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VILLAGE BACKDROP: BEACON PROMONTORY





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VILLAGE BACKDROP: BEACON PROMONTORY

Beacon Promontory arose from the watery grave of Beacon Cove after a ferocious storm submerged the village. The handful of doughty survivors rebuilt their homes around Beacon Lighthouse, which lights the way for passing ships, many of which used to make the former village a port of call. Many consider the holdouts insane for staying, considering over half their neighbours left or were killed in the storm, but they feel they have a duty to seafarers who become stranded along the remote stretch of coast. However, the truly insane person may be the lighthouse keeper who believes the deluge that destroyed Beacon Cove was a precursor to an invasion from beneath the waves.

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BEACON PROMONTORY AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Vilina Koira

Population: 19 (11 humans, 2 dwarves, 3 half-elves, 3 halflings)

Alignment: N

Languages: Aquan, Common

Resources & Industry: Fishing, safe shipping

The following items are for sale, when the characters arrive at Beacon Promontory:

- **Consumables:** *potion of water breathing* (900 gp), *scroll of continual light* (900 gp)
- **Miscellaneous:** *ring of water walking* (5,000 gp)

Additionally, the following services are available:

- **Crafting:** Fishing gear, nets and water-related weapons (fishing spears, harpoons and tridents).

Situated north of the Picaroon Peninsula and southwest of Ashlar, the village of Beacon Cove was once a prosperous fishing village and served as a port of call for large ships sailing along the otherwise remote and isolated stretch of coastline.

Three years ago, when the autumn rains arrived, ferocious storms dumped an unprecedented amount of water on the village while leaving the rest of the region relatively unscathed. When the rainy season should have ended, instead of drier weather supplanting the storms, the rain kept falling. The waters rose, and the village sank; most of the now homeless villagers fled northeast to the Duchy of Ashlar. A few hardy folk, however, retreated to the highest location, the rocky ground around their lighthouse. Thus, Beacon Promontory arose from the watery grave of Beacon Cove, just as the weather returned to normal. Now the residents wait for the water to recede, so they can reclaim their sunken village.

Most villagers are hopeful Beacon Promontory will rebound from its dire situation. However, lighthouse keeper Filppu Koira is convinced the deluge was a harbinger for a far worse evil. He stands vigil against an invasion from the deep, but his wife, Vilina, is concerned her husband's vigilance borders on paranoia. His open distrust of visitors hurts business, so she works to keep him away from such folk. As Filppu's paranoia worsens, he suspects fellow villagers of being enthralled to the invaders or clever doppelgängers waiting until the time is right to strike.

VILLAGE LORE

A character may know something about Beacon Promontory, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the characters are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Beacon Promontory is a remnant of a previous village, Beacon Cove that stood on the site. Beacon Cove's lighthouse still stands and is more important than ever in warning ships' crews about the dangerous shoreline.

- An unnaturally powerful deluge wiped out Beacon Cove, about three years ago.
- Some of the villagers drowned when powerful storms destroyed Beacon Cove. Tales from fleeing villagers speak of tentacled beasts lurking in the night, and other unnatural horrors.

VILLAGERS

Most of the population are nothing more than ordinary individuals.

Appearance: All the locals are proud of their weatherworn skin and calloused hands—wearing them as badges of honour.

Dress: Villagers dress for the weather but often wear raincoats even when the sun is shining.

Nomenclature: *male* Filppu, Jalmari, Yrjänä; *female* Cecilia, Hilppa, Magdeleena; *family* Koira, Toiva, Tuntia.

Some of the inhabitants, however, are notable:

- **Cass Dever** (location 1; N female human) maintains and guards the rickety Promontory Bridge.
- **Felgrim Colvin** (location 8 and 10; N male dwarf fighter 3) fanatically tends the lighthouse's light, and watches for the invader he knows will soon come.
- **Maggie Turkel** (location 2; N female halfling fighter 2) works diligently as the village's blacksmith.
- **Vanya Colvin** (location 3; N female dwarf cleric 6) serves as the village's spiritual leader and is also the leader of Beacon Promontory in temporal matters.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Beacon Promontory, a character may hear one or more rumours. The PC can learn this information in several ways: perhaps by overhearing two locals gossiping, chatting with regulars over a few drinks at the local taverns and so on. Use the table below, to determine which rumours the character learns.

D6 RUMOUR

1	Most fish from recent catches have been half rotten.
2	I swear I saw a tentacle pop out of the mouth of one of the fishermen who arrived recently.
3	The rainy season is soon upon us; Vilina has been praying fervently to keep the downpours to a minimum.
4*	I saw a ghostly ship hovering above the lighthouse, at dusk a few days ago.
5*	Filppu is looking for an apprentice to eventually take over as lighthouse keeper, so he can help his wife, Vilina with her duties.
6	Even on cloudless days, lightning strikes the lighthouse at the same time of day.

*False rumour

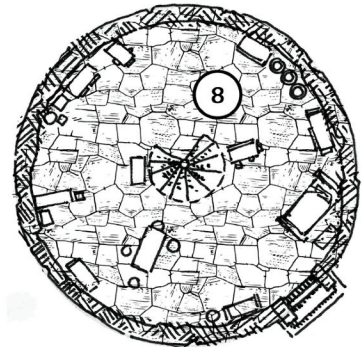
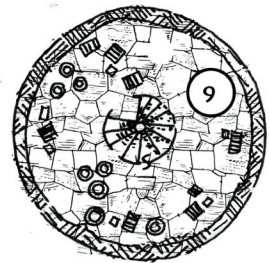
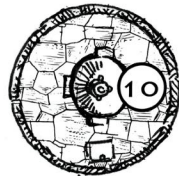
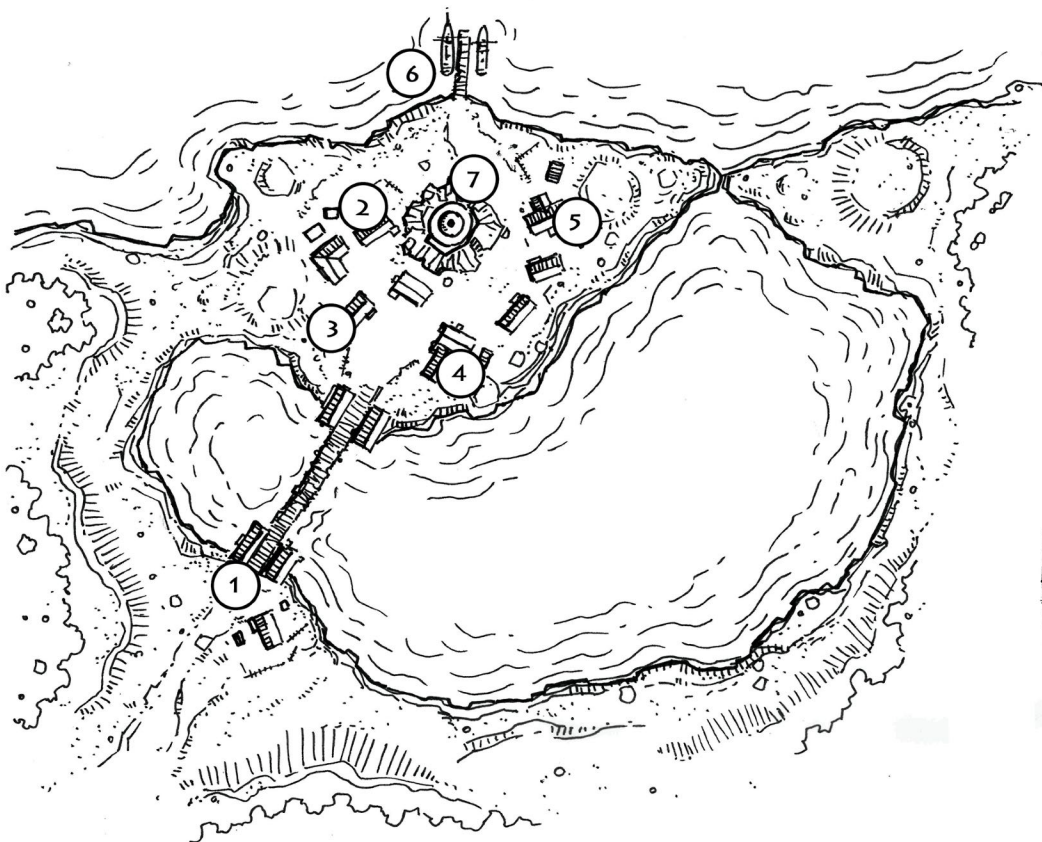
NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Beacon Promontory comprises locations of little interest to adventurers. A few locations, however, are notable:

1. **Promontory Bridge:** This hastily-built wooden bridge is the only safe way to approach Beacon Promontory by land. It is rickety and only usable by pedestrians; it is not strong enough to support horses, wagons and the like.
2. **Hooks and Gaffs:** Magdeleena Tuntia spends most of her time here crafting fishing gear and the occasional weapon or suit of armour. Hooks and Gaffs stands on the highest and driest spot in the whole village.
3. **Sea Queen's Blessing:** Everyone from Beacon Promontory comes to the church to at least pay lip service to the Sea Queen, who impacts their livelihood with her savage, impulsive nature.
4. **General Supply and Salvage:** This store serves the crews of the now-rare ships anchoring offshore. Prices are low, as business is slow.
5. **Sea Bounty Inn:** Optimism (and more than a little bit of hope) prompted the rebuilding of the Sea Bounty Inn, a near-identical replica of the business of the same name that stood in Beacon Cove; it stands mostly empty due to lack of visitors.

The inn has no permanent staff—all the villagers lend a hand when the inn has guests.

6. **Makeshift Dock:** Although business has trailed off since the flood, enough ships stop near Beacon Promontory to require this dock. The dock cannot accommodate full-sized ships, but can moor rowboats. Larger vessels drop anchor further offshore to avoid the many sunken perils lurking just under the cove's calm waters.
7. **Lighthouse Entrance:** Paranoia surrounding the events around Beacon Cove's fall, and Filppu's proclamations of impending doom, prompted the remaining villagers to set a guard at the lighthouse's entrance.
8. **Lighthouse Ground Floor:** During the day, when Filppu isn't making repairs or assisting Vilina, he is here sleeping, eating or counting his supplies.
9. **Hidden Storage:** A secret door, known only to Filppu and Vilina, hides a store of staple goods and a few weapons. If Beacon Promontory comes under siege from sinister forces, the Koiras plan to shelter the residents in this hidden area.
10. **Lighthouse Lamp:** Arguably the most important feature of Beacon Promontory, Filppu has ensured the lamp's light has remained constantly lit ever since he became keeper.



LIFE IN BEACON PROMONTORY

Before disaster befell Beacon Cove, life was already rigorous for the villagers, who made their living by fishing. The village's mass desertion left a handful of residents who work hard to maintain and improve the buildings they hastily erected during their retreat to higher ground. Fortunately, the weather has returned to a semblance of normalcy with the recent summer mostly free of rain, allowing proper construction to take place.

Several villagers also put to sea to harvest fish for the others who can't leave the lighthouse and its immediate surroundings. With fish becoming less plentiful in the surrounding waters, the fisherfolk are traveling increasingly further away to fill their nets.

The increasing frequency of shipwrecks also adds an element of stress and danger to the inhabitants' lives, since they do what they can to rescue sailors foundering in the freezing water and fending off increasingly aggressive marine life. Those who remain in the village feel a sense of duty to one another and to the ships' captains and crews who rely on them to maintain the lighthouse and its light.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Beacon Promontory's primary trade good is fish, notably sea trout. The rains didn't diminish the local fish stocks, but the catches have been demonstrably worse than beforehand.

Before the flood, the village was a famously safe port, mostly due to its powerful lighthouse. The flooding, which has yet to fully subside, renders Beacon Promontory less useful, as its main dock remains submerged.

LAW & ORDER

The villagers look after themselves and make no trouble for each other, except for the occasional ale-induced brawl which neighbours immediately break up before ushering the brawlers to their homes. The villagers collectively police Beacon Promontory and turn out any visitors who disrupts the peace.

Vilina indulges Filppu's paranoia regarding visitors and has set a pair of guards at the lighthouse. The guards, along with villagers who come to their aid, forcibly remove anyone ignoring their warnings to leave the grounds or who break into the lighthouse.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Beacon Promontory has resumed the annual holiday marking the end of the rainy season, giving thanks to Serat for sparing the village for another year. If anything, the recent celebrations are more fervent, as many villagers believe the endless rain was a sign of the Storm Mistress's displeasure.

Newborn children are set adrift for a day in a covered, watertight basket so they can become accustomed to the sea. Villagers believe Serat claims those who don't survive the trip.

VILLAGE DRESSING

While the characters are at Beacon Promontory, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A glowing green pearl washes up on the beach.
2	Several lacedons emerge from the sea and approach the village in search of food.
3	Writhing tentacles surround Promontory Bridge and threaten to smash it to kindling.
4	At night, a cargo ship ignores the lighthouse's warning light and will imminently smash onto the rocks, unless something is done.
5	The lighthouse's light begins to flash intermittently.
6	Hundreds of dead fish float near the dock.
7	A fisherwoman, presumed drowned, washes up onshore with no memory of how she got there.
8	Sea gulls encircle the lighthouse and attack anyone who approaches the building.
9	A small octopus crawls along the makeshift dock. Villagers beat it to death with oars.
10	A flock of birds bursts from the neighbouring forest. The culprit for the disruption appears to be an antlered boar.
11	A sailing ship barely makes it to the dock before it begins sinking. The villagers rush to the aid of those who jump overboard and those stuck on the submerging vessel.
12	Rain descends from the cloudless sky, provoking much concern among the villagers.
13	A pair of terriers swim ashore and shake themselves vigorously upon reaching dry land. One of the dogs has a collar with a tag reading "Snippy."
14	At midday, the sky to the west turns a deep red.
15	At night, a bright glow appears from the sea, apparently answering the light emanating from the lighthouse.
16	As a disembarking sailor traverses the dock, a plank gives way, dumping her into the water.
17	A waterspout appears half a mile from the village, moves threateningly toward the lighthouse, and then dissipates 100 feet from shore.
18	Simian howls, loud enough to disrupt normal conversation, sound from two distinct directions in the forest and give the impression of communication between two groups of apes.
19	A trio of muscular sailors carry a contraption looking like a replacement for the lighthouse's lens.
20	The sky darkens above the forest before unleashing a torrent of rain. The rain sweeps across the forest toward the village but ceases when it reaches the forest's edge.

THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

The waters of the secluded cove by which Beacon Promontory stands make the village an ideal place for ships to put in for repairs or to take on supplies. Very few predatory creatures lurk in the cove. Sea lions are the most aggressive natural predators. The locals claim to have noticed an increase in octopodes and squids among the cove's fauna, but no one has dived into the water's depths to verify their claims.

Of more worry to ship's captains putting in at Beacon Promontory is the increased hazard of underwater obstacles brought on by the floods three years ago; several ships have been wrecked in recent months, despite the villagers' best efforts.

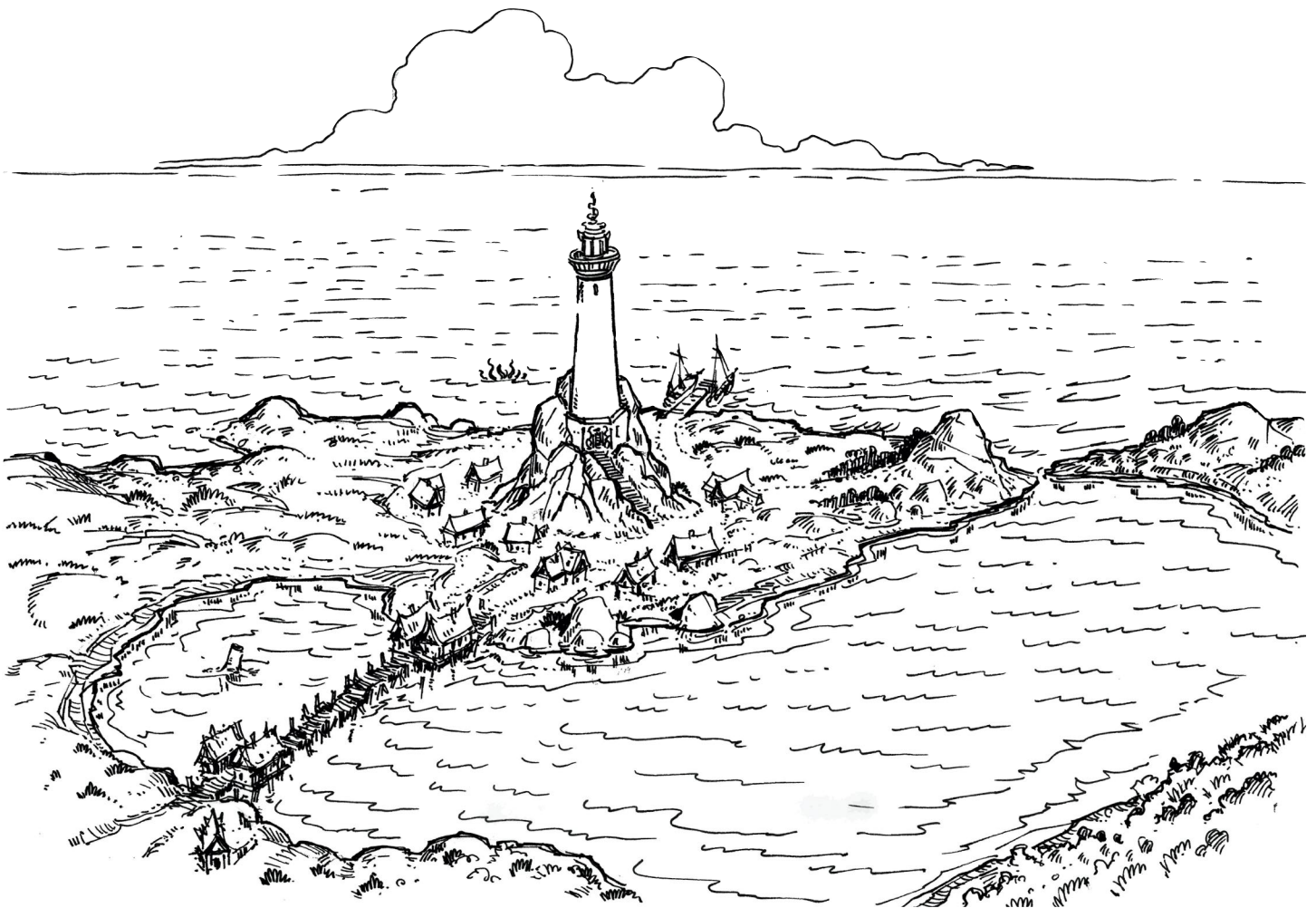
The Forest of Gray Spires is Beacon Promontory's sole land-based border. Gifted with the bounty provided by the sea, the villagers rarely ventured into the forest, rumoured to contain demonic elves, one-eyed giants and worse. Certainly, the occasional shrieks emanating from the forest, whether from sacrifices made by the elves or the supposed hyper-intelligent apes living on the forest's eponymous spires dissuade exploration. The forest and Beacon Promontory exist in an uneasy equilibrium. The forest's fecund trees never encroach upon the village's bounds, and the villagers quickly learned not to clear the forest to expand into it.

Though the forest has plenty of game animals, the residents learned not to hunt them. Taking the life of even a squirrel living in the forest seemed to result in bad catches, strange accidents and the like. Travellers into the forest who never returned added to the notion that it is a forbidden, dangerous place.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Beacon Promontory serves as a bastion on an isolated coast. It is a lonely place, all but cut off from the rest of civilisation because of the flooding and the near-impenetrable Forest of Gray Spires. A party could be forced to travel here because of shipwreck, leading them to rescue themselves or receive assistance from Beacon Promontory's residents, and then become involved in the fight against the strange beings Filppu Koiri claims have behind the villages plight. Alternatively, the characters might be forced to oust the entrenched dwarf whose delusions have begun to adversely affect his ability to carry out his job.

With slight tweaks, a GM can move the lighthouse to a warmer location, beset by an unusually long monsoon season or affected by a persistent tropical storm.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Beacon Promontory is a wet, muddy place. The buildings—except the lighthouse—are obviously both new and not particularly sturdy, unless otherwise noted. There is little joy or value in the village, after the floods of the three years ago.

1: PROMONTORY BRIDGE

Promontory Bridge provides the only safe landward passage to Beacon Promontory, although the bridge is not much used these days as many fell rumours and legends hang over the nearby Forest of Gray Spires. The inhabitants of Beacon Cove worked together to scavenge wood from houses submerged by the deluge to fashion the bridge. It is only suitable for foot traffic and, even then, travellers only cross a pair at a time as the bridge creaks audibly under their weight. Despite the return of normal weather to the area, the floodwaters refuses to recede, making the bridge the only (dry) way of reaching the mainland.

Cecilia Toiva (N female human) has undertaken the task of bolstering the bridge and watches the approaches for invaders. (Filppu Koira has partially convinced her about otherworldly beings plotting to take over the land they flooded). Cecilia’s skill at carpentry made her the best candidate to work on the bridge, and she did most of the work on the modest house standing nearby. Cecilia is welcoming toward visitors, but observant folk note a hint of sadness in her eyes. She uses her inherent charm to allay concerns about the many questions she asks about a visitor’s business.

CECILIA TOIVA

N female human

This red-haired woman’s tanned and weatherworn face tells the tale of someone who spends a great deal of time outdoors. Tools hang from her patched overalls.

Mannerisms: Cecilia periodically interrupts conversations to hammer an errant nail or replace a cracked board.

Personality: Despite her distracted nature, Cecilia is friendly to those she meets. She hasn’t fully embraced Filppu’s notion the otherworldly threat is using humanoid vessels to infiltrate the village, but this doesn’t stop her from surreptitiously observing visitors to the village.

Background: Cecilia was not raised in Beacon Promontory. Instead, she served as a sailor aboard a ship anchored at the village to make repairs. After the flood, Cecilia stayed in the village despite losing her spouse, who was carried out to sea while trying to rescue fisherfolk wrecked near the lighthouse. She decided to stay and help the remaining villagers out of devotion to her loved one, who would have done the same.

Hook: Cecilia becomes suspicious of the characters’ activities and interest in the village. Wherever they go, they bump into the carpenter diligently repairing this or that.

2: HOOKS AND GAFFS

Occupying the highest and driest spot in Beacon Lighthouse, the forge tended by Magdeleena Tuntia (N female halfling fighter 2) and a pair of teenage helpers (N human) produces metal fishing gear (mostly hooks, poles and suchlike). Of late, however, Filppu has insisted Magdeleena shift her focus to weapons and armour, since he is convinced of an imminent attack from the sea. He also procured a shipment of silver and asked her to expedite harpoons for his use. During normal days, Magdeleena provides equipment to her neighbours for free and sells fishing gear to visitors for a ten percent mark-up. She sells weapons and armour produced at her forge at a ten percent discount to other residents, with apologies for having to charge so much to recoup the cost of materials. She is reluctant to sell armaments to visitors, since such equipment is in such short supply. However, those who convince her of their desire and ability to protect Beacon Promontory can pry items from her at only a 25 percent hike.

Silver Cache: Magdeleena believes pirates pretending to be legitimate merchants stored a supply of silver ingots in a nearby cave. When authorities from Ashlar hunted the pirates down, they abandoned their stash. The severe rainfall and subsequent flooding happened almost immediately afterwards, so she never got the chance to retrieve the ingots. She promises armour or weapons to those who collect the valuable metal on her behalf.

VILINA KOIRA

N female dwarf cleric 6

This blond dwarf has blue eyes the same colour as the sea. Dressed in simple garb, her most prominent item is her holy symbol which resembles a cresting wave.

Mannerisms: Vilina absentmindedly fidgets with her holy symbol. When faced with a serious question, such as the future of the village, she grips the symbol and utters a brief prayer.

Personality: The dwarf spends much of her time focusing on the villagers’ well-being, but she makes time for visitors. She invokes Serat’s name many times during conversations and tolerates no dissension toward the deity. Though her focus is on Serat, she takes time away from worship and proselytising to help with village repairs or even to manage the inn when able-bodied villagers are required elsewhere.

Background: Vilina was born and raised in Beacon Cove. When she was young, she took a dare to swim away from shore for 30 minutes before returning. She nearly drowned as a result, but a vision of the Storm Mistress goddess guided the dwarf to shore, and her faith was born.

Hook: Vilina grows increasingly worried about her husband’s state of mind. She asks the characters to placate Filppu by searching the surrounds for any signs of sinister activity. If they find even a hint of such, Filppu flees to the lighthouse and begs his wife to join him.

3: SEA QUEEN'S BLESSING

Three years ago, when it became clear the rain wouldn't stop, the people of Beacon Cove prayed and made offerings to the deity they revered as the Sea Queen (more widely known as the Mistress of Storms). When she seemingly refused to respond to their pleas for aid, many villagers turned away from her worship before abandoning the village altogether. Vilina Koira (N female dwarf cleric 6) was resolute in her adherence to the Sea Queen and managed to rally the remaining villagers with promises of great rewards for those who passed the goddess's tests.

Shortly after Vilina relocated the Sea Queen's temple nearer to the lighthouse, sunlight broke through the clouds and the rain stopped. Vilina took this event as a sign of the goddess's favour and used it to begin restoring faith among her people. As the unifying force for Beacon Promontory Vilina because the mayor after the incumbent fled the village. Fortunately, the close-knit nature of the community and the decrease in arriving ships make her job easier, allowing her to devote much time to worship.

4: GENERAL SUPPLY AND SALVAGE

The General Supply was the largest building in Beacon Cove, as brisk trade forced the store to keep items in stock and to store goods brought in from the sea. With fewer ships arriving, and the lack of space around the lighthouse, the supply store is now one-quarter its former size. Hilppa Sarijoutsu (N female human) manages the place, taking over from her parents whose ill-health forced them to flee the village's damp environs.

FILPPU KOIRA

N male dwarf fighter 3

Weariness touches all this dark-haired dwarf's features, giving him bloodshot eyes and a slumped stature.

Mannerisms: Filppu stares at those he converses with, focusing on facial orifices. If he is not within his lighthouse, he nervously looks toward the building.

Personality: Gripped by paranoia, the dwarf treats everyone with suspicion. Until recently, he reserved his odd behaviour for visitors to the village. He now treats villagers the same way. Fortunately, Filppu still trusts his wife, Vilina, giving her an opening to talk sense into her husband, which has proven to be an ever-increasingly losing battle.

Background: Filppu is the only child of dwarves who came from a line of keepers of the lighthouse. He readily took to the trade much to the relief of his parents, who instilled in him a strong sense of responsibility for the lighthouse and the vessels relying on its promise of safe passage.

Hook: The night after the characters arrive in the village, Filppu comes to a sudden realisation the characters are agents of the dark forces moving against the village. He denounces them loudly in the Sea Bounty Inn. Only Vilina can calm him, and her reaction to her husband's accusations depend on how the characters have been acting during their brief stay in the village.

Hilppa sells goods unavailable from Hooks and Gaffs and ensures she gives a fair price to villagers and travellers alike, except for those with odious personalities. She keeps her prices low because of her side business—salvaging shipwrecks—she and her brother Tommo (LN male human) have started. In cases where all crew were lost, she claims rights to all material goods wash ashore, which she sells for the good of the village. For survivors who have no stomach to reclaim their property, she offers a hefty recovery fee (25 percent of the bounty's worth).

5: SEA BOUNTY INN

Another casualty of the flooding, the Sea Bounty Inn once provided accommodations for up to 30 visitors but can now comfortably sleep only ten.

- **Food & Drink:** Meal (typically fish soup with bread, vegetables and bread) 2 sp, ale 3 cp, wine (pitcher) 1 sp.
- **Accommodation:** A standard room costs 2 gp a night. The room is draughty and has no lock on the door. Guests are welcome to cram as many people as they like into their room.

No single resident manages the inn; villagers fill in to serve guests during the day. At night, if the inn has guests, a villager stays in the common room to question anyone coming and going, and usually give such folk a warning about frightful monsters emerging from the cove at night.

6: MAKESHIFT DOCK

With ships arriving outside the now submerged rocky boundary to the cove and sometimes coming to grief on those same rocks, Beacon Promontory required some way to receive visitors or launch rescue and salvage operations. A handful of boats are moored here, and several spots are open for rowboats or skiffs to deliver visitors and goods.

Two boats bob in the water just beyond the dangerous rocks to warn ship's captains about the threat and guide smaller boats to the dock. This vigil ends one hour before dusk, so the boats' crews are on the open water after dark.

After Cecilia Toiva completes upgrading Promontory Bridge, she intends to improve the dock to allow additional light watercraft to moor here. A month ago, the dock was destroyed, apparently by a powerful wave, diverting Cecilia's attention from the bridge for almost two weeks. It was this latest destruction which helped Filppu convince Cecilia of a greater threat to the village's residents.



7: LIGHTHOUSE ENTRANCE

The lighthouse entrance is guarded day and night by a two villagers. The door into the lighthouse requires a 20-foot-tall ladder to reach, and Filppu Koira (N male dwarf fighter 3) has the only ladder of such length in the village. He pulls it into the lighthouse when he enters, to keep himself safe. For the past two

months, he has rarely emerged from the lighthouse and only allows Vilina to enter. When he leave the lighthouse, he only does so to perform "inspections" of the guards, asking them bizarre questions and examining their mouths. Most of the residents are convinced Filppu is overly stressed because of the lighthouse's increased importance to ward off ships from the dangers of the transformed shoreline, so they put up with his strange behaviour.

8: LIGHTHOUSE GROUND FLOOR

Filppu Koira spends most of the daylight hours here when he isn't repairing the lighthouse's lamp or fastidiously reviewing the stores in his hidden storage. He keeps a journal of ships he sees, but he has hidden it under a hatch to keep it away from prying eyes. The past couple of months' entries also contain scrawled "evidence" of an attack from the sea carried out by creatures not of this world. The ramblings have grown more severe, and refer to inhabitants and travellers hosting tentacled mind-controlling creatures within their bodies.

9: HIDDEN STORAGE

This storage area holds enough supplies to feed the villagers for a week. Filppu added this hidden space as part of his growing paranoia induced when the area flooded. Finding the secret door is difficult and Filppu has warded it with a sophisticated lock (-10% chance to open locks).

The storage area contains crates filled with hardtack, dried fish and skins of fresh water, along with a stockpile of weapons and barrels filled with lamp oil. A ladder leads from the storage area to an even more difficult to find trapdoor beneath the lighthouse lamp. Filppu's duty to the ships passing near or travelling to Beacon Promontory outweighs his mania.

10: LIGHTHOUSE LAMP

Filppu obsesses over Beacon Promontory's most vital feature. When he took over as lighthouse keeper he vowed to never let the light go out, and he has kept that vow even when the land around the lighthouse flooded and many of the inhabitants fled. The floods made the nearby waters even more treacherous, as the formerly dry ground and ruined buildings lurk just below the surface, waiting to rip apart the hulls of ships coming too close to shore.

Even when Filppu hadn't given in to his paranoia, he refuses to grant admittance to this part of the lighthouse. Figuring he would outlive most of the residents anyway, he intends to pass on his knowledge of the lighthouse's inner workings to his child.



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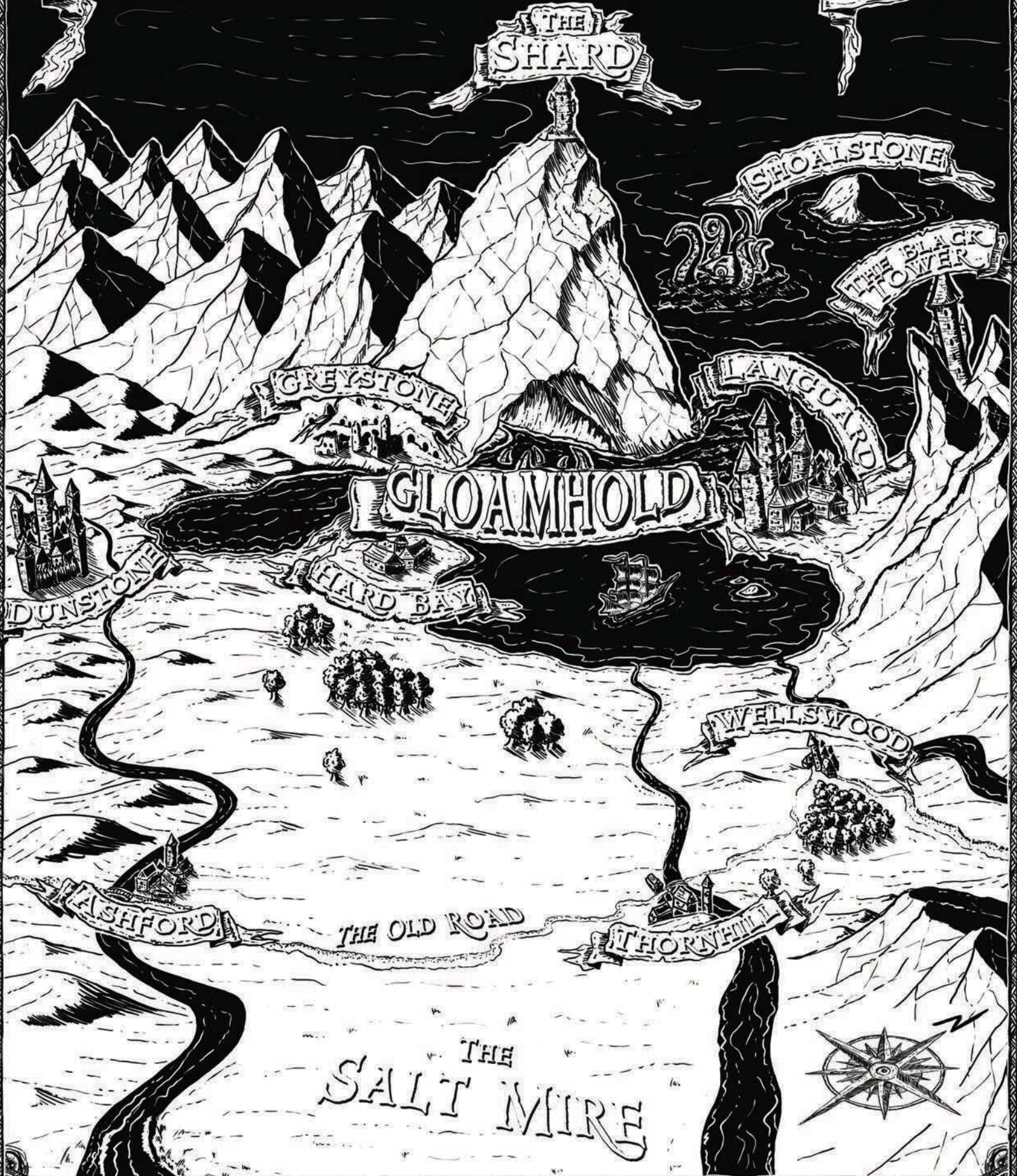
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