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VILLAGE BACKDROP:
UNDERDELL





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VILLAGE BACKDROP: UNDERDELL

The once quiet and quaint halfling community of Underdell rests along the Old Road near the Salt Mire. Steeped in tradition and idleness, the Underdellians found themselves unprepared to deal with the horrors of the plague outbreak in nearby Ashford. Terror gripped Underdell, tearing apart the strong bonds of family and friendship. Fear and paranoia took root in the halflings' hearts as they tried to escape sickness and death. As Underdell falls apart, a vile halfling bandit has used the chaos to take control of Underdell, enforcing a strict martial law. As neighbour turns on neighbour, a group of bandits terrorize merchant caravans traveling through Ashlar, raiding with impunity and aided by a rich noble. The Underdellians, their smiles and laughter turned to tears and hopelessness, live in fear of another plague outbreak and the harsh punishment of the bandits who insist they are protecting and enriching the village.

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SYSTEM NEUTRAL EDITION

Welcome to this Raging Swan Press System Neutral Edition Village Backdrop. Herein you'll find evocative, inspiring text designed to help you—the busy GM—run better, quicker and easier games.

This book is compatible with most fantasy roleplaying games. It's impossible to create a truly system neutral book, though, and some generic game terms—wizard, fighter, human, elf and so on—lurk within. These generic terms are easily modified to the GM's system of choice.

One special note about the NPCs in this supplement. While some are wizards, fighters, clerics and so on, others are simply normal folk. Because different game systems handle normal folk differently we've made no attempt to note their "class" leaving them simply as "female human" and so on.

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UNDERDELL AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Vihtori Ikonen

Government: Secret Syndicate

Alignments: LG, NG, N, CN, LE, NE

Population: 152 (12 humans, 140 halflings)

Notable Folk: Vihtori Ikonen (location 8), Mayor Linodal Mannerheim (location 5, Mannerheim Brewery), Father Jalo Tammi (location 4, Eveninggarden)

Languages: Common

Resources & Industry: Beer, crafts, produce

Underdell resides under the shadows of a line of hills along the Old Road in the Duchy of Ashlar. A hundred years ago, halfling immigrants to the duchy settled Underdell to get away from the crowded city life of the duchy's larger towns. The halflings quickly created a small, quiet community, sending exports throughout the duchy of their ales as well as produce from their carefully tended gardens.

Life remained somewhat unremarkable in Underdell until recently when a traumatic event shattered Underdell's way of life. The black tendrils of death ensnared Underdell's nearby neighbour, Ashford, with the plague, devastating the village. At first, Underdell tried to help, taking in refugees fleeing from their hellish plight. But when the first plague victims appeared amongst the Underdellians, the halflings' generosity turned to fear and from fear to paranoia and despair. Though the plague affected Underdell far less than Ashford, the scared halflings looked to a savior, no matter who, to save them. Vihtori Ikonen, a former thug of the Shadow Masks, had recently fled to Underdell. Quickly, he formed a band of fearful halflings, killing any plague victims and enforcing marshal law on the village. Vihtori then began training his accomplices as bandits, preying on the merchant traffic in the area.

Today, Vihtori and his bandits lurk in the background, the imprisoned mayor, Linodal Mannerheim, serving as a puppet leader. Far from being hunted, Vihtori made alliance with a noble from Dulwich to harass caravans from the town's powerful merchants. The village's halflings remained cowed by Vihtori, under threat from the plague's return and the harsh protection he offers.



VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Underdell, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Underdell is the duchy's only halfling community, renowned for its excellent beer. Mannerheim Brewery, run by the local mayor, is their most famous brewery.
- A plague savaged Underdell a year ago. Not as virulent as in Ashford, it still claimed a number of lives.
- The once jovial halflings have become insular and unfriendly towards visitors. People visiting the village sometimes disappear.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: Underdellians appear as typical, portly halflings; however, their wide smiles are gone. Most appear downcast or watch others with furtive, nervous glances.

Dress: The halflings prefer brightly dyed loose clothing that is easy to move in. Most wear simple jewellery. Lately, their clothes appear shabby and dirty. Many wear strange charms made by the local wizard.

Nomenclature: *male* Esko, Joni Ukko, Seppo; *female* Anu, Eleni, Helvi, Raili; *family* Eskola, Korpela, Mustonen.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Underdell, a PC 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 PC learns.

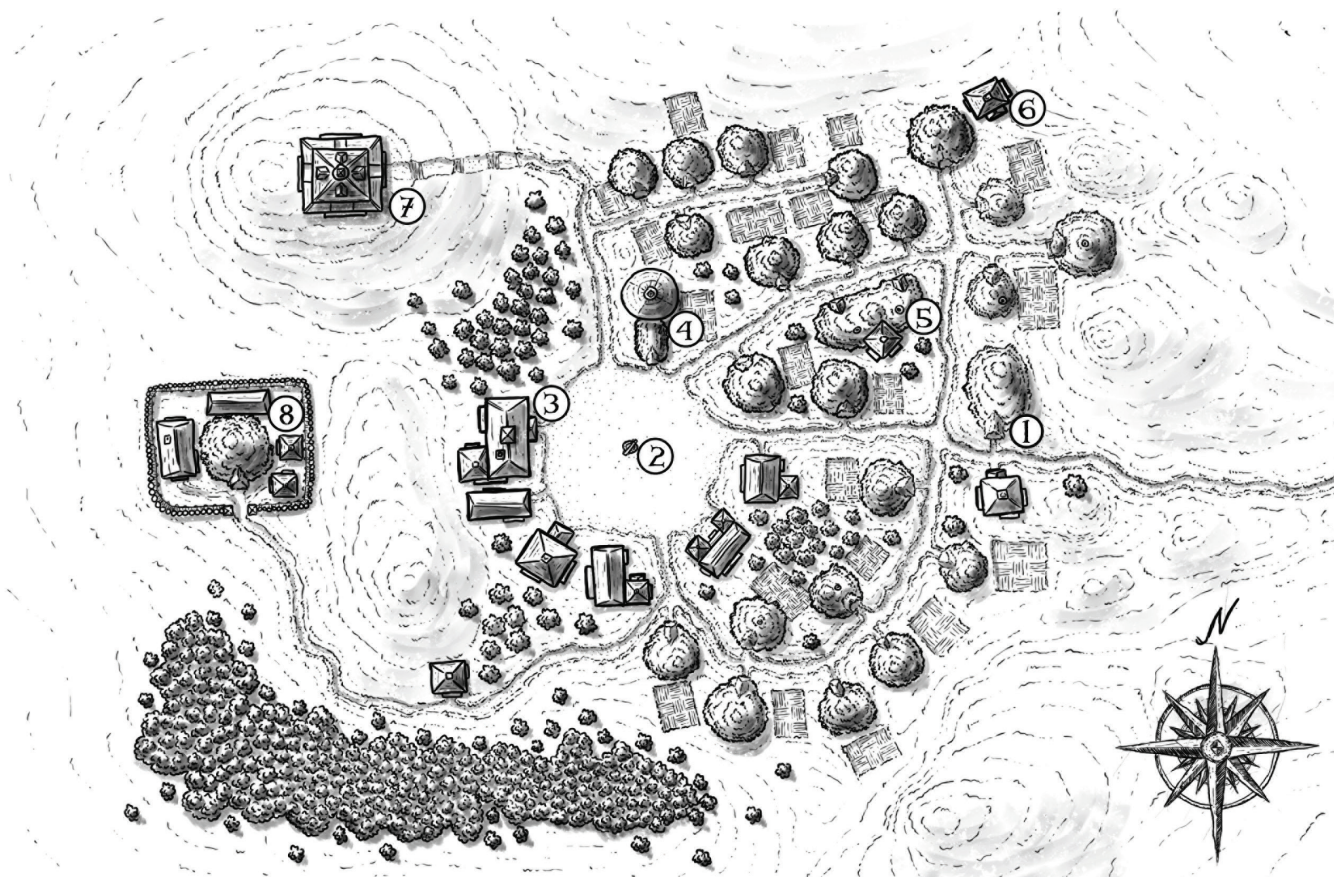
D6	RUMOUR
1	Outbreaks of the plague ravaging Ashford still occur from time to time in Underdell.
2*	Lately, the mayor, Linodal Mannerheim isn't taking any visitors. Apparently, he's occupied with brewing a new batch of Mannerheim beer.
3*	The Finger of Conn was built to conceal a great vault of treasure. I bet the treasure is still there!
4	A beautiful wizard in Underdell crafts charms for the villagers to ward off the plague.
5*	There are no acolytes at the Eveninggarden, a temple of Conn. The priest worships a devil and sacrificed them all to abate the plague.
6	A band of warriors has recently been seen inhabiting the village's old watchtower but no one seems to know who placed them there or why.

*False rumour

NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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

1. **Jail:** Recently built, as Underdell never had a need before, the jail lies along the road leading to the village. A small, wooden guardhouse sits across from the jail as a security checkpoint. Guards rigorously screen all visitors for signs of the plague, before allowing them entry. Anyone suspected of illness is held here before their lifeless body is dumped in the pits out back.
2. **Marketplace:** A number of small businesses stand around an open space once the heart and soul of Underdell. Weekly markets, replete with entertainment as well as festivals, took place here before fear and paranoia gripped the village.
3. **The Gallows:** Once a bit of dark humour, the local tavern and inn's name seems more fitting now. Formerly a cosy, accommodating place, its regulars now grip their mugs tightly, casting suspicious glances at everyone.
4. **Eveningarden:** A beautiful church of flowing greenery and flowers dedicated to Conn was Underdell's spiritual heart. Few now find faith in Conn, feeling betrayed by the god. Its resident priest, Father Jalo Tammi, still holds services, vainly attempting to instil hope back into the community.
5. **Mannerheim Brewery:** This large halfling home is both the mayoral residence for Linodal Mannerheim and Underdell's most famous brewery. Vihtori's bandits keep the mayor imprisoned in his own home, using him as a puppet leader.
6. **Kirsi's House:** The halflings converted this dwelling to accommodate the human wizard, Kirsi Niskanen, replete with another building to serve as her workshop. Kirsi, a former prisoner in Dulwich's dungeons, reluctantly works her magic in Vihtori's service to pay off her debts. To the outsiders, she is Underdell's eccentric wizard.
7. **Conn's Finger:** A forty-foot-high watchtower stands atop a squat hill originally built by the Knights of the Eternal Watch to safeguard the Old Road and survey the Salt Mire. Abandoned for years, it now houses a contingent of human mercenaries from Dulwich who aid Vihtori and act as a liaison between him and the mysterious noble who feeds him information on plump merchant caravans.
8. **The Compound:** Vihtori built a base hidden from view by a small, rocky hill. The compound serves as a barracks for the bandits along with pens for the riding dogs and ponies. A 10-foot-high wooden palisade surrounds the complex.



LIFE IN UNDERDELL

Underdell is a shadow of what it once was. The smiling halflings with ever-open doors now shuffle about suspicious and fearful, their homes shuttered from their neighbours' prying eyes.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

The halflings of Underdell remain largely self-sufficient, producing what they need and trading with their neighbours for what they don't have. Nearly every halfling home has a well-tended garden and maybe a small animal pen with chickens. This results in a lot of produce, the surplus of which was formerly carted off to nearby Ashford or down to Kingsfell. Now the extra is jealously hoarded or used to feed the mercenaries stationed in Conn's Finger. The halflings main export of beer remains undisturbed by recent events. The Underdellians are known for their fine brew, particularly from Mannerheim Brewery. Vihtori ensures these exports go out as normal as to do otherwise could arouse suspicion of something happening in Underdell. Many other halflings practice various crafts traded their wares in the village's lively marketplace.

LAW & ORDER

Once a peaceful halfling community, Underdell's citizens policed themselves. They looked out for their neighbours and came together to help anyone struggling. Ashford's plague shattered Underdell's ideal community, breaking the bonds of goodwill. No one could tell who might secretly be harbouring the plague and so the halflings became suspicious of each other. The arrival of Vihtori only inflamed their paranoia allowing him to seize power. Vihtori and his bandits serve as the law now, ruthlessly executing those suspected of having the plague. Anyone attempting to overthrow Vihtori is similarly dealt with. The Underdellians constantly spy on one another, eager to report to Vihtori.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Underdell once held many monthly festivals in the marketplace, often loosely based on halfling interpretations of Conn's teachings. It did not take much to get the Underdellians to pull together for a large feast replete with dancing and games. Weddings were elaborate affairs, often lasting for two days. Even the weekend marketplace meet-ups were a cause to over eat, partake in games and drink copiously. Sadly, today, the halflings no longer celebrate or engage in any sort of festive activities. Most stick to their families, suspicious of everyone around them.

VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Underdell.

D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Father Jalo performs a solo funeral service, carrying a dead halfling into Eveninggarden while he haphazardly waves a censer.
2	Four warriors on horseback thunder through the streets, heading towards the large watchtower.
3	A wagon is seen disappearing along a narrow road winding past a rocky hill.
4	A group of dirty halfling children chase an old woman down the street, hurling curses and stones at her.
5	A group of female halflings surround an elegant human woman in robes. They seem to be asking her for some sort of charm.
6	A wild-eyed woman stumbles out of the Gallows, mug in one hand and an attractive, but wriggling, male halfling slung over one shoulder.
7	Three armed halflings roughly drag someone out of one the homes and head towards the jail.
8	Eyes stare at the PCs from the windows of the halfling homes. Many of the inhabitants make signs to ward off evil or spit in the PCs' direction.
9	A legless halfling shuffles towards the PCs using his arms to move and begins begging for coin so his children can eat. If given any money, he immediately heeds towards the Gallows.
10	A group of halflings in filthy robes dig through a patch of mud though it's unclear what they are collecting.
11	Two halflings quarrel over a wilted vegetable garden between their homes. It quickly comes to blows.
12	A halfling dressed in a black mourning robe howls despondently in front of a grass covered temple.
13	A halfling bursts out of a home, carrying a bundle of vegetables only to be chased down by their owner.
14	A group of halflings huddle together whispering before two well-armed halfling guards force them to disperse.
15	A halfling is flung from a catapult located on top of a large watchtower.
16	The cloying smell of incense wafts along the street.
17	A bar fight spills out from the Gallows followed by two cheering well-armed human warriors.
18	Two halfling guards on shaggy ponies patrol the street, causing a few halflings to retreat indoors.
19	A family of sullen looking halflings trudge joylessly about their business, deigning to even look at the PCs.
20	A lone halfling sells vegetables at the marketplace but most seem to be avoiding her.

THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

Underdell stands near the Old Road which runs east to west through the Duchy of Ashlar passing through Thornhill and curving up towards the village of Wellswood.

A line of hills runs north from Underdell, skirting the Selka River where the old town of Dunstone nestles amongst the hills. Dunstone, once serving as guardian against creatures lurking within the Mottled Spire, slips into urban decay though its current lord works hard to revitalize the town and restore it to its former glory. Dunstone has an active Brewer's Guild whose products often compete with Underdell's. Located within the Mottled Spire's stony crags rots the ruins of the village of Greystone lurking in the shadow of Gloamhold. Gloamhold remains an ancient abandoned citadel, its roots descend into a sprawling complex of caves and caverns eating into the earth, containing all manner of fell beasts. Many adventurers seek out this famed site in search of treasure and many are the lives lost in such ventures.

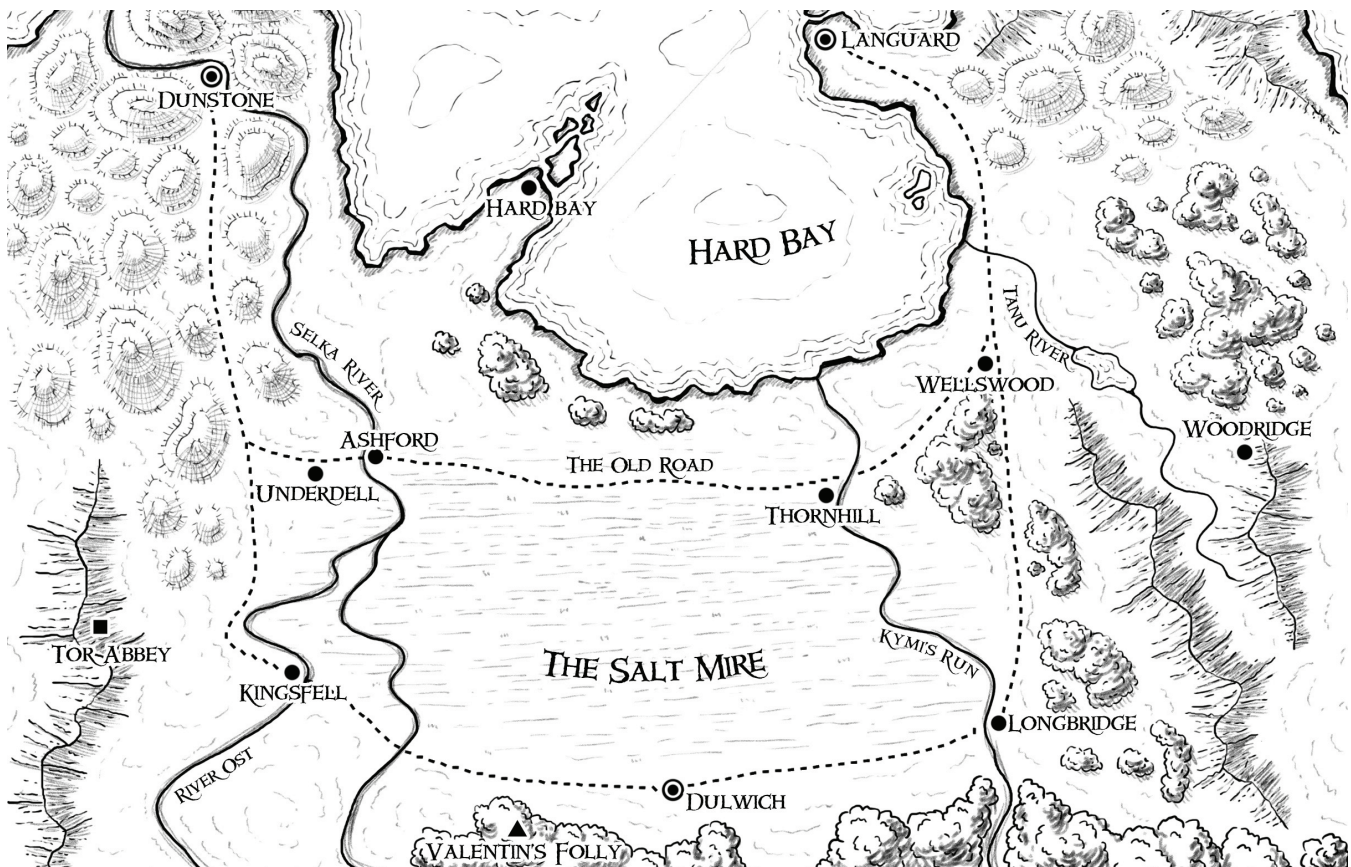
To Underdell's east stretches the vast expanse of the Great Salt Mire, a fetid, untamed swampland in the very heart of the duchy. Travel through the swamp remains dangerous due to deep bogs, merciless insects, bandits and all manner of dangerous beasts who call the swamp their home. Once one passes the

swamp, they arrive in the eastern section of Ashlar, studded by numerous small villages.

Above them all, Ashlar's capital, Languard, squats on a peninsula thrusting out into the cold waters of Hard Bay. The capital, home to almost 8,000 souls, serves as the seat of power for the Duke Armas Nenonen whose eyes constantly stray across the bay to the shadows clustering about the Mottled Spire.

Southward, a road winds towards the village of Kingsfell before turning east to arrive at the town of Dulwich. Dulwich lies in the shade of the Forest of Grey Spires. A growing merchant trade, bolstered by the revenues of a lumber guild, threaten the hold of the nobles who rule the city. Danger lurks in the depths of the forest as evidenced by the ruins of Valentin's Folly, a border castle now fallen into ruin and a hideout for bandits and goblins. Other adventure sites are rumoured to lurk beneath the shadows of the forest's menacing trees.

West of Underdell remains mostly unclaimed by the duchy as rugged hills march towards its borders. The lonely Tor Abbey, located on a thrust of stone stands as the last point of civilization with the duchy.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN UNDERDELL

1: UNDERDELL JAIL

A large, grass-covered building abuts the road leading into Underdell. Directly across the way stands a wooden guard post.

Built not long after Vihtori took control of Underdell, the jail houses those suspected of carrying the plague. A small contingent of bandits garrison the jail and guard post, ruthlessly interrogating visitors to the village. Those exhibiting signs of the plague are killed and their bodies dropped into pits behind the jail.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	Four well-armed halflings torment a ragged family seeking shelter within Underdell.
2	Two halfling guards carry a shroud-wrapped body, unceremoniously dropping it into a pit behind the jail.
3	Bored guards loiter around the jail, throwing dice. One of them coughs, spits up phlegm and causes the other guards to suddenly panic.
4	A halfling guard holds a hungry dog on a leash while a skinny, ragged human attempts to get away.
5	A man bursts out of the jail, terribly wounded. Halfling guards follow, brandishing bloodied weapons.
6	A merchant's wagon is waved through without fanfare, making its way towards a distant spire of rock.

2: UNDERDELL MARKETPLACE

A number of wooden buildings surround a beaten clearing of packed earth. A few halflings listlessly roam about.

The heart of Underdell was once a thriving marketplace of cheery halflings going about their daily business. Here, the halflings held weekend open markets, festivals and other celebrations. The shops remain open—a general store, bakery, craft store, the Gallows and a few others, but flowers droop in their window boxes and windows remain shuttered. It feels forlorn and uninviting.

- **For Sale:** +1 dagger (500 gp), Alli's sweets and baked goods (3 sp), a worn map of the Salt Mire (10 gp).



WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D4	EVENT
1	A small halfling girl in a shabby dress bumps into a PC and attempts to pick pocket one of the party.
2	A halfling wanders by, hacking and coughing before he collapses on the ground.
3	A heavily armed warrior leaves the bakery and heads towards the watchtower, eyeing the PCs.
4	A pack of underfed dogs fight over the carcass of large, dead bird and attack anyone who gets too close.

3: THE GALLOWS

A squat stone building with a grass thatched roof flanks the marketplace. A sign swinging above the double doors depicts three figures swinging from a rope.

Once a quaint tavern and inn excelling in halfling hospitality, the Gallows was a favourite stopping point for travellers and local gathering place. Its name, a bit of dark humour poking fun at the village's peaceful life, unfortunately is now grimly apropos. Inside, a smoky hearth seems to hide dismal halflings who stare at one another with suspicion. The rooms reek of neglect and smell of mould. Outsiders are charged exorbitant prices to encourage them to leave. The inn's staff regularly reports gossip and news to Vihtori.

- **Food & Drink:** meal (baked river trout and cabbage and onion soup) 5 sp, Mannerheim ale 3 sp, wine (pitcher) 4 sp.
- **Accommodation:** One-bed human-sized chamber 5 gp; two-bed halfling chamber 10 sp.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A halfling patron starts retching uncontrollably, causing the patrons to flee the tavern.
2	Four halfling guards abruptly appear, point out a halfling patron and then proceed to drag him away.
3	Six rough looking halflings, obviously drunk, begin making jokes about the PCs' appearances.
4	A halfling sobs into his mug repeating the name "Annita" over and over again.
5	One of the servers whispers into the barkeep's ears, pointing towards the PCs.
6	A number of patrons suddenly get up and abruptly leave when the PCs are seated.

4: EVENINGGARDEN

Flowering vines flow down the walls of this large earthen building. Two small trees frame the building's entrance.

Eveninggarden stands near the marketplace, a beautifully crafted building of interwoven trees, vines and flowers. Dedicated to Conn, Eveninggarden served as Underdell's spiritual heart. Unfortunately, hope fled the halflings and few now attend services or even acknowledge the temple's existence. The Underdellians believe Conn failed them. Its high priest toils by himself, his acolytes having moved on to more hospitable villages. Having no allies, Father Jalo Tammi fights a losing battle to restore hope to the halflings and confront the evil of Vihtori and his bandits. He provides what relief he can but feels he betrayed the village; his faith was not strong enough to cleanse the plague, allowing Vihtori to take control.

Reclaim a Holy Object: A high priest of Conn has determined a holy object (a magical vessel whose water causes plants to grow quickly) residing in the Eveninggarden should be returned and tasks the PCs to retrieve. Of course, Father Jalo Tammi does not want to relinquish it and beseeches the PCs to aid him instead.

5: MANNERHEIM BREWERY

The smell of brewing beer wafts from the double chimneys of a large grass-covered mound and halfling home.

Underdell's most famous brewery also serves as the residence of Underdell's mayor, Linodal Mannerheim. The Mannerheims have

KIRSI NISKANEN

LE female human wizard 5

A permanent scowl threatens the beauty of a robed woman, her spectacles perched on an imperious nose.

Mannerisms: Kirsi can be very charming, using her looks (and magic) to her advantage when she wants something. Otherwise, she has little patience for others.

Personality: Vain and a bit cold, Kirsi is beginning to realize that in her current situation, she may have to become more open and tolerant of others. She is still shocked by the kindness the halfling villagers (excluding Vihtori's bandits) have shown her.

Background: Kirsi grew up in Languard but moved to Dulwich to practice her spells on the town's rich nobles. After her ploys were discovered, Kirsi spent time in Dulwich's prison awaiting trial. A noble approached her, offering to broker her freedom if she would work for him. Her assignment ended up being in Underdell, using magic to assist Vihtori. She detests both Vihtori and Jeela Jaakola.

been brewing the beer sold throughout the duchy since the village's founding, though Linodal is the first Mannerheim to enter politics. Unfortunately, he was not equipped to deal with the hysteria of the plague and quickly lost control of Underdell to Vihtori who keeps Linodal locked inside his own house as a puppet leader. It's also important for Vihtori to keep Mannerheim Brewery in operation to avoid unwanted notice.

Message in a Cask: The PCs have at some point been gifted a cask of Mannerheim's best brew. Upon emptying the cask, they find a note sealed in a scroll tube. It's a plea of rescue from Linodal Mannerheim and an offer of reward.

6: KIRSI'S HOUSE

A human-sized door fronts this typical halfling home. Additionally, a small stone building with no windows stands nearby.

Vihtori set aside a house for his wizard, Kirsi Niskanen, as well as a workshop for her use. There, she studies magic and plots new tactics to help Vihtori in his raiding. Vihtori favours spells like *enlarge*, *invisibility* and *obscuring mist* to avoid detection in battle. Most villagers believe Kirsi is an eccentric wizard who moved to Underdell to escape the hustle and bustle of the duchy's larger settlements. Kirsi fashions mostly functionless charms, selling them to the villagers, to keep up this ruse. She longs to escape from her current role and go back to swindling rich old nobles.

Witch Hunt: Relatives of the noble Kirsis scammed which lead to her imprisonment aren't happy at her recent disappearance. The PCs are hired to track her down and bring her back to Dulwich to face justice. Rumour has her in Underdell.

FATHER JALO TAMMI

LG old male halfling cleric 5

Dark bags lurk under the eyes of this white-haired halfling who wears the garments of a priest of Conn.

Mannerisms: Stress and exhaustion have taken their toll on the good priest. He walks slowly, needing frequent rests and occasionally dozes off mid-sentence.

Personality: While Jalo still strives to do right in the community, doubts about his own worthiness to serve Conn slowly devour him, marring his once bright and jovial attitude. He is increasingly sceptical about his own faith.

Background: Jalo inherited the position of high priest from his mother decades ago. A hard worker, he was a pillar of Underdell's community and was consulted in almost any matter of importance. Now, he is slowly becoming but a shell of the priest he once was.

7: CONN'S FINGER

Moss and ivy crawl along a 40-foot-high tower perched on a hill. Its lofty battlements command the surrounding area for miles.

Built originally by the Knights of the Eternal Watch, the tower offers a large view of the surrounding area, particularly the Salt Mire. Lack of resources caused the watchtower to be abandoned and the Underdellians used it for storage. Shortly after Vihtori took control, his noble sponsor sent a group of mercenaries lead by Jeela Jaakola to occupy the tower and serve as a liaison between Vihtori and himself. The mercenaries do not participate in the raids but instead ensure the noble receives his fair share of profits and information is passed along. The mercenaries also deal with outsiders sticking their nose in the village's business. The bored mercenaries often descend from the tower and bully the harried halflings, particularly when Vihtori is away.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D4	EVENT
1	Eight warriors unload a large wagon at the tower. The goods appear to comprise furs and fabrics.
2	A wild-eyed woman stuffs a hapless halfling into a barrel before rolling it down the hill. She laughs the entire time, swigging from a mug.
3	Two halfling men fan a wild looking woman relaxing in a camp chair with a large mug in her hand.
4	A wild looking woman argues loudly with a scowling, bespectacled woman in a robe before both storm off.

JEELA JAAKOLA

CN female human fighter 4

Scars from battles criss-cross the body of a fierce woman with wild hair and a crazed look in her eyes.

Mannerisms: Jeela is very loud with any action she takes—from hearty guffaws to heavy smacks on the back for a job well done or a boot to the groin for failure.

Personality: Brash, bold and loud, Jeela likes to fight and drink or preferably drink and then fight. She's getting bored with her current assignment which only inflames her temper.

Background: A wild warrior, Jeela hails from the Lonely Coast. Her temper caused her to bounce between various mercenary companies until she ended up fleeing the Lonely Coast entirely and ended up in the Duchy of Ashlar. Lately, she takes out her boredom by harassing Kirsi, frequently interrupting her work for a drink.

8: THE COMPOUND

A 10-foot-tall wooden palisade surrounds a large central building covered in grass. Numerous pens and storage buildings surround the main building.

The bandit compound in Underdell lies hidden from the main road into the village by a partially man-made rocky hill. A wooden security checkpoint guards the road looping up towards the compound which is surrounded by a 10-foot-tall wooden palisade. Vihtori and his bandits live and plan within the grass covered central building. Nearby are various storehouses with supplies and pens containing riding dogs and small ponies. Vihtori prefers to strike hard and fast, aided by Kirsi's magic. He always has Kirsi cast *invisibility* on him before attacking.

Vengeance: The Shadow Masks aren't ones to forget any slight done to them. The PCs are engaged by a proxy who spins a tale of woe denouncing Vihtori and offering a reward for his elimination.

Find the Sponsor: Dulwich's merchants believe there is a link to the bandit raids and a noble in Dulwich. The PCs are paid to investigate Underdell and discover the noble's identity.

VIHTORI IKONEN

NE male halfling fighter 6

Faded tattoos cover the arms and chest of a burly, grim halfling. A flattish nose, broken and smashed from numerous fights, lies splayed across his face.

Mannerisms: As a former enforcer, Vihtori knows how menacing silence can be. As such, he is a man of few words, often fixing someone with a steely glare before speaking.

Personality: Greed and power rule Vihtori. A base creature, he believes you need to take what you want by force or have it stolen away.

Background: Orphaned at young age, Vihtori was taken in by Ashlar's preeminent thieves' guild, the Shadow Masks. Abused and mistreated, Vihtori learned he had to be strong to survive. Despite his small stature, he became one of the guild's top enforcers. Feeling held back by the guild, Vihtori left (leaving a pile of corpses is a common rumour). Fortuitous for him, he arrived at Underdell during the onset of the plague in nearby Ashford. It did not take him long to take charge and engage in banditry. Shortly afterwards, one of Dulwich's more shady nobles approached him and offered to give him information on merchant caravans leaving the town in exchange for some of the profit.

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