel, and beyond in the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting* and leads directly into the sequel, *Race for Shataakh-Ulm!*

While designed for use with the Lost Lands, these adventures are loosely connected rather than following a strictly controlled plotline, enabling you to easily place them into any campaign world. Your heroes can explore at their own pace to discover the secrets of antiquity or be consumed in their seeking as they brave the dark paths of the *Aegis of Empires*.

Legendary Games was founded on the principle of delivering first-class product for your *Pathfinder Second Edition* experience, brought to you by the very authors who design and contribute to the adventures, hardbacks, and campaign supplements you are already using. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!



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AKM = **Ancient Kingdoms: Mesopotamia** by Necromancer Games

B1 = *Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*

B2 = *Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*

BM = **The Black Monastery** by Frog God Games

CRB = *Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition)*

F2 = **F2: Fane of the Witch King** by Necromancer Games

FB = **Fields of Blood** by Frog God Games

GA = **The Gulf of Akados Region Map** by Frog God Games

G1 = **G1: The Siege of Durgam's Folly** by Necromancer Games

G6 = **G6: The Grey Citadel** by Necromancer Games

GMG = *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*

K1 = **K1: A Family Affair** by Necromancer Games

K12 = **K12: The Eamonvale Incursion** by Necromancer Games

LLo = **The Lost Lands Campaign Setting** by Frog God Games

LL1 = **LL1: Stoneheart Valley** by Frog God Games

LL3 = **LL3: Sword of Air** by Frog God Games

LL5 = **LL5: Borderland Provinces** by Frog God Games

LL6 = **LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete** by Frog God Games

LL7 = **LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City** by Frog God Games

LL8 = **LL8: Bard's Gate** by Frog God Games

MoM = **Mountains of Madness** by Frog God Games

QoD = **Quests of Doom** by Frog God Games

RC:FBG = **Razor Coast: Freebooter's Guide to the Razor Coast** by Frog God Games

INTRODUCTION

Legend of the Burning Star is a *Pathfinder Second Edition* adventure for four to six player characters of 10th level. Unlike the other adventures of the *Ashes of Empires Adventure Path* which are capable of serving as stand-alone scenarios, *Legend of the Burning Star* is Part One of the only two-part adventure of the series. Where it ends, the fifth adventure in this saga, *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*, picks up immediately. In addition, this two-part adventure is much longer than the others in the adventure path (Part Two is about three times as long as a typical adventure in *Aegis of Empires*), so plan your campaign accordingly to allow the PCs to be available for an extended expedition into unknown lands following an ill-rumored trail discovered in *Legend of the Burning Star*. The PCs should be 12th level at the conclusion of this adventure.

Legend of the Burning Star can be placed in any campaign setting but, though it is not an official **Lost Lands** adventure, it is designed for and fully compatible with the **Lost Lands Campaign Setting of Frog God Games**. In the **Lost Lands** setting the adventure takes place in and around the Kingdoms of Foere, the central lands of known Akados and the former seat of the ancient Hyperborean Empire. The PCs will travel beyond from these “civilized” lands, though, as the adventure progresses until, by the time they reach Part Two, *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*, they will be journeying far afield into the unknown spaces of the continent.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The story of the lost Conroi Expedition's sojourn into the Haunted Steppe remains a tragic tale even nearly a century after its disappearance. In truth, the venture is simply a chapter in a much longer cycle of greed, loss, and obsession that has long marred the central plains of the Haunted Steppe. Throughout this region's miserable history, thousands of otherwise civilized folk have died at the hands of savage beasts, dark energies, foul undead, and other so-called “civilized” folk. But to understand the fate of the Conroi Expedition, one must know the legend of the Burning Star.

More than two thousand years ago, a pair of falling stars graced the skies over the northern hemisphere on the same unlucky night. They finally crashed onto the surface of Lloegyr*, hours and thousands of miles apart, leaving behind a trail of smoke and destruction. In the Assurian Plains of northern Libynos to the east, one meteor impacted in the desolate Red Waste creating its own tale beyond the scope of this one^{AK:M}. In the northern steppes of

Akados, entire tribes of nomadic peoples were vaporized by the second meteor's impact. Camps and settlements more than a week's ride away felt the tremors, and even those hundreds of miles away beheld the giant plume of smoke and debris. Feuds and alliances within the immediate vicinity were forgotten as all sought to flee and put the accursed region as far behind as possible.

Word of the devastation even reached the civilized world. Astromancers** and the learned had observed the phenomenon of the falling stars from afar, though the points of impact were calculated through the work of educated conjecture at best. And though seers and the scholars variably interpreted the event as a dread omen or simply an interesting cosmic accident, some far-sighted individuals saw opportunity in the ashes. Though little was done to pursue such speculation for more than twelve centuries. But some 1,339 years after the sky fell to the earth, Prince Cale, ruler of the newly created Grand Duchy of Reme, set out to lead the colonization of the long-abandoned lands of the Haunted Steppe.

A series of new homesteads and settlements called the Caleen Colonies reached ever farther across the vast northern steppes until savage humanoids began to arise and strike at the Rhemian colonists with shocking violence. At first Cale's people resisted, but then came the strange and terrible shadow walkers from the farthest northern reaches of the plains who led the humanoid invaders and bid them slaughter the colonists as the Rhemian encroachment was driven back. A devastating invasion of the southern lands of the Kingdoms of Foere was forestalled only by the intervention of the archmages Margon and Alycthron and the raising of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 I.R.^{LL1-100}. The Grand Duchy of Reme abandoned its plans of taming the Haunted Steppe and withdrew to grieve the loss of thousands of its colonists as well as the death of its first Grand Duke, a Prince of Foere.

With the shock of the colonies' loss and the creation of the daunting Wizard's Wall, over time interest in the Haunted Steppe and its legends was again forgotten. The tales of the Burning Star passed into obscurity along with rest of the plains' lore, except as a cautionary tale for the overly curious who poked about where they were not welcome. It was renowned adventurer and explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who again took interest in the Caleen Colonies centuries after their loss. Following on the heels of his own research into the falling stars of the Red Wastes and the Haunted Steppe, the famed Gravenfar set out from Dun Eamon and crossed the Wizard's Wall in 3437 I.R. To some he reported his goal to be finding the location of the mythical “crèche of

Hyperborea” in the northern Stoneheart Mountains and to others he gave no indications as to his goals at all. But if he did indeed seek the source of that long-ago empire among lost mountain peaks, it did not explain why he didn’t just travel north along the more settled lands of the Gulf of Akados to the east rather than try to cross the unknown desolation of the Haunted Steppe along the mountains’ western flank^{GA}. In any event the legendary explorer was neither seen nor heard from again, whatever theories or discoveries he may have made were lost with him.

Two years after Gravenfar’s disappearance, the Conroi Expedition organized in Reme at the regional capital of Panethoth and set out on its own venture into the heart of the Haunted Steppe. The expedition attempted to follow the original colonists’ course along a route that had come to be known as the Road of Sorrows. While the expedition was ostensibly an academic pursuit of the lost Rhemian colonies, in truth it had more lucrative underpinnings—the secret purpose of the expedition was a mission sponsored by Queen-Regent Lotheria Tredici of Castorage^{LL7-232,320} to find and exploit the rare mineral resources of the fallen star from almost two millennia earlier.

An internal power struggle developed within the Conroi Expedition between the Rhemian scholars who championed the purely research-oriented mission of the expedition and those secretly in the pocket of Castorage’s Royal Family. In the end the loyalty of expedition leader Colonel Sixtun Conroi to the Castoragi coin he was receiving won out. A portion of the expedition undertook a slow, methodical examination of the southern Caeen Colonies and founded what would eventually become known as the Conroi Settlements on the Haunted Steppe’s Campacha Plains^{FB-171}. The rest of the expedition under Col. Conroi and accompanied by chaplain Azmerius Thade continued northward on the Road of Sorrows along what quickly proved to be the route originally followed by Aroldus Gravenfar himself.

After many travails recorded in reports to the Archdeacon of Nains by Azmerius Thade, the survivors of the northern expedition reached the Pit of the Burning Star at last. There they discovered the madness and monstrous inhabitants that now controlled the ancient crater, and this

last remnant of the expedition was slain to a man and lost from all knowledge in the southlands for the next 78 years.

Since that time, memory of the Conroi Expedition itself has also slipped into obscurity. Its southern branch remained on the Campacha Plains beyond the Wizard’s Wall and conducted its archaeological and historical research in this area of the Lost Colonies of the Caeen. It never sought to trace the steps of its ill-fated northern branch. The secret of the Royal Family of Castorage’s involvement in the Conroi Expedition was lost with those questing members who fell at the Pit of the Burning Star and with the arrest and eventual execution of Queen-Regent Lotheria^{LL7-232,320} for her attempted filicide. Most in the south preferred to let the legacy of the Road of Sorrows rest at last. However, with the discovery of long-lost correspondence from the expedition’s northern branch, that eight-decade rest is about to come to an end.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs become involved when an archivist at the Cathedral of Saint Angeline in Nains is murdered, and documents lost from the murder scene prove to be of great historical value. The party is hired by the church to retrieve the documents from an antiquarian’s shop and in doing so learn that there are sinister forces still afoot and centered around the documents and what they portend.

After recovering the documents, the party learns that they are correspondence from the legendary Conroi Expedition and reveal previously unknown correspondence between a member of the expedition and the cathedral’s archdeacon. This correspondence, only partially intact in the documents recovered by the PCs, hints of a greater purpose behind the expedition’s journey and of the governments of nation-states willing to stop at nothing in order to gain the prize secretly sought by the lost expedition—a lode of star metal believed to be at the site of an ancient meteorite impact.

With the knowledge that some of the documents for which the archivist was murdered are still in the hands of unknown parties, the PCs set out on behalf of the church to follow the clues of the Conroi Expedition, learn of its fate, and document whatever momentous discoveries it

* Lloegyr is the name of the planet currently most commonly in use in Akados, when a name for the planet is used at all. See page 4 of **LL1: Stoneheart Valley** by **Frog God Games**.

** Astromancy has a long history in the **Lost Lands**. An astromancer is a magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. See page 88 of **Bard’s Gate** by **Necromancer Games**, page 197 of **LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett’s Crooked City**, and page 281 of **LL8: Bard’s Gate**, both by **Frog God Games**.

AK:M See “The Pit of Yhath” in **Ancient Kingdoms: Mesopotamia** by **Necromancer Games**

may have made. In the city of Panetoth, the PCs find clues that indicate the expedition may have been following in the footsteps of the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who had likewise disappeared in the Haunted Steppe only two years before the expedition's fateful mission. The information further indicates that Gravenfar may have left some of his own writings on the subject in a wizard's library in the distant city of Dun Eamon. The PCs also find themselves under attack by mysterious marauders and uncover evidence that others following the trail of the expedition to Panetoth and Dun Eamon have been murdered.

In Dun Eamon the party gains access to the library of the wizard Elinda Bannon just as a group of intruders who have magically infiltrated her tower make off with the journal of Gravenfar. Stopping these interlopers and recovering the journal, Elinda grants the PCs the use of the book to continue their quest and find out what other forces are out to get them. They are soon thereafter ambushed by thieves and discover that the thieves' guild of Dun Eamon has been contracted by the distant City-State of Castorhage to eliminate the PCs and gain the journal to allow that nation's own expedition for the star metals.

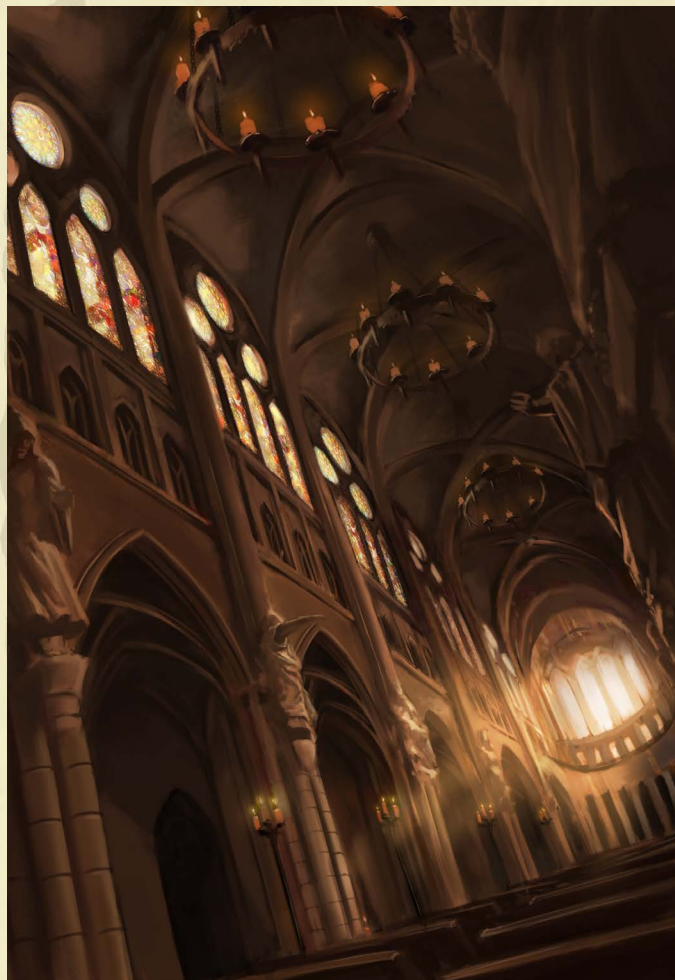
Further investigation in Dun Eamon reveals that a group of mountain dwarves who were the original recipients of the missing documents has launched their own expedition in agreement with the government of the original Conroi Expedition's charter through the Grand Duchy of Reme in order to find the star metal and obtain a lucrative contract in mining and refining it for the grand duchy. But their expedition has also been plagued by assassins and marauders, and they wish to join forces with the PCs. Since the PCs have the journal and the dwarves have the missing documents, if they pool their resources, they might together claim the final prize and overcome the forces at work against them.

Heading for the Haunted Steppe beyond the Wizard's Wall, the joint caravan discovers signs that some of the marauders have been cultists of a dark power known as the King in Yellow and are able to trace them to their hideout on the Wizard's Wall which also provides a secret route down to the plains below. However, at the hideout the party discovers more than mere cultists as they are confronted by horrors from beyond the stars and a foul high priest of the Yellow Sign who will stop at nothing to prevent the PCs from continuing their expedition. Once these challenges have been overcome, the PCs and their caravan find themselves on the Campacha Plains, at the very edge of the Haunted Steppe, preparing to begin their own expedition into the unknown expanse.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Legend of the Burning Star begins with the PCs in the Foerdewaith city of Nains. Nains is a major city in the central Kingdoms of Foere serving as both the capital of the County of E'stil and as a Cathedral City of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline, the primary focus of the worship of the sun god Mitra^{LL5-241} within the High Church of Foere. As such, there are many reasons why the PCs might have chosen to visit Nains, from a religious pilgrimage to major commercial dealings to sightseeing to even having originally hailed from the region and simply returning home for a visit. Whatever the reason for being in Nains, the PCs will soon discover that the influence of the High Church in Nains is not to be ignored as they are quickly drawn into the business of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline.

The party is drawn into the adventure when they receive a summons from Daryus Flommescal, the Magnate of Books for the Archdeacon of Ste. Angeline's. As such he is a fairly powerful individual within Nains and not a summons to be dismissed lightly. However, it is written more as an



invitation and in a cordial manner, promising reward if the PCs will respond with timeliness and discretion. Assuming the PCs agree to hear the Magnate out, they are to come to his offices in the library of Ste. Angeline's. Upon presenting themselves, they are ushered in by an armed retainer who looks askance at any weapons they bear but allows them to pass nonetheless. They are then brought into a conference room off the private office of the Ecclesiastical Magnate of Books, His Worthiness Daryus Flommescal of Mitra.

You are ushered into a well-appointed conference room off the cathedral's library. The thick stone walls and bound wooden doors ensure that voices can't be discerned from outside the room. The impressive wooden table that dominates the room's center holds modest refreshments, and the walls are decorated with religious iconography depicting the Sun Father, resplendent in his glory. Through a single small window looking out over the cloisters can be heard the distant peel of the cathedral's bell and the drone of holy brothers in worship below.

Seated at the head of the table in the gold and white garb of the clergy of Mitra and deep purple stole of an ecclesiastical magnate is a portly man of middling years and a nearly bald pate surrounded by a graying fringe. A small sheaf of parchments lies before him next to a quill and inkwell, and a larger stack of parchments rests to the side. You can only assume that he must be His Worthiness, Daryus Flommescal, the Archdeacon's Magnate of Books.

He rises as you enter and ushers you to comfortably padded chairs arranged around the table while he instructs the retainer who let you in to close the door and see that you are not disturbed. He then directs your attention to the small leather pouches that rest upon the table before each seat.

"I am Flommescal," he begins in a friendly tone. "I oversee the library and archives of Ste. Angeline as the Archdeacon's Magnate of Books. This is no small undertaking as the cathedral holds texts and codices that date back to the days of Hyperborea before the faith of Mitra had even arrived from the East. It is my directive to not only care for these many records of a bygone era — many worth more than a king's ransom for their great antiquity — but also to catalogue, reference, and examine these countless records to learn more of our faith, of our great kingdom, and of our place in the cosmos.

"It is no small endeavor and deals in matters of great import. But please," he gestures to the small pouches before you, "Those are yours in thanks for you coming to hear me out. They are but a paltry offering of gems, but I hope they will whet your appetite for what is to come."

There is one pouch for each PC present, and each holds 100 gp worth of precious stones. They are for the PCs to keep simply for agreeing to meet with the Magnate. Once the PCs have finished with the pouches, Flommescal continues.

"I pay you in advance because this matter requires your utmost secrecy, even if you should elect to not undertake the task I have

for you. The gemstones are yours to keep with my thanks for your time. That should give you some idea of the importance in this matter, and I hope you will approach it with the same gravity of purpose and integrity.

"To put it bluntly there has been a murder most foul in the cathedral. One of my archivists, a dwarf named Kisarus Thrun was found dead — his throat cut from ear to ear — late one night last week. His tongue was also removed so that his spirit could not be contacted magically and interrogated as to the identity of his killer. This matter has been kept quiet for the time being while it is looked into without potentially alerting the culprit and will continue to be so until the issue is resolved. Only you, the Archdeacon, and my own staff are aware of it at this time. However, I have not called you here to investigate this crime or bring his killer or killers to justice. I have my own coterie of retainers working on that as we speak. They are rattling doors from here to Seber Hall in search of answers, and they assure me that they are not far from finding their quarry.

"No it is not to investigate who killed Archivist Thrun that I seek to retain your services but rather to look into the matter of why he was killed. Because while the mutilation of the corpse and certain magical countermeasures can stymie some means of identifying the culprit and what exactly occurred, my own communications with the archivist before his death and our divinatory efforts around that subject matter have borne fruit. It is for this that I seek your services...if you are agreeable."

Ecclesiastical Magnate Daryus Flommescal (LN male human cleric 8 of Mitra^{LL5-241}) waits for the PCs to reply in the affirmative before he offers any more details. If the matter of further payment is raised, he will simply say that the pouches of jewels should be considered a down payment to retain their services and that the party will be amply rewarded beyond this payment by the Church of Mitra if they are able to complete the task that he has for them. If not, they are free to leave the cathedral and keep the pouches of gems in return for simply staying silent about what they have learned so far.

Assuming the PCs are interested, Magnate Flommescal will fill them in on what he knows. Almost a month ago Archivist Thrun came upon some old documents that had been miscataloged in the archival stacks. As he set about determining their contents, he discovered them to be of a historically valuable nature dating back almost 80 years and relating to the infamous Conroi Expedition and its journey into the Haunted Steppe along the Road of Sorrows. PCs making a DC 15 Society (or appropriate Lore) check are familiar with the tale of the Caleen Colonies and the Road of Sorrows. If they are not, Flommescal can fill them in. Provide the players with the information below.

KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CALEEN COLONIES

In 2861 I.R. Grand Duke Cale of Reme led colonists into the vast Haunted Steppe and established a series of new homesteads and settlements called the Caleen Colonies that reached ever farther northward across the plains. These colonies thrived and grew under the Grand Duke's personal supervision for many decades until savage humanoids began to arise and strike at the Rhemian colonists with shocking violence. At first Cale's people resisted, but then came the strange and terrible shadow walkers from the farthest northern reaches of the plains who led the humanoid invaders and bid them slaughter the colonists as the Rhemian encroachment was driven back. A devastating invasion of the southern lands of the Kingdoms of Foere by this force was forestalled only by the intervention of the archmages Margon and Alycthon and the raising of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 I.R. The Grand Duchy of Reme abandoned its plans of taming the Haunted Steppe and withdrew to grieve the loss of thousands of its colonists as well as the death

of its first Grand Duke, a Prince of Foere, who had fallen with his people upon the cursed prairie. In time the northwestern path of the colonies became known as the Road of Sorrows and sank into little more than legend and a cautionary tale in the southlands.

Likewise, a DC 20 Society check reveals the information below, though, again, the Magnate can provide this information if the PCs fail on these checks.

KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CONROI EXPEDITION

The Conroi Expedition was an exploratory and scholarly venture outfitted in the Rhemian regional capital of Panetoth in 3439 I.R. The expedition was organized and led by Col. Sixtun Conroi, a retired officer of the Rhemian cavalry. That year the expedition crossed the Wizard's Wall with the purpose of discovering what remained of the

TIMELINE OF THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR*

| Imperial Record (I.R.) | Erylle Cycle (E.C.) | Huun Chronicle (H.C.) | Event(s) |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 681 | 7165 | | Civil war erupts among Hundaei clans |
| 683 | 7167 | | Hundaei cease to exist as a people; Survivors flee to Libynos or become the Shattered Folk of the Great Steppes |
| 1522 | 8006 | | Meteors strike in Red Wastes of northern Libynos and in central Haunted Steppe |
| 2840 | 9324 | 345 | Foerdewaith settlers push through Crynomar Gap |
| 2843 | 9327 | 348 | Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus |
| 2858 | 9342 | 363 | Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme |
| 2861 | 9345 | 366 | Cale leads Colonization of Great Steppes |
| 2899 | 9383 | 404 | Caleen colonists discover Pit of the Burning Star |
| 2931 | 9415 | 436 | Caleen colonies reach shore of Lake Hali; Humanoid attacks begin |
| 2947 | 9431 | 452 | Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap |
| 3437 | 9921 | 942 | Disappearance of the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar after a short stopover in Castorhage |
| 3439 | 9923 | 944 | Conroi Expedition crosses Wizard's Wall to begin exploration of Haunted Steppe |
| 3517 | 10,001 | 1022 | Current year |

* Excerpted from the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting* timeline by Frog God Games.

long-lost Caleen settlers and their destroyed colonies. The expedition initially limited its search to the Campacha Plains region of the southern steppes where they found traces of colonies dating back to the time of Cale that had extended westward along the Deepfells mountain range rather than north along the Road of Sorrows and had apparently survived for some time after the fall of the rest of the colonies to the shadow walker hordes. While one portion of the expedition remained in the Campacha area and established what eventually came to be known as the Conroi Settlements, another portion led by Col. Conroi crossed the Wanaheeli River and embarked northward to trace the path of the Road of Sorrows. This portion of the expedition was never heard from again, its members presumed to have all been lost to the dangers of the Haunted Steppe.

Flommescal goes on to explain that after reviewing these documents Archivist Thrun prepared a short report on their contents and requested a meeting with the Magnate to discuss them. Of course, because of the nature of the Magnate's duties and the oppressive number of reports he reviews on a daily basis it was several weeks before he read Thrun's report and scheduled a meeting with him to review the newly discovered documents. Apparently, this was too long, because the murder occurred on the night before the scheduled meeting. Flommescal thinks that perhaps somebody saw Thrun's report, which alerted them to his discovery, because even the short report that Thrun prepared for Flommescal has since disappeared. All of his retainers and staffers have stood up to magical scrutiny so he doesn't believe it was an inside job but rather that someone found out the nature of the discovery and then sent someone either very skilled or very powerful in magic — of both — to assassinate the archivist and remove any trace of his discovery. In any case Kisarus Thrun was murdered, and the documents he had discovered disappeared. Magnate Flommescal believes that the murder investigation is well in hand, but he'd like to know more about what was in those documents and what made them so important that they were worth killing for. That's why he wants to hire the party.

Flommescal explains that there was one bit of good fortune. The documents were in poor shape and only loosely bound, and his spies have picked up hints that some documents were discovered in the street outside the cathedral on the night of the murder and subsequently sold to a local book dealer. He is not so naïve as to think that the totality of the documents were lost or discarded by the assassin but believes it is possible that a few leaves of parchment might have been loose and fallen unnoticed in

the darkness as the perpetrator fled the scene of the crime. He knows who the book dealer is, but he doesn't want to send his own people to recover the parchments because he doesn't want to tip his hand to the assassin that some of the documents are still out there; he doesn't want the book dealer murdered and these documents stolen before he has a chance to act. Therefore, he would like to discreetly hire the party as unaffiliated buyers to obtain the documents for the Church. He would prefer that the PCs purchase them legally — for which they will be reimbursed for the expense as well as rewarded for success — but ultimately he doesn't care how they are obtained as long as the PCs don't hurt any innocents or get arrested in the process.

If the PCs request more information about the murder or access to the deceased archivist's corpse, the Magnate will deny all such requests. He will reiterate that the party's mandate is solely to recover the documents, not to look into the matters surrounding the murder. PCs might find this suspicious, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check will confirm Flommescal's sincerity; while he is willing to bring outsiders in on the relatively minor task of the document recovery, he is not yet willing to trust them with something of the importance of the murder and will stick to the skills of his own retainers for that.

Once the PCs have agreed to the job, Flommescal informs them that the documents have been traced to the book dealer Vidrac Dorse of Dorse's Paper Shoppe. He gives them directions to the shop's location on the Street of the Four Winds not far from the County Enclave of Seber Hall and admonishes them once again to be discreet and lawful in their endeavors, as the Count's men might be only too eager to put strangers beyond the protection of the Archdeacon to the question in the dungeons of Seber Hall. With this final word, he turns his attention to some of the amassed paperwork and silently dismisses the PCs from his presence. The retainer outside the door escorts them from the cathedral grounds and tells them to report back to him when they have finished their mission and he will get them another audience with the Magnate.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO THE ARCHIVIST

Magnate Flommescal and his divinatory investigations are only partially correct in his deduction of what occurred leading up to and following the murder of Archivist Thrun. Neither he nor the PCs know what really occurred, though the PCs may be able to piece together some of it through the course of the adventure. Archivist Thrun did, in fact, discover the documents relating to the Conroi Expedition.

In reviewing them he learned about the Burning Pit that the expedition sought for the potentially vast amounts of the star metal noqual that it possibly contained. This piqued the archivist's attention greatly and brought about his ultimate doom.

Most dwarves encountered in an around the civilized lands of Foere are the hill dwarves who have been allies of Man for millennia or the street dwarves^{LL8-382/K9-49} who have come to appear in the great metropolises of Akados in recent centuries. Unbeknownst to his human peers at the cathedral, however, Kisarur Thrun was a mountain dwarf^{MoM-10} of the Ironskull Clan. Unlike most of the Great Mountain Clans of dwarves who have hated humanity ever since the Battle of Hummaemidon^{LL0} in 1 I.R., the Ironskulls of the Blackrock Mountains are one Great Mountain Clan that has maintained friendly relations with the humans first of Hyperborea and subsequently Foere in the past three-and-a-half thousand years. However, largely isolated in their mountain fastness of Iron Hall, they remain a rarity and largely a mystery in the lowlands. Thus, none of Kisarur's fellow archivists knew of his lineage or the sorrowful heritage of that lineage.

Once a powerful kingdom ruled by the House of Ironskull, the Ironskull Clan's most famous scion was the legendary High Thane Cole of a century ago, sometimes referred to in legend or nursery rhyme as Mad Thane Cole or even Old Thane Cole. It was this venerable monarch who sowed the seeds of destruction among his house and clan when he became obsessed with claiming the treasures of the Dragon Temple of West Talon Island in the Crescent Sea, for which he built an unheard-of dwarven armada. The armada was subsequently destroyed along with the old thane by the dragons of said temple*. The death of Old Thane Cole and loss of so much of the clan's able-bodied folk caused rule of the clan to pass to the cadet House of Brazzegard, whose own reign was relatively short-lived after High Thane Tramhan Brazzegard was destroyed along with his house's King City of Tir'Oen 60 years ago at the fangs and flames of a great red wyrm thought to have come from West Talon with vengeance on its mind for the Ironskulls' prior perfidy. The High Thane's surviving son, Trameht passed rule of the clan back over to House Ironskull and disappeared on his own quest of vengeance against the dragon some 40 years ago and has yet to reappear. For the last four decades, the House of Ironskull has ruled over the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull's Kingdom of Dorriden from their King City of Iron Hall at the headwaters of the Iron River deep

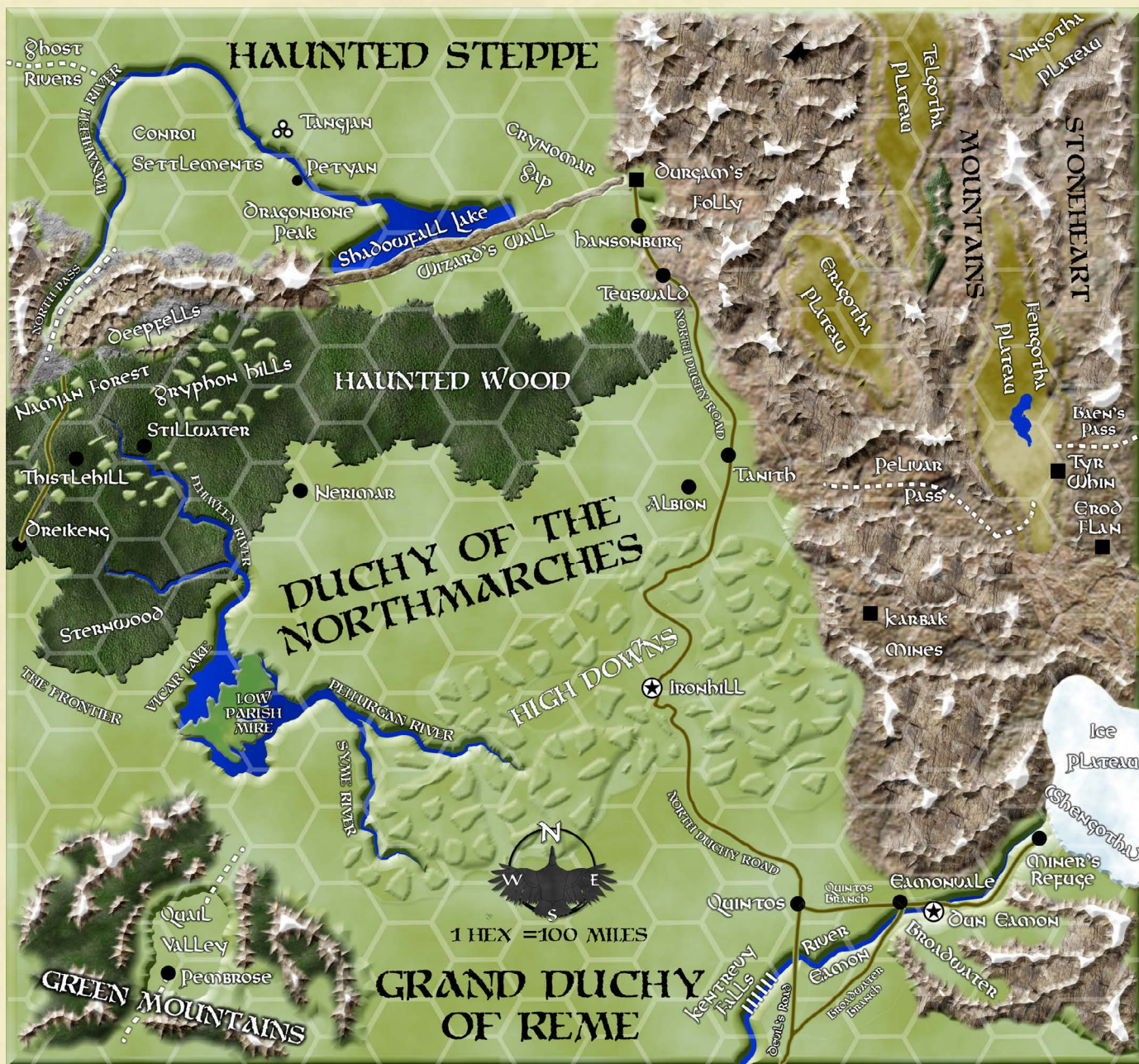
in the Blackrock Mountains. The current High Thane, Klanghorn Ironskull, has maintained friendly relations with the surrounding lowland Foerdewaith realms, but the Iron Kingdom, as it was once called, has fallen on hard times this past century due to the repeated catastrophes it has endured.

Such hard times are what prompted a young Kisarur Thrun to leave his homeland three decades ago and seek a life of study and reflection among the clergy of a primarily human god in the Cathedral City of Nains.

When Kisarur Thrun read of the wealth of precious star metal that was believed to rest undiscovered in the Pit of the Burning Star, he immediately thought of the desperate times that had afflicted his own people for so long — a people he had nearly forgotten in the long years of his absence. Overcome by a sudden surge of guilt and homesick longing for his childhood home, Thrun securely packaged the most detailed portions of the documents and sent them by courier to his people, sure that they would be able to put such knowledge to good use towards reversing the fortunes of the clan. Not wishing to be derelict in his own responsibilities, he dutifully prepared a report of the remaining documents and sent it to the Magnate of Books, requesting an audience to ascertain their historical value. It was this report which languished too long in transit before crossing the Magnate's desk that caught the eyes of certain watchers in the employ of foreign powers among the cathedral's inner workings.

The contents of Thrun's report were relayed to handlers in the distant City-State of Castorhage where it was recognized to be in reference to an old operation sponsored by the Castorhagi Crown 78 years ago when they secretly backed the Conroi Expedition under the ruse of a scholarly endeavor in order to claim the riches of its star metal for themselves. When none of that portion of the expedition ever returned or reported in, the matter was dropped as being considered too costly to pursue, but with the summary provided in Thrun's report it became apparent that there remained more potential than had been previously recognized. Learning this new information through his network of spies and magical thralls, Justice Burr^{LL7-44}, Lord Protector of the City of Castorhage and its de facto spymaster, activated a trusted agent in Nains to assassinate the archivist who had discovered the information and recover the documents regarding the Conroi Expedition.

* See page 101 of "Dread Dragon Temple" in *Quests of Doom* by Frog God Games



It was this Castorhagi sleeper agent, the slayer Ioris Flenn, who subsequently murdered Kisarus Thrun and stole the documents he possessed before he could brief the Magnate of Books about them. However, upon reviewing the documents Ioris quickly realized that the most valuable of them were missing and had likely been hidden somewhere by the archivist. Planning quickly, Flenn left the documents in the street outside the cathedral so that they would look like they had been carelessly dropped by the culprit. He then resolved to monitor them and see who took them and for what purpose in hopes of being

led to the cache of the remaining documents (which, unbeknownst to him, had already been received by Thrun's kin in Iron Hall). When the documents were discovered by a street urchin who subsequently sold them to the book dealer Vidrac Dorse, Ioris became even more intrigued in who would show up to claim them and to this end has been secretly casing the book dealer's shop for several days. He is aware that the Magnate's retainers are seeking him but is not yet concerned that he might be discovered, as he largely considers them to be pompous, incompetent buffoons.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HEART OF THE KINGDOM

The events of *Legend of the Burning Star* primarily take place in a string of cities on a northward path through the heart of the Kingdoms of Foere. Beginning in Nains, this course continues on through Panetoth^{LL4-15/LL8-44}, Dun Eamon^{G6}, and finally Tanith^{F2-3} before it heads out into the wilderness around the Wizard's Wall. Each of these cities has its own history and personality as explored in previous works by **Frog God Games** and/or **Necromancer Games**, however, none of those sources are required to run this adventure. It is in Cathedral City of Nains, however, where the adventure begins and where the PCs are first put upon the trail of the Legend of the Burning Star.

THE CATHEDRAL CITY OF NAINS

Nains is a major city of the central Kingdoms of Foere. It is the Cathedral City of the Cathedral of Saint Angeline, the major center of the Church of Mitra in Foere, and serves as the capital of the County of E'stil, one of the Kingdom of Foere's major realms. Cathedral cities are designated centers of worship within the High Church of Foere, the official religion of the Foerdewaith that encompasses all of the good and neutral religions recognized within the kingdoms under a single quasi-political umbrella. The High Church has little impact over the official doctrine and worship of the deities that comprise its whole, but it does command a great deal of the money that comes to these different churches through the auspices of its tithes and therefore holds a great deal of influence over their practices at least within the borders of Foere when it wishes to. The High Church of Foere is overseen by the Archbishop of Cantelburgh who is appointed by the Overking of Foere, usually for life.

The cathedral cities are an example of this ecclesiastical control exercised by the Crown of Foere. The cathedral cities are independent of the territories in which they stand, answer only to the Archbishop, and are under the protection of the Overking. Individual cathedral cities are ruled ecclesiastically by an Archdeacon of the High Church who oversees the cathedral and local administration with Ecclesiastical Magnates under his supervision. These Ecclesiastical Magnates are typically lay local rulers with bands of men-at-arms, called retainers, who serve under the authority of the Archdeacon. Most cathedral cities have multiple ecclesiastical magnates.

Issues of royal interest in the cathedral cities such as taxation, defense, lay courts, etc. are under the purview of a Mayor of the Palace who oversees civil authority in the name of the Overking. In practicality, most Mayors of the Palace possess much less influence in the cathedral cities than the Archdeacons themselves and the Magnates' combined, and the Magnates' retainers often far outnumber the royal soldiers stationed in the city.

Some cathedral cities, such as Nains, serve as the de facto capitals of various regions of Foere as the largest, wealthiest city in the area. But technically the capital is some small side area or fortress within or near the city known as an enclave that falls fully under the local lord's rule. In these cases, the local lord often rivals or even surpasses the influence of the cathedral's Archdeacon, and there is usually a constant political tug-of-war occurring in these places.

Nains is the Cathedral City of Ste. Angeline, a matron saint of the Church of Mitra, and also serves as the capital of the County of E'stil, though the Count of E'stil's enclave is actually a fortress called Seber Hall that lies within the boundaries of the city of Nains. Count Oristan the Pious is a devout follower of Mitra, so there is less of the usual politicking between the local lord and the Archdeacon, but as a result many of the Count's own liegemen bear a grudge against the High Church for what they see as the usurpation of their natural feudal powers and noble rights. Thus did Magnate Flommescal issue his cautionary warning to the PCs about falling afoul of the Count's men. However, unless the party decides to do something truly rash or outrageous, they are unlikely to need fear any reprisals from the county.

NAINS

The capital of the County of E'stil is the centrally located Cathedral City of Nains (pronounced NINS). The heraldry of the County of E'stil is three pinecones on a field of green^{QoD4-10}.

A. DORSE'S PAPER SHOPPE

LOW 10

The PCs can find Dorse's Paper Shoppe strategically located in one of Nains' many market squares. The shop is lined with wooden tables covered in books and loose leaves from books. Dorse uses lead paperweights that radiate a faint aura of transmutation magic — a simple enchantment that increases the paperweights' weight should anyone but Dorse himself try to move them. This system increases the DC of Thievery checks to steal from Dorse by 5. A PC who browses through Dorse's shelves and makes a DC 15 Accounting Lore or Library Lore check to

NAINS**SETTLEMENT 16****LN METROPOLIS**

A prosperous cathedral city in a strategic location, Nains draws tourists for its outstanding academic reputation as well as its holy sites.

Government dual government (see below)

Population 533,685 (441,200 humans; 37,940 half-elves; 23,069 halflings; 13,285 dwarves; 9,500 gnomes; 6,180 elves; 2,511 other)

Religions Mitra

Cathedral City Being one of the cathedral cities of Foere, Nains receives special dispensations and revenue for the High Church from the Overking. This freedom and largesse directly affects the opportunities of the city's citizens and visitors as well as the infrastructure of the city itself.

Dual Government The political structure of Nains is built around the primacy of the Archdeacon and the High Church of Foere, while at the same time the city also serves as the county seat of E'stil. This creates a certain amount of political

friction between the Crown-backed clergy government and the local feudal government of the Count of E'stil. This friction is relatively mild in Nains due to the Count's own devotion to the Church of Mitra, but the resentment among the lesser nobles does create some tension.

Baron Ivan Turesco (LE male human knight), Mayor of the Palace

Daryus Flommescal (LN male human cleric of Mitra^{LL5}), Magnate of Books

Lady Krystus Kolem (LN female human cleric of Mitra^{LL5}), Magnate of Orders

Oristan the Pious (LG male human cleric of Mitra^{LL5-236,241}), Count of E'stil

Phiser Slatterly (LE male old human wizard [transmuter]), Magnate of Coins

Preston of Mitra (LG male human expert), Archdeacon of Ste. Angeline

Silas Afferbale (NG male gnome cleric of Mitra^{LL5}), Magnate of Bells

Sir Langstrom Treist (N male aasimar fighter), High Sheriff

understand his organization system can locate the likely spot where historical documents regarding the Conroi Expedition are displayed.

Vidrac Dorse (N male old human rogue 8, Perception +16, Sense Motive +15) is amicable when discussing business or academia, but he has a keen nose for profit and his interest is immediately piqued if the PCs begin showing too much attention towards the documents they seek. He can confirm that he recently acquired a small bundle of loose leaves of parchment that consisted of letters pertaining to the Conroi Expedition of 3439 I.R. He will not give any details as to whom he purchased them from, as his policy is always strict confidentiality for his clients. He has confirmed their provenience though and guarantees the authenticity of any purchase. A DC 24 Sense Motive check or magic can confirm that he is telling the truth. He will not, however, let them examine them for more than a moment or two without purchasing them — insufficient time to absorb their contents.

None of the items in Dorse's shop are marked with a price, as he prefers to read his customers in order to set a price he thinks he can get out of them. In the case of the PCs, unless they succeed at a Deception check (without anyone able to use aid another to help) opposed to his Sense Motive, he quickly discerns that the papers are extremely valuable to them. If the PCs mention the Magnate, the cathedral, or the High Church in any way, his Sense Motive check is automatically successful. If he succeeds on his Sense Motive check, he sets the asking price at 150 gp. Any PC making a DC 17 Crafting or relevant Lore check can determine that the true value of the documents to an antiquarian is probably closer to 15 gp, but Vidrac will not budge from his price. If he failed the aforementioned Sense Motive, check then his asking price is only 30 gp. If the PCs attempt to strong-arm the book dealer or outright rob him, he doesn't resist but immediately blows a small whistle that he keeps in his pocket. This will summon **2 county guardsmen** that arrive in 1d4 rounds and pursue anyone that has stolen the documents. They blow their own whistles which calls **1d4 men-at-arms** or **1d6 county guardsmen** from nearby Seber

A. DORSE'S PAPER SHOPPE

Street of Four Winds

F



1 square = 5 ft.

D ≈ Vidrae Dorse

F ≈ Ioris Flenn

X ≈ Connoi Documents

W

E



S

Hall every 1d3 rounds to a maximum of 16 men-at-arms and 30 guardsmen. Anyone arrested by these men will be locked in the dungeons below Seber Hall for later questioning by High Sheriff Treist and will undergo torture for 1d3 days before Flommescal can have them released. Of course, if any guards or men-at-arms are killed, the Magnate will be unable to obtain their release and they will face either a long prison sentence or execution, either of which is beyond the scope of this adventure. Anyone being tortured becomes fatigued and also becomes clumsy 1, drained 1, and enfeebled 1, with this value increasing by 1 for each day of torment. In addition, they must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom or Fortitude saving throw (player's choice) each day, with the DC increasing by 1 per day, or be compelled to confess the details of their mission. If this occurs, there are later repercussions as the PCs' involvement in the matter gets out sooner than it otherwise would have.

These repercussions come in the form of an extra attempt by the City-State of Castorhage to eliminate the party and/or find out what they know at some point on the road between Nains and Panetoth or perhaps shortly after they reach that city. Its set-up and the statistics for its thugs are identical to those described in **Event 6** in **Chapter 2**. However, in this case they are independent brigands rather than members of the Ebon Union and are after the documents recovered from Dorse's shop. Unlike in **Event 6**, no survivors of the group flee to nearby safehouse, and the PCs are just left to wonder at who might have orchestrated the ambush.

COUNTY GUARDSMAN

CREATURE 3

LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +12

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +8, Medicine +6, Society +6

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items studded leather armor, heavy crossbow, longsword

AC 20; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

HP 45

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ longsword [versatile P] +12, **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing

Ranged ♦ heavy crossbow [range 120] +10, **Damage** 1d10 piercing

MAN-AT-ARMS

CREATURE 6

LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +14

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidation +14, Medicine +10, Society +10, Stealth +8, Survival +8

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

Items breastplate armor, heavy crossbow, longsword

AC 24; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

HP 96

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ longsword [versatile P] +16, **Damage** 1d8+8 slashing

Ranged ♦ heavy crossbow [range 120] +10, **Damage** 1d10+4 piercing

Field Orders ♦ The Man-at-arms shouts encouragement or tactical advice. For each within 30 feet, the man-at-arms chooses a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls or a Step action. The bonus affects the subject's attacks on their next turn. The Step is taken immediately.

Weapon Specialization The man-at-arms gains access to the critical specialization effects of any weapon he wields.

Even if the party is willing to pay Vidrac's asking price, they still must deal with another potential buyer. This is **Ioris Flenn** who has been casually observing the shop to see who might show up to claim the documents. He has identified which pile they are in, so he loiters on the street, occasionally glancing in to see if anyone is showing interest in that particular stack. He is also making Perception checks to listen in on any discussions through the nearby open window. Once the subject of purchasing the Conroi Expedition documents is brought up he enters the shop and requests the same documents and is willing to pay double the asking price immediately. He is doing this to size up the PCs and hopefully rattle them. He wouldn't mind whittling down one or two of them as well so he can follow them and capture them later for questioning. At this point he assumes that the PCs are just some of the Magnates retainers and has no real fear or respect for them.

Once Ioris makes his offer, Vidrac is inclined to immediately accept it unless the PCs make a higher bid. Vidrac is perfectly

willing to allow the two buyers to engage in a bidding war to his benefit. Ioris cultivates a drab image; his clothes and armor appear run-of-the-mill, and his expressions are dry and unmemorable. He answers no questions that the PCs may pose, simply making bids in an expressionless tone. He will go as high as double the asking price in his bids before pausing and proposing that he and the PCs settle the matter with a duel. Dueling is not forbidden in Nains if both parties agree to it, and if the PCs refuse, he slaps one to insult his or her honor. Ioris isn't bluffing. The man is an experienced killer and excels in a one-on-one fight. If the party accepts his challenge, he fights their representative in single combat. Not wishing to acquire life-long enemies, he keeps his promise to yield if his adversary asks, but he fights with lethal intent to that point. If the PCs still refuse, he leaves and allows the PCs to purchase the documents while he prepares to ambush them on their route back to the cathedral, dropping all pretense at an honorable duel.

IORIS FLENN

CREATURE 11

CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +20

Languages Common, Undercommon, Thieves' Cant

Skills Acrobatics +26, Athletics +20, Deception +22, Intimidation +18, Stealth +26, Thievery +22

Str +4, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

Items +1 studded leather armor, +1 striking rapier, wyvern poison (2 doses)

AC 33; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 195

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ +1 *striking rapier* [deadly d8, disarm, finesse] +26, **Damage** 2d6+4 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and poison

Ranged ♦ +1 *dagger* [agile, finesse, range 10, versatile S] +26, **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Reactionary Ioris gains a +2 bonus to Initiative checks and a +2 bonus to weapon damage rolls in the first round of combat.

Sneak Attack Ioris deals an additional 2d6 damage with Strikes against flanked or flat-footed opponents.

Tactics: Ioris uses his studied target as a swift action the second a PC agrees to fight him. His hope is to catch the character off guard and win quickly with minimal injury. If the PCs are still in conversation about how the duel will proceed, he simply announces it already has and lunges with his rapier. Both of Ioris' daggers are stored in poisoning sheaths with poison already applied. Ioris yields immediately when reduced to 20 or fewer hit points. If the PCs gang up on him or continue the fight after that point, he throws his poisoned daggers at the character he deems most likely to succumb (using Sense Motive to gauge the party's weaknesses). He then runs with a final remark about the party's lack of honor and disappears into the dense crowd to report his failure to his superiors.

If a duel occurs, the county guardsmen will not interfere because Vidrac confirms that it was agreed to. However, 2d6 **county guardsmen** and 1d4 **men-at-arms** will arrive to monitor the clash and make sure both parties abide by its rules (no outside help, yielding when called for, etc.). Anyone violating the rules of the duel will be arrested as described above, though if they attempt to arrest Ioris, he quickly slips away.

Development: If the party fails to defeat Ioris or convince Dorse to sell the documents to them, the slayer pays the vendor for the papers and leaves immediately. Following

Ioris in the city is difficult, as his training allows him to disappear in crowds with ease. A

PC proficient in Society can follow Ioris without losing him with a successful DC 30 Perception check with a DC equal to Ioris' Stealth check. If the PCs obtain the letters from Dorse or Ioris, they can be seen to be a series of short pieces of correspondence between the chaplain of the Conroi Expedition and the Archdeacon of Nains, who was the chaplain's church superior. They are each on worn, travel-stained leaves of parchment and are clearly old enough to be authentically from the time of the expedition. Provide the players with **Handout 4A** (see page 64), which combines the short missives into a single handout.



EVENT 1: A HISTORY LESSON

The Magnate expects delivery of the papers as soon as the party acquires them. Assuming the PCs did not break the law or otherwise embarrass the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline, the PCs are brought immediately to Flommescal's private study when they arrive at the cathedral with the documents.

The Magnate's study is much more spartan in its layout than the conference room you met in before, and much more secure with no windows breaking its heavy masonry walls and the only entrance leading from the Magnate's personal apartments. However, there are a few comfortable chairs surrounding the cleric's wooden desk, a desk now covered in old books and crinkled parchment maps. Magnate Flommescal motions you to sit as he spends a few moments perusing the documents you have recovered.

A PC making a DC 18 Perception check can catch a glimpse of the books and maps open on the desk. Those that do can make a DC 20 Academia Lore or Library Lore check to recognize them as old history texts about the original colonization of the Haunted Steppe by Prince Cale of Reme and incomplete maps of the steppe lands beyond the Crynomar Gap at the northern boundary of the Grand Duchy, including one well-known tome of historical geography called *Oldranui's Geogrammatica*, written nearly 600 years ago. After identifying the map, a character with expert proficiency in Academia Lore, Library Lore, or regional Lore about Reme or the Haunted Steppe notices that the Wizard's Wall is not marked across the Crynomar Gap confirming that it was drawn before the time of the shadow walker invasion in 2947 I.R. It is apparently a (largely speculative) map of the Caléen Colonies as they existed before their fall.

After a few minutes of reviewing the documents he sets them down on the desk and addresses the party.

"Well it's abundantly clear that these are not all of the documents connected with Archivist Thrun's discovery," he begins with a sigh. "As to the whereabouts of the rest of them we can only guess, though I'd wager the thief has already sold them to other interested parties. It's pure chance that we came across these.

"I'm sure from your review of them that you were able to piece together at least the bare facts: Azmerius Thade was a priest of Mitra and served as the official chaplain of the Conroi Expedition. He was a disciple of Archdeacon Leofric, who did indeed preside over Ste. Angeline at the time, and who apparently felt it his duty to record the events of the expedition and report them back to the High Church. We also already know that the expedition split after crossing the Wizard's Wall with one portion remaining in Campacha and forming what became the Conroi Settlements, and the other portion under Col. Conroi — and apparently our

illustrious chaplain, as well — crossing the Wanaheeli River to follow the Road of Sorrows and ultimately disappearing from history...until now.

"However, we also learn some things of certain historical interest — like for instance they crossed the Wizard's Wall at Fort Prudence^{G1-2}. This is not really very surprising as it's the only known pass to the bottom of the cliff, but it is somewhat interesting that in 3439 that fortress's nickname of Durgam's Folly^{G1-27} was not yet in wide use. But we also learn some things that are very, very interesting — like the true purpose of the expedition. Look here," Flommescal points at the first of the missives, "Thade mentions funding from a silent backer. This is interesting because it has always been commonly held that the Grand Duchy of Reme funded the expedition to learn something of the fate of their lost colonies. But Conroi apparently secured additional backing, and by the sound of it this silent backer actually composed the lion's share of the expedition's funding. This becomes important when we see how the silent backer's goals differ from those of the Rhemian scholars, and how Col. Conroi chooses the silent backer over that of his own homeland."

Flommescal grows visibly excited as he pores over the ancient letters with you.

"But who might this silent backer be? What might this secret goal have been?" he asks the air rhetorically. "Thade is trying to be coy with his words, but it's clearly all right here if you know what to look for. Here in the fifth letter he refers to the backer as the 'island queen.' Isn't that an interesting turn of phrase? It seems like it could mean anything, but when you think about it not really. It has to be someone from beyond the boundaries of Foere, for there are no lesser kings or queens within the realms of the Overking. And it has to be somewhere close enough to be relevant and to specifically have a queen — not a king. That becomes very specific indeed. It also just so happens that the City-State of Castorhage, an island nation of the western coast of Foere and Reme has had its own independent monarchy for the last 3,000 years and more. And while the monarchy has traditionally been a king, there was a two-year span from 3439 to 3441 when there was a queen-regent, the duplicitous Lotheria Tredici, who presided over Castorhage while her husband King Worn IV was too infirm to rule. In 3441 she was deposed for attempting to murder her own infant daughter and only a few short years later she was executed when it was discovered she had been slowly poisoning the king to bring on his debilitating illness^{LL7-232,320}. She's just the sort of person who would have used subterfuge and double-dealing to undermine some foreign nation's interests if it meant lining her own coffers.

"And there's more, because something that almost everyone knows yet somehow never bothers to put together is that the Conroi Expedition wasn't the first to cross the Wizard's Wall in that same timeframe. No, the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar had crossed

the wall only two years earlier on some expedition of his own that he never returned from. There are vague reports that he searched for some cradle of the ancient Hyperborean Empire among the farthest peaks of the Stoneheart Mountains, but why would he enter the Haunted Steppe to do that rather than take an easier route along the mountains' eastern flank through more civilized lands. When looked at in that light, it could almost be said that the Conroi Expedition was following in the missing explorer's footsteps. Still not convinced? Well, how about if I told you that before embarking on his fateful quest, Gravenfar is known to have stopped for a short time in Castorhage. To consult the archives there? To gain financial backing? To eat one last meal of their wretched meat pies sold by street vendorsLL7-22? Who knows? But there is clearly an interesting connection in light of an 'island queen' serving as a silent backer for a similar expedition only two years later."

The normally staid Magnate visibly calms himself and mops his now sweat-beaded brow with the cuff of his magisterial robe. "So now we get to the heart of it. What was old Conroi about out on the steppes that cost him his life and that of all his men...and likely that of the most famous explorer to ever trod the dust of Lloegyr. That is something truly of great value. And I don't mean whatever sort of treasure it was. I'm the Magnate of Books, not the Magnate of Coins — let old Slatterly** worry about that — I'm interested in the discovery and recovery of knowledge. Profound knowledge. Important knowledge. What do you fellows say, are you interested in another job?"*

The discovery of the documents has clearly gotten Flommescal quite excited. There is not usually this much of interest in the day-to-day matters of the cathedral's chief scholar and librarian. If the PCs enquire about payment for their previous job he becomes embarrassed and quickly repays them whatever they spent on the documents (a critical success on a Deception check opposed by his Sense Motive allows unscrupulous PCs to inflate this amount by up to 25% without him getting suspicious, but if the check fails he cuts the rest of the payment offer by half in punishment) as well as another 100 gp per person for recovering the documents.

If the PCs show interest in this job, he says it is very simple. He wants them to find out what became of the Conroi Expedition after it crossed the Wanaheeli River and determine what it was that they and the Crown of

Castorhage were looking for along the Road of Sorrows. He doesn't require that they recover anything for him and honestly doesn't care whatever treasure it is that they might find. What they do with it is up to them. All he wants is for them to record their expedition and provide him with a copy of the records so he can add it to the Ste. Angeline archives and close one of the greatest mysteries of the last century. In return he will provide them 300 gp with which to outfit their expedition and another 300 gp when they return to them with an accurate account of what occurred and what they discovered that will stand up to scrutiny under zone of truth and similar spells. Anything they find along the way is theirs to keep.

He will also provide them with two pieces of advice. One, they should start their search in Panetoth as that is where the expedition originally started from and where evidence may still exist to provide them with some guidance before they head out into the vast expanse of the Haunted Steppe. Two, he dissuades them from going to Castorhage to find out what Gravenfar was up to there. He has had some experience in that city and believes their chances of finding anything of use in that morass of degeneracy is far outweighed by the inherent dangers it would provoke. This reminds him to also provide one final warning as well: He suspects that the murder of the archivist might have the stink of Castorhage about it, so the discovery of the documents might have renewed the interest of that decadent kingdom's current monarch, Queen AliceLL7-40. If so, the party should beware of competitors who might even now be on a similar course to claim whatever prize lies at the end of the journey.

If the PCs ask further about the murder investigation he will inform them that his agents suspect it was the work of a killer-for-hire named Ioris Flenn, whom he believes the PCs may have already encountered, and that it was likely at the behest of some shadowy backer — the discovery of Castorhage's involvement in the affair suddenly makes them look like the prime suspect. In any case, he doesn't want the PCs to waste any time on that angle. His retainers will finish the murder investigation from here. If the PCs wish to be the first to discover the secrets of the Conroi Expedition they'd best start sooner rather than later when others might gain a head start on them.

* Lloegyr is the name of the planet currently most commonly in use in Akados, when a name for the planet is used at all. See page 4 of **LL1: Stoneheart Valley** by **Frog God Games**.

** Phiser Slatterly, Magnate of Coins of the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline (see Nains above)

THE JOURNEY TO PANETOTH

The journey from Nains to Panetoth is one of approximately 650 miles as the crow flies but for which no direct route exists. PCs traveling overland will need to head east to the city of Sion on the Star Sea and take ship to Pentalis before heading north up the Bishop's Road through the County of Coutaine and the Duchy of Ysser before heading northwest along the Duke's Way towards the Tradeway and Panetoth. Parties that have previously played through *The Ebon Soul* from the *Aegis of Empires Adventure Path* will find much of this journey familiar from their prior visit to the city of Tourse in that adventure. Alternately the party could elect to strike out cross country along the back roads and farm lanes through the County of Barresque and the Saymere Valley to reach the Old Tors and try to pick their way along the long-abandoned road that once crossed those lonely peaks by way of the halfling enclave of Oldhome and the much-more-sinister ruins atop the cursed Hill of Mornay^{BM}. This is a much shorter distance but cuts through wilderness for most of the way and is much slower going with a much higher chance of hostile encounters. Each of these routes requires several weeks of travel, so feel free to sprinkle in encounters as you see fit to liven up the journey.

Alternately the PCs may be capable of magical flight that could enable them to pass directly over the Elderwood and Old Tors. This is still a 650-mile journey and would require many days of travel at best with commensurate encounters. It is also likely, however, that PCs of the party's level have some other means of magical travel like teleportation or ethereal travel that could make the trip significantly faster. Whatever the case, the next portion of the adventure takes place in Panetoth, so however you get the PCs there is up to you and your players.

PANETOTH, DUKE'S CITY OF THE WAYMARCH

Panetoth is the regional capital of the Waymarch, the Grand Duchy of Reme's easternmost marchland. The Waymarch stretches from just west of Panetoth, across the sere plains to the mouth of the Stoneheart Valley at the caravan city of Fareme, some 8 days march from the village of Fairhill^{LL1-7}. Like all of the marches of the Grand Duchy, Waymarch is ruled by a duke who owes fealty to Grand Duke Iltobarus of Reme^{LLTG-3}. The Duchy of Waymarch has been ruled by House Qellinroque (Gasquen^{LL5-14} for "Rock of Quell"^{RC:FBG-42}, the house's patron deity) for as long as anyone can remember, and the current Duke's grandfather and great grandfather^{LL8-328} both bore the name of the original Grand Duke Borell I who famously defeated the hobgoblin demigod Kakobovia at the Battle

of Ironhill in 1573 I.R.^{MoM-100/LL3-255} In addition, the Dukes of Waymarch hold the ancient title of Harmost^{LL3-78} of Panetoth (a term dating from the Hyperborean Empire as the military administrator of a city) as well as the grandiose title of Voice of the Grand Duke in the East. The current Duke of Waymarch is Lucius Qellinroque, a loyal subject of Grand Duke Iltobarus and staunch ally of the City of Bard's Gate^{LL8-44}.

The Duchy of Waymarch is an arid plain of rolling hills and dry grass prairies. The land boasts no major rivers and the water supply is limited to rain catch pools and the runoff from the annual snowmelt of the Stoneheart Mountains that fills a number of temporary lakes and washes in the eastern portions of the duchy. As a result, the duchy is a sparsely populated land that always stands on the verge of famine during the dry season each summer and fall. Within Panetoth itself, each year's dwindling water supply is protected and overseen by the clergy of the Church of Mitra who make liberal use of their magical abilities to create and purify water in order to stave off the dual specters of dysentery and cholera.

Vast herds of sheep, cattle, and horses roam the plains in a constant search for new pasture, and the famous Waymark cavalry patrols its vast stretches on their sure-footed, locally bred mounts. A large perpetual cavalry encampment lies just north of Panetoth which serves as the cavalry's mustering ground and is under command of the venerable Lord-Knight Commander of the Waymarch, Count Kessiar Ulthol, but despite its constant influx of mounted troopers the camp is rarely full. This is because the duchy's many contracts with foreign governments (primarily the Free City of Bard's Gate) to hire its cavalry forces out as mercenaries^{LL8-38} keeps a goodly portion of these soldiers abroad at any given time.

Of final note, is the significant number of nomadic Plainsmen that call the Waymarch home and are found as frequent visitors to the city of Panetoth. These horse-riding tribes are all descended from the Shattered Folk of the Haunted Steppe who have been allowed to cross the Wizard's Wall, one tribe at a time selected through a lottery held every 50 years, and take up their migratory ways in the great open expanse of the northern and eastern marches of Reme. These groups range as far east as Bard's Gate and the Lyre Valley and as far north as the fringes of the Haunted Wood in the Northmarches of Reme. They exist peacefully among the folk of the Grand Duchy, most of them having lived for generations south of the Wizard's Wall since their initial lottery selection, though there are rivalries among the tribes that have existed since even before and still erupt sometimes into bloodshed.

Nevertheless, they generally keep the peace between their groups while in and around Panetoth. The tribes of the Plainsmen that can be encountered in the Waymarch are the Grass Sailors, Quick Knives, Stone Faces, Thunder Riders, Stone Walkers, and Beast Takers (see page 26 of *LL8: Bard's Gate* by Frog God Games and *K12: The Eamonvale Incursion* by Necromancer Games for further information).

Panetoth is a bustling trade city straddling the Tradeway, the great caravan road that spans the vast plains of central Akados between the great cities of Reme in the west and

Bard's Gate in the east. As such there is always a roiling mix of traders, travelers, soldiers, and locals treading upon its wide dirt streets, peppered liberally with the droppings of the thousands of horses that are bred upon the surrounding prairie.

Though nowhere near as large as the great cities of the Kingdom of Foere to the south or even of the closer metropolises of Bard's Gate or the port of Reme, Panetoth nevertheless gives off an air of busy commerce and cosmopolitan variety in the many faces that walk its broad streets: the sun-wrinkled faces of traders mingle

PANETOTH

SETTLEMENT 7

N CITY

Panetoth (pronounced PAN-uh-tawth) serves the regional capital and administrative center for the Grand Duchy of Reme's eastern marchlands, known as the Waymarch.

Government Duke and Duchess (overlord)

Population 22,470 (18,110 humans [Foerdewaith]; 2,455 humans [Plainsmen]; 785 half-elves; 580 gnomes; 368 dwarves; 172 other)

Religions Mithras, Mitra, Quell

Military District The famed Waymark cavalry's mustering field lies just north of the city causing a constant influx of soldiers, knights, and their many support personnel and retainers. This boosts the city's economy but brings with it a greater frequency of brawls between rival units and frequently a harsher dispensation of justice for even minor criminal infractions.

Regional Capital Panetoth has been the administrative capital of the region for thousands of years and, as a result, has a well-entrenched and robust bureaucracy that is able to keep it afloat in even the harshest of circumstances but can bog down the evolution of even the smallest changes.

Water Poor Panetoth lies in an arid region with uncertain supplies of water during the dry

months. This leads to black market trading, extortion, and the threat of disease and famine along with an over-reliance on the clergy to keep and maintain the supply.

Lucius Qellinroque (LN male human fighter), Duke of Waymarch, Harmost of Panetoth

Amirlaine Qellinroque (N female human wizard), Duchess of Waymarch

Quinn Hardalinger (LN female half-elf expert), Epistates* of Waymarch

Royster Geddrun (LN male human cleric of Mithras^{LL7-126}), Pater of Mithras

Calebi Venezccio (LN male halfling cleric of Mitra^{LL5-236/241}), High Faithful of Mitra

Verethorne the Elder (NG male old human cleric of Quell^{RC:FBG-42}), Prelate of Quell

Count Kessiar Ulthol (LG male old human fighter), Lord-Knight Commander of the Waymarch

Davulosa Printetha (N female human fighter), City Guard Commander

Baron Bluto Heinsvith (NE male human [Heldring^{LL4-17}] noble), Lord Chamberlain of the Gate

* Much as the Hyperborean title of harmost as a regional governor has been preserved, so too has the Hyperborean position of epistates, the chief bureaucratic administrator, has been retained within the Grand Duchy of Reme and a few other ancient cities.

with the steely-eyed soldiers of the Waymarch's famed cavalry and the ageless complexions of elves and half-elves from the Forest Kingdoms^{LLS-44} beyond Bard's Gate to the east or the grim, dour-faced gnomes and dwarves of the Stoneheart Mountains. It seems one could run into anyone from anywhere on the streets of a city like Panetoth and lends credence to the fact that the great expedition of Col. Sixtun Conroi could begin right here.

As busy as Panetoth is, there is a certain impermanence to it. Its population triples to more than 70,000 during the prime trading months, and businesses come and go with the traders. Many establishments never set up more than a tent as its retail location, and more permanent structures change hands swiftly as business ventures come and go with the tide of the Tradeway. Even the great cavalry post visible to the north of the city is more an encampment of tents than a fortified structure. The duke's citadel and the residential districts that skirt to the south of the Tradeway are some of the few areas of truly permanent construction. As a result, it may not be clear where the party should begin looking for clues as to the origins of the Conroi Expedition.

Anyone making a DC 17 Diplomacy or Society check can learn that there is a monument to the Conroi Expedition located near the center of the city just off the Tradeway. Someone could instead spend an hour making a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to gain the same information from locals.

A result of 22 or better on any of these checks reveals that a small museum dedicated to the expedition and curated by a man named Lartan is located on a side street near the monument. A critical success (DC 27 or greater) also makes the PC aware that it is rumored that a single survivor of the original Conroi Expedition may still be alive and dwelling in an invalid's hospital for veterans a couple of miles northwest of the city on the Devil's Road.

B. THE CONROI MEMORIAL AND EXPEDITIONARY MUSEUM

This location lies in a small square just north of the Tradeway near the center of town.

B1. MEMORIAL STATUE

Standing at the center of a small square is a stone statue upon a pedestal rendered in the classic equestrian style of Foere. It heroically depicts the image of a bearded man in the uniform of a commander of the Waymark cavalry, scabbarded saber at his belt, and helmet in hand, gazing northward with a look of intense concentration on his furrowed brow. He sits astride a gallant light horse of the Waymarch plain, its forehooves raised in the air as if about to leap forward into a gallop. A plaque is visible upon the base, but other than evidence of passing birds no one seems to pay much attention to the sculpture.

The plaque at the base of the pedestal is badly corroded copper that can be recognized with a DC 10 Linguistics check or a DC 22 Society check to read in Common:

**COL. SIXTUN CONROI, CDR. CONROI EXPEDITION
DEPARTED FROM THIS SQUARE ON MITHROND
26, 3438 I.R. TO DISCOVER THE FATE OF THE
CALEEN COLONIES. CROSSED THE WIZARD'S
WALL AND ENTERED THE HAUNTED STEPPE ON
OEROS 7, 3439 I.R.**

**LAST KNOWN POSITION CROSSING THE
WANAHEELI RIVER ON FREYRMOND 5, 3439 I.R.***

**KNOWLEDGE COMES IN DISCOVERY. HOPE
COMES IN THE SEEKING.**

Anyone making a DC 17 Crafting check recognizes that the Foerdewaith equestrian style of the statue with the horse's hooves rampant (both front hooves lifted as it rears up) is intended to indicate that the subject of the statue died in battle**. Though the ultimate fate of Col. Conroi and his expedition are unknown, it is assumed by historians that he died in battle with foes or simply the elements in his doomed journey. If the PCs are not aware of this aspect of the sculpture, Lartan can fill them in.

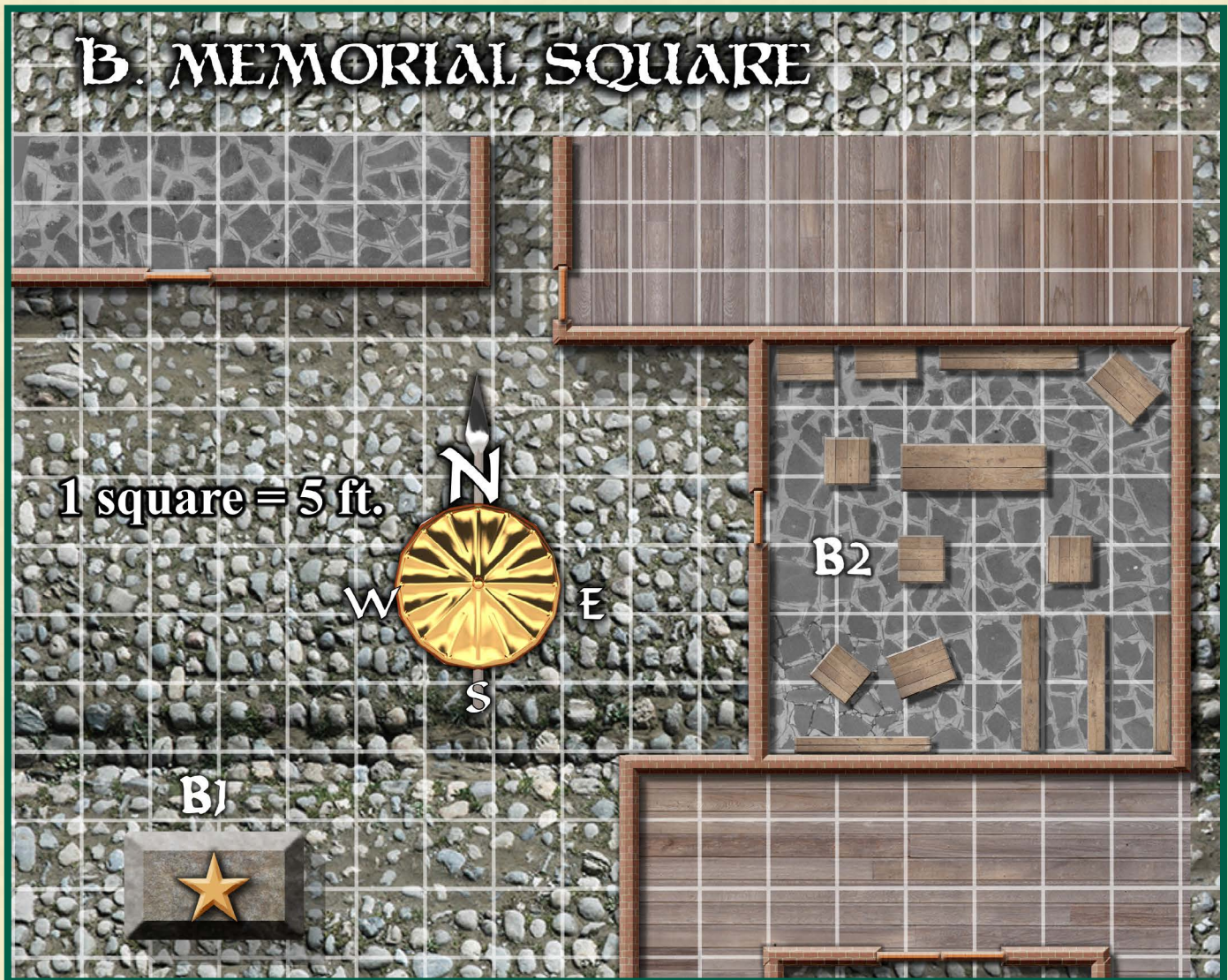
B2. THE CONROI EXPEDITION MUSEUM AND REPOSITORY **TRIVIAL 10**

This humble structure is tucked in between two other buildings fronting on the square and has seen considerably less maintenance

* September, January, and March, respectively in the **Lost Lands** calendar. See page 219 of **LLj: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City** by **Frog God Games**

** While this is a commonly held (though ultimately incorrect) belief about real-world statuary, it is in fact true in the Foerdewaith-style of equestrian sculpture: Rampant (front hooves up in a rearing position) indicates death in battle, *passant* (one front hoof up in a striding position) indicates being mortally wounded in battle, and *statant* (all hooves down in a standing position) indicates survival in battle.

B. MEMORIAL SQUARE



over the years. Its boarded walls are silver with age, bearing only the faintest hint of the whitewash that once graced its surface, and its roof is low-slung and sagging towards the street, its shingles as gray as the building's walls with many missing and their absence carefully patched with tarpaper. A faded sign nailed to the eaves directly above the small entrance declares this to be "The Conroi Expedition Museum and Repository".

The interior of the museum is a cluttered space occupied by displays of "artifacts" of the expedition and a small library of tomes, journals, and documents related to the expedition. Most of the artifacts are actually tools, weapons, or goods of the Plainsmen tribes of Waymarch that have been misidentified as relics of the Shattered Folk tribes of the Haunted Steppe or are mundane pieces of gear or articles of clothing (most well-worn or in otherwise poor shape) that purport to be examples of items carried by the

expedition but are more likely just pieces of discarded rubbish collected over the years and put on display. The truth of these displays can be recognized with a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check.

The curator of the museum is a gray-headed, stooped old man with a pair of spectacles perched precariously on his nose named **Perite Lartan** (CG male old human bard; Deception +11). Lartan is a self-styled expert on the Conroi Expedition and has put the museum together over the years with a fanatical dedication. He charges 2 sp per person for admission to the museum, but as the PCs are his only visitors in some time, he gives them a personal guided tour once the admission fee has been paid. Lartan is well aware of the dubious provenience of most of the displays (and is responsible for the majority of them) but will wax philosophical over them until such time as he gets the

idea that the PCs are aware of their false nature at which point he will quickly usher them on to the archives saying something about “unreliable field researchers.”

The archives are Lartan’s true pride and joy because most of the books and documents present do truly relate to the expedition. Though the affair happened generations ago, records still exist — names of merchant suppliers, purchase orders, and personal correspondence, etc., leading up to the departure of the expedition, its initial leg across the Northmarches of Reme, and its journey over the Wizard’s Wall onto the Haunted Steppe. There is also a section filled with books about the research conducted by the expedition’s scholars on the Campacha Plains, but these are all reproductions of the accounts published from the Royal Archives at Reme for whom the scholars were working. None of them specifically deal with the northward portion of the expedition across the Wanaheeli River, and Lartan has nothing associated with that portion of the expedition other than the fake artifact displays. All in all these assorted accounts of the build-up to the expedition and the research conducted in Campacha don’t seem to provide any useful information the PCs don’t already know, apart from an overwhelming sense of discovery and optimism that pervades them throughout. However, anyone spending an hour to search through these books and documents with Expert training in Society finds a reference to something called the *Tellio Manuscript*.

Development: Though he is happy to tell all kinds of tall tales about what befell the expedition after Col. Conroi sojourned north, a DC 15 Sense Motive check is sufficient to tell that he is simply embellishing and building on what few rumors made the rounds about the fate of that group and that none of them bear any true merit. If confronted with this he will hesitantly admit that really no one knows what became of the expedition once it crossed the Wanaheeli and, truth be told, even attempts at magical divination as to its fate (beyond the fact that everyone was dead) were unable to uncover anything. This last bit is actually one of the more valuable pieces of information that Lartan possesses because it reveals that something very powerful must have blocked any such divination attempts, which also reveals something of the true nature of the expedition’s goals.

Nonetheless, the PCs can question Lartan about what he may know, and potential questions and the answers the curator is able to impart are given below.

Have any others come by seeking information about the expedition recently? Lartan smiles grimly at this and states

that few have any interest anymore in the history upon which our very existence is built. However, he does admit that a stranger came through just over a week ago to see the collection. He was a nondescript, middle-aged man who had the accent of a southlander (i.e. from the central Kingdom of Foere region). He did not give his name and only spent a few hours scouring through the archives after questioning the curator for a bit. He did not give a name or a reason and left without comment. Lartan has not seen or heard from him since and is not sure he could identify him again on sight if he tried beyond recalling that the man had a sailor’s tattoo of a sea serpent on his left forearm, probably former Foerdewaith Navy.

Other than that one man, no one else has been through in months, though he pauses a moment after saying that, and characters with Expert training in Sense Motive notice that the question seemed to spark a sudden recollection in the old curator. If pressed, he admits that there was a break-in less than a week ago. Nothing was stolen, but some of the tomes in the archive were shuffled around a bit. Since nothing was missing, he repaired the lock on the door and didn’t think anything else about it until this moment. If they ask him what was shuffled around, he directs them to the Tellio Manuscript (see below).

What/where is the Tellio Manuscript? He tells them it’s one of the journal fragments among the archive collection. He can locate this unmarked folio for them if asked (see “Tellio Manuscript Trap” below).

Were there/are there any survivors of the expedition who could be questioned? He states that no one who traveled northward on the final leg of the expedition escaped the fate of his peers. Of those who remained behind in Campacha to conduct their research and ultimately establish the Conroi Settlements, all have long since died of advanced years or assorted mishaps over the intervening eight decades. However, a successful Sense Motive check opposed by his Deception check (with a +8 bonus) allows a PC to realize the old curator is holding something back in a seemingly protective way.

To gain this omitted detail, the PCs must convince Lartan they are sensitive to the privacy and peace of mind of anyone who might be able to help them. This requires a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check or a magical charm. Should they gain his trust, the historian admits that one person still lives who may know something more, but Lartan prefers no one bother the man in the final years of life. If the PCs promise to keep their visit short and not

press him, Lartan agrees to tell them where to find the final surviving member of the expedition, an old fellow named Ambrose Hallet who is the sole survivor of the Campacha portion of the expedition. He returned to Panetoth years later and eventually moved into the Devil's Rest Hospital for Invalids as a long-forgotten, but nonetheless-true hero of the Grand Duchy of Reme.

Who is the survivor at the Devil's Rest Hospital for Invalids?

If the PCs have already heard of the resident of the Devil's Rest and question Lartan specifically about it, he answers as above, initially denying the existence of Ambrose Hallet but can be swayed as described.

What/where is the Devil's Rest? Lartan can provide directions to the Devil's Rest, and even explain the meaning of the name (see area C below).

What is Gravenfar's manuscript at the Grey Citadel (see "Tellio Manuscript Trap" below)? Lartan is no Gravenfar expert but does have some knowledge of the famed explorer. He knows that he disappeared in the Haunted Steppe only two years before the Conroi Expedition. As he recalls, the story is that the explorer spent some weeks in Castorhage before taking ship to Reme to begin his quest. Lartan doesn't know any details of Gravenfar's quest beyond something about a "cradle of Hyperborea" in the mountains somewhere, but he does seem to remember that Gravenfar made one final short stopover in the Grey Citadel of Dun Eamon before crossing the Wizard's Wall. Lartan doesn't know why Gravenfar stopped by Dun Eamon, nor is he aware of any Gravenfar manuscript related to that stopover.

Tellio Manuscript Trap: This is an unmarked folio of loose parchment leaves held in a worn cloth cover that bears many stains of age and wear. If asked, Lartan can confirm that this folio was moved after the break-in of 5 days ago, but after a cursory glance within he saw that none of the leaves were missing and so simply re-shelved it in its proper place. If the PCs wish to peruse the documents, Lartan willingly provides it to them (touching the pages for the first time in the process). The documents are the partial journal of a member of the expedition referred to within only as "Tellio". They hold only items of mundane interest like those described previously except for one entry that is noticed with a DC 20 Society check. This one makes brief mention of the "consultation of the manuscript of Gravenfar at the Grey Citadel." Other than that, it holds no information of interest. The PCs can learn from Lartan or with a DC 20 Society check that the Grey Citadel refers to the city of Dun Eamon in Eamonvale, on the eastern edge of the Grand Duchy.

Unfortunately for the PCs and Lartan, other interested parties broke in and discovered the folio themselves after learning through their own channels of the resurgent interest in the Conroi Expedition. These unknown individuals found the information they were looking for and then left a trap for any that would follow after. The edges of the pages in the folio have been treated with a contact poison that affects Lartan (assume he fails his save) and any PCs handling the pages who fail their own saves. The onset of the poison is in 1 minute, so there is plenty of time for Lartan and multiple people to handle the pages before the effects of the poison are noticed.

POISONED PAGES TRAP

HAZARD 9

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 32 (expert)

Description The book's poison pages bear a dose of lich dust.

Disable Thievery DC 25 to use the book without touching the poison, or DC 31 to neutralize the poison so the pages are no longer toxic.

Lich Dust (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28 Fortitude;

Onset 10 minutes; **Maximum Duration** 6

minutes; **Stage 1** fatigued (1 minute); **Stage 2** 5d6 poison damage and fatigued (1 minute); **Stage 3** 5d6 poison damage, fatigued, and paralyzed (1 minute)

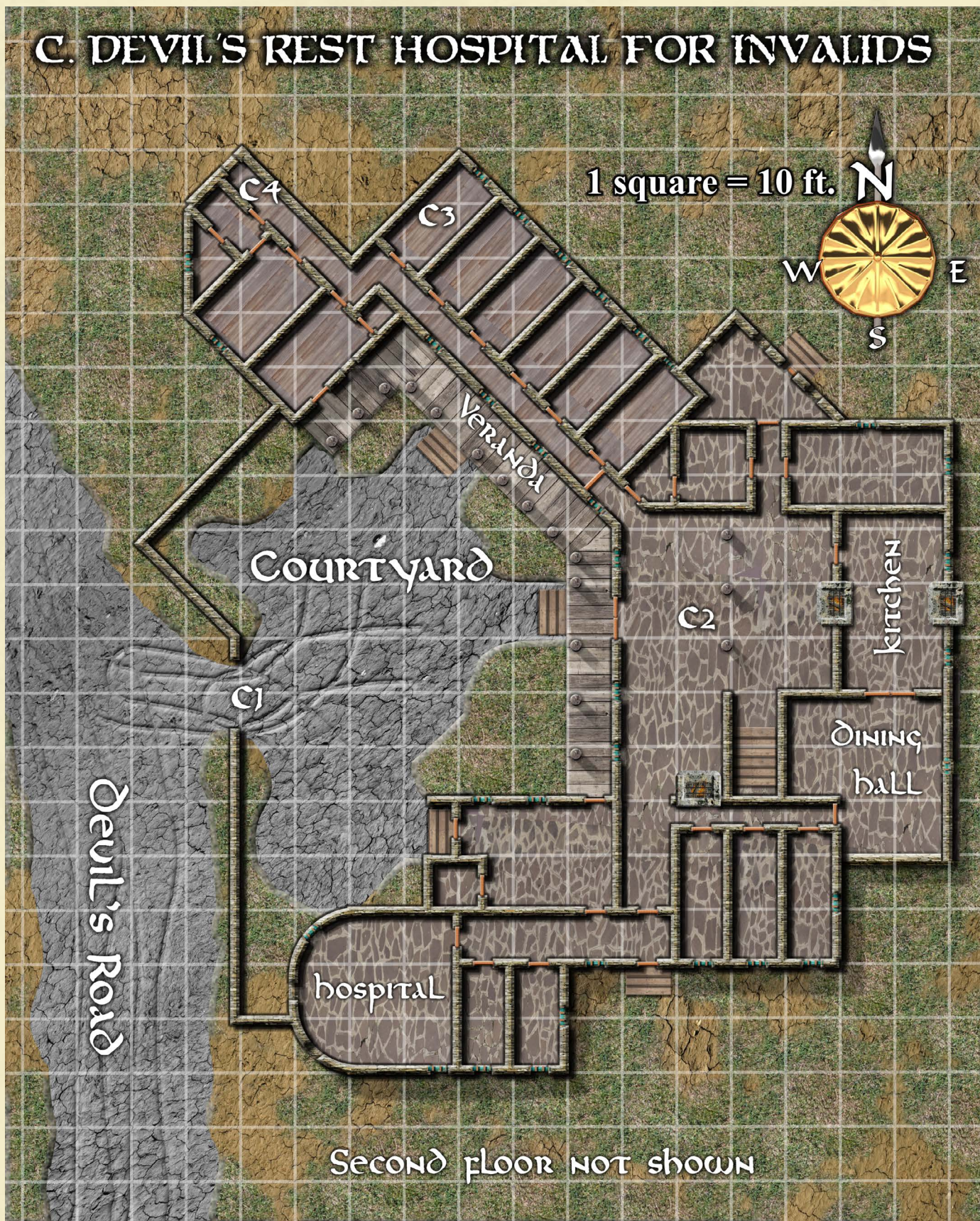
XP Award: Award XP for a Moderate Accomplishment for acquiring the above information from Lartan.

C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS

Anyone seeking this invalid soldier's hospital can locate it with a DC 20 Diplomacy or Society check. A critical success on either check reveals that a few years ago a group of deranged ruffians attempted to break into the hospital for unknown reasons. They were repelled, though three caretakers and two visiting soldiers were killed in the process. Since that time members of the City Guard have volunteered their time to keep watch over the facility and protect the vulnerable residents within.

This retirement home for invalid soldiers takes its seemingly sinister moniker from the road upon which it lies. The Devil's Road stretches between Panetoth and the city of Yalendir some 260 miles to the north. The city of

C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS



Yalendir is named for an old Gasquen^{LL5-14} word for devil: “yalen” and refers to the campaign two millennia ago when Grand Duke Borell I faced and defeated the hobgoblin demigod Kakobovia^{MoM-100/LL3-255}. The hobgoblin god was commonly referred to as the Great Yalen (“Great Devil”) by the common folk of Reme at that time, and the city from which Borell sallied forth to face him, previously known by the unassuming name of Riverborg, was thereafter renamed Yalendir, or “Devil’s Door”. The road between Panetoth and Yalendir subsequently came to be known the Devil’s Road in honor of Borell’s victory. Anyone making a DC 20 Society or Mercantile or Warfare Lore check (with a +10 bonus if they speak Gasquen) is aware of the meaning of the road’s name. For others, it might provoke a more cautionary response.

Once a small country manor, this estate has clearly seen better days. A low stone wall separates it from the main road revealing a dusty yard and sagging veranda. One wing of the house shows signs of repairs and painted letters on a newly white-washed wall reads, “Heroes of Bard’s Gate,” but otherwise the rest of the building seems to be slowly succumbing to the passage of time like the residents within that call it home. A few old codgers dodder around the courtyard or sit in the shade of the veranda, while a handful of armed and armored men stand near the entrance. A faded sign mounted on the wall next to the front gate says, “Devil’s Rest Hospital for Invalids.”

This tiny run-down estate once functioned as a private manse before ownership reverted to the duchy after the last owner died without heirs. It was then converted into a convalescent hospital and rest home for war veterans. Since then the facilities have become more and more decrepit as its residents have slowly succumbed to age and their injuries. Recently attempts were made to refurbish parts of it to accommodate a number of new maimed veterans home from the Huun invasion that struck Bard’s Gate only three years ago^{LL8-17,22}, but other than a few modest repairs the hospital has remained largely decrepit with most rooms unoccupied save for a few crusty old veterans that have hung on far beyond their time.

C1. GUARDED ENTRANCE

The main entrance to the veterans’ hospital opens off the front veranda. There are always **1d4+2 city guardsmen** standing around here. Even though these volunteers are off duty, they remained armed, armored, and wearing the livery of the Panetoth City Guard. They are wary of visitors they don’t recognize and are very protective of the residents of the hospital. They have an initial attitude of indifferent towards the PCs and will converse with them but will not let them in.

TRIVIAL 10

If made at least friendly they can explain why the stand guard (the attack by hooligans as described above). If at least friendly and asked about Ambrose Hallet, they will admit that he resides here and will even reveal that a pair of men came by only a week ago to see him. They can describe the pair as a nondescript man of medium build and a sailor’s tattoo on his arm and a younger-seeming man with blonde hair and a short beard that had the look of elven blood about him. The pair could not provide adequate reason for wishing to disturb Old Ambrose and were rebuffed, going on their way without giving any trouble. If their attitude is changed to helpful, they will allow the PCs to go in to see Old Ambrose and give directions to his room. But one guard and one caretaker will accompany them and will only allow the visit for 15 minutes as he is very frail and can’t withstand much strain. If the PCs can’t obtain entry through diplomacy, they must find some other means, though attacking the guards is a very bad idea if they wish to avoid becoming fugitives from justice in the Waymarch.

CITY GUARDSMEN (1D4+2)

CREATURE 3

Initiative Perception +12 (see page 13)

C2. HOSPITAL PROPER

This estate is small and run down with plaster peeling from walls and mismatched pieces of furniture used by the few residents. More rooms are bare and empty of occupants, their ceilings stained and sagging from old water leaks in many places. The southern wing has seen some refurbishment and includes the working kitchens and cafeteria for the residents as well as the rooms for a handful of Waymark cavalry veterans of Bard’s Gate who are much younger than the other residents but are in poor shape with many missing limbs or eyes and some badly burned or virtually comatose. The rest of the manor is populated by a dozen or so veterans ranging in age from their late 50s to even a pair in their 90s. These broken-down human beings shuffle quietly about their abode, closer akin to ghosts than any living person. Also present in the manor are a total of **6 caretakers** and a **physiker**^{LL7-197} (a professional doctor) who care for the residents.

C3. OLD AMBROSE’S ROOM

If a caretaker walks the PCs to Ambrose’s room, he relates that the old veteran mainly sleeps and otherwise keeps to himself. However, during violent storms he hobbles down the hallway and mutters nonsense to himself while watching the lightning from a window that faces northwest. When a caretaker or fellow resident does ask him about his experiences, he either goes catatonically mute or starts

trying to hurt himself. Some of the caretakers and resident think he would rather end his life than remember the things he's seen.

The trip down the hallway passes several dusty empty rooms. Most don't even contain beds or tables anymore; just old drapes pulled over dirty windows. At the end of a long, lonely hallway, a caretaker uses a ring of keys to open the last small room. The musty smell of too many years and not enough cleaning pervades this aged chamber. Once cheering paper curls from the walls like sickly, yellowing fingers, and a single small window provides the only light and but the feeblest hints of fresh air. A metal-frame bed with thin, threadbare mattress sits near one wall bearing upon it the blanketed form of a mummified figure. The wizened, virtually hairless head lies, with neck extended above the covers, its sunken eyes closed and toothless mouth agape over sallow, hollow cheeks. From the smell and the flies buzzing about your hearts sink with the realization that this old-timer has been dead for some time, abandoned and alone back in his tiny room, unnoticed and uncared for by the other residents who haunt these ruinous halls. Then a low gurgle and whistle escapes the gaping mouth and you realize with a start that the cadaverous form snores softly.

This old fellow is **Ambrose Hallet**. A soldier in the Waymarch army assigned as a guard to the Conroi Expedition, Hallet accompanied them to the Campacha Plains and remained behind with the researchers in the Conroi Settlement. After a decade working there, he returned to Reme and worked for many years as a caravan guard before eventually becoming too old for the work and ultimately moving into the hospital as he became too infirm to care for himself. Now at 116 years old, Old Ambrose is barely conscious and sleeps away most of his days here in his room, eating only little and rarely conversing. He has no visitors and lives solely on the pension he received for his years of service to the state.

Unbeknownst to all (including Ambrose himself), the Cult of Hastur has been aware of his existence for many years. Over the decades they systematically eliminated anyone that they feared might know of their plots and plans on the Haunted Steppe while making it look like accidents and misadventure, but by the time they had tracked Ambrose down he was already old. They managed to ambush a caravan he guarded in the guise of simple raiders, but he escaped with only deep wound to his hip left by a cultist's arrow. Shortly thereafter Ambrose retired and became a resident of the hospital. Assuming that he would die soon on his own, they bided their time and waited, but the old warrior has hung on for more than 30 years and his increasing age and dottiness have begun to cause some concern. Three years ago, a small group of cultists

finally decided to permanently silence the old man but ran afoul of several able-bodied visitors and caretakers who managed to thwart their plan. Since then the hospital has been under guard, and the cult has refused to risk an overt altercation...until now.

The cult fears that Ambrose may know something that could endanger their operations in the Haunted Steppe, even though he never crossed the Wanaheeli with Col. Conroi's ill-fated venture. Though it is possible that the cult may have been correct years ago when the hospital had more patients and Ambrose had a stronger sense of self, the sad truth is that though he is the only surviving member of the expedition, his existence barely qualifies as such. Now he speaks to no one and rarely leaves his bed as his mind has made the long slide into dementia.

Development: Old Ambrose wakes shortly after the PCs enter the room and stares around in confusion. Ambrose suffers from dementia brought on by advanced age. When awake he is largely catatonic, but a few situations trigger behavior and cause him to become confused, babbling incoherently as the *confusion* spell). These triggers include if anyone asks him to think back to his time on the Conroi Expedition or if there are any loud noises, including the sounds of battle. If he enters this confused state, the **city guard** (see page 13) caretaker immediately demands the PCs stop bothering their ward and let him rest and can only be dissuaded if the old man is calmed or the PCs succeed on a DC 30 Diplomacy check. Ambrose can be calmed by such means as a *calm emotions*, *suggestion*, *hypnotic pattern*, or a *charm* spell (or similar magic) or with a bardic performance check to fascinate him (he automatically fails all Will saves). by soothing him with a DC 25 Charisma (Perform) check. *Remove fear* causes him to become lucid for 1 round, though his uncertainty at everything going on around him causes him to become stunned 1. A *restoration* spell removes his dementia and leaves him clear headed permanently, though it does not reverse the other debilitating effects of his age. If this occurs, see **Event 2** below.

Another means to shake him out of his befuddled state is for the PCs to convince him that there is a thunderstorm outside. This could be done with spells like *call lightning*, *control weather*, or even with an illusion. If one of these methods is successful, Ambrose immediately climbs from his bed and shuffles down the hall towards **C4**, where he stands and stares out the window for 1d4 x 10 minutes continuing to mumble to himself. Anyone making a DC 25 Perception check can make out that he is mumbling "If the lightning is white, we're all fine." Ambrose doesn't know he repeats this phrase continuously and can't explain its meaning.

XP Award: Award XP for a Minor Accomplishment if the PCs simply meet with Ambrose, or for a Moderate Accomplishment for if they are able to restore him to lucidity and/or acquire the Canary Crown handbill from the cultists in **Event 2** below.

C4. NORTHWEST WINDOW

The hallway ends here are a wall with a single window that looks northwest along the Devil's Road. Its shutters are broken, and any glass panes are long since gone. A single drab curtain partially covers its view. There is nothing of particular note beyond the window, but whenever there is a rainstorm, Old Ambrose shuffles to this window and stands mumbling to himself as described under **C3** above. If Ambrose comes to the window in the course of the PCs' interactions with him, proceed with **Event 2** below.

EVENT 2: THEY SHALL KNOW YOU BY THEIR SIGN

MODERATE 10

Whether the PCs have managed to make Old Ambrose lucid or he has shuffled to the window at **C4** because of a thunderstorm, this event is triggered when one of those conditions is met. In either case, an arrow flies through the window (of his room or the hallway) and thuds into the venerable man's sunken chest. This is immediately followed by an attack of **4 quiet thugs** led by a ruffian named **Furney One-Eye**. The archer who fired the arrow never reveals himself and does not appear during the rest of the battle, having fled after taking his fatal shot.

Furney and his thugs are insane cultists of Hastur, though they will not reveal this to the PCs. The quiet thugs have all voluntarily had their tongues removed, and Furney gave up an eye in his devotion (as a bard he opted to keep his tongue). He doesn't wear a patch over the eye revealing his gruesome empty socket scarred over years ago. Furney and the thugs have already slain the guards at the gate and any caretakers and residents that got in their way. Any guard with the PCs will assist them to the best of his ability, and the caretaker will try to shield Ambrose's bleeding body with his own.

CITY GUARDSMEN

CREATURE 3

Initiative Perception +12 (see page 13)

FURNEY ONE-EYE

CREATURE 9

CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +21

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +15, Deception +18, Diplomacy +15, Intimidation +18, Stealth +19, Survival +13, Thievery +19

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items +1 *leather armor*, +1 *striking rapier*, 2 *lesser healing potions*

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +23, **Will** +15

HP 159

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ +1 *striking rapier* +21 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 27, attack +17; **5th** (1 slot) *synaptic pulse*; **4th** (2 slots) *blink*, *dimension door*; **heal 3rd** (2 slots) *haste*,

heroism; **2nd** *humanoid form*, *knock*, *paranoia*; **1st** (2 slots) *heal*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (5th)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*

Bard Powers 2 Focus

Points, DC 27, attack +17; **5th** *inspire courage*

Poetic Strike ♦ (magical, mental, occult)

Trigger One-Eye successfully strikes an opponent in melee while affected by the inspire

courage cantrip **Effect** One-Eye punctuates his attack with dark and obscure poetry. His Strike deals an additional 1d6 mental damage.



QUIET THUGS

CREATURE 7

CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +15

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +15, Deception +12, Intimidation +15, Stealth +18, Survival +12

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

HP 140

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +15 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing

Silent Killer ♦ The silent thug can Stride and Strike in the same action so long as he is not observed. This attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty normally.

Tactics: Furney casts heroism on himself before combat and then *silence* to conceal the attack on the guards at the hospital entrance. If his thugs are hard-pressed, he uses *inspire courage* to bolster himself and his thugs before they attack the PCs. One-Eye avoids melee if possible, interposing thugs between himself and any aggressors unless he can flank a vulnerable target, while using his spells to weaken more dangerous combatants. Furney doesn't care if any of his thugs die, but once he is below 15 hit points, he flees back into town. As soon as he believes he is no longer followed, he heals himself with a quick spell or two, casts *humanoid form* to avoid discovery, and then continues to his hideout. If in danger of capture, he attempts to take his own life with a coup de grace.

If any are somehow captured and questioned, they will not reveal their affiliation with any cult even under duress and will say only that the "old man had been marked". However, a search of his body will reveal a flyer for a theater in distant Tanith called The Canary Crown (see area G). A copy of the flyer can be found in **Appendix B** (see page 66). A DC 17 Society or DC 10 Theater Lore check reveals the location of The Canary Crown, and that Tanith is the name of a city in the Duchy of the Northmarches in northern Reme. Arcana, Occultism, and Religion checks and magical divinations alike are unable to decipher or comprehend the mystical symbols that appear on the handbill. Additional information about Tanith and the Canary Crown Theater can be found in **Chapter 3** (see page 48). See **Appendix B** for details of this player handout.

Development: Regardless of any efforts made by the PCs, Ambrose's wound is mortal. Even if healed, the shock is too much for his aged system to handle. He will hang on until the end of the battle or until a PC attempts to heal him if in the midst of battle. At that point his rheumy eyes will clear for a moment as lucidity takes hold one last time. He will look at the nearest PC and softly say, "White lightning means we're fine, but the yellow...the yellow is death." He pauses a moment and closes his eyes as a single tear slides down his cheek and mutters, "Gravenfar sleeps just like the rest of 'em; every last one. I wish they'd never followed that man's journal." Then he breathes his last. No

means of artifice or magic can save the man nor contact his spirit to gain more information, the last member of the Conroi Expedition finds peace at last. If Ambrose's body is searched for a mark, among many old scars and injuries can be found a single unusual scar on his right hip. It appears to resemble a circle with three wavy lines radiating from it, but it is too distorted by time and aging to be recognized. No one asked knows what the scar means or where it could have come from, but Old Ambrose clearly carried it for many years.

EVENT 3: JUST THE FACTS TRIVIAL 10

Before the PCs leave town, they are approached by the City Guard. It is possible this has occurred after the poisoning (or attempted poisoning) of Perite Lartan at area B or the assault on the veterans' hospital at C, or likely both. In any case the party are persons of interest, though they are unlikely to be suspects unless they have acquitted themselves particularly poorly. Preferably this event occurs only hours before the PCs are preparing to depart for Dun Eamon. The PCs are approached by **3 city guardsmen** and a **guard captain** who respectfully requests that they follow him to the central guard station at the Duke's Citadel. The captain, an affable dwarf named Nyman, explains the City Guards' interest in the PCs based on the events that have occurred since they've arrived. He knows they are involved in researching the Conroi Expedition somehow and that is why they've been summoned.

CITY GUARDSMEN

CREATURE 3

Initiative Perception +12 (see page 13)

NYMAN, GUARD CAPTAIN

CREATURE 6

Initiative Perception +15 (as Captain of the Guard^{GMG}, but Nyman is a dwarf)

Captain Nyman takes them into the morgue at the guard station and shows them a body. It is a nondescript human male, with brown hair and brown eyes. His throat has been cut from ear to ear and his tongue removed. He is partially decomposed and appears to have been dead for several days. Clearly visible on his forearm is the faded tattoo of a sea serpent.

The captain explains that the corpse was found stuffed in a rain barrel behind a brothel. No one knew his name or where he had come from. He had been seen several days ago in the company of a blond, bearded man, a human or perhaps a half-elf, and one witness stated that the blond

man was spotted leaving town hurriedly on the Devil's Road. Captain Nyman suspects that the blond man didn't kill the fellow but was rather running from someone, but he admits he has no idea who. He only knows that the two had been previously seen in some of the same locations as the party has visited. He doesn't know exactly what the connection is but believes there is one and hoped that the PCs could shed some light. The PCs should recognize the description of the man from what they've heard previously, but unless they act particularly suspicious, Captain Nyman lets them go after only a few minutes with a request that they let him know if they turn up anything new about the murder.

Though the PCs likely suspect that the same thugs who beset them at the hospital (and probably believe them to be connected to Castorhage somehow), the truth of the matter is that the two men were agents of the Ironskull Clan doing some advance scouting for their own retinue. Unfortunately, treachery within led to the man's murder at the hands of Cherbaud Brazzegard (see **Event 8** in **Chapter 2**). His partner fled town only to run into an ambush set for him and now lies in a shallow grave in the wilderness. The PCs have no real way of knowing all the wheels moving behind the scenes but should have a sense that they are not alone in their pursuit of the Conroi Expedition and that the others also seeking it are willing to kill to stop any rivals.

XP Award: Treat this encounter as a Minor Accomplishment.

THE JOURNEY TO DUN EAMON

The Grey Citadel lies midway up the Eamonvale on the western flank of the Stoneheart Mountains. Dun Eamon lies some 500 miles north as the crow flies, but again the route is not that direct. An overland journey first involves traveling up the Devil's Road to Yalendir followed by a trek northeast up the North Duchy Road with a turn onto the Broadwater Branch. From there it is a straight shot to the city of Broadwater at the entrance of the Eamonvale and then a short journey up the valley to the great citadel built upon the River Eamon. However, as with before, it is possible that the PCs have magical means of reaching the city that do not require so much in the way of slogging. Like Panetoth, Dun Eamon is a well-known city and can be reached faster by magical means if the PCs possess the necessary resources. As a result, no details of the journey from Panetoth to Dun Eamon are included, though you can feel free to add encounters to the road as you see fit.

CHAPTER TWO: THE GREY CITADEL OF DUN EAMON

Dun Eamon stands dauntingly in the mists atop a great waterfall in the midst of the River Eamon. Originally an outpost of the ancient gnome kingdom of the High Downs^{LL7-325} and later a stronghold of the Clan Krazzadak of mountain dwarves, the Angus are some of the few — perhaps the only — humans with whom the Krazzadak's have had quasi-peaceful relations in the last 3,500 years. Eventually when their King City of the Shengotha Plateau came under a powerful winter curse, the dwarves withdrew up the valley to the mountain highlands and ceded the Eamonvale and the ancient foundations of their fortress of the Grey Citadel, which the humans built upon and expanded into the mountain city of Dun Eamon^{MoM-106}.

Since the human founding of Dun Eamon by the insular Uplander clans and their eventual rise to dominate even the Eamonvalers of the lower valley, Dun Eamon has prospered. Its huge waterwheel driven forges have produced much of the finest metalwork to be seen outside the dwarven smithies of the Ironskulls and is renowned for its quality far and wide^{G6-6}. Trade has brought prosperity to the city, and the lawful and just rule of the dour Angus clan has ensured that such prosperity has not corrupted the hardworking Uplanders.

The city is positioned at a ford between two waterfalls which causes it to be constantly shrouded in a misty spray. Outdoor surfaces are uniformly slippery (increase DC by 2 for all Acrobatics checks and Athletics checks made to Climb). In addition, the omnipresent mist outdoors provides concealment to anyone more than 20 feet away. At night, even with a light source, this is reduced to 10 feet. Additionally, the saving throws to avoid catching fire gain a +10 bonus due to the wetness. These conditions do not prevail inside or underground unless otherwise noted.

DUN EAMON

The Grey Citadel of Dun Eamon (pronounced DUHN EE-muhn) is the capital of Eamonvale and has served as the hereditary seat of the Uplander clan of Angus for generations.

DUN EAMON (AKA THE GREY CITADEL)

SETTLEMENT 5

LG CITY

This small, insular city is a hotbed of rumormongering in its mist-veiled streets, yet its strategic location ensures its prosperity and security.

Government Lordship (overlord)

Population 5,722 (4,520 humans; 401 dwarves; 229 gnomes; 216 half-elves; 171 halflings; 114 elves; 71 other)

Religions Belon the Wise, Stryme

Waterfall City The waterfalls flanking the walls of Dun Eamon cause it to be shrouded almost constantly in a misty spray; see above for game effects.

Arb Angus (LG male human [Uplander^{LL7-49}] ranger), Lord of Eamonvale

Bron Angus (LG male human [Uplander^{LL7-49}] fighter), Captain of the Mist Watch

Semerion (LG male human [Uplander^{LL7-49}] expert), Chief Steward

Cael Angus (CG male human [Uplander^{LL7-49}] cleric of Stryme^{LL4-168}), Master of Stryme

Brother Melph (NG male human cleric of Belon the Wise^{LL5-237}), Priest of Belon the Wise

Elinda Bannon (LG female human [Uplander^{LL7-49}] wizard), arcane advisor to the Angus

Devlin (NE male half-elf assassin), Guildmaster of the Ebon Union

Unless they have devised some other means of travel, the party arrives at the southern bank of the River Eamon where the ford leads into the shallows towards the citadel's southern gate.

The trade road leads directly to the river's edge where a ford has been clearly marked allowing access to the gatehouse beyond. Not a quarter mile to the west the river flows over one of the massive waterfalls that flank the Grey Citadel's perch, sending up its perpetual shroud of gray mist that lends the fortress its name.

Though water of the ford is shallow, the current is strong and will undoubtedly pull anything lost to it over those churning falls. Across the ford a grim gatehouse stands guard over entry into the fortress's lower bailey where the main city is located. The banner of the Angus flies above this gatehouse, and men with the mail and longswords of the Mist Watch keep an eye over the travelers entering and exiting the city.

Dun Eamon is a vibrant and living trade city, its streets bustling throughout the day, and its taverns and festhalls boisterous into its fog-cloaked nights. However, few details of the city are provided. A listing of the major locations to be find is included for your convenience, but only a few of them are of importance in this adventure. These are detailed below. For more information on The Grey Citadel itself or the Eamonvale as a whole, see **G6: The Grey Citadel** and **K12: The Eamonvale Incursion** by Necromancer Games.

The party has little to go on upon its arrival in Dun Eamon. They know that Gravenfar visited here before heading over the Wizard's Wall. They know that individuals that appear to be connected with their quest were also in pursuit of this Gravenfar secret, and they know that at least one of those individuals was murdered in Panetoth with his companion last sighted headed in the direction of Dun Eamon. Beyond that, they have little information. If they used magic to reach Dun Eamon, then they have arrived far sooner than the blond man who fled Panetoth would have — unless he also commanded some magic — so their best idea may be simply to wait and watch for him to arrive or seek him out in the city if they arrived by more mundane means.

In the course of either of these strategies, they can also do their own investigation around to see what they can turn up about Gravenfar or anything related to the Conroi Expedition. Attempts to gain these sorts of information in town can be made through Intelligence (History) or (history) or with Charisma (Persuasion) checks to gather information. The information that can be gained from the types of checks made are included below. They obtain the information for the DC they rolled as well as any DCs below their check. Some lines of questioning may lead to more specific inquiry; the results of these are provided separately below. Any PCs making checks in regards to matters specifically about Gravenfar (see the "Gravenfar" table below) gain advantage on their checks if they consulted the Tellios Manuscript and if they successfully spoke to Ambrose Hallet in Panetoth. If they think to consult with the Mist Watch Garrison and reveal the information obtained from Captain Nyman in Panetoth, they gain advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made with the local watchmen.

DUN EAMON



DUN EAMON MAP KEY

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Gatehouse | 10. Bannon's Tower |
| 2. Public Stables | 11. Shrine of Solanus |
| 3. Caravan Camp | 12. The Hole Tavern |
| 4. Market Tavern | 13. The Bathhouse |
| 5. Market | 14. Ironworks |
| 6. Craffhall | 15. The Millworks |
| 7. Temple of Stryme | 16. The Root-Cutter's Shop |
| 8. Mist Watch Garrison | 17. Waterfront |
| 9. Angus Keep | |

GENERAL GATHER INFORMATION ACTIONS

| DC | Result |
|----|---|
| 15 | The town has been plagued of late by "dark visitors from below". These are short, dark-cloaked figures are sometimes seen moving furtively through the misty streets at night. |
| 20 | Old gnomish and dwarven tunnels run beneath island, many of which are played-out mines. These tunnels have been known to host dangerous creatures from below that come up and threaten the city from time to time. |
| 25 | The current noise [slang for "rumor" or "news"] is that the short figures seen at night are dark creepers stealing babies or serving as advance scouts for a dark folk invasion — or perhaps some more nefarious purpose. |
| 30 | The dark visitors have not come from the tunnels below but are actually based out of a black pavilion tent that's been set up for over a week in the caravan grounds. No one sees anyone come or go from the tent, but it's heavily guarded by a troop of sinister-looking lowland mercenaries. |

GATHER INFORMATION ACTIONS ABOUT DUN EAMON

| DC | Result |
|----|--|
| 10 | The Angus clan has ruled Eamonvale for countless generations, but before them the dwarves of Great Mountain Clan Krazzadak once ruled from the upper reaches of the vale. The Grey Citadel served as their southernmost mines and as a stronghold against the humans of the lowlands. |
| 15 | The Krazzadak dwarf clan retreated up into mountains many centuries ago after some disaster befell their homeland in the high mountains, and they allowed human settlers to occupy the upper vale after they left. There is even some trade and peaceful relations still maintained between the Uplanders and the Krazzadak dwarves through the Upvale town of Miners' Refuge ^{MoM-106} . |
| 20 | Old dwarven mine tunnels run beneath Dun Eamon, but there are other tunnels thought to be older still, some of them from a gnomish stronghold that predated even the coming of the dwarves; no one ever dares to explore these. |

GATHER INFORMATION ACTIONS ABOUT GRAVENFAR

| DC | Result |
|----|--|
| 15 | Aroldus Gravenfar was known to write extensive journals about his travels and discoveries that he would then publish and make available to scholars. |
| 20 | Gravenfar never published a journal about his last journey, whose purpose remains a jumble of conjecture even to this day. He disappeared while on this journey and any journal notes were presumed to have been lost with him. |
| 25 | The famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar stopped by Dun Eamon in the same year as he disappeared on his last journey into the Haunted Steppe. He consulted the Angus's chief steward, the wizard Bannon, in private before departing only a short time later. |
| 30 | Gravenfar left his final journal with his good friend, the wizard Bannon, before traveling over the Wizard's Wall because he feared he might be unable to return from that journey and publish it. Whether Bannon was supposed to publish the journal or simply hold it for safekeeping, no one knows. |

GATHER INFORMATION ACTIONS ABOUT BANNON

| DC | Result |
|----|---|
| 10 | Elinda Bannon serves as informal advisor to the Angus on all matters arcane. Her father and grandfather served as stewards to the Angus clan as did their ancestors for generations before. |
| 15 | Elinda Bannon lives in the tower built by her grandfather's grandfather at the southwest corner of the Grey Citadel. |
| 20 | Elinda Bannon is a powerful wizard and artificer of great power. She advises the Angus informally on magical matters but mainly keeps to herself and her own experiments. |
| 25 | Bannon's Tower is known to possess many items of great magical power and an extensive library of ancient books of great value. |
| 30 | In the time of Elinda's grandfather, both the famous explorer Aroldus Gravenfar and representatives of the ill-fated Conroi Expedition came to visit the Angus's chief steward over a period of only a few years. What was discussed was never revealed, but both parties soon disappeared over the Wizard's Wall shortly after their visits. |

XP Award: Gathering at least 4 pieces of information above is a Minor Accomplishment. Gathering at least 10 pieces of information is a Moderate Accomplishment.

ENCOUNTERS AT THE GREY CITADEL

The following encounter areas are likely visited in the order mentioned, though it is possible that the PCs will find a way to encounter them in a different order. If so, you will need to modify them accordingly to make sure that the PCs still have the opportunity to experience all three. The only points of true importance are that **Event 6** occurs before the PCs find area **E** and **Event 7** occurs before they explore area **F**.

D. BANNON'S LIBRARY

Low 10

Elinda Bannon's tower is area 10 on the city map. It is accessed by a single iron door at ground level. Assuming the PCs arrive during the day, she will answer their knock but is reluctant to admit visitors. Her initial attitude is indifferent, but if she can be made helpful, she allows entry. If the PCs mention Gravenfar, working with the City Guard of Panetoth, or their discovery in Nains they gain a +5 non-cumulative bonus on the Diplomacy check.



D: Bannon's Library

Assuming that she becomes helpful, Elinda allows the PCs to enter and escorts them to her sitting room on the second floor of the tower.

Elinda Bannon is an attractive female Uplander^{LL7-49}, tall and slender, with braided brown hair and the simple blouse and trousers of a common craftsman. She is curious as to the party's purpose in visiting her and will listen politely to their explanation. She can confirm that when her grandfather was chief steward of the Angus, the explorer Gravenfar did come by and visit. She remembers her father telling her that he left behind one of his traveling journals for safekeeping before departing on his last fateful trip over the Wall. A year or so later, men from Panetoth came regarding an expedition they were putting together, and her grandfather allowed them to copy portions of the journal for their own use. She supposes these men were with the Conroi Expedition but does not know for certain. For her own part, she was always more inclined towards magical invention and never gave the journal much thought. She keeps an extensive library in her tower, collected by her family over many generations, and is willing to allow PCs she is friendly with to take a look at it, though she doesn't want to part with it due to its extreme historical value.

LG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +21**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Terran**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Arcana +23, Athletics +18, Diplomacy +18, Occultism +18, Society +18, Survival +16**Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4**Items** +1 striking short sword, ring of wizardry II, scroll of teleport, spellbook**AC** 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21**HP** 159**Speed** 25 feetMelee ♦ +1 striking short sword +16 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+3 slashing**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 31, attack +21; **5th** cone of cold, shadow walk; **4th** clairvoyance, dimension door, weapon storm; **3rd** lightning bolt, heightened magic missile, nondetection*; **2nd** heightened burning hands, see invisibility, shrink; **1st** magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, true strike; **Cantrips** (**5th**) acid splash, light, produce flame, shield, telekinetic projectile.**Arcane Ire** ♦ [arcane, flourish] **Requirement** Elinda has taken damage in this combat. **Effect** Elinda's next Strike with a weapon this turn deals an additional 6 damage.

When the PCs are ready, she will escort them up the stairs to her third-floor library.

This vast circular chamber is sizable library with 360-degree floor-to-ceiling shelves on its walls accessible by a rolling ladder, an ornate writing desk, a comfortable red velvet divan with decanter-laden sideboard, an assortment of small tables bearing unrolled maps and schematics, and a number of comfortable chairs. The entire chamber is lit by floating points of light that resemble the flames of torches, though none seem to be giving off any heat. However, despite the chamber's comfortable and even extravagant surroundings, your first impression is one of surprise. This is because a number of shelves have had their contents upended, books and scrolls strewn chaotically across the floor. Strangely a handful of books seem to be floating momentarily in midair as they are plucked from shelves before being tossed haphazardly aside.



Elinda Bannon is stunned by the desecration of her sanctum. Barely audible is the sound her mumbling to herself, “They didn’t breach the tower so they must’ve come from...” before suddenly turning to you and exclaiming, “Take care of whatever that — thing — is,” as she points towards the floating books. “I’ll find the others!” Then with a single utterance of magic she is gone.

Bannon’s library has obviously been ransacked, and the fact that some sort of invisible intruder remains is immediately evident to her even if it is not to the PCs. She, however, has quickly determined that the intruders must have entered through her ring gate (see **Appendix C**, page 80) and teleports to her workshop before they can escape, leaving the PCs behind with the **alchemically-invisible advanced nithu** that the intruders have left behind. A nithu is a Large aberration that resembles a floating, four-tentacled blob of semi-translucent protoplasm, but this one has been additionally treated with an alchemical concoction to render it invisible. It has chosen to remain behind and look for other texts of interest while its compatriots have already retreated from the tower. Upon the PCs’ entry into the chamber, the nithu moves to attack, though its inherent madness may cause it to act unpredictably in any given combat round. If the nithu is reduced to less than 20 hit points, it opens the false top

of the writing desk to try and escape back to the Trackless Mire through the ring gate there, but its bulk is too much to pass through the gate without the help of its fellows and it is effectively trapped in the library.

TH'GHERU

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON CE LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +24, darkvision

Languages Common (can't speak)

Skills Acrobatics +19, Intimidation +21, Stealth +21, Survival +16

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 31; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +24, **Will** +21

HP 240

Naturally Invisible Th'Gheru has undergone an alchemical procedure and is naturally invisible at all times. When it takes a hostile action of any kind it becomes hidden instead of undetected until the start of its next turn.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ tentacle +24 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet),

Damage 2d8+7 bludgeoning plus grab and poison

Invisible Fury ♦ Th'Gheru makes two tentacle Strikes. These Strikes count as only one attack towards Th'Gheru's multiple attack penalty.

Mire Blindness (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 26

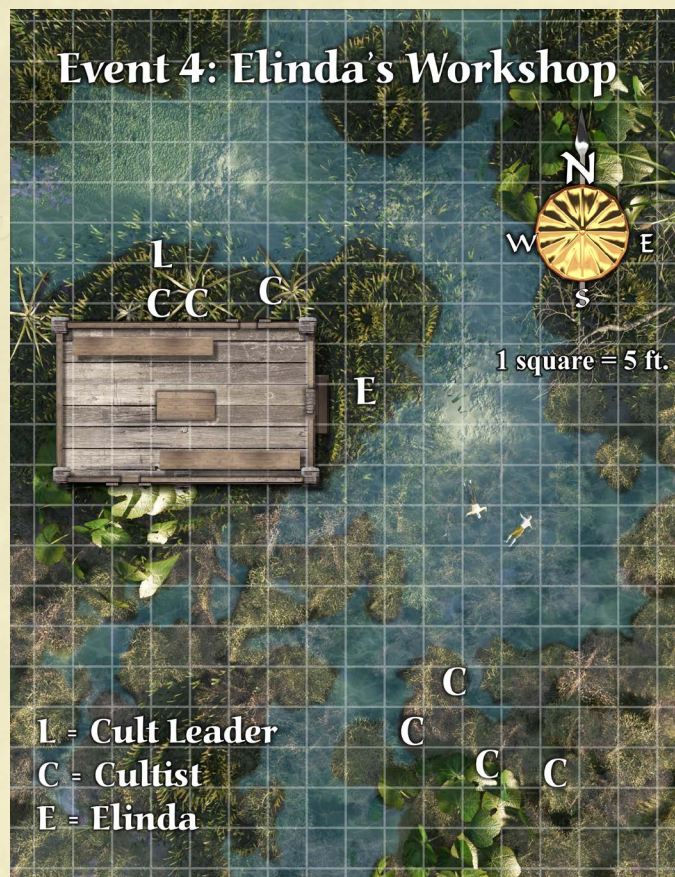
Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** blindness (1 round) and 2d10 poison damage;

Stage 2 blindness (1 minute) and 2d10 poison damage;

Stage 3 blindness (permanent) and 4d10 poison damage

Development: Elinda Bannon does not return after the PCs defeat the nithu. Any character trained in Library Lore notices Bannon's simple organization system, and a quick perusal shows them that the shelf where Gravenfar's journal should be is among those the intruders ransacked. There is no sign of the book elsewhere in the room either. A search of the room with a DC 17 Perception check reveals a number of muddy boot tracks on the floor that seem to go between the writing desk and the ransacked bookshelves. A DC 30 Perception check allows a character to notice a subtle glow on the underside of the room's large writing desk and thus the ring gate mounted there. If the PCs wish to travel through the *ring gate*, proceed with **Event 4**. If they remain in the room, Elinda returns in a few minutes (**Event 5**).

Event 4: Elinda's Workshop



EVENT 4: ELINDA'S WORKSHOP

MODERATE 10

This event only occurs if the PCs elect to travel through Elinda's ring gate. Otherwise she returns to her tower after a few minutes having successfully recovered the journal (see **Event 5**), and this event can be ignored. If some or all of the PCs chance the ring gate, read the following.

You have emerged from a similar ring embedded in the top of a worktable. You are in large chamber with a floor of stone flags, wooden walls, and a thatched roof overhead. Two long tables covered in tools, books, and unknown devices flank either side. Two shuttered windows are set in opposite walls, and a single door exists in one wall. The door is slightly ajar and allows daylight to stream in through the gap. A thunderous blast and the yells of several men can be heard from beyond this door.

The party has arrived at Elinda's secret magical workshop, a secluded cottage she has erected in the great peat bog known as the Trackless Mire. The workshop lies 80 miles from Dun Eamon and is not reached by any roads. Anyone opening the door or windows can see the dingy, gray-green landscape extending as far as they eye can see in all directions, with the shapes of

mountains just barely visible on the hazy horizons. The Cult of Hastur, seeking Gravenfar's journal, discovered the secret of the workshop and its *ring gate* and used this knowledge to travel into the mire in order to sneak into her library. Elinda realized this as soon as she saw her library ransacked and teleported here. She has just slain two fleeing cultists with a *lightning bolt*. If the PCs look out the front door or the south window, they see the two smoldering corpses and **4 cultists** fleeing across the boggy ground. Elinda Bannon stands just outside the door preparing to smite the others with her spells. Anyone opening the north window sees another **3 cultists** and their **cult leader** sneaking around to ambush the wizard. Anyone out front can make a DC 22 Perception check to notice the approaching cultists and be able to act in the surprise round. As soon as the ambushing cultists attack, the others turn back and join the battle. Like the thugs at the invalids' hospital, these cultists are entirely fanatical and will sacrifice their lives to destroy Elinda and the PCs. The ground outside the cottage is considered a shallow bog for movement purposes.

ELINDA BANNON

CREATURE 9

Perception +21 (see page 33)

HASTUR CULTIST

CREATURE 5

CE MEDIUM HALF-ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +15

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Athletics +10, Deception +12, Occultism +13, Stealth +12

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

HP 78

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ kukri +15 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing

Mad Revelation ➤ **Trigger** The Hastur cultist succeeds on a Will saving throw while in melee combat. **Effect** The cultist makes a melee Strike against an enemy. If possible, he attacks the source of the triggering Will save.

HASTUR CULT LEADER

CREATURE 8

CE MEDIUM HALF-ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +19; low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Abyssal, Common

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +16, Deception +18, Occultism +21, Stealth +18

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

Item +1 striking kukri, bag of holding (type III)

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +19

HP 165

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ +1 striking kukri +20, **Damage** 3d6+10 slashing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 25, attack +15; **1st** *charm, fear, magic missile*; **Cantrips (4th)** *daze, guidance, message*

Mad Revelation ➤ **Trigger** The Cult Leader succeeds on a Will saving throw while in melee combat. **Effect** The cult leader makes a melee Strike against an enemy. If possible, he attacks the source of the triggering Will save.

Development: Once the thieves are dispatched, Elinda thanks the party for assisting her and searches the bodies for the stolen journal. As in Panetoth, the run-of-the-mill cultists have had their tongues removed. The leader has not but is wholly insane and can give no meaningful information on questioning. Though well-armed, they are poorly dressed in general, with a ragged, cast-off look about them. It seems highly likely that they are homeless vagabonds of some sort, but what could have united them in purpose, brought them out 80 miles into the Trackless Mire, and given them the magical ability to penetrate Elinda Bannon's private library seems anyone's guess. The obvious connection, however, is the handbill for the playhouse in Tanith the leader carries that matches the one carried by the thug in Panetoth.

After locating the journal on the leader's body, Elinda secures it to take back to her tower. If the PCs followed her here through the *ring gate*, between their passage and those the cultists, its powers are exhausted for the day. It's a long slog back to the Grey Citadel, but she can use her scroll to *teleport* up to 4 PCs back to her library immediately. If one or more PCs is willing to have Elinda *shrink* them, they

can be stuffed into the cult leader's *bag of holding* and travel back via teleportation with them. If PCs wish to wait until the next day when the *ring gate* has recharged, she can use her wand or spells to shrink one or more PCs to send them back through the *ring gate* while the rest *teleport* back. Of course, PCs also may find their own means of returning to the city. Regardless of how they get there, proceed with **Event 5** when the PCs are back at Elinda's tower.

EVENT 5: THE READING

This event occurs whether the PCs followed Elinda Bannon to the Trackless Mire in **Event 4** to help her recover the stolen journal or if they remained behind at area **D** to await her return. Events that occur during **Event 4** are described in that encounter. If the PCs wait in the tower, then Elinda returns after only a few minutes. In this case, assume that the insane cult leader carrying her companions crammed into her *bag of holding* forgot to let them out in her own psychotic confusion. Elinda defeated the cult leader and recovered the journal, the map, the flyer, and the *bag of holding* (see **Event 4**) and teleported back to the library. Under these circumstances, whenever the party checks the **bag of holding**, they find that all of the cultists were still trapped inside and have suffocated. In any event, Elinda willingly gives the party the *bag of holding* in reward for helping her deal with the break-in (do not award XP for the cultists if the PCs did not travel through the *ring gate* to fight them).

Once all the foes have been dealt with and everyone is secure back in the library, the PCs can examine what they've found. The handbill (**Handout 4B**) is identical to the one from **Event 2** in Panetoth and connects the two groups of ruffians together. **Handout 4C** is a crude map (see **Appendix B**, page 64). The final item of note is the plain-bound book that is, in fact, Gravenfar's infamous journal (see **Appendix A** for details).

After reviewing the journal with the PCs and assessing the other information, Elinda Bannon can see that something much bigger is going on here than a simple break-in of her tower. She realizes that the PCs are a part of something monumental and, assuming they acquitted themselves as something other than scurrilous knaves, does not wish to hinder them in their quest. She will offer to give the PCs the journal in exchange for a promise that they will publish it once they have finished their current task, just as Gravenfar would have no doubt wished it. Since the PCs are already working on behalf of the great library at Nains, adding the journal to the record of their deeds and convincing the Magnate of Books to publish such an important historical tome should be no problem at all.

READING THE MAP

This is a crudely drawn and labelled map. The only indication that it depicts of northern Reme and the Northmarches is a town labelled as "*Tanith*" near the bottom. Based on that, tree symbols appear to indicate the Haunted Wood, a pair of lines likely represent the Wizard's Wall, and wavy lines of water would be Shadowfall Lake. Likewise, the representation of a tower labelled as "*Folly*" no doubt refers to Durgam's Folly with a downward arrow referencing it as a location where the Wizard's Wall can be descended. If the players have trouble reaching these conclusions allow a DC 15 Society check to deduce its meaning.

Additional points of interest include a dashed line pointing to a location south of the Haunted Wood called "*Landry's Cross*", another dashed line going through the forest to a location on the Wall labelled as "*Two Rock Point*", and another dashed line with the caption "3 miles" pointing along the Wall to a location marked "X" with another down-pointing arrow and the label "waterfall". One final enigmatic mark is a circular area in the Haunted Steppe beyond the Wall labelled only as "*Burning Pit*".

A DC 20 Society check or DC 18 Scouting Lore check can identify Landry's Cross as a landmark south of the Haunted Wood and Two-Rock Point as a landmark on the Wizard's Wall. The players can deduce from this that the map indicates a route to an unknown means of descending the Wizard's Wall at some nameless waterfall that entirely bypasses the known road at Durgam's Folly. The map shows the route by guiding its bearer to two local landmarks and then indicating that the waterfall lies 3 miles west of Two Rock Point. No indication is given as to the meaning to the area labelled "*Burning Pit*", though the PCs can likely make their own inferences based on the nature of their investigations. The map does not provide any means of locating this Burning Pit once beyond the Wizard's Wall.

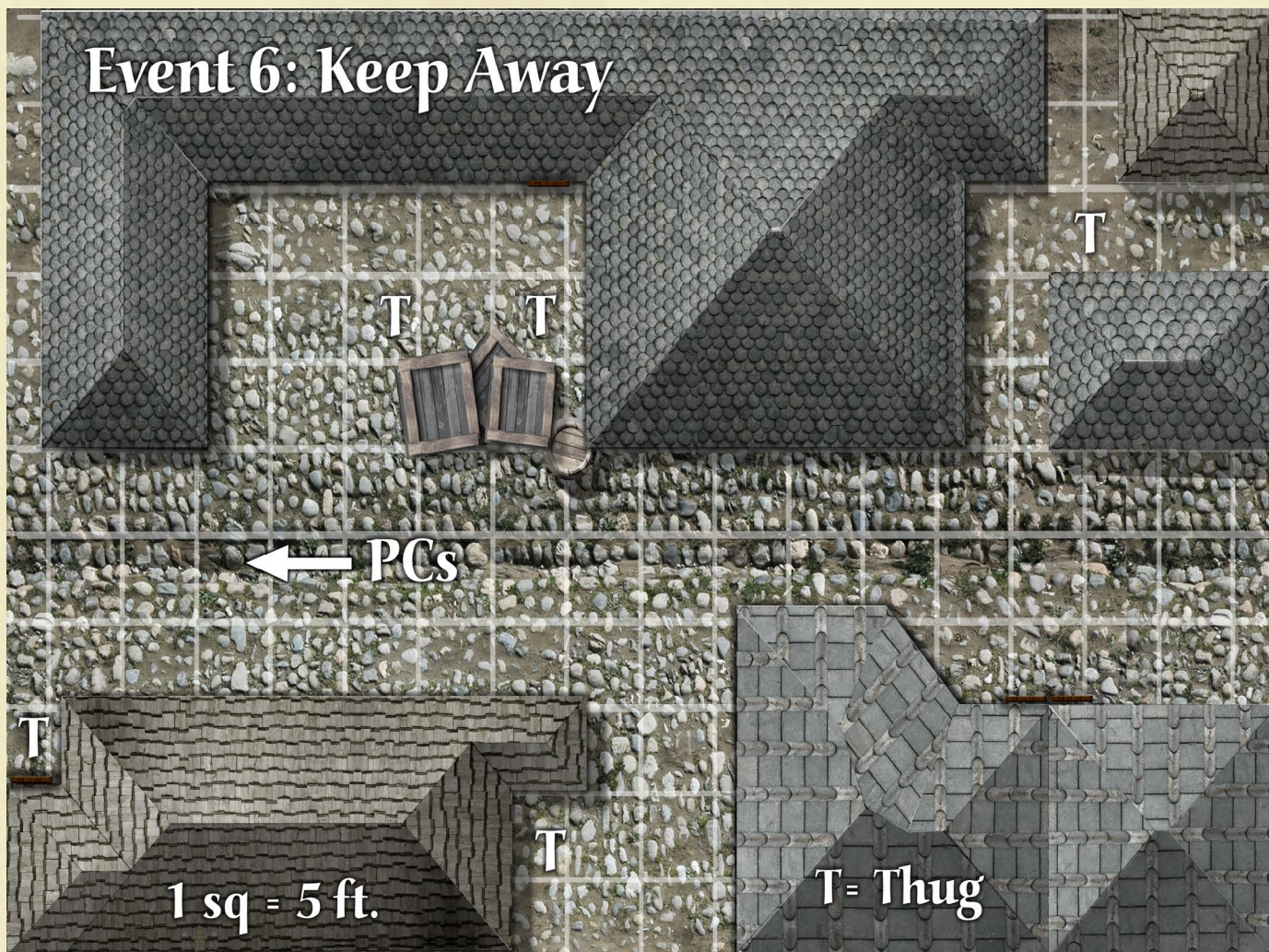
If the PCs wish, Elinda will allow them to stay and rest at her tower until they are ready to go, but at some point, they will have to leave. When this occurs, run **Event 6** if you have not already had opportunity to do so.

EVENT 6: KEEP AWAY

SEVERE 10

This event assumes that the PCs have obtained Gravenfar's journal (see **Event 5**). It is possible to run it without that occurring first, but you will need to modify the assailant's tactics accordingly.

Event 6: Keep Away



This event occurs at some time when the PCs are traversing the streets of the Grey Citadel after dark. The local thieves' guild of Dun Eamon, an outfit called the Ebon Union, has been hired to relieve the PCs of Gravenfar's journal by a contact from Castorhage. Castorhage believes that the PCs came to Dun Eamon to acquire the journal from Elinda Bannon and also believe that the PCs have done so by this point (whether the PCs actually have or not). If the PCs have, then the thugs have tracked the PCs' location through the journal with a scroll of locate. If the PCs do not yet have the journal, then the thugs have simply been tailing the party discreetly and managed to successfully anticipate the route the PCs were going to take down this alley.

A group of 5 **Ebon Union** thugs wait to ambush the party in a darkened side street of Dun Eamon. The normal misty conditions prevail in this alley, and there are no light sources other than faint lights from the street ahead (the alley is considered to be dark in addition to the normal concealment from the mist). Each of the thugs is under the effects of a

potion of darkvision and are, therefore, not hampered by the dark. They hide in the shadows of side alleys, nooks, and crannies, though a PC making a DC 31 Perception check becomes aware of them just as they spring their trap and is able to roll for initiative to act in the surprise round.

EBON UNION THUG (5)

CREATURE 9

NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +23

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +20, Deception +21, Intimidation +21, Occultism +18, Stealth +23, Survival +18, Thievery +20

Str +4, Dex +6, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +3, Cha +3

Item +1 striking rapier, *potion of heroism*

AC 28; Fort +21, Ref +23, Will +19

HP 159

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ +1 *striking rapier* +23 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+12 piercing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +23 (deadly d10, propulsive, range 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Debilitating Strike ♦ **Trigger** The Ebon Union thug's Strike hits a flat-footed creature and deals damage. **Effect** The thug applies one of two conditions. The subject either becomes enfeebled 1 or takes a -10-foot penalty to its Speeds.

Powerful Shot ♦♦ (flourish) The Ebon Union thug makes two ranged Strikes with a composite bow. Add the damage for both Strikes together before adjusting damage for resistances or weaknesses. This counts as one attack toward the thug's multiple attack penalty.

Gang of Thieves Ebon Union thugs can Steal or Palm a closely guarded object without taking a -5 penalty to their Thievery check. They can't steal objects that would be extremely noticeable or time consuming to remove. Ebon Union thugs can steal from a creature in combat or otherwise on guard by spending two manipulate actions and taking a +5 penalty to the check.

Sneak Attack Ebon Union thugs deal an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed opponents

Tactics: The Ebon Union thugs each consume a *potion of heroism* as the PCs draw near (the potion is reflected in the statistics block in case the PCs surprise them, but the statistics do not change regardless). If they go first in combat they leap over the boxes and barrels to charge the PCs. If the party acts first the thugs maintain cover and fire their shortbows.

Two of the thugs remain undetected for the first round of fighting. They observe the PCs using Seek and Sense Motive actions to identify the most likely carrier of Gravenfar's journal.

Development: Once one of the thugs has the journal, she immediately flees towards area E while the others attempt to cover her escape. If the PCs are successful in following her, she should manage to always stay at least one turn ahead of them until reaching E, so they are able to find her lair. If they are unable to follow, her tracks in the foggy,



puddled streets can be followed with a DC 24 Survival (reduced to DC 20 for creatures using a source of bright light or with darkvision).

The other rogues have been promised a tidy sum and resurrection should they be killed, so they fight to the death in hopes of being able to loot the bodies. However, if no thug managed to steal the journal, the courage of one of them breaks during the fight, and he flees if reduced below 30 hit points. Run any chase as indicated above, but even if not chased his footprints and blood trail can be followed back to E with a Survival check as above.

If the PCs have already been to Bannon's Tower, even a cursory examination of these thugs can tell that they have little in common with the raggedly dressed ruffians that assaulted Elinda Bannon's library, indicating that they are likely agents of a different group than those were.

E. EBON UNION SAFEHOUSE

The PCs can only find this location by following a thief from **Event 6**.

The thief's trail ends here where this alley stops abruptly at the great stone wall of the citadel. There is nowhere else for it to go. The cobbled streets dips in the middle here creating a drainage channel through which the constant mist collects as does as the evening's light precipitation, so that flow of water travels down the center of the lane and washes away any tracks or other signs of passage. To either side, the blank faces of masonry buildings block any access other than their dripping tile roofs some 30 feet above, and ahead the sheer stones of the city wall bar further progress. It seems the thief either disappeared or grew wings in order to escape into the darkness. There is no sound other than the gurgling of the water sluicing past your ankles and the muffled roar of the great Eamon Falls that lie just beyond the city's wall. The roar is somewhat louder here than elsewhere because a barred drainage grate no more than a foot high and two feet wide pierces the base of the wall to allow the runoff to exit the city and tumble down into the darkness beyond.

Anyone searching the surrounding walls or building will find no sign that anyone climbed or flew upon them. A close examination of the iron-barred drainage grate with a DC 23 Perception or Thievery check reveals, however, that it has been cleverly hinged to swing upward and out of the way when pulled on, creating a crawl space beneath the city's curtain wall. The passage is large enough for a Medium creature to squeeze through with a DC 10 Acrobatics check at 1/4 speed and a Small creature to crawl through at half speed with no other impediment. The drainage channel is half-full of frigid runoff, though, so those navigating it must keep their head above the flow and pass through in no small discomfort, making a DC 17 Fortitude save to avoid gaining becoming fatigued, plus becoming clumsy 1 and enfeebled 1 on a critical failure, due to hypothermia.

The drainage channel runs beneath the wall for 30 feet and exits at another similarly hinged iron grate on the far side. Beyond this is the sheer drop of the cliff below the citadel walls of some 200 feet to the churning pool of the Lower River Eamon below. However, anyone making a DC 20 Perception check here can find hand and foot holds carefully cut into the rock that descend 10 feet to a small cave opening, concealed from above by an overhang of rock. The rock is slick and wet, and even with the footholds, a DC 15 Athletics check is required to climb across the rock face and prevent a fall into the pool 170 feet below, taking 1d6 nonlethal and 80 lethal bludgeoning damage from the fall. Creatures remaining conscious after this plunge then must succeed on a DC 20 Athletics check to make it to the river's edge a quarter mile downstream. Creatures failing by less than 5 make it to the

river's edge but become fatigued and drained 1; if already fatigued, they instead become drained 2. On a critical failure, the character starts drowning, as described in Chapter 9 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition)*.

A successful Athletics check to Climb brings the climber to area **E1**.

E1. SAFEHOUSE ENTRANCE

TRIVIAL 10

A trickle of water flows down the sloped narrow tunnel from this cave to the cliff entrance. At the back of the cave another small drainage sluice opens in the far wall 6 feet above the floor and puddles the floor. This drainage sluice was also blocked by a grate of iron bars, but these bars have been sawn off into nubs at the very top of the opening to create a crawl space up the drainage channel. The chamber is of natural stone with only minimal marks of stonework, the low ceiling only 7 feet high. An **Ebon Union thug** is stationed in here as a lookout to make sure the thug the PCs were chasing was not followed (the thug has already crawled up the drainage channel to **E2**). If the PCs are using a light source as they enter or do not succeed on Stealth checks against the lookout's Perception check, he is alerted to their presence and gives a sharp whistle to let the occupants of **E2** know, while drinking his *potion of invisibility* and preparing to ambush the first intruder to enter the room.

EBON UNION THUG

CREATURE 9

Initiative Perception +23 or Stealth +23

See page 37, but this thug has a *potion of invisibility* rather than a *potion of heroism*.

Trapped Drainage Grate: The bars to the grate granting access to the drainage sluice crawlspace have been sawn through to allow for Medium and Small creatures as described under **E** above, though a DC 20 Athletics check is needed to surmount the water-slicked 6-foot wall to reach it. However, the Ebon Union has placed a trap on this entrance as well. One of the sawn-off bars has actually been rigged with gears and springs so that if anyone crawls through without first throwing a hidden lock at the lip of the crawlspace, the sharpened iron rod suddenly springs down to impale the crawler and pin him in place.

PINNING PISTON TRAP

HAZARD 8

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 28 (expert)

Description A spring-loaded bar fires straight down when triggered and locks into place, impaling the

creature below it.

Disable Thievery DC 24 (expert) to remove the bar or press the release hidden in the wall nearby.

Powerful Shot ♦♦ (flourish) The Ebon Union thug makes two ranged Strikes with a composite bow. Add the damage for both Strikes together before adjusting damage for resistances or weaknesses. This counts as one attack toward the thug's multiple attack penalty.

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +13

Hardness 13; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Pinning Piston ➤ (attack); **Trigger** Pressure is applied to the floor on the far side of the trap or the surrounding metal bars. **Effect** The sharp iron rod fires straight down. If it critically strikes a target, that target is impaled and immobilized. Moving the rod or cutting the creature free deals the rod's critical damage and inflicts 1d8 persistent bleed damage.

Melee sharp iron rod +23 (deadly 1d10), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing

Reset Manual

E2. SAFEHOUSE

SEVERE 10

The entrance to this chamber is blocked by a thick, moldering curtain that is nailed into the stone above the crawl tunnel to keep any light from escaping.

Partially natural, partially cut from the native stone, this chamber sprawls unevenly away from the drainage tunnel at a slight slope. The ceiling ranges from 5 to 8 feet above, and narrow channels and fissures bring trickles of water that collect on the floor here to flow out the drainage tunnel. A pair of lanterns placed atop stones out of the constant runoff cause their flickering light to glimmer of the many damp surfaces.

The Ebon Union thieves' guild of Dun Eamon has long made use of some of the ancient tunnels cutting through the citadel's bedrock for their own dark purpose. This expansion of an ancient drainage channel has served them as a hidden safehouse beyond the view of the Mist Watch for many years, and it is from here that they have launched their plot against the PCs. Within this chamber are the **Ebon Union thug** that escaped the PCs in **Event 6**, a Castorhagi agent named **Mortis Tremaine**, and an Ebon Union tough named **Garme** sent by Guildmaster Devlin^{G6-72,93} to ensure that Tremaine pays the promised



fee when the journal is recovered and provide resurrection for any thugs slain. Tremaine is a thin, sallow-faced, blighted^{LL7-69} human from Castorhage. He has an extra knuckle on each finger making him particularly nimble and deft, though he wears gloves that disguise this deformity from all but careful inspection.

EBON UNION THUG

CREATURE 9

Initiative Perception +23 or Stealth +23

GARME, ELITE EBON UNION THUG

CREATURE 10

NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +25

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +22, Deception +23, Intimidation +23, Occultism +20, Stealth +25, Survival +20, Thievery +22

Str +5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

Item +1 striking rapier, minor healing potion, potion of heroism

AC 30; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21

HP 189

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ +1 striking rapier +25 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d8+14 piercing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +25 (deadly d10, propulsive, range 60 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Debilitating Strike ♦ **Trigger** The Ebon Union thug's Strike hits a flat-footed creature and deals damage. **Effect** The thug applies one of two conditions. The subject either becomes enfeebled 1 or takes a -10-foot penalty to its Speeds.

Powerful Shot ♦♦ (flourish) The Ebon Union thug makes two ranged Strikes with a composite bow. Add the damage for both Strikes together before adjusting damage for resistances or weaknesses. This counts as one attack toward the thug's multiple attack penalty.

Gang of Thieves Ebon Union thugs can Steal or Palm a closely guarded object without taking a -5 penalty to their Thievery check. They can't steal objects that would be extremely noticeable or time consuming to remove. Ebon Union thugs can steal from a creature in combat or otherwise on guard by spending two manipulate actions and taking a +5 penalty to the check.

Sneak Attack Ebon Union thugs deal an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed opponents.

Body Shield ↻ **Trigger** A melee attack from one enemy misses Tremaine while he is adjacent to at least two enemies. **Effect** Tremaine dodges at the last second and pushes two combatants together. The opponent making the triggering attack resolves this attack against the AC of one of Tremaine's other opponents.

Charmed Life Tremaine can reroll one failed saving throw of each type (Fortitude, Reflex, and Will) each day. When he does this he must keep the results of his second roll even if the result is worse than the first one.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ +1 striking wounding rapier +24 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 4d6+7 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Ranged ♦ dagger +23 (agile, finesse, range 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Expectation of Violence Tremaine gains a +2 bonus to Initiative checks and treats all opponents as flat-footed in the first round of combat, whether they have taken an action or not.

Whirlwind ♦ [flourish] **Requirement** Tremaine scores a critical Strike in melee combat. **Effect** Tremaine makes an additional melee Strike against the same target. This attack is made using the same bonus as the triggering attack and does not count towards Tremaine's multiple attack penalty.

Tactics: If this group has not been alerted by the lookout in **E1**, then they can be surprised here as they listen to the thug from **Event 6** relating what occurred and turning over the journal if she has it. If she was wounded, she has drunk a *potion of minor healing*, so modify her hit points accordingly. If they have been alerted to the presence of the PCs, they react as follows. Garne takes position hiding beside the crawlway entrance to ready a sneak attack against the first one coming through, while Tremaine and the thug remain in the open in the center of the room to draw the PCs in. Garne focuses his studied target on that individual he sneak-attacked while Tremaine and the thug spread out and ready actions to strike at any who come forward to melee. Retreat is difficult from this chamber, Tremaine is half insane, and the Ebon Union guildsmen do not want the secret of its existence exposed, so all of these criminals will fight to the death here.

MORTIS TREMAINE

CREATURE 11

NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID BLIGHTED

Perception +21

Languages Bridge-Cant, Common, Thieves' Cant

Skills Acrobatics +26, Athletics +23, Deception +18, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Thievery +20, Survival +18

Str +2, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items +1 striking wounding rapier, potion of protection from good, scorpion venom (2 doses)

AC 34; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +24, **Will** +18; charmed life
HP 199



EVENT 7: FRIEND OR FOE

TRIVIAL 10

This event occurs at some point before the PCs head over to investigate the black pavilion in the caravan camp (area F). Ideally it occurs after the PCs have obtained Gravenfar's journal from Elinda Bannon and fought off the attempt by the Ebon Union to steal. It could be dramatically inserted as the PCs climb their way back through the drainage sluice that pierces the city's curtain wall after dealing with the rogues at area E. However, you can modify the text accordingly so that it can occur at any point during their stay in Dun Eamon as long as it's before their visit to F.

A pair of short figures appear from the darkness. They are completely muffled head to toe in hooded black cloaks that reveal nothing of their feature save piercing dark eyes that look out from the enshrouding folds. The pair radiate menace almost palpably.

If the PCs have done any asking around town since their arrival, they have likely heard of the short, dark-cloaked figures seen skulking about at night that many suppose to be dark creepers or worse. If so, they realize that these are surely those figures that have been spotted. However, before the party can take any hostile actions, the figures push back their hoods to reveal the curly brown hair and smiling cherubic faces of two halflings. They quickly introduce

themselves **Bono Curlytop** and **Val Nannygarter**. They explain that they work on behalf of a certain benefactor who would like to make the party's acquaintance. They invite the PCs in an extremely non-threatening way to meet their employer, at which point Val reveals a small iron brooch cast as a cracked and bearded dwarf skull. Anyone making a DC 25 Society or DC 17 Heraldry Lore check recognizes the symbol as the crest of the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull, the mountain dwarves of the Blackrock Mountains. A dwarf gains a +2 circumstance bonus on either check. If the PCs do not recognize the symbol the halflings identify it for what it is, the halflings will do so and assure that their employer means them no harm. Each is under the effects of an *undetectable alignment* cast by their hired bard, but a Sense Motive reveals no malice in their invitation.

IRONSKULL ENVOYS

CREATURE 4

LG MEDIUM HALFLING HUMANOID

Perception +11, keen sight

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undecommon

Skills Athletics +8, Diplomacy +10, Society +12

Str +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

AC 21; **Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

HP 63

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ warhammer +12 (), **Damage** 1d8+4 bludgeoning

Development: The PCs are free to refuse the invitation. The halflings don't press and will allow the PCs to depart with no hard feelings. However, they will persist in their efforts again and again as long as the PCs remain in Dun Eamon. Ultimately the PCs should either accept the invitation or decide to visit area F on their own.

Once the PCs are aware of the clan's identity, they can make a DC 25 Genealogy Lore or Heraldry Lore check to know the general history of the Great Mountain Clan Ironskull. A success on this roll reveals all of the information in the third paragraph under **What Really Happened to the Archivist** in the **Starting the Adventure** portion of this adventure (see page 7). Likewise, if the PCs ask about the clan, the halflings can provide the same information. The halflings themselves are obviously not members of the clan but have served as hired retainers for their employer for many years.

XP Award: Encountering these halflings and agreeing to meet with the Ironskull expedition is a Minor Accomplishment.

F. THE BLACK PAVILION

The caravan grounds of Dun Eamon are a busy place any time of day or night. Situated right next to the city livery stable, wagons and porters are always moving about. At night bonfires spring up between the many tents over which hang spits of meat, kettles, and cauldrons, while men and women huddle close in the chill misty air. However, one corner of the campground is distinctly different than the rest, for here a great black pavilion tent has been erected without banner or emblem. Mules and horses are picketed neatly nearby along with bundles and barrels of supplies. No one is seen coming or going from this tent but arrayed around it are more than a dozen lowland mercenaries, heavily armed and armored, who keep a mistrustful eye on everyone.

Despite its sinister appearance, this great tent is actually the encampment of members of the Ironskull clan of mountain dwarves (see **Event 7**). They have come to the Grey Citadel under great secrecy and security and hired a band of Rhemian mercenaries to prevent anyone from entering the tent without a pass. This band is led by **Feldar Ironspur**, a former captain cashiered out of the Waymark cavalry for acts unbecoming an officer, and he has gathered a formidable group around him. Ironspur's company is comprised of his lieutenant, **Hanley Marfival**, two sergeants, **Gumber Been-Fine** and **Ashlock Two-Fingers**, and a total of 13 Rhemian mercenaries.

Despite their less-than-friendly demeanor and general lack of scruples, they are well paid and extremely loyal to their employer as long as his gold is good. This group stops anyone that attempts to approach the tent unless accompanied by a member of the caravan (probably the halfling envoys since none of the dwarves shows his face outside the tent). If the PCs have come without being accompanied by the envoys in **Event 7**, the two halflings recognize them and come out of the tent to tell Captain Ironspur that they are invited guests before quickly ushering them inside.

CAPTAIN FELDAR IRONSPUR CREATURE 6

Initiative Perception +14
See **Man-at-Arms** page 13
Feldar Ironspur is a CG dwarf rather than a humanoid. He otherwise has the dwarf trait, darkvision, and resistance to poison 5.

HANLEY MARFIVAL

CREATURE 5

NG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Dwarven, Terran, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +10, Deception +10, Diplomacy +16, Occultism +12, Society +13

Str +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15

HP 78

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ battle axe +13 (sweep), **Damage** 1d8+3 slashing

Ranged ♦ heavy crossbow +12 (range 120 ft.), **Damage** 1d10+4 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells (DC 24, attack +14) **3rd** circle of protection, paralyze; **2nd** mirror image, see invisibility, undetectable alignment; **1st** alarm, mending, true strike; **Cantrips** (3rd) detect magic, forbidding ward, message, sigil, telekinetic projectile



GUMBER BEEN-FINE**CREATURE 5****LG MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID****Perception** +15; darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Undercommon**Skills** Athletics +13, Intimidation +16, Stealth +12, Survival +10**Str** +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2**AC** 22; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15**HP** 91**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ♦ dwarven waraxe +12 (dwarf, sweep, two-hand d12), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing**ASHLOCK TWO-FINGERS****CREATURE 7****N MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID****Perception** +17, darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Undercommon**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Deception +12, Stealth +16, Thievery +16, Survival +12**Str** +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2**AC** 22; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12**HP** 78**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ♦ kukri +15 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing**Sneak Attack** Two-Fingers deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed opponents.**RHEMIAN MERCENARIES (13)****CREATURE 3****Initiative** Perception +12 (see page 13, statistics as City Guardsmen)**EVENT 8: UNKNOWN****ALLIES****EXTREME 11**

Despite the tent's large size, it is comfortable and cozy within, almost crowded. It has been divided by thick curtains into a large common area in the front and two separate private rooms in the back. Rugs, lamps, braziers, personal equipment, camp

furniture, and assorted bedrolls — all sized for a dwarf — are scattered throughout, though in a fairly regimented and organized manner. The front common room serves not only as the dining area for the tent (cooking is done on fires outside by the mercenaries, who likewise bed down outside) but also as the quarters of **6 Clan Ironskull guards** (mountain dwarves) and **4 Clan Ironskull envoys** (halflings). The back two rooms serve as the personal quarters of **Captain Okrem Kresh** and the expedition's leader, **Goribald Ironskull**, respectively.

"GORIBALD IRONSKULL"**(CHERBAUD BRAZZEGARD)****CREATURE 13****UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID DWARF****Perception** +26, darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant**Skills** Acrobatics +27, Athletics +24, Crafting +24, Deception +27, Diplomacy +22, Assassin Lore +24, Stealth +26, Society +22, Survival +22, Thievery +26**Str** +1, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +8**Items** +1 *resilient studded leather*, blowgun (10 darts), clan dagger, *dagger of venom*, *deceiver's ring* (see **Appendix C**, page 80), infiltrator's thieves tools, blightburn resin (3 doses), deathcap powder (3 doses), giant wasp venom (8 doses), slumber wine (3 doses)**AC** 34; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. poison effects**HP** 250; Resistances poison 10**False Alignment** "Goribald's"*deceiver's ring* makes his alignment appear to be Lawful Neutral (see sidebar, page 45).

Slippery Secrets When a spell or magical effect tries to read "Goribald's" mind, detect whether he is lying, or reveal his alignment, he can attempt a Deception check against the spell or effect's DC. If he succeeds, the effect reveals

nothing.



Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *dagger of venom* +27 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Melee ♦ clan dagger +25 (agile, parry, versatile B), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Ranged ♦ blowgun +27 (agile, nonlethal, range increment 20 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1 piercing

Ranged ♦ *dagger of venom* +23 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +24; **2nd** (4 slots) *blur, darkness, invisibility, see invisibility*; **1st** (4 slots) *illusory disguise, magic missile, sleep, true strike*; **Cantrips** (4th) *daze, ghost sound, mage hand, shield, telekinetic projectile*

Death Strike ↻ (death, incapacitation)

Requirements "Goribald" does precision damage with a melee Strike against a creature he has Marked for Death. **Effect** "Goribald" attempts to paralyze or kill the target, which must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save. "Goribald" can't use Death Strike again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 round and wounded 1. If it was already wounded, its wounded condition value increases by 1.

Critical Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 minute or dead ("Goribald's" choice).

Mark for Death ♦ (concentrate) "Goribald" marks a single creature he can see for death. The first time each round "Goribald" Strikes that creature, the Strike deals 1d12 additional precision damage. The creature remains marked for death until "Goribald" is knocked out, marks a different creature for death, uses Death Strike, or the encounter ends.

Poison Weapon ♦ (poison) **Requirement** "Goribald" is wielding a piercing or slashing weapon and has a free hand; **Effect** "Goribald" applies a poison to the weapon.

Sneak Attack "Goribald" does an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Death Strike ♦ (death, incapacitation)

GM'S NOTE ON GORIBALD IRONSKULL

Goribald Ironskull is in actuality an imposter. The truth is that the mountain dwarf that the PCs meet is Cherbaud Brazzegard, a cousin of Goribald Ironskull. Cherbaud is a member of the cadet branch of the Ironskull Clan that once ruled the clan entire until the fall of Tir'Oen some four decades ago. He managed to get himself and several of his cronies assigned to Goribald's secret mission, and once they were far out in the wilderness he and his men murdered Goribald and those loyal to him, including two human agents that were in Panetoth at the time. Cherbaud then assumed the identity of his cousin (what lowlander would know the difference between the insular mountain dwarves) and resumed the mission but with the intent of enriching his own branch of the clan and bringing them back to power over the Ironskulls.

It is very important that Cherbaud's ruse not be discovered until the next adventure *Race for Shaatakh-Uulm*. To this end he is very careful to keep any lies he tells very close to the truth (really anything other than his name is more or less true and grants him a +10 circumstance bonus on Deception checks for cleaving so closely to the truth). For his actual identity, assume he successfully beats any Sense Motive checks made to discover his true identity and successfully saves against any spells cast to detect his falsehoods. The PCs will have ample opportunity to expose his charade and gain their revenge in the next adventure. In the meantime, this adventure and the next will refer to him by the name Goribald to prevent any accidental GM slip ups by saying the wrong name aloud.

In the unlikely event the PCs elect to attack the false Goribald at this point in the campaign, treat it as an **Extreme 11** encounter level.

Requirements "Goribald's" last action was a melee Strike against a creature he has Marked for Death that did precision damage. **Effect** "Goribald" attempts to paralyze or kill the target and makes a Strike. This attack counts toward "Goribald's" multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after the attack. On a hit, the Strike deals 1d12 additional precision damage and the creature attempts a DC 32 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 round and wounded 1. If it was already wounded, its wounded condition value increases by 1.

Critical Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 minute or dead ("Goribald's" choice).

CAPTAIN OKREM KRESH

CREATURE 11

LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran

Skills Athletics +26, Intimidation +26, Stealth +23, Survival +21

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Items +1 *adamantine striking guisarme*, +2 *full plate*

AC 34; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +20, **Will** +24

HP 240

Resistance poison 5

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ +2 *striking guisarme* +27 (reach, trip),

Damage 2d10+16 slashing

Mountainous Momentum

Each time Kresh strikes the same melee opponent in the same round he gains momentum. Add one damage die to the damage roll of each successful hit after the first.

Unburdened Any time kresh takes a penalty to his Speed, deduct 5 feet from that penalty.

Weapon Mastery

Kresh gains the critical specialization effect of two-handed weapons he wields.

CLAN IRONSKULL GUARDS

CREATURE 6

Initiative Perception +14

See **Man-At-Arms** page 13, but Ironskull Guards have the dwarf trait, darkvision, and Resistance 5 to poison.

Melee cold iron dwarven waraxe +15, 1d10+6

IRONSKULL ENVOYS

CREATURE 4

Initiative Perception +11 (see page 42)

*Includes Bono Curlytop and Val Nannygarter (see **Event 7**)

Development: When the party is ushered into the tent, Goribald Ironskull comes out of his quarters to greet them warmly. He asks them to sit on the (slightly undersized) camp chairs in the room and orders one of the halflings to bring hot tea for all against the chill of the citadel's mists. If the PCs refuse his offer of tea, Goribald is not offended but takes a cup himself regardless. He thanks them profusely for coming at his invitation and says he has been eager to meet them ever since they arrived in town and he realized what they were. He believes that their current goals align with one another quite well and hopes to create an alliance of mutual benefit.

If the PCs have not learned the history of the Ironskull mountain dwarves, he quickly fills them in as described in **Event 7**. He then identifies himself as a lesser cousin of

High Thane Klanghorn's extended family. He goes on to admit that the archivist at the cathedral in Nains, Kisarus Thrun, is also a member of the clan though he had foresworn his heritage to serve the god Mitra in human lands. He adds that when poor Thrun discovered the Conroi documents he must have remembered his old impoverished

clan folk fondly and saw an opportunity for them to maybe reclaim some of their dragon-lost glory. He sent the documents directly to the Ironskulls at Iron Hall but must have missed some of them which ended up getting him killed and is no doubt what brought the party to this very spot.

Goribald regrets the loss of his distant kinsman and is



extremely happy that the PCs were involved in bringing the killer to justice. He said the clan has had eyes and ears in Nains ever since and became aware of the party's quest on behalf of the Church shortly after they departed. Though the Ironskull group had a considerable head start on the party, he said he'd hoped to run across them eventually and compare notes. To this end he makes the PCs an offer.

Goribald has the nearly complete travelogue of the Conroi Expedition's chaplain, Azmerius Thade, sent to him by the archivist Thrun. It is undoubtedly more detailed than what scraps of information the PCs have. From these travel reports the Ironskulls learned about the secret reason for the expedition to find the trove of priceless star metal. He believes it is likely noqual because of the lack of divinatory ability to probe the site (a conclusion reached by Gravenfar as well). The cash-strapped Ironskulls, unable to finance such an expedition on their own but with the technical know-how to be able to recover, refine, and utilize rare alloys like the star metals, approached the Grand Duchy of Reme with an offer. The dwarves would mount an expedition to discover and claim the lost star metal deposit that was more rightfully the duchy's than anybody's because of the duchy's own history with the Caleen Colonies in their vicinity. Thus, the duchy would not have to devote any more manpower to this lost prize. In return, the duchy would help finance the expedition and enter into an exclusive trade agreement with the Ironskulls to mine and process the star metal ore. The Grand Duchy gets a vast, unexploited deposit of extremely valuable star metal as well as the means to recover and make use of it, while the Ironskulls gain an extremely valuable contract to work the star metals for decades, if not centuries to come, depending on how great the deposit is (based on the meteor's ability to block all divinatory effects related to it, the Ironskulls believe the deposit is likely to be massive). It's a win-win situation for all parties involved.

However, the dwarves ran into some trouble in Panetoth, Goribald mentions. The Royal House of Castorhage somehow got wind of the expedition and now seeks to reassert their old claim to it from the missing Conroi Expedition. Goribald says that assassins of Castorhage managed to get to a pair of Rhemian agents who were working for him on loan from the Grand Duke. One was murdered and one disappeared on the road, causing his group to hasten to Dun Eamon in pursuit of the Gravenfar journal evidence which the murdered agents had just recently discovered. Now he and his group have remained hunkered in their camp since their arrival because his halfling spies learned that a deadly Castorhagi agent named Mortis Tremaine was in town and could spell disaster for the mission. If the PCs describe the distinctive extra-knuckled man with the Castorhagi coins from area

E, Goribald can confirm that he was Tremaine, and the old dwarf is visibly relieved if he has been disposed of.

In any case, Castorhage knows about the expedition and is unlikely to give up on the trove of star metal at stake. And that is where the PCs come in. Goribald says he believes the party has (or will soon have) Gravenfar's journal, and it and Azmerius Thade's letters together provide the best chance of discovering and claiming the Pit of the Burning Star that Gravenfar had written of. Goribald also knows that the PCs primary mission is one of information gathering for the Magnate of Books in Nains rather than one to claim the star metal for themselves — nor do they have a nation-state to back such a claim or provide the ability to exploit such a find if they wanted to. So Goribald makes a proposition beneficial to all. He invites the PCs to join his expedition, or as he calls it, "the only lawful and legitimate expedition". They can combine their resources to have the best chance of finding the star metal. The PCs can write their report for the Magnate, the Grand Duke of Reme can claim his treasure, and the Ironskulls can experience some prosperity again for the first time since the fall of Tir'Oen.

In addition, the Goribald will gladly cut the PCs in on some of the Ironskull's profits for mining and refining the ore, say a 1% stake in their net profits — an investment that will turn into tens of thousands of gold pieces a year in the coming decades once the mine is up and running — as well as any ancillary treasures they recover in the course of the expedition. All he wants in return is for the party to partner with his own group for the journey. He mentions that his Rhemian mercenaries will only stay with him until they reach the Wizard's Wall, and with Castorhage lurking about along with the dangers of the Haunted Steppe his little group will stand no chance on their own. He can be bargained up to 1.5% with a successful DC 28 Diplomacy check, or as high as 2% on a critical success on this check. He goes no higher because his thane would not allow him to. However, his offer is more than generous and does dovetail nicely with the party's own interests in the matter.

If the PCs mention the ragged assassins that assailed them in Panetoth and at Bannon's Tower or their connection to Tanith (per **Handout 4B**), Goribald has no idea who they are but is not surprised. He says that once the word gets out — if it hasn't already — there's going to be a gold rush of every cutthroat, pirate, and soldier-for-hire in a race to claim the star metal first. He and the PCs hold the keys to finding it though, in Thade's letters and the journal, and they have a head start. All the more reason to team up, Goribald adds. If the PCs mention the map they recovered (**Handout 4C**), Goribald is especially happy as it appears to show a secret way down the Wizard's Wall that will cut weeks off of their journey

that would otherwise have to go all the way around the Wall at Durgam's Folly^{G1} and will give them an even larger lead on their competitors.

Once the party reaches an agreement and enters into a handshake with Goribald (plus whatever legal documents they wish him to draw up, which he can have the Grey Citadel's chief steward witness and countersign within a matter of hours), Goribald shares the sheaf of letters from Azmerius Thade to High Deacon Leofric that the archivist Kisarus Thrun discovered in Nains. These extensive documents are provided as **Handout 4D** (see **Appendix 68**). Once an agreement has been reached, Goribald calls for his caravan to be packed and ready to go by noon of the following day. The party has until then to acquire any additional supplies and equipment around the city (though the caravan will provide basic food supplies for the PCs for the duration of the trip).

GM's Note: Because the party may have traveled between Nains, Panetoth, and Dun Eamon by many means, and the travel time could have varied by days or even weeks, there is no set time frame of when Goribald's group traveled where. This is by design so that there is no discontinuity in the adventure background. All of the information Goribald gives about his group's timing and travel is true, so you will need to modify it accordingly so that it fits the adventure timeline to this point even if it means stretching some plausibility across the long distances covered. Goribald can cryptically mention magical mountain dwarf "high-ways" or some such that can allow faster travel times. These play no role in this adventure and will not be encountered further. Whatever the case, assure your players that any timing issues are because of the variability of player timing in the game and were a part of the adventure's intentional design to remain flexible and are not part of a plot by the GM to trick them about how the dwarves knew about them or got there in time (the tricking of the players is about wholly different matters as related in the **GM's Note on Goribald Ironskull** sidebar, see page 45).

CHAPTER THREE: TO THE WIZARD'S WALL

The Ironskull caravan departs the gates of the Grey Citadel at noon. It consists of the Rhemian mercenaries in **F** and the dwarves and their envoys in **Event 8** in **Chapter 2**, as well as, the player characters. Each of the Rhemian mercenaries is mounted on a **light warhorse**, while the dwarves ride **light horses**, and halflings ride **ponies**. A remuda of an additional **3 light warhorses**, a **heavy warhorse** (for Captain

Ironspur), **6 light horses**, and **2 ponies** accompany the group as remounts along with a string of **11 pack mules** for supplies and equipment. If the PCs do not have mounts of their own, the dwarves will procure an additional **light horse** or **pony** (dependent on the character's size) for any unmounted PCs.

RIDING PONY

CREATURE 0

Initiative Athletics +7 or Perception +4
Pathfinder Second Edition Bestiary

WAR HORSE

CREATURE 2

Initiative Athletics +7 or Perception +4
Pathfinder Second Edition Bestiary

RIDING HORSE

CREATURE 1

Initiative Athletics +7 or Perception +4
Pathfinder Second Edition Bestiary

THE JOURNEY TO TANITH

With the larger group in tow, even party's with magical means of faster locomotion are limited to the pace of the caravan while traveling. The journey downriver from Dun Eamon to the mouth of the Eamonvale at the caravan city of Broadwater^{K12} is 132 miles on good roads and takes the group just over 8 days of travel. The lower valley is relatively civilized and well-patrolled, so the only encounters are with other groups of travelers and caravans. Staying only a single night in Broadwater before departing on the Quintos Road for the easternmost Rhemian city of Quintos, which oversees trade between the Waymarch, the Northmarches, and Eamonvale. This is well-maintained road across the plains and is likewise uneventful, save for the frequent caravans.

After that the route is north and west on the North Duchy Road as the caravan follows the land's slow ascent towards the High Downs. There among the chalky, domed hills and windswept high plains the road follows a series of switchbacks to Ironhill, the capital of the Duchy of the Northmarches and site of the legendary battle between Grand Duke Borell I and Kakobovia almost 2,000 years ago^{MoM-100/LL3-255} and the theorized site of the even more ancient gnome empire of Granith that formed after the raising of the Stoneheart Mountains^{ST-382} and that once held sway over the High Downs and what is now much of northern Reme and the Northmarches according to gnomish tradition^{LL7-289,325}.

After spending a few days obtaining warrants of passage to the Wizard's Wall from the Lady Candrella, Duchess of the Northmarches and Harmost of Ironhill, the caravan departs once more north along the winding road of the High Downs before descending into the Northmarches Proper and journeying on across the plains once again to Tanith, the northernmost city of civilized Akados west of the Stonehearts. Again, this stretch of the journey is along the fairly well-traveled and well-patrolled roads of the Northmarches, and the presence of the PCs and Rhemian mercenaries prevents any sort of hostile encounters from occurring.

TANITH TRAVEL TIMETABLE

| Departure | Destination | Miles | Travel Time |
|------------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| Dun Eamon | Broadwater | 132 | 8-1/4 days |
| Broadwater | Quintos | 125 | 5 days |
| Quintos | Ironhill | 375 | 17 days |
| Ironhill | Tanith | 375 | 20-1/4 days |

TANITH

Tanith is considered the northernmost civilized city of Akados west of the Stoneheart Mountains, with only Apothasalos on the Gulf of Akados^{LL3-64} east of the Stonehearts lying farther north. Towns and thorps of the Northmarches do exist along the North Duchy Road as it makes its way to its terminus at the Wizard's Wall and the fort known as Durgam's Folly^{G1-2}, towns such as Teusowald and Hansonburg^{G1-7}, but neither of these qualify as anything like a city and are little known even among folk of the March, much less those farther south.

Beyond its northern position, Tanith itself is of little note other than as the former abode of the banished wizard and crime lord Crithian Raine who led his mercenary army called the Ghul Legion into the western Stoneheart Mountains in search of lost dwarven treasures of the Great Mountain Clan Koth^{F2-3} and has yet to be heard from since.

Connected to Raine's rise, overthrow, and banishment and search for lost dwarven magic is the little-known fact that the city is magically attuned to the land. This has spawned an unusual number of sorcerers and other spellcasters in the city as well as many specialists in the creation of magical items. This is because of the city's and region's unknown past dating back some 14,500 years to the time of the Gods War's^{LL1-169} end and the destruction of the Doomspire of Krezzel Dul, abode of the Witch King Osenkej who had ruled these lands for almost 3,000 years^{F2-3,21}.

There is little of interest in Tanith that applies to this adventure as well other than a single site to investigate, a place to resupply and prepare for the final leg of the journey, and the point at which the Rhemian mercenaries detach themselves from the caravan and head back to the south for greener pastures and safer purses to draw wages from. As a result, few details of the city are provided beyond those of immediate utility to the adventure.

PREPARING FOR THE FINAL PUSH

Based on the map (**Handout 4C**) the PCs recovered in **Event 4**, Tanith is the point at which the caravan will leave the main roads and strike out cross country to the northwest, through the Haunted Wood and towards the supposed secret access point allowing descent of the Wizard's Wall, a route cutting roughly 300 miles off of their journey to the Haunted Steppe and bypassing Durgam's Folly entirely. As such, Goribald announces that the caravan will encamp outside Tanith for 7 days while the animals rest and feed and the necessary supplies and any last orders of business (see "GM's Note" below) are attended to before their departure. Despite the local antipathy towards mountain dwarves, the halfling envoys can obtain the necessary supplies and equipment from the city. Goribald pays the Rhemian mercenaries the last of their contracted fees before bidding them farewell and lets the PCs do what they will during this rest period. The PCs can take this opportunity to re-equip themselves as needed and, if they choose, track down the location mentioned in the handbills (**Handout 4B**) they may have found upon their attackers in **Event 2** and **Event 4**.

GM's Note: As will be learned at area **H** in the next adventure, *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*, the treacherous Goribald has arranged for some of his kinfolk who have traveled ahead of the caravan to prepare an ambush for the PCs in the mountain pass near Durgam's Folly. After Goribald learned that his caravan would not be following that route but instead heading cross country from Tanith, it is here in this city that he hires a courier and attempts to send a message to his assassins about the change of plans in order to redirect their ambush to a new location. Unfortunately for him, the roads north of Tanith are much wilder and less safe than elsewhere in the Northmarches, and the courier is attacked and killed by a band of marauding ogres from the Stonehearts. As a result, the mountain dwarf assassins near Durgam's Folly are never alerted of the change of plans and end up dying when their ambush goes awry while attacking the wrong group. None of this, however, will be discovered until hearing **Rannulf's Tale** in *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*.

TANITH

The northernmost city of the Duchy of the Northmarches, Tanith (pronounced TAN-ith) is a city that combines the features of supply depot and administration city for the northern duchy as well as a military outpost against any incursions by hostile monsters or mountain dwarves that might come by way of Pelivar Pass^{GA} in the Stoneheart Mountains to the east. This is the westernmost known pass of the Stoneheart Mountains; it accesses the Feirgotha Plateau from the Duchy of the Northmarches (See *The Gulf of Akados Region Map* by Frog God Games).

TANITH

SETTLEMENT 6

CN CITY

This borderland city has a somewhat notorious reputation as a rough place on the farthest frontier, where wise people keep to themselves to avoid danger.

Government council (elected leaders)

Population 12,630 (8,350 humans [Foerdewaith]; 2,548 gnomes; 730 humans [Plainsmen^{LL8-26}]; 622 half-elves; 380 other)

Religion Bast, Kudrak, Solanus

Disdain for Dwarves Tanith has a history of enmity and racial intolerance towards mountain dwarves as a result of past incursions. They take a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks in Tanith.

Count Wolfort Hyde (N male human rogue), High Councilman

Nograri Silanthos (CG female human [Khemite^{LL7-49}] sorcerer/cleric of Bast^{DD-106}), City Councilwoman

Pilsdun (CN male human wizard), City Councilman

Iliondi Vesperos (NE male human rogue), City Councilman and Thieves' Guildmaster

Contrary Granith (N female gnome noble), City Councilwoman

General Antigone Uth (LE male human fighter), Military Overseer

Bresiden the Petulent (NE male human cleric of Solanus^{LL5-242}), High Priest of Solanus
Brother Tranton (LG male gnome cleric of Kudrak^{LL4-92}), Chaplain of Kudrak

G. THE CANARY CROWN

If the PCs recovered the handbills (**Handout 4B**) in **Events 2** and **4**, then they should realize the connection between those two groups and may want to investigate the location mentioned in the handbills: The Canary Crown Theater. If so, they can locate this theater in Tanith and learn more about it with a Society check, Theater Lore check, or Diplomacy check to Gather Information. A successful check reveals the information at the DC listed and all those DCs below it. A Theater Lore check gains a +5 bonus for the purpose of making this check.

If the PCs learn of the Cult of the Unspeakable^{TD-45} mentioned in one of the rumors, they can identify it with a successful DC 25 Religion check as a little-known amoral sect dedicated to hedonism and physical debauchery as the means to explore the reality of a hidden "Other Realm." It has been officially proscribed by the High Church of Foere for centuries and actively stamped out wherever it is found,

but there have been no recorded instances of its existence in decades — though this might be to records of such pogroms being expunged.

Likewise, if the PCs seek further information regarding the raid, the arrests, secret trials, the condemned City Councilors, or even the deaths of the previous High Councilman and Military Overseer they will discover there to either be no official records of such things or only sealed records that to which they cannot gain access.

Once they have managed to learn its whereabouts, they can make their way to the decrepit venue, arriving just as the sun is beginning to set unless they choose to wait until the next morning to seek it out.

The run-down building stands a little bit to itself on this back street of the city. Empty lots laden with rank weeds and the scorched timbers of a building burned out long ago are its only immediate neighbors. At one time it must have been a theater of

| DC | Result |
|----|--|
| 15 | The location of The Canary Crown Theater |
| 20 | The Canary Crown Theater was shut down suddenly almost 10 years ago by order of the Military Overseer of Tanith after a midnight raid was conducted on it by soldiers of the March. |
| 25 | The Canary Crown was raided on the night before it was to open its greatest stage production to date, though no record remains of what that show was going to be. |
| 30 | Two members of the Tanith City Council were arrested the same night the theater was raided. Both disappeared and were replaced on the council by the High Councilman within a week. |
| 35 | The two City Councilors arrested during the raid on The Canary Crown were Aldreth Spiel and Marwina Javenora. Both were secretly tried and found guilty of leading a cult called The Unspeakable that used the theater as a front. Both Councilors were taken to Ironhill and executed shortly thereafter. |
| 40 | The Military Overseer and the High Councilman who oversaw the raid on the theater and subsequent trials were both dead within a year, both under mysterious circumstances. |

modest success and accommodations, though it has clearly been many years since that proved true. Its formerly glamorous façade and marquee now sag alarmingly above the main entrance, the wood rotten and warped from many decades of exposure. The once-bright yellow paint and gold trim that formerly gave it a garish allure have now faded to the silver of aging boards and the sallow tint of a dying man's skin. The grand sign that once proudly proclaimed it as the "Magnificent Canary Crown Theater" is now broken and missing sections, so that its message is now barely legible. The whole affair has a feeling of long abandonment, lost glory, and an air of subtle menace with just a hint of corruption hidden somewhere within its bent and buckled walls.

The front door of the building is chained shut and locked by a heavy padlock that has since rusted into uselessness and can no longer be unlocked. An old parchment nailed to the door serves notice that the building has been condemned by order of the Tanith City Council. Getting in requires breaking the chain or lock (hardness 10, hp 20) or removing the heavy boards nailed over the structure's few windows (hardness 5, hp 10). Both of these activities are noisy and will attract the attention of a patrol of **1d3+1 city guardsmen** who order the PCs away from the building. However, PCs taking a little bit more time to search around

the premises can find a section of the building's siding around back that can be swung aside to allow entry within (treat as a secret door, DC 22 Perception check to locate).

CITY GUARDSMEN

CREATURE 3

Initiative Perception +12 (see page 13)

Within the party finds what is to be expected of a theater that has been abandoned for a decade or more. Rotting, molded furniture and decorations and copious amounts of debris, rat droppings, etc. A DC 23 Perception check notices what appears to be old bloodstains on the golden carpet in a few places (signs of the military raid perhaps?). A DC 26 Perception check locates a single handbill for the theater's final show that has been partially hidden behind a piece of peeling wainscoting for many years. It is almost illegible from water damage, but the title of the play is still visible as *The King in Yellow: A Hyperborean Revival*. A PC making a DC 35 Religion check can identify this composition with Cult of Hastur, but otherwise this obscure title is completely unfamiliar to any patrons of the arts.

Finally, anyone who seeks to explore backstage finds with a DC 20 Perception check that a hidden cellar exists for storage of props. Though this space is also in tatters, unlike the building above, there are signs that it has seen use more recently. Individuals or groups appear to have met and camped here from time to time. Whether homeless transients or others is unclear. It has, in fact, been used by the remnants of the Cult of Hastur for some time when infrequent meetings have been called by the Sagging Man (see **H4**). Both groups the PCs met in **Events 2** and **4** stemmed from this cult of madmen and unrepentance decadents.

A search of the downstairs area turns up a stack of old, moldering handbills for the theater (identical to **Handout 4B**) with a DC 15 Perception check. A DC 25 Perception check reveals that the candle can be removed from a prop candleholder shaped like a human skull and within the hollow beneath is a small amulet crudely painted with a yellow glyph. A DC 20 Religion recognizes this as the Yellow Sign (see sidebar), the unholy rune associated with the cult of the Great Old One Hastur. If the Cult of the Unspeakable was identified from the rumors gleaned earlier, anyone recognizing the Yellow Sign for what it is will realize that there is an association between the two.

XP Award: Discovering the crude Yellow Sign is a Moderate Accomplishment.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE HAUNTED WOOD

The caravan heads northwest from Tanith towards the Haunted Wood, leaving the main roads behind. The landmark known as Landry's Cross can be located with a DC 22 Society check or a DC 20 Mercantile Lore or Warfare Lore check before leaving Tanith. The route follows farm roads, cart paths, and foot trails when possible, but is frequently required to cut directly across country to stay on its course. The ground of the Northmarches is gently undulating grasslands, cooler and better watered than the arid rolling plains of the Waymarch. The route follows a slight incline as the ground slowly but steadily rises towards that titanic edifice that is the Wizard's Wall nearly 400 miles to the north.

NORTHMARCHES RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

It is 162 miles from Tanith to the eaves of the Haunted Wood, and it takes the caravan 10 days to cover it. Civilized lands are left behind farther and farther along with the duchy's patrols, so chances of random encounters begin. Roll 1d6 to check for encounters twice during the day and once during the night. An encounter takes place on a roll of 1. If an encounter occurs roll d6 and consult the table below. If an encounter occurs, the members of the caravan protect themselves and the animals to the best of their ability but expect the PCs to take primary responsibility in taking the fight to the enemy.

| D6 | Encounter | Level |
|----|--|-------------|
| 1 | 1d6 <u>wyverns</u> | Trivial 10 |
| 2 | 1d6 <u>hill giants</u> and 1 elite <u>hill giant</u> | Low 11 |
| 3 | 1d4 <u>rocs</u> | Low 11 |
| 4 | <u>Adult green dragon</u> | Low 11 |
| 5 | <u>Cauthooj</u> | Low 11 |
| 6 | <u>Purple worm</u> | Moderate 11 |

HAUNTED WOOD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

After crossing the northern plains, the caravan arrives at the eastern arm of the Haunted Wood and wends its way northwest as directly as possible using such game trails and clearings as exist. This forest is a vast woodland stretching across the Duchy of the Northmarches along the southern side of the Wizard's Wall from the Deepfells Range in the west to the Stoneheart Mountains in the east. Older even than the Great Akadonian Forest^{LL5-7} that once covered much of the continent of Akados, the Haunted Forest has long been considered a fey and cursed place. It was under its eaves that the elves made their great defense of the Crynomar Gap

THE YELLOW SIGN

The Yellow Sign first appeared as a cursed runic symbol in the 1895 Robert W. Chambers book *The King in Yellow*. The symbol's appearance is never described in the story and remained undefined for almost a century. In 1989 (or 1986 depending on the source you're referencing) Kevin Ross designed a version of the Yellow Sign for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* as the now-familiar triskelion symbol. The Yellow Sign in literature is in the Public Domain, but the Kevin Ross symbol does not appear to be so. Green Ronin Publishing illustrated the Ross Yellow Sign in its original *Freeport* trilogy in 2001 and again in its 3.5 revision in 2005 and credited the Kevin Ross copyright but does not mention what sort of permission has been extended for use of the sign in game products. As a result, we have opted not to illustrate the Yellow Sign in this or subsequent adventures out of respect for Mr. Ross's and/or Chaosium's copyright of the symbol. However, these adventures do assume that the Yellow Sign is the particular three-armed (tentacled!) symbol created by Kevin Ross.

If you wish to view the Yellow Sign appearing in the *Ashes of Empires Adventure Path* or show it to your players, an illustration of it exists at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Sign (albeit in black-and-white rather than yellow), and many other excellent color versions of it can be found with a simple Google search.

in 712 I.R. against the first humanoid horde from the steppes before withdrawing west in their Third Exodus little more than a decade later, and the blood and suffering of so many of the elves has long been a catalyst for dark influences and dire hauntings. In addition, a shadowy curse has seemed to settle upon much of the wood over the centuries^{ONS6}. Today the woods are largely unexplored with only a tiny remnant of reclusive wild elf tribes still calling the place home, and these more confined to the western extent of the woodland^{ONS6-4,8}.

The caravan's route crosses about 225 miles of the forest, though it is unable to travel in such a direct manner among the towering, shadow-shrouded trunks. As such the journey takes an additional 19 days. Roll 1d6 to check for encounters once during the day and twice during the night. An encounter takes place on a roll of 1 during the day and a roll of 1-2 at night. If an encounter occurs roll d12 and consult the table below. Encounters marked with an asterisk can only occur once and should be considered as no encounter if rolled again.



| D8 | Encounter | Level |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2d4+2 <u>winter wolves</u> | Trivial 11 |
| 2 | 1d6 <u>arboreal regents</u> | Low 11 |
| 3 | 1d6+2 <u>greater shadows</u> | Low 11 |
| 4 | 1d4+2 <u>ettins</u> | Trivial 11 |
| 5 | 2 <u>deadly mantises</u> | Moderate 11 |
| 6 | 2 <u>goliath spiders</u> | Moderate 11 |
| 7 | 1 elite <u>troll king</u> and 2d6 <u>trolls</u> * | Moderate 11 |
| 8 | 1 <u>crag linnorm</u> * | Severe 11 |

* Encountered only once. If rolled again, reroll.

THE WIZARD'S WALL

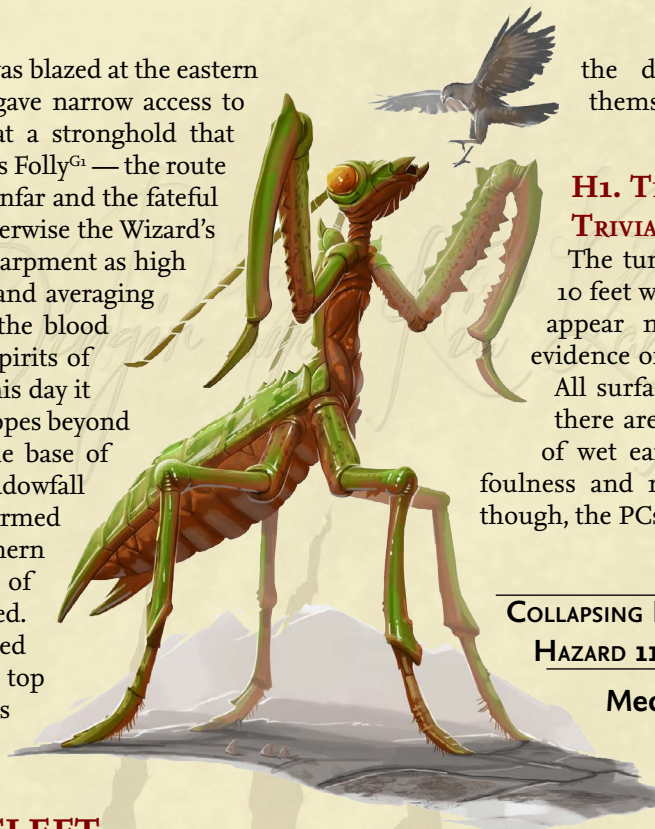
The Crynomar Gap once stretched unblemished between the mighty Deepfells of the west with the even mightier Stoneheart Mountains to the east and allowed access between the forested verge of what would later be known as the Haunted Wood and the seemingly endless plains of the vast Great Steppes. In the time of the Hundaei Empire, the nomadic peoples of the plains considered the elf-

haunted forest to be taboo and refused to travel by that route, even in the later Hun Wars between the Hundaei and the Hyperborean Empire of central Akados. However, with the fall of the horselords in their own cataclysmic civil war in 683 I.R. and the plains becoming the Haunted Steppe populated only by scattered refugee tribes of the Shattered Folk, nothing barred the newly roused humanoid tribes of the Lost Mountains from gathering in a great horde and descending upon the unsuspecting Hyperboreans to the south — nothing except the wild elves of the forest.

The wild tribes put up the great Elven Defense of the Crynomar Gap against the endless numbers of the humanoids and eventually turned them back to their far northern homes, all while the Hyperborean peoples lived completely oblivious to the disaster that had been averted. Yet so great was the slaughter that the wild elves could no longer maintain their hold against the ever-expanding human settlements and undertook the Third Elven Exodus, retreating to the west beyond the Green Warders. Finding their northern borders empty, the humans of Hyperborea expanded into the virgin territory comprised largely of what is now the Grand Duchy of Reme, but even they balked at the ominous shadow of the blood-soaked forest and named the forest the Haunted Wood much as they had so labelled the Great Steppes to the north of it.

Centuries later Reme was founded and expanded under Prince Cale into the Caleen Colonies extending past the Haunted Wood and across the Haunted Steppe, only to run afoul of those same humanoid tribes to be found in the Lost Mountains and around forbidden Lake Hali. Once again, the humanoid hordes rolled south, though this time with the terrifying shadow walkers of the Shadowlands spurring them onward. They cut through the Caleen Colonies in only a few short years and, with the wild elf warders of the Haunted Forest long gone, seemed unstoppable as they approached the Foerdewaith forces gathered at the Gap. However, here fate intervened again and the legendary archmage brothers Alychthon and Margon appeared and spared the southlands from what seemed certain destruction. By combining the might of themselves and their magical staffs and extracting a primordial word of power from the earth spirit of the Stoneheart Mountains, the archmages sacrificed themselves in a burst of power that broke the continent. In a great upheaval, the entire lands of northern Reme and the Haunted Wood tilted and rose upward even as the lands of the southern Haunted Steppe subsided until a great escarpment stretching from the Deepfells to the Stonehearts completely closed off the Gap^{LL1-100}. Unable to surmount such an obstacle, the shadow walker horde was repulsed and eventually melted back into the great wilderness of the north.

In time a precipitous trail was blazed at the eastern end of the escarpment that gave narrow access to the plains below anchored at a stronghold that came to be known as Durgam's Folly^{G1} — the route used long after by both Gravenfar and the fateful Conroi Expedition — but otherwise the Wizard's Wall remains a sheer rock escarpment as high as 1,000 feet in some places and averaging 700 feet frequented only by the blood hawks of the plains and air spirits of the flanking mountains. To this day it is as much a barrier to the steppes beyond as it was at its raising. At the base of the Wall are the waters of Shadowfall Lake, created by the newly formed depression of the southern steppes and the rerouting of water courses that resulted. Beyond stretches the Haunted Steppe itself, visible from the top of the Wall for as far as 40 miles on especially clear days.



the dangers below before entering themselves.

H1. TRAPPED LEDGE

TRIVIAL 11

The tunnel beyond the ledge is roughly 10 feet wide and 12–15 feet high. The walls appear mostly natural but show some evidence of stonework to widen it in places. All surfaces are slick with moisture, and there are no light sources. The air smells of wet earth with an underlying stink of foulness and rot. Before reaching the tunnel, though, the PCs must first pass a **trap**.

COLLAPSING LEDGE TRAP

HAZARD 11

Mechanical Trap

Stealth DC 31 (expert)

Description Weakened loam piled over a weak

frame collapses, sending any who fall with it into the water 600 feet below.

Disable Thievery DC 28 (expert) to scatter larger stones across the loam to increase its stability, or to lead allies across a path close to the cliff wall.

Water Fall ⤵; **Trigger** A creature moves such that three squares in the shaded area on the encounter map are occupied at the same tie.

Effect The unstable loam collapses. Every creature standing in the shaded area falls 600 feet. Those who fail to Grab an Edge take 300 bludgeoning damage.

Reset manual

Development: If the trap is triggered, the sound alerts the occupants of H2 to intruders, and they come flying out in 1d4 rounds to attack any PCs who are still on the ledge behind the waterfall. If the PCs have already moved on towards H2 by that time, then they meet the PCs in the tunnel and quickly retreat back to their chamber to battle the intruders there. If combat occurs on the ledge, the void-stirges attempt to bull rush opponents off or even grapple them and then leap, trusting their ability to disentangle themselves from falling PCs and catch themselves with their wings before striking the water at the end of the round (assuming the PC doesn't choose to grapple them back, which he might).

H. THE HIDDEN CLEFT

Once the PCs reach the Wizard's Wall the location of Two-Point Rock can be found with a DC 20 Scouting Lore or Survival check. This check is reduced by 2 for each day spent searching along the Wall's edge (roll for encounters as normal from the Haunted Wood Random Encounters Table while this search is underway). Once Two-Point Rock is located, it is a simple matter of following the edge of the Wall westward for 3 miles until reaching a small waterfall. To all appearances it is just a narrow crevice with a thin waterfall that tumbles into the lake 800 feet below. It would look like one of dozens of such minor falls that lace the Wall's face without the map to point it out, but anyone searching along the edge of this crevice with a DC 30 Perception check finds a hidden path that leads to a hollow behind the falls.

The cascade falls through a narrow fissure at the edge of the cliff, and just visible inside this fissure is a precarious rock trail, almost like a natural stair that descends beside and then turns behind the falling waters. There, behind the cascade, a cave entrance cuts deep into the cliff face disappears into darkness.

The rocky path is puddled and slick with a sheer drop of 600 feet to the base of the cliff below. However, the path is wide enough that no Acrobatics checks to balance are necessary. The mules and mounts of the caravan can even traverse the ledge carefully, but Goribald and his retainers will remain atop the cliff and wait for the PCs to explore



H2. TANGLED OVERWATCH

Low 11

The smell of decomposition and refuse has become almost unbearable here as the tunnel begins to descend crude steps cut into the surface of the stone. However, the ceiling doesn't descend at the same rate, revealing this to be a deepening crevice rather than a true tunnel course. Along the length of this winding course, ledges are visible upon the heights of the cavern walls above the descending path.

This labyrinthine corridor is in a sense a single, multilevel chamber. The passage continues to descend for a total of 100 feet, but a series of connected ledges above the course of the passage remains at the same level. The relative height of the ledges above the adjacent path is given on the map. Walls are damp, natural stone, so climbing to these ledges requires a DC 30 Athletics check. The ceiling of the passage and connecting ledges is 25 feet above the level of the ledges. The ledges and the connecting tunnels serve as the abode of a flock of **11 void-stirges**. These strange creatures hail from another world and star system altogether, having spent years travelling through the void of space to settle

in the Lost Mountains. They responded to the call of The Sagging Man (area **H4**) and serve him in this place. These aberrations are vaguely humanoid in shape with two upper limbs and two lower limbs on a torso with a head in the usual location, but there the resemblance ends. They are not altogether crows, nor moles, nor buzzards, nor ants, nor vampire bats, nor decomposed human beings, but something both more and less, and when not flying they flop limply along, half with their webbed feet and half with their membranous wings.*

Void-stirges are a race of interstellar aberrations that hail from the distant and alien city of Carcosa, where they serve Hastur. Vaguely humanoid in shape, their bodies combine elements of the forms of carrion birds, insects, and mammals, giving an outward appearance that, while horrific, might at first glance seem possible in the natural world. Yet, those who have studied dead void-stirges know this to be a lie, for the creatures' bodies hold bizarre organs and masses of unknown tissue that seem to serve no purpose; the further into a void-stirge's body one

* See "The Festival" by H.P. Lovecraft

explores, the stranger its entrails become. The fact that portions of its body appear to be decaying or rotting away even as it lives only adds to the mystery of the creature's peculiar anatomy.

VOID STIRGE

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +14; darkvision

Language Aklo

Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +10, Survival +8

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

AC 21; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

HP 63

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ talon +12 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+5 piercing and grab

Melee ♦ proboscis +10 (agile); 1d4+5 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Blood Drain ♦♦ **Requirement**

The void stirge is grabbing an opponent. **Effect** The void stirge ingests its victim's blood, dealing 2d4+10 damage. The victim is drained 1 until it receives any amount of healing.

Bloodlust (Ex) When a void-stirge successfully bites a living creature, it is swiftly driven to a frenzied bloodlust. For 1 minute after it bites a target, it gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against that target. A void-stirge has no limit as to how many simultaneous bloodlust targets it can have at any one time, but it generally focuses on the same target once its bloodlust is engaged. It also gains these bonuses on attack and damage rolls against creatures taking persistent bleed damage from any source.

Starflight (Su) A void-stirge can survive in the void of outer space, and it flies through space

at incredible speeds. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system normally takes it 3d20 months, while trip beyond normally takes it 3d20 years (or more, at the GM's discretion)—provided the void-stirge knows the way to its destination.

Yellow Sign Affinity (Ex) A void-stirge is immune to the effects of the Yellow Sign, and by concentrating, it can locate the nearest active Yellow Sign as per a *locate* spell. When an active Yellow Sign is visible, a void-stirge gains fast healing 2 and a +2 increase to its Dexterity bonus. An active Yellow Sign is either one that was created by Hastur or by the *Yellow Sign* spell. Inactive Yellow Signs, such as the unholy symbols carried by cultists of Hastur, do not bolster a void-stirge, but these creatures generally treat those who openly wear such symbols as allies. A character who displays a Yellow Sign in this manner gains a +5 circumstance bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks against a void-stirge.



Tactics: The void-stirges reside on the ledges but fly to area H1 if they hear the trap activated. Otherwise they engage intruders here. They initially remain in total concealment and cover atop the many ledges and within the connecting passages between and wait for the intruders to reach the section of passage between the two 80-foot ledges. Then they swoop down to attack from all directions — above, in front, and behind — in a frenzy of bloodlust. If intruders climb up the ledges rather than following the descending path, the void-stirges try to swarm them there rather than waiting for them to descend.

Treasure: The void-stirges lair upon the ledges and within the caves connecting them. These areas are a nightmare of partially devoured decaying animal carcasses and feces from the filth and squalor in which the void-stirges live. Spending any time searching through this area requires a successful DC 16 Fortitude save to avoid contracting **blinding sickness**^{GMG}. Among the rotting wildlife can be

found a few barely recognizable carcasses of unfortunate humanoids, mainly Shattered Folk or forest travelers. Anyone taking the time to search through the refuse and making a DC 28 Perception check can locate the scattered treasures that have been dropped and forgotten. These include 180 sp, 17 gp, 4 gp, and a large black pearl worth 60 gp in assorted rotten pouches and packs as well as a still-usable suit of +1 *padded armor* of Shattered Folk make, a *ring of swimming* still on a skeletal finger, a *demon mask*, a *scroll of blink* being used to line the sole of a ragged boot, and a *wand of invisibility*.

H3. CAVERN OF THE THAWNS

MODERATE 11

As the PCs approach this area, the foul air becomes worse, adding the sharp odors of stale sweat, urine, feces, and ammonia. This miasma requires a successful DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened until the PC is able to breathe fresh air again, after which they can attempt a new saving throw each round to end the effect.

The smell of rotting meat and unwashed bodies is almost overwhelming in this large, low-ceilinged chamber. The floor is strewn with the partially devoured remnants of animals and puddles of suspicious origin. Small beetles and rodents scurry among this collection of filth and scatter at your approach. Despite the apparent haphazard squalor, there is a sense of order to the place, as if someone or something has made an attempt at tidying up — or some version of that. Numerous side caves open off of the central area with shadowy forms barely visible lurking in two of them.

The ceiling of this cave is only 7 feet high, though the hunched stature of its occupants allows them move through it unimpeded. It and the surrounding caves serve as the home of a gang of **6 thawn barbarians**. These malformed creatures appear to be giants under some sort of melting curse as their loose flesh hangs from their deformed frames like the folds of a robe, and their tumorous arms end in clublike hands with elongated, scythe-like claws, all partially concealed beneath tattered, rotted cloaks and robes. These creatures have constructed crude statues of themselves out of mud, rock, and frames of bone which are placed in two of the side caves. If alerted by combat in **H2**, the thawns themselves lurk in the other caves and wait for intruders to be lured by the decoys before rushing out to attack from behind. Noticing that the decoys are little more than piles of debris requires a DC 27 Perception check while they remain in shadows but is readily apparent with adequate light.

The side caves are as filthy as the main cavern and are where the creatures keep their bedding and few possessions (mainly additional layers of cloaks and blankets used to shroud their hideous forms). The entrance to **H4** is

shrouded by a thick, woolen black-out curtain that prevents any light from escaping. Anyone searching through the muck in this area is exposed to the same disease as described in **H2**. Anyone breaking down one of the mud and stone effigies (hardness 4, 16 hp, BT 8) and making a DC 17 Perception check can find the thawns' treasure in the debris. Likewise, anyone making a DC 27 Perception check notices signs of digging in the bases of the sodden lumps where the thawns of buried their valuables.

RAGING THAWN (6)

CREATURE 8

CE LARGE HUMANOID GIANT THAWN

Perception +16; **scent** (imprecise)

Languages Giant

Skills Athletics +18, Crafting +14, Stealth +11, Survival +14

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

AC 25; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +13

HP 165; **Resistances** physical 2; **Weaknesses** repulsive

Repulsive (Ex) Thawns find the appearance of themselves and others of their kind revolting. As such, most wear heavy cloaks or otherwise obscure their countenances. All thawns within 30 feet of an uncloaked thawn must make a DC 20 Will save or be sickened for 1 round. This repulsion is all the more severe when a thawn sees its own reflection. Should a thawn be confronted with its own reflection (such as being presented with a mirror), it must make a DC 20 Will save or be sickened for 1d4+1 rounds.

Speed 25 feet, climb 15 ft.

Melee ♦ **claw** +18 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+14 slashing

Ranged ♦ **rock** +14 (brutal, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+7 bludgeoning

Early Charge ♦ (flourish) The thawn Strides and Strikes with a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls. For this attack. If the thawn achieves a critical success on this attack roll, the attack does not count toward the thawn's multiple attack penalty this round.

Tactics: The thawns rush into the room, using their Early Charge ability to ensure a devastating attack or

achieve flanking position. They use scent to locate hidden or invisible intruders. The thawns are fanatically loyal to the Sagging Man and fight to the death to prevent the PCs entering area H4.

Treasure: Hidden within the thawns' effigies are there compiled treasure that consist of 112 cp, 85 sp, 37 gp, a carnelian worth 6 gp, a *potion of remove disease*, a *potion of tongues*, and a *wand of fireball* made from the serrated horn of a steppes ibex.

H4. THE CAVE OF MIRRORED MADNESS

EXTREME 11

This room is completely dark, but if a light source is brought in it flashes brightly as it is reflected a hundred times over. This erratic illumination is highly distracting, and all creatures other than the Sagging Man and his minions must succeed on a DC 27 Will save each round at the beginning of their turn; on a failure, they are dazzled for 1d4 rounds.

Piles of moldering books and scrolls are stacked on the stone floor, some obviously fused to the ground with mildew. There's no sign of a fire pit or bedding, but mirrors of many shapes and sizes rest against or hang from nails driven into the cavern wall. Several mirrors hang on ropes from iron spikes in the ceiling ten or twelve feet overhead. Several crystals of varying colors rest on the piles of books and next to the mirrors. A peculiar rune, painted the yellow of a diseased liver, occupies the middle of the west wall.

This strange chamber is the abode of a dread creature known as **The Sagging Man**. Perhaps the most powerful servant of the King in Yellow south of the Wizard's Wall, The Sagging Man is a hideous undead thing called a keeper of the Yellow Sign. The Sagging Man's corpulent body is barely contained by an ancient moth-tattered bison hide beneath an intricately designed colorful felt hat with a wide brim on either side, upturned in the front and back, and bearing a number of shiny bangles. His flesh is the color of a drunkard in the last throes of cirrhosis and hangs flaccidly on his corpulent frame. The remains of his uniquely shaped straggly beard and moustache and his piercing, slightly



upturned eyes complete the picture along with his exotic garb to identify his original race with a DC 25 Genealogy Lore or Society check as that of the Hundaei who once roamed the Haunted Steppe and have been extinct for some 2,800 years, and his current state of corporeal corruption does nothing to disprove that extinction.

The Sagging Man was one of the first Hundaei chiefs to dare to trod upon the Nam-i-Budhani^{FB-106} — the forbidden Lost Mountains at Lake Hali — and to discover and walk upon the ruined streets of ancient Carcosa, and he paid with his sanity, his life, and ultimately his soul. Centuries later he wandered south by the will of his master and eventually took up residence in this lair after dominating a tribe of thawns who resided here. From here he has formed and coordinated the various cults of Hastur the Unspeakable throughout Reme and lands farther south by means of dream spells and occasionally direct meetings at the Canary Crown Theater established by the Tanith cult, though he largely attempts to stay behind the scenes and reclusive.

As is not unusual for disparate cults of a chaotic and capricious god, The Sagging Man has not remained aware of all the machinations of the agents of Hastur throughout the **Lost Lands** and thus had no knowledge of the planting of the Conroi Expedition documents to be discovered in Nains (a plot point detailed in the forthcoming *Race for Shataakh-Ulm*). As such, when his cult members heard rumors of outsiders seeking the location of the Pit of the Burning Star, The Sagging Man sent his minions to suppress this activity, unknowingly going against the will of his Yellow King. Whether the PCs' arrival at his lair was the inevitable result of his meddling or some greater punishment by the will of Hastur for this failing, in either case The Sagging Man has found himself alone and exposed to his enemies for the first time in more than two millennia.

THE SAGGING MAN, KEEPER OF THE YELLOW SIGN

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE **CE** **MEDIUM** **UNDEAD** **HUMAN**

Perception +32, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +25, Carcosa Lore +33, Deception +25, Diplomacy +, Intimidation +27, Occultism +33, Stealth +25, Survival +23

Str +8, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

Items +1 greater shadow hide armor, 2 healing potions (level 3)

Yellow Sign Affinity (Su) While the Keeper of the

Yellow Sign stays within 1 mile of an active Yellow Sign for at least 24 hours it gains a +1 bonus to AC and on all saving throws. The Sagging Man's yellow sign is on display at H4 and is powered by the will of Hastur himself. These changes are included in this statistics block but expire if the Yellow Sign is destroyed.

AC 38; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +25, **Will** +33

HP 340; **Immunities** death effects, disease,

paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances**

mental 5, physical 5 (except silver), positive 2

Disquieting Aura (emotion, mental) A Keeper of

the Yellow Sign is surrounded by an aura of

gloom and repulsiveness. A creature that fails

its saving throw against this aura takes a –1

penalty on attack rolls and on saving throws

against fear affects while within the aura and for

7 minutes after leaving the aura. Any creature

that successfully saves against this aura becomes

immune for 24 hours. A creature within range

of a keeper's disquieting aura that critically fails

a saving throw against any of the Keeper's spells

also becomes doomed 1 (or has its doomed value

increase by 1). If a target of the aura has seen the

yellow sign, it takes a –2 penalty on its saving

throws against the aura.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +30 (agile), **Damage** 2d10+12

bludgeoning plus 2d6

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 37, attack +27; **7th**

(2 slots) *duplicate foe*, *mask of terror*; **6th** (3 slots)

heightened slow, *spirit blast*, *zealous conviction*; **5th**

(3 slots) *abyssal plague*, *cloak of colors*, *subconscious*

suggestion; **4th** (3 slots) *dimension door*, *heightened*

spiritual weapon, *suggestion*; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness*,

hypnotic pattern, *mind reading*; **2nd** (3 slots) *death*

knell, *invisibility*, *mirror image*; **1st** (3 slots) *charm*,

magic missile, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** (7th)

daze, *detect magic*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *sigil*

Entropic Strike (evil, occult) If the Sagging Man

succeeds on a critical success while Striking

with his fist attack, the target of the attack gains

doomed 1. Successive critical hits increased a

target's doomed value by 1.

Tactics: The Sagging Man is preternaturally aware of his followers and knows of any interaction between the PCs and the thawns in **H3**, so he is always prepared for intruders. He casts *invisibility* on himself before combat. As soon as any light source enters the area he casts *hypnotic pattern*, with the mirrors in the chamber allowing him to affect every creature in the room except himself and the thawns. He uses spells and claw attacks to weaken the party but reserves a 2nd and 4th-level spell slot to cast *invisibility* and *dimension door* to avoid being cornered and appear behind the most vulnerable opponent. The Sagging Man fights until destroyed, gaining the sudden insight in his last moments that if he falls defending his cavernous lair after 2,837 years of cursed, mad unlife, then he has at least lain eyes on the harbingers of Hastur's will 'ere the end.

Treasure: If the PCs examine the book titles, they see a range of topics from children's adventure tales to metaphysical theory and the nature of the planes that extend back over the history of the Hyperborean Empire, the Grand Duchy of Reme, and even the more recent Conroi Settlements. The pages between the covers are stuck together and almost uniformly unreadable from the effects of damp and worms. One worn felt scroll case, however, holds two ancient and crumbling scrolls that have avoided the worst of these effects. A DC 29 Society check or DC 24 Heraldry Lore check identifies them as rare historical documents written in Imperial Tielethae, known as "Hundish" to the southlands of Akados, that date to the days of the Great Khanate of the Hundaei Clans prior to their civil war in 681 I.R. Anyone able to read them can see that they relate to the court of the last Great Khan, Ogedan, and give amazing details of everyday life in the Great Khan's court prior to its fall. As historical documents, these fragile scrolls are virtually priceless, but someone like the Magnate of Books in Nains would willingly pay up 10,000 gp for them.



Also hidden among the piles of ruined books are a few magical items that have proven resistant to the ravages of their environment. These include a *scroll of feeblemind*, a *scroll of possession*, and a *holy avenger*.

H5. WINDING STAIR

A stair of roughly cut stone follows a natural fissure as it winds its way down hundreds of feet to the base of the Wizard's Wall and exits on the rocky shores of Shadowfall Lake. At this cavern exit the thawns have rigged a trap to ward against anyone entering unbidden.

A thin cord is placed as a tripwire across the cave mouth. The cord runs up the wall and attaches to an iron spike driven between large stones that have been wedged in place at the tunnel's ceiling 10 feet above. Tripping this cord causes the spike to be dislodged and the stones to fall across the entrance of the cave. Not only does the trap threaten to crush anyone beneath it, but the stones constitute a cave-in that blocks passage through the fissure.

FALLING STONES TRAP HAZARD 10

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 32 (trained)

Description A trip cord pulls free an iron piton holding carefully piled stones in place. Tripping the wire causes a cave in.

Disable Thievery DC 18 to loosen or cut the wire without moving the piton. A character must achieve a critical success on this check or they set the trap off.

Cave-In ⤵; **Trigger** A creature enters the squares along the threshold of the cavern exit. **Effect** Creatures on the threshold of the cave exit or in adjacent squares must succeed on a DC 30 Reflex save.

Critical Success The target moves to a space adjacent to the collapse and takes no damage.

Success As critical success, but half damage.

Failure As success but 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Critical Failure As failure but the target remains in place and is buried by falling stones, (as with an avalanche). Buried characters can breathe but take 1d6 persistent bludgeoning damage until removed from the rubble.

Reset The trap can be reset by restacking the boulders and securing them with pitons and a wire. This process takes at least four hours.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The death of the Sagging Man is the end of the ragged cult that has plagued Reme for the past several years. While other devotees to Hastur lie in wait to the north, they have very little knowledge or connection with the mesmerist and his doings, as disorganization inherent to the disparate nihilistic cults of Hastur is not uncommon.

It only takes a few days to skirt the Shadowfall Lake and enter the Campacha PlainsFB-181 and its scattered population of a mixture of colonial descendants and the native Shattered Folk primarily of the Campacha Tribe that comprise the Conroi Settlements. These groups have lived together in peace south of the Wanaheeli River for some eight decades. There are no large population centers or cities, but settlements do exist where the party and their dwarven companions can rest and resupply before their big push across the Wanaheeli and into the interior of the Haunted Steppe.

Petyan is an example of a typical village of the Conroi Settlements, and there are likewise many small outposts and wayside inns scattered along its dusty roads. An example of one of these is the Galloping Ghost Inn. Both of these locations are further detailed in the adventure “Madness Grows” in *Fields of Blood* by Frog God Games.

Though the Conroi Settlements do not have a single large population center from which the party can make bulk purchases or acquire individual items of greater value, if they are willing to remain for 1d4 weeks and make DC 22 Charisma (Persuasion) checks to work through the many local channels and connections between the scattered

settlements, the Conroi Settlements as a whole can be regarded as having the amenities of a town rather than a village. Guides, mounts, services, etc. are all available at the standard prices listed in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition)*.

GUIDES

No hirelings are willing to travel north beyond the Wanaheeli River other than guides. And, while these have no specific knowledge of the territory beyond the Wanaheeli, they can provide normal guide services to keep employers on course and avoiding natural hazards through the use of Survival checks. Guides hired to work south of the Wanaheeli River are available for the trained hireling rate of 3 sp per day plus the cost of provisions for guide and mount. Once the river is crossed, however, that rate goes up to 1 gp per day with 2 weeks paid in advance for deposit at home by the guide due to the unknown dangers to be faced in that ill-rumored expanse.

Hired guides will defend themselves in battle and will participate in a general defense of the PCs’ caravan if attacked, but they will not take unnecessary risks upon themselves and their first choice will always be to retreat back to the safety of greater numbers in the caravan if attacked while scouting. They will not accompany the PCs into any dungeons or other adventure areas that are beyond the scope of their duties as simple guides and will always attempt to flee (or surrender if flight is not an option) if reduced below a third of their hit points. A guide for travel north of the Wanaheeli can be found with a successful DC 27 Diplomacy check for each week spent asking around, to a maximum of three guides total. Guides hired in the Conroi Settlements have a 50% chance to be of either Campachan or Foerdewaith descent. Each guide will have his own mustang as a mount.

HIRED GUIDE

CREATURE 7

Initiative Perception +14

See *Man-At-Arms* (page 13)

WAR HORSE

CREATURE 2

Initiative Athletics +11 or Perception +6

Pathfinder Second Edition Bestiary

When the PCs and the dwarven caravan have finished their preparations and are ready to depart, they travel to banks of the Wanaheeli River at its northernmost extension where Gravenfar and the Conroi Expedition made their departure into the Haunted Steppe. The adventure concludes as they prepare to step off into the unknown, and is continued in the next adventure, *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*.

PETYAN

SETTLEMENT 2

CG VILLAGE

This holy site features a shrine of Thaka presided over by Quanata, the village priest, though the village elder Donhowee manages most of the village's affairs. The shrine sees few pilgrimages per se, but its strategic location along trade routes bring many visitors.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 168 (104 humans, 22 half-elves, 18 elves, 24 others)

NOTABLE NPCS

Donhowee, village elder (LG female human [Shattered Folk] elder)

Quanata, village priest (LG male human [Shattered Folk] cleric of Thaka^{FB-96} 5)

Shatan, trapper (CN male human [Shattered Folk] scout)

THE GALLOPING GHOST INN

SETTLEMENT 1

N VILLAGE

This large roadhouse is marked with a splendid sign depicting a majestic white horse in full gallop. The quality of the fare is high, with specialized accommodations available, with very fair prices. The roadhouse is well-defended by its staff and loyal clientele who consider it something of a tourist attraction, though care must be exercised to beware of crooked card dealers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Staff 24 (19 humans, 4 gnomes, 1 halfling)

NOTABLE NPCS

Dardennell Verglade, proprietor (CG male gnome wizard)

Zayla Verglade, concierge (CG female gnome)

Dwanda, bartender (N male human [Shattered Folk])

Batsu, crooked pharo dealer (LE male human [Shattered Folk] rogue)

APPENDIX A: GRAVENFAR'S JOURNAL

Gravenfar's journal is a plain volume of vellum sheets bound between cloth-board covers. It is 112 pages long, and each leaf is covered in the handwriting of the venerated explorer, including daily entries, side notes, maps, sketches, and various and sundry marginalia. It is written in Westerling^{LL4-18} (the common tongue of Akados), and the handwriting is relatively legible, though somewhat cramped in places. A reader taking an hour to skim through the book and making a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check can determine that it is divided roughly into four sections and can identify the subject matter of each section. Each individual section requires an hour of study and a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to reveal all the information that can be gleaned from it. Once a check has been made for a section, that reader does not require a new check to study that section. After the entire book has been successfully

read, a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check concludes that the accounts in the journal are internally consistent and use expression common to Gravenfar's time and other writings. The journal passes muster as the authentic writing of Aroldus Gravenfar, and as such it could be worth as much as 15,000 gp to an avid collector of such literature.

Pages 1–38; On matters of stars and star fall: Gravenfar relates his years of research into legends regarding falling stars. He was very interested in locating a particular ancient, esoteric tome called *The Book of the Star-Seed* that described a star fall in the Red Wastes of Libynos far to the east that created a crater called the Pit of Yhath. The book was said to give many eldritch secrets of the falling star and the realms beyond the void of space where it originated^{AKM-8,74}. He also takes note of strange Eastern occult activities that seem to have sprung up around the Yhath star fall. Gravenfar never located the book or the fabled pit, but did locate some excerpts of the book that spoke of a second star that fell the same night thousands of miles to the west. When he compared these to certain known oral histories of the Shattered Folk as obtained through interviews with the Plainsmen of Reme, he concluded that there was a second meteor impact somewhere in the midst

of the central Haunted Steppe. Attempts to magically divine information about this second “Burning Star” all failed to provide any information, though. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (History) or (religion) checks involving the Burning Star or the Pit of Yhath.

Pages 19–36; On the properties of star metals: This section consists of a discussion on the properties of a number of special ores and alloys identified by alchemists and metallurgists. It includes that several of these special metals — the most common being adamantine — are originally of extraterrestrial origin and are often ascribed to have come from falling stars, earning them the moniker of “star metals”. These star metals are of extreme value to metalworkers and magical practitioners alike, making the craters left by falling stars potential treasure troves for those who can find and exploit them. It further connects the discussion of the falling star in the “stars and star fall” section to the subject of this section by indicating that attempts to magically locate the landing site of the legendary Burning Star of the Haunted Steppe have all been unsuccessful but notes that such spells don’t give a false indication of its location, rather they simply fail to give any indication at all as if they are being somehow blocked or thwarted. Gravenfar posits from this that said Burning Star could, in fact, be made of the rare star metal noqual, a star metal is noted for its antimagic properties. He goes on to say that a large find of such a star metal would be unprecedented and of virtually incalculable value. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (Arcana) or Craft checks involving star metals.

Pages 37–74; On the location of the Pit of the Burning Star: Further research among the Plainsmen into the legend of the Burning Star convinced Gravenfar that it must have indeed landed somewhere in the central Haunted Steppe. In fact, he discovered ancient oral traditions among these former Shattered Folk tribesmen of a cursed place called *Shataakh-Uulm*, or “The Pit of the Burning Star” in the Kirkut^{LL8-30} language of the Shattered Folk. From these legends and the migrations and movements of the Shattered Folk tribes over the years — or more importantly where they didn’t migrate or move through — he narrowed down a section of the Haunted Steppe where he believed the Pit of the Burning Star must lie. However, its location placed it near the Road of Sorrows, the area of the old Caleen Colonies. The indication was that

these centrally located settlements of the colonies must have been built very near the Pit itself. Yet, search though he might, Gravenfar could find no mention of anything like the discovery a crater or pit referenced among the old colonial records still available in Reme. Gravenfar concludes from the fact that no such discovery is mentioned combined with the complete lack of information revealed by divinatory magic indicates an at least equal chance of a true-but-purposely-concealed Pit of the Burning Star rather than an only-fictional Pit of the Burning Star. He is intrigued by this possibility and resolves to look into it further. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence (History) or (local) checks involving the Caleen Colonies or the Shattered Folk of the Haunted Steppe.

Pages 75–112; On safely traversing the Haunted Steppe: The final section of the journal relates how Gravenfar made a final trip to Castorhage to consult the records at the Royal Cartography Society^{LL7-261}, as that city-state had made efforts to explore and colonize the western shores of the Haunted Steppe since 3262 I.R.^{LL7-216}. From the puzzle pieces of oral Shattered Folk traditions, Caleen Colony written accounts, and the available Castorhagi charts, he has put together a tentative route into the Haunted Steppe from a specific point on the Wanaheeli River that he believes will enable him to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. He makes mention of his better-known desire to seek the “crèche of Hyperborea” in the Stoneheart Mountains and indicates that the route he has roughly devised to the Pit should not take him far off his intended course to reach the upper Stonehearts, which he intends to depart for in 3437 I.R.

Unfortunately, this is where the journal abruptly ends. The pages wherein the explorer recorded the actual route itself have been torn from the volume. Apparently, the representatives of the Conroi Expedition who sought to “copy” his route from the journal in the Bannon’s possession tricked the wizard and outright stole the pages instead. Nevertheless, the journal still retains a wealth of information and detail about the hazards of crossing the Haunted Steppe and provides the location of a starting point for an expedition at the northernmost curve of the Wanaheeli River. Anyone making use of this section as a reference source gains advantage on Intelligence (History) or Survival checks involving locations to be found upon or for traveling across the Haunted Steppe.

APPENDIX B: PLAYER HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 4A

Your Worshipful Grace, We prepare to depart on the morrow. Col. Conroi has assembled a glorious corps to undertake this grand venture. I shall keep a detailed journal and provide you with updates of our progress. Conroi was able to obtain the funding he had hoped from the silent backer, so we will be well equipped and mounted to ensure our success. May the Sun Father smile on our endeavor. Your humble servant, Azmerius Thade, Expedition Chaplain

Your Worship, Lecfric, We crossed the Wizard's Wall today at Fort Prudence. Tomorrow we trek along the shore of Shadowfall Lake at the wall's base to reach the plains-lands beyond. It is there we will begin our investigation into the ancient Galeen settlements. Humbly, Az. Thade, Conroi Exp.

These plains are peopled by a peaceful horsefolk called the Campacha. They have welcomed our expedition and even told us of some "old stone houses" left by the "people that lived before the dark times". I can only assume they refer to the Galeen colonists prior to the great shadow walker invasion. We shall soon see the physical remnants left by our long-lost cousins. Your servant, Azmerius Thade, chaplain

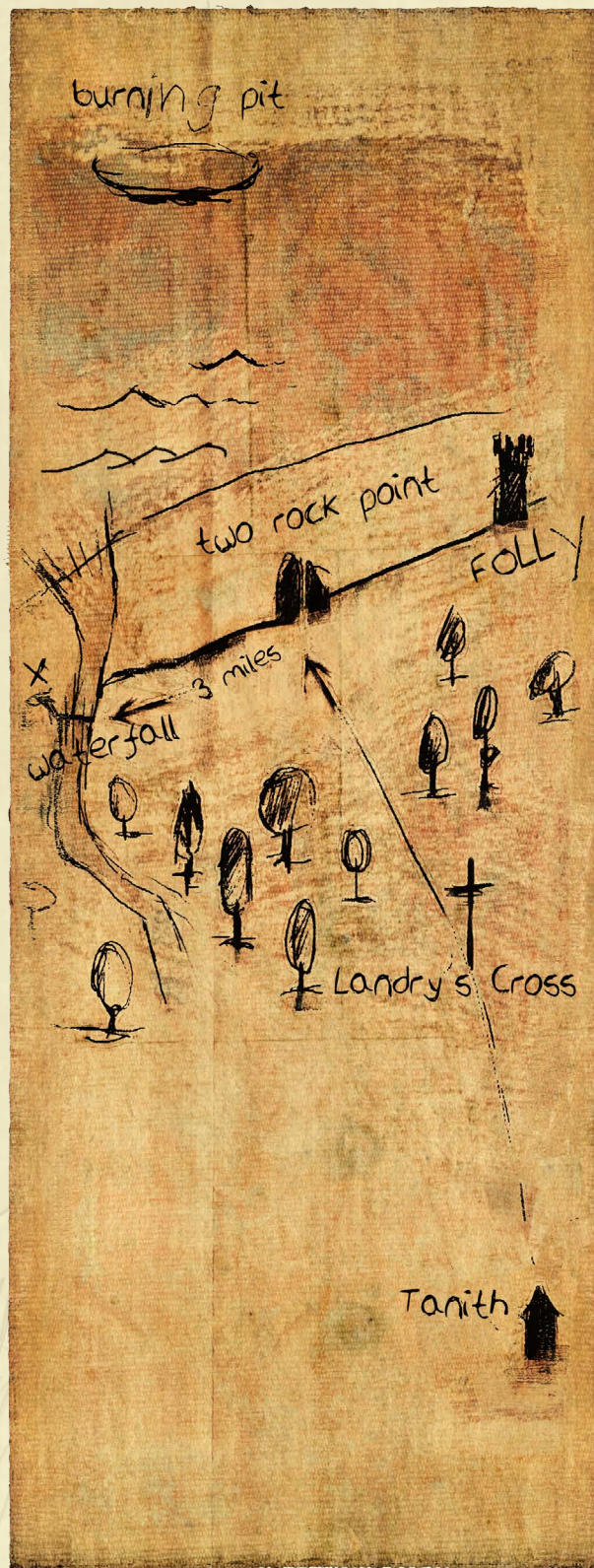
Your Most Worshipfulness, The Rhemian scholars are extremely excited by the archaeological remains they have found and confirm it was indeed the colonists of Cale who built them. They claim there is evidence that more recent colonies may exist to the west and wish to head in that direction, but Col. Cenrei will brook no discussion. He reminds them that his backer provided far more funds for the expedition than did the Grand Duchy, and the backer's goal lies across the Wanaheesi in the great steppes beyond. Your humble servant, Az. Thade, chp.

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Your Worship L'fric, It has been decided. The expedition will split. The Rhemian scholars and their underslings will remain on the Campacha Plains and sift the dust for arrowheads and potsherds while Col. Cenrei will lead the soldiers and specialists provided by the island queen's gold to cross the river and claim the scholarly riches to be found there if old Gravenfar was right. I will purchase more pigeons from the Campacha and keep you updated on our route and progress. All for the glory of the great Sun Father and Truth-Speaker. Ever his humblest slave, A. Thade, Cen. chp.



HANDOUT 4C



HANDOUT 4D

Freyrmond 5th of Year 3439 by the Imperial Reckoning —

Your Most Worshipful Leofric, Archdeacon of Nains

From Your Humble Servant, Azmerius Thade of Mitra, Chaplain of the Conrei Expedition

Greetings,

Let today be my first official communique as the chaplain and informal historian of this auspicious expedition to push back the shadow of savagery and the unknown and bear the light of Mitra and Civilization to the Heathen North.

Today we cross the Wanaheeli River at that point dictated by Areldus Gravenfar in his own recent sojourn. We officially leave behind the Campacha Plains and their now-familiar grasses and friendly tribesmen as we venture forth to retrace the route of our ancestors these five-and-a-half centuries gone. May we tread boldly into the unknown as did their beloved Prince Tale and bring to the light of knowledge with honor and reverence the path and record of their endeavor — that now so-named Road of Sorrows where they left their hopes, dreams, and blood on the wind-blown plains. Mitra rest their souls and grant us the wisdom to learn from their lives.

We are 163 this merry company following Col. Sixtun Conrei: soldiers, explorers, adventurers, cartographers, engineers, historians, craftsmen, scouts, hunters, drovers, porters, teamsters, and the assorted women, children, and entrepreneurs that congregate with any expedition of merit — patriots all. And though most are humans of the central kingdoms, we include many Campachan scouts and hunters, as well as gnomes, half-elves, a handful of elves, dwarves, and even four of the smallfolk among our number.

I am the official chaplain of the expedition in service to our own Sun Father and Truth-Speaker, Mitra, but there are clergy and laymen to other faiths including that of Thyr, Sefagreth, Kudrak, Stryme, Freya, Oghma, and Jambor. I greatly look forward to sharing the faith of the Sun Father with my fellows and guiding them as we provide succor and comfort to our mates on this great victory for the many peoples of Eere.

Truly we make a splendid sight in our myriad panoply of sizes, shapes, mounts, wains, and herds. Mitra must look upon us and smile as we proceed in his work on this land.

Freyrmond 9th —

Today we encountered our first settlement among the "Shattered Folk" tribes who people this lonely land. They are not so different than the Campacha we encountered south of the Wanaheeli. Their language is understandable though somewhat different than that of the Campacha; clearly they diverged from some common ancestral tongue. Their village is composed of leathern conical tents which they call "tipi" and which they can pack up on their ponies and move at a moment's notice. These people are guarded but willing to trade and share their ways with us. They laugh at the notion we have arrived in the North, pointing farther along our direction of travel and saying, "North is that way."

Freyrmond 10th —

The journey proceeds, though it is unseasonably dry for the late spring. And, O how the wind howls. The Campacha guides tell us that summer — which they call "Shaka" — sometimes gets lost making its way to the Haunted Steppe. In the afternoon we were challenged by a great dust storm and lost our way for nearly an hour afterward. One of the porters and a small child, the son of one of the washerwomen, went missing during the storm and have yet to be found. If our search party cannot locate them, they will be the first casualties of what is becoming a rather unpleasant journey.

Mitra protect them and rest their souls.

Freyrmond 24th —

A soldier called Osfeldt disappeared while on guard duty last night. There was no sign of a struggle. The men whisper of ancient curses and the supernatural, while the children cry and whine in the followers' camp. I think the scout deserted.

Freyrmond 27th —

Two more men who walked the night watch were missing this morning along with a young cobbler girl. Not even the Campacha scouts can discover traces of them beyond the camp.

Estre 3rd —

*Tonight I dare to write of a victory for our expedition. Though we have lost a score of men to date, this afternoon we found old ruins — remnants of abandoned structures we suspect belong to the old Gaseen settlements. I believe this might have once been the Gaseen fort of Remeria that Oldranui wrote of in his *Geogrammatica*. The walls are battered by these storms of dust and now lightning, but several are still defensible and serve as foundations upon which we can pitch our tent covers and circle up our wagons and stock. For once with solid stone around us we can rest without fear of waking up with missing men in the morning. We have sacrificed much and our supplies dwindle in this desolate region, but for tonight, we are as safe as we have been in weeks.*

As I finish today's entry, a ferocious wind rips through the camp with a howl like some stalking beast. The camp women complain of other noises too, but they are always prone to such superstitious prattle. The sound is eerie, I confess. But I am favored of Mitra, and in any event I am exhausted. There will be much exploration of the ruins tomorrow.

Estre 8th —

I petition Mitra for strength and ask that you, Holy Eminence, pray for the spirit of our errand to be restored. There has been open fighting these last few days. Our Compachan companions complained loudly this morning of short equipment and shorter rations. Everyone has had to tighten their belts, and one blessed child was laid to rest last evening having finally succumbed to hunger and fatigue. The mothers are barely able to eat enough to stay upright, and if they fall there is no one to care for their little ones. Cenrei will not allow the expedition members to take in any of the children, saying we can't afford to support beyond our own and the camp followers should have known better than to bring their babes along. I confess to having used Mitra's gifts to provide some small food for a few of the worse-off children, but my own resources are already stretched to the limit just keeping the expedition and its stock fed and watered.

For his part the quartermaster, Balthombris, turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to the privations, and the colonel sides with him. He says the Compachans and the camp followers can turn back for home if they wish — though no man doubts that setting out across this dusty, savage-hunted land without the full column is anything but a death sentence.

It is clear that, like Manx, Balthombris is Cenrei's man through and through. That they have an agenda, it is clear. But I confess to Your Eminence I don't know what that means. This is surely more than just seeking to follow the northern reach of the Taleen Colonies of old. If only that, why need Gravenfar's writings? We have the Geogrammatica and any number of Rhemian maps and atlases from the old days. What do they hope to find amid these scattered ruins and tribes? And why does our quiet quartermaster seem so content to cause such division?

I fear the matter is beyond my feeble wisdom. Perhaps your own sagacity can find some meaning in it, Your Eminence.

Estre 21st —

I must apologize for writing less often, Your Eminence. I have the time to write, and the setting down of our journey is important, but the pigeons I employed have stopped returning from Janith and I only have a few left. I will write every day, but I must now trust that my letters will reach you according to the Sun Father's timing.

We have been encamped for 2 days now after discovering the most amazing thing. In a small hollow in the ground we found a cave. And within the cave the most wonderful contraption you have ever seen. It is a map of the surrounding area built in topographical relief in almost perfect miniature. It is a work of art is what it is. And it is marked with an indicator — of direction, I believe. Manx says this was created by Gravenfar, though how he knows and what's its purpose is, he will not say. However, I can only assume it is related to whatever the true purpose of our expedition is. Col. Conrei is remaining extremely tight-lipped and has barred entry to the cave to all but himself, Manx, and a few of the engineers. Whatever they are doing, I'm sure it is to prevent others from following as we once again shift course. We head out tomorrow.

Scouts captured a member of one of the cannibal bands attempting to sneak up on us. Col. Conrei has turned him over to Manx for questioning. We hear his grunts and cries at night from the interrogation, but he spends the day with hands bound and a burlap sack over his head.

Some of our rapidly diminishing flock of sheep have begun to show signs of illness.

Estre 24th —

There is sickness in the column. It affects the very young or those already injured or infirm. It is a malaise and includes a yellowing of the eyes and under the tongue. Three sheep and one horse have died. Some of the other animals are beginning to look sickly as well. The Campachans say that the ground here is bad.

The cannibal attacks have stopped.

Eostre 26th —

The Campacha guides are all gone. They left in the night without a word, heading back to the south. Cenroi considered pursuing them but chose to press on.

Somehow I don't believe they will make it.

Eostre 30th —

Last night the missing guard Osfeldt returned to our camp. From a distance he appeared tired and travel-worn, perhaps stricken by the same malaise. Hammas, our youngest man (barely 15) ran out to greet him. The treachery was revealed when Osfeldt tore out his neck with sharp claws and fangs. No cannibal, was Osfeldt. He had returned as an undead monstrosity. The ghoul disappeared into the night before the crossbowmen could fire. We burned Hammas's body.

Calends of Tiwemond —

We doubled the guard last night. There was a ruckus, and our guards found a poor teamster named Mildren paralyzed on the ground. A vicious claw wound marked his left arm. When he came to, he said strange ghouls appeared out of the dark and attacked. He saw they bore burn scars upon their emaciated bodies. If the guard hadn't been doubled, we surely would have been overrun. I fear Mildren won't ever regain full use of his numbed arm.

Twemond 6th —

Mitra preserve His children. I have witnessed many things today, and I cannot say that one of them is more pleasant to report than any other.

A mercenary called Hissij was found rended at his post with the morning's light. More unsettling, the skin around each bite was red and blistered as if his attacker had scalded his meal with boiling water before sinking its fangs in. Then tragedy struck again. At dusk a howling pack of ghouls beset our column. Among them was Osfeldt and Hissij (who we failed to burn, building only a small cairn in our haste to depart) and 4 or 5 others. After a pitched battle, the remaining ghouls retreated. We killed 2 of their number. They killed 3 of our men and left 2 others paralyzed and helpless. There being only a half dozen left, Watch Captain Taggert took 12 of the men and pursued to avenge our dead and end their menace for good. The rest of the column formed a defensive perimeter and burned the bodies in a great pyre in the center that we made by breaking up 3 of the wagons.

Tiwemond 7th —

Today is Beltane, the first day of summer, by my reckoning of the calendar — even though we only celebrated Lever's Day less than a fortnight ago. Despite the sparse growth of the ground cover, the plains remain as arid as ever, though now the ceaseless wind grows uncomfortably hot by the middle of the day. I am beginning to miss the chill breeze of less than a month ago. But I am stalling. . . trying to avoid putting to parchment that which I must as part of this cursed record.

The sortie didn't return last night. At noon 6 of the men returned to camp tired and wounded. They said the ghouls showed a ferocious cunning they had never encountered before. They led Taggart and his riders into a narrow, dead-end gulch. Then once all the riders were committed, more ghouls pounced from above. Watch Captain Taggart was the first to go down. These 6 managed to escape only because the ghouls stayed to devour their hapless paralyzed companions rather than pursue.

At this Col. Genrei gave the order that I never thought I would hear another civilized man say. All who had steeds were to mount up and leave behind the camp followers, and drovers, and porters. I argued that there was room on the two wagons for at least the few remaining children, but he would brook no argument from myself or the other clergymen present. Many tears were shed as Genrei's officers looked on with loaded crossbows to defy shirkers. More than a few of my canonical compatriots chose to stay behind with those afoot to continue to guide them towards safety — though what that safety might be, I cannot say.

I am sworn to the service of the expedition, so I had no choice to stay behind, but I clasped hands with every one of those fine fellows who did. I admit my own eyes were not dry either. As we rode off, condemning those innocents to who knows what fate, I demanded an explanation from the colonel. But he brushed me off. Our very purpose for braving these undocumented dangers was to find the remains of the Galeen Migration of nearly 6 centuries ago, but apparently that story covers up Genrei's true motivation. He says we seek something far more important and rewarding. Several men balked at this secrecy, but their objections lasted only until the remaining watch captain, a fellow named Ossel, forbade me to use my healing abilities on any deserters or dissenters. . . and sickness still runs through the company.

We serve a strange master now; Genrei seems obsessed with something and many men feel more lives will be lost before we find it.

Twemond 23rd —

I believe now that we are in dire need of rescue. We are far removed from home but traveling slowly. This morning we woke to find that our quartermaster, his deputies, and the entirety of the morning watch have taken our stores and gone their separate way. We are left with the food in our personal packs and the weapons under our bedrolls. The company seems united in purpose with their absence, but that purpose has become survival instead of discovery — or perhaps it is now revenge. Col. Genrei has ordered everyone who can ride in pursuit of the deserters.

Daan 2nd —

We have been camped at this crossing for 7 days. Yesterday we hanged the quartermaster and his accomplices from the strange rock formation over the river. I protested it as a waste of manpower in this, our time of peril, but Col. Genrei scoffed. He has taken to calling our makeshift gallows "Azmerius's Angels" in mockery of me. I dare say nothing further; I am too weak. There is no one now to stand up to Genrei, and Manx, and his coterie of fellow conspirators. Those of us that are left — and few enough it is, our entire company is less than three dozen now — have no choice but to stay together to survive.

The disease has weakened everyone, and the strange burns persist despite my best attempts at healing. Col. Genrei has ordered that we will rest here another few days before making our final push.

Daan 5th —

The guards claim they saw a watcher in the night. An apparition in tattered saffron robes who stands silent in the dark beyond the firelight and disappears before he can be approached. Manx scoffs, but I believe them. What else could be expected from this cursed land.

Daan 7th —

We have departed from the natural bridge, and Col. Genrei assures us that we are near our prize and that loyalty will be amply rewarded and in sufficient largesse to make us easily forget the hardship and trials we have faced thus far. I no longer trust his motives, but I have devised my own plan. I have fished for a way to guide others in our steps even though the colonel's parancia prevents me from recording much detail of our route. Yes, I have fished indeed, and I have "caught" a solution.

I sent a rider from the Angle along our back trail. A loyal lad and faithful fellower of Mitra. He is ostensibly to look for any sign of our refugee party left behind, but in reality I secretly gave him a map and a box to deposit at the springs. I have devised a series of six clues from the six points on our journey where we changed course. I am calling them my Path of the Six: the Circled Twelve, Genrei's Wall, Gravenfar's Cave, Sixtun's Spyglass at the tower, the Hallelujah Springs, and my own Azmerius's Angle where I fished for inspiration. By following the trail and the clues left at each, another exploration party should be able to retrace our steps and bring justice where Col. Genrei has denied it.

I hope the boy makes it back. Only 17 years old. He reminded me of poor dead Hammas.

Daan 9th —

A column of unbroken dark smoke on the northern horizon. Col. Tenrei says that is our goal where all will be revealed.

The guards continue to claim that the apparition is watching. It seems to draw closer each night. I fear what will be revealed when it finally appears within the bounds of the firelight.

Daan 11th —

What nightmare is this?

We have discovered the nature of our doom; the object of our obsessive march north. We neared the black smoke, and came to the edge of a vast crater seemingly almost a mile across. I believe it must have been caused by a falling star in some long-bygone era. The smoke rises, unbroken, from a fissure at the center of the crater but with no discernable source. The floor of the crater is peopled by the shambling forms of the burned and burning walking dead, no few of them resembling missing members of our own troupe even at this distance.

Col. Tenrei and that blasted Manx held a hushed conference but seem intent upon entering those haunted depths. Of our original 163 only 34 remain, but he is obsessed with somehow winning through to whatever prize he claims it holds.

I don't wish to enter those depths nor can I focus on the makings of a plan, because on the opposite lip of the crater a lone figure stands and silently watches us. And though I can't make out the details from here, somehow I know it wears tattered yellow robes.

Daan 12th —

I fear that this will be my last message to Your Eminence. Forgive me for my ignorance and lack of foresight in falling into this unholy trap of an expedition. I have saved the last pigeon to release to you as soon as I set down these final thoughts.

Genrei and his men entered the pit at nightfall under cover of darkness. I knew not what has become of them. A dozen men refused to accompany him, and for a moment I thought he might order the rest to attack, but I think the odds seemed too great even for him. He left the dissenters with me while he and Manx led the rest down a path to the crater floor. We heard sounds of struggle but saw little in the gloom.

As the shadows lengthened the burning dead began to rise forth from the pit a few at a time. Fearing greater numbers we retreated to a defensible cave we had scouted in the crater's rim earlier. It is an old mine shaft from at least the days of the Taseen if not before. We will hold here and wait for daylight to make our escape.

The stranger is here! The yellow apparition stands at the mouth of the mine and insanity has come. The men tear at each other like animals, deep brown burns appearing on their skin. Some of them are hammering at the supports of the mine entrance to bring it down upon us and block that hateful apparition from sight. I must make haste and away with the bird before it is too late.

He comes

A PRINCE KEEPS HIS PRIZE

APPENDIX C: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The following new items can be discovered in this adventure.

DECEIVER'S RING

ITEM 10

INVESTED **MAGICAL**

Price 600 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk** –

A deceiver's ring is a gold ring of virtually any design but always appears to be quite valuable — at least 50 gp. The wearer sets the alignment of the ring once per day by focusing their thought for 1 minute and cannot change it again for 24 hours. The ring's wearer is considered to be of the chosen alignment for any spells or effects that detect alignment or the presence of chaos, evil, law, or good. In addition to its alignment-masking properties, the ring itself does not appear magical for the purposes of skill checks or divination spells. The wearer of the ring is not protected from alignment-based spells, such as protection, divine wrath, and divine decree, to which the wearer's natural alignment applies. Few outside the Cult of Fraz'Urb-luu are aware that these rings exist, as they are a closely guarded secret.

RING GATES

ITEM 10

INVESTED **MAGICAL**

Price 4,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Ring gates always come in pairs—two iron rings, each about 18 inches in diameter. The rings must be on the same plane of existence and within 100 miles of each other to function. Whatever is put through one ring comes out the other, and up to 100 pounds of material can be transferred each day. (Objects only partially pushed through and then retracted do not count.) This useful device allows for instantaneous transport of items or messages, and even attacks. A character can reach through to grab things near the other ring, or even stab a weapon through if so desired, though only against targets within their reach from the exit ring. Alternatively, a character could stick his head through to look around. A Small character can squeeze through. Creatures of Tiny size can pass through easily. Each ring has an “entry side” and an “exit side,” both marked with appropriate symbols.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You can cast a spell while holding one ring gate (using any actions normally required) and cause its range to extend from the destination ring gate instead of your actual location. If the spell has targets, you must be able to see them looking through the ring gates. Creatures on that side can see you, and until the beginning of your next turn effects that pass through the opposite ring gate are transmitted to your side of your ring gate regardless of whether they are directed through the “entry side” or “exit side” of the opposite ring gate.

A. DORSE'S PAPER SHOPPE

1 square = 5 ft.

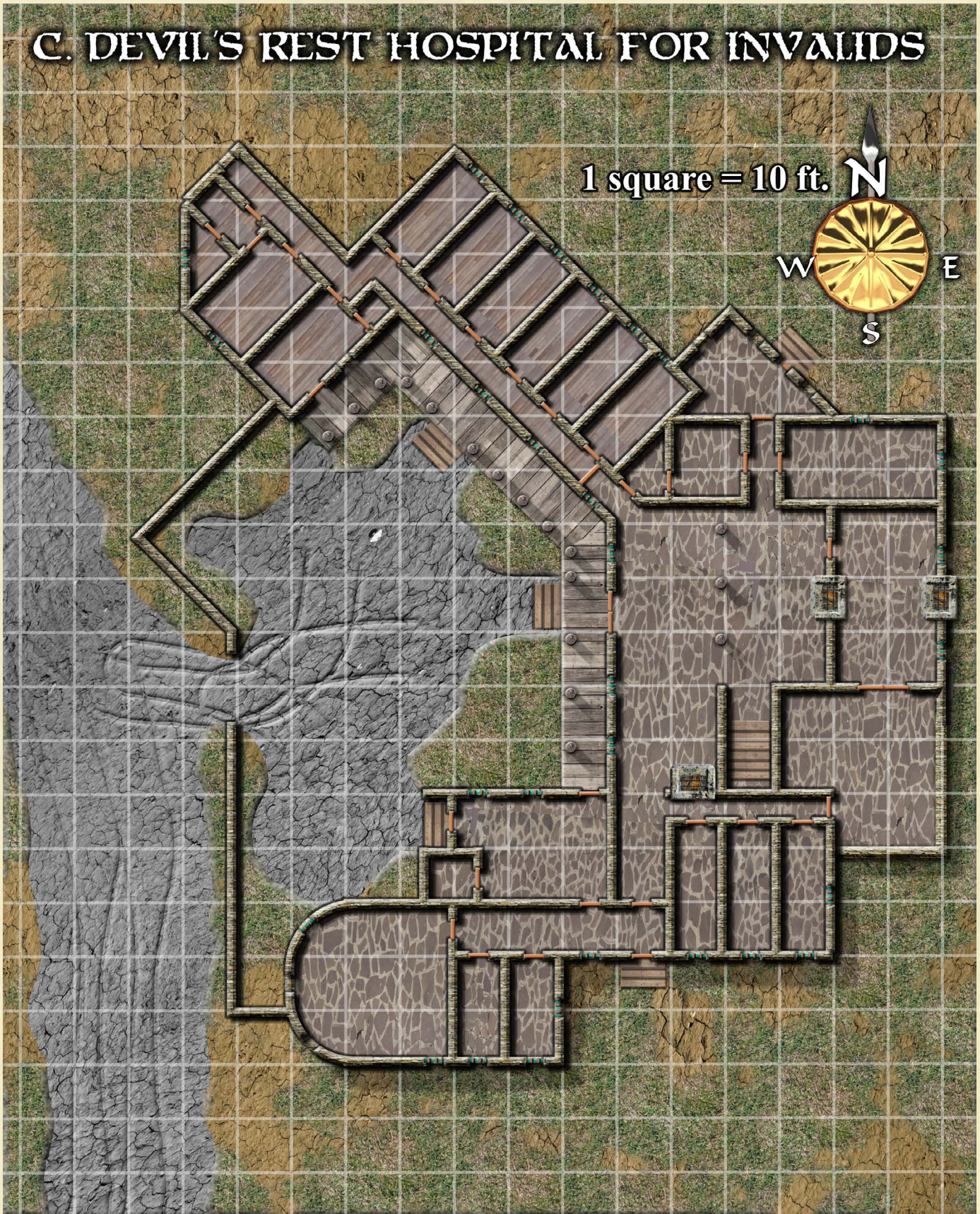
N
W E
S

B. MEMORIAL SQUARE



C. DEVIL'S REST HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS

1 square = 10 ft.



DUN EAMON



LOWER RIVER EAMON



1 square = 5 ft.

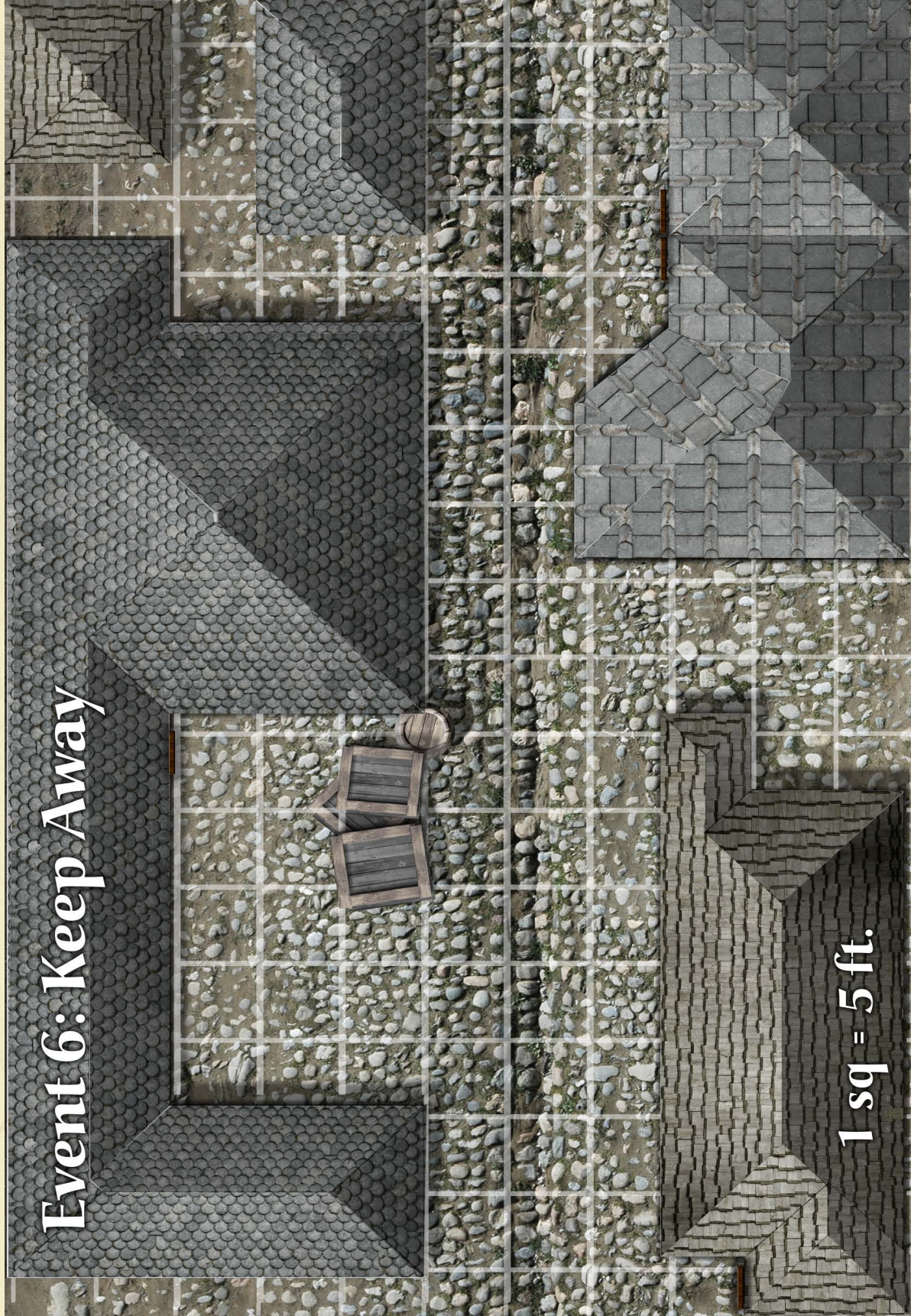
D: Bannon's Library

Event 4: Elinda's Workshop



1 square = 5 ft.

Event 6: Keep Away



1 sq = 5 ft.

EBON UNION SAFEHOUSE





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