

THE
WITCHER
A BOOK OF TALES

Tales of magic and monsters as told by the World's Greatest Bard

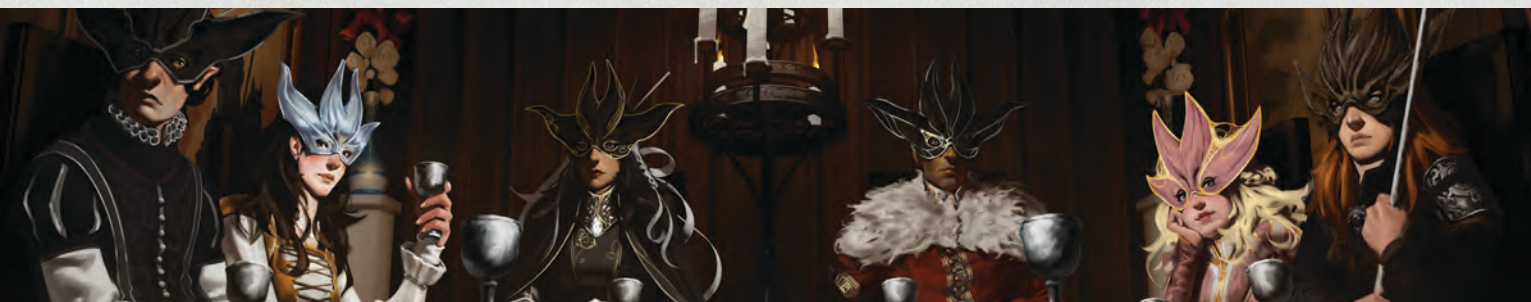


CD PROJEKT RED



Talsorian
Games





Cast & Crew

Writing & Design

James Hutt
Linda Evans
Sara Thompson
Cody Pondsmith

Cover

Bad Moon Art

Illustration

Agus SW
Anna Podedworna
Araire
Alberto Bontempi
Bad Moon Art Studio
Bartłomiej Gaweł
Neil Branquinho
Kai Carpenter
Manuel Castañón
Justine Cruz
Matt DeMino
Dendy
Martina Fačková
Shen Fei
Siba Gasser
J Gray
Jonathan Guzi

Maksym Harahulin
Dani Hartel
James Hutt
Marek Madej
Monika Zawistowska
Adrian Marc
Jeffrey R McDonald
Robson Michel
Allen Morris Art
Anna Orlova (SpaceLaika)
Mikhail Palamarchuk
Cody Pondsmith
Brian Adriel
Christ Adiel Then
Claudio Pozas
Sherbakov Stanislav
Sebastian Szmyd
Yama Orce

Art Direction

Jaye Kovach

Layout Design

Cris Viana
J Gray

Typography

Cris Viana

Editing

Carol Darnell
Matt Click

Playtesters

Aaron Burdett
Alex Thompson
Caitlin Murphy
Craig "Wuruhi" Hyder
Dagmara Bohdana Wojtczak
Dan "F00d4Th0ught"
Richardson
Daniel Jedrychowski
Darcy Hilton
Deirdre Donlon
Grace Carey
James "ELH" Adams
Jared Barnes
Jason Rand
Jasper Djman-king
Jay Jasti
Jilian Wagner
Justin Musser
Karl Warlow
Kelli "The Opera Geek"
Butler
Kevin Diehl

Kimberlee "Bugs" Walters
Kylie Douglass
Lawrence Astill
Leon "LeotheDino" Mendez
Linda "Druttercup" Evans
Matt "Sir Fluffles" Carroll
Michael Carey
Naomi Calhoun
Nicole Walters
Paul Khalifé
Rebecca Wagner
Riccardo Allegretti
Roxanne Phan
Sara Thompson
Shu Qing Tan
Simon "WanderingDM"
Goudreault
Thomas McInerney
Victor Cristool
Wheelhouse

Special Thanks to

Franciszek Rożnowicz
Jan Rosner
Luigi Annicchiarico

R Talsorian Games

P.O.Box 82922, Kenmore, WA USA 98028

© R. Talsorian Games, Inc., 2020

THE WITCHER® is a registered trademark of CD PROJEKT S.A. THE WITCHER GAME © CD PROJEKT S.A. All rights reserved. THE WITCHER game is based on the prose of Andrzej Sapkowski. PRINTED IN CANADA.

Molecule technology background designed by Tj-Rabbit - Freepik.com

Black feather w/ old paper background designed by Dmitri1Ch - Freepik.com

WI11031 ISBN 978-1-950911-08-0

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---|------------|
| Book of Tales | 5 | Enter the Fighting Pits | 95 |
| How to Use This Book..... | 6 | The Aardvark..... | 111 |
| Underneath the Ice | 7 | The Gigascorpion..... | 112 |
| The Beast of Lake Tankred..... | 16 | Non-Player Characters..... | 114 |
| Non-Player Characters..... | 18 | Maps | 133 |
| Maps | 20 | The Maiden Surrounded By Butterflies | 137 |
| In the Alderwood..... | 25 | Non-Player Characters..... | 146 |
| The Sylvan..... | 34 | The Panther | 150 |
| Pardus of Korath..... | 36 | The Marionette Armor..... | 152 |
| Non-Player Characters..... | 38 | The Maiden Surrounded By Butterflies | 154 |
| Maps | 40 | Maps | 156 |
| Stone Cold Lies | 49 | Compiled Content | 165 |
| Non-Player Characters..... | 64 | Weapons & Items | 165 |
| Maps | 67 | Spells | 166 |
| Murder in Maribor | 71 | Gnomes | 167 |
| Non-Player Characters..... | 83 | Vran..... | 168 |
| Maps | 87 | Werebbubbs | 169 |
| | | Dandelion, Slayer of Dragons & Ladies | 171 |





Book of Tales

Dear Reader,

In my travels as a wandering poet, I have experienced much more than any one's fair share of excitement. Indeed, like beauty, it cannot hide from me. Often, I am called upon to recount adventures which do not appear in my popular ballads, to satisfy an audience's craving for novel amusement.

In the same spirit in which I always oblige them, I have decided to catalog some of these tales, so they might reach further than my lungs allow. You may consider this book of tales an addendum to *The Adversities of Loving and Time of the Moon*.

These stories span the entire Continent, from the icy mountains of Kovir and Poviss to as far south into Nilfgaard as Ebbing. They concern thieves, assassins in the night, monsters of frightening proportions, deadly duels, and the hands of maidens fair.

You might expect me here to quell any fears that these dangers did ever walk these lands, to claim them as mere fantasy, to soothe you. I will do no such thing. All that I write here has transpired.

On my honor as a bard, I pledge it so.

— Dandelion

Viscount de Lettenhove

Master of the Seven Liberal Arts



Greetings, Gamemaster, and welcome to Book of Tales, the first adventure book for *The Witcher TRPG*. This is an expansion to The Witcher TRPG Core Book, which you also need to play. This book contains six dark fantasy adventures to run with your group, complete with new monsters, helpful maps, and illustrations to bring the Continent to life for your group. Your players will also enjoy the new player content in this book, which includes new weapons, spells, and playable races, in addition to ice skating, aardvark fighting, and expanded rules for animal companions. Much of the new player content makes its appearance in the adventures, so we've also compiled it all together safely in the back of the book so they may go over it without spoiling any surprises you have in store for them.

We salute you, Gamemaster. You are the final bearer of responsibility for your party's enjoyment. You know what works for them, what they can handle, and when to turn up the heat. We welcome you to take these adventures and make them your own. The following are summaries of the six adventures in this book, along with guidance for the types of parties toward which they are geared, and how you might connect them together in a larger campaign.

Combat Difficulty & Adventure Complexity

The difficulty of combat encounters in these adventures are tuned for groups of four players. If you have more than one witcher in your four-player party, or have more than four players, you might want to increase the difficulty of combat encounters. Additionally, the further south your players travel for each of these adventures, the more challenging the difficulty of combat encounters becomes. Adventure complexity has been designed to alternate between complex adventures and more straightforward ones as the players travel south, to keep things fresh.

The Six Tales



Underneath the Ice 7

A straightforward monster hunt in the mountains of Kovir and Poviss, designed as a great first session for a larger campaign. Any party will feel at home here, but a sorceress will find a particularly warm welcome.



In the Alderwood 25

A seemingly straightforward monster hunt in Kaedwen which quickly goes off the rails and can end in tragedy. A party with an inclination for social encounters and roleplaying will love it.



Stone Cold Lies 49

Traveling to Mahakam for the beloved Ale Festival, the party is called upon to investigate a murder. Any party will feel at home here.



Murder in Maribor 71

To destroy a death cult menacing Nilfgaardian-occupied Maribor, the party must fight through a monster-riddled sewer. Players who love combat will eat their fill here.



Enter the Fighting Pits 95

Seduced by the prospect of winning, the party enters a tournament in Ebbing hosted by a group of masked wealthy Nilfgaardians who love betting on life and death. A party fond of meeting interesting characters will love it.



The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies 137

In the fairytale land of Toussaint, the party is paid handsomely to protect a handsome knight in his quest to rescue a princess from a tower — a situation which quickly turns hairy. This adventure has a little bit of everything, and its conclusion is final enough to be the end of a larger campaign.

Running Book of Tales as a Larger Campaign

These six adventures can be played as a larger campaign. To do so, start your party with Under the Ice in the northernmost point of the continent in Kovir and Poviss. Use the party at the end of the adventure to hook them into In the Alderwood, by having a mage with a prosthetic leg named Barend Anselberg feed them a rumor about a magical disturbance in the Alderwood. After the adventure, the players find themselves near Mahakam, and who wouldn't want to go to the Ale Festival? This desire hooks them into Stone Cold Lies, after which a courier delivers a message from Alwyn de Claremont, the Quartermaster in Nilfgaardian-occupied Maribor, who has heard of the player's penchant for problem-solving and would like to hire them to solve a problem in Murder in Maribor. After the adventure, the players learn of a lucrative tournament in Ebbing. Following the promise of riches, the party heads south to Ebbing in Enter the Fighting Pits. After their victory, the master swordsman with whom they win a lesson, Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir, introduces them to Rafael de Surmann, the Ducal Camerlengo of Toussaint, who hires them to protect his son during his knightly quest in The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies. This ends the larger campaign cleanly, complete with a fairytale ending.

Underneath the Ice



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

This is the first adventure in the Larger Campaign. The hike up to Highwatch is a great place for your Players to introduce their characters. How long have they all known each other? What is their reason for adventuring together?

Background (Read Aloud)

Way up north in the mountains of Kovir & Poviss, the wind whips whorls of powdered white as it blows across the snowdrifts that bank your neat, magically cleared path. Perched on a ridge above you is an imposing stone structure gleaming in

the afternoon sun, which you know to be Highwatch, home apparent to the High Mountain Society of Sorceresses. You know this because you've been summoned to solve a nebulous urgent matter by one of these sorceresses by the name of Louise van Adelaide. Judging by her note, she seemed rather upset, so tread lightly.

The Rest of the Story

Louise's crisis is one of party planning, the delay of a critical natural ice shipment, meant for a recruitment party for sorceress alumni of Aretuza, which takes place in seven days. The High Mountain Society of Sorceresses currently only

has three members — Louise van Adelaide, Clarisse de Claudine, and Catrin Preece — so bringing on new members is their chief concern. Magical ice would impart an unwanted taste to the drinks, which would embarrass the budding society in front of potential new members, something they wish to avoid at all costs. Recently, a young man named Olgar, hailing from the village with whom the High Mountain Society has a contract out to produce ice, arrived empty-handed at Highwatch with nothing but excuses about a four-legged monster prowling the lake, making ice-cutting impossible.

Louise and the rest of the Society expect the monster in question to be a Warg, as the nearby mountain range is known for its considerable wolf population. What they don't know is that monster is no mere Warg, but a cursed one that seeks revenge on one of the village's inhabitants, Henrick, from its lair underneath the ice.

Setting

The players, from arriving at Highwatch in the Dragon Mountains in Kovir & Poviss, are on a seven-day time limit to trek up to the ice-cutting village and return with a massive block of ice from Lake Tankred, each direction of which is a day's journey by way of a barely marked hinterland trail.

When they make their way to the ice-cutting village, the players discover the story behind the curse, leading them to the climax, a showdown with the cursed one itself atop the frozen lake.

Forces

This adventure can be run with up to six players. Sorceresses who are alumni of Aretuza will find a particularly warm welcome. Remember that the enemies you deploy should reflect the number of your players.

The Opposition Will Be

Wolves hunt the hinterland trail between Highwatch and the ice-cutting village. Players will run into either one or two packs of wolves, each equal in number to the players plus two.

The Beast of Lake Tankred is the most fearsome monster the players will encounter; they might choose to fight it atop the frozen Lake Tankred or lure it into a fight on the lake's shore. [See the stat block at the back of the adventure for its stats.](#)

Set Up (Read Aloud)

The entrance to Highwatch is carved with flowing lines broken by the occasional triangular symbol, a symbol which anyone with a shred of magical aptitude would recognize as the sign of

Aard. This pattern of lines is cast down onto the door from the balcony above you and continues onto the steps on which you walk. The double doors open to reveal Louise van Adelaide, a distraught blonde sorceress. Behind her stretches a ballroom large enough to entertain thirty or more, at the back of which rises an impressive grand staircase. She speaks:

"You are on time, but only barely. Come in and warm yourselves. We will discuss the matter at-hand when you have had an hour to shake off your travels. You will be on your way again shortly, so it is unnecessary for you to unpack. Please also avail yourselves of the washroom. Your boots go to my right. If you have neglected to pack slippers, you will find some for borrowing in the basket beneath the coat rack to my left. In the meantime, I have other things to attend to. Farewell."

Hook

The party is left alone in the entryway of Highwatch. Use this opportunity to introduce the two other members of the High Mountain Society of Sorceresses, Clarisse de Claudine and Catrin Preece. Of the two, Clarisse readily engages members of the party with magical aptitude in a conversation about their magical schooling, especially any that have high reputation in Kovir & Poviss, or alumni of Aretuza. Clarisse prefers to talk about alchemy. Catrin Preece listens in on any conversation that Clarisse starts with the players, agreeing with her when necessary. Both sorceresses remark how excited they are for the party at Highwatch in seven days, and brag about its incredible guest list of sorceresses.

If any member of the party is an alumni of Aretuza, Catrin invites them and their plus-one to the event. If asked, neither Clarisse nor Catrin know why Louise summoned you to Highwatch, except that it is probably related to party planning, as she is charge of that. When you need to move the party along, have Louise return, and launch into a speech meant for the players. As Louise comes down the stairs, she gestures to Clarisse and Catrin, who excuse themselves and climb staircase, leaving her alone with the party:

"Let us get to the matter at hand. Our society is hosting a party for the most distinguished sorceresses in only seven days. Everything must be perfect, and so my fellow members have trusted me to plan it so. You are here to solve the one problem that I have no desire to solve myself. To the north there is an ice-cutting village on the shores of Lake Tankred, which I had paid to deliver a block of natural ice from its waters. Last night, a boy, Olgar, from the village arrived at Highwatch empty handed, claiming that a four legged monster had scared off the temporary workforce and made ice-cutting impossible. We've boarded him in the basement, guaranteeing his father will make good on the contract and



prove no impediment to you. For this you will be paid. 50 Bizant. A fair sum to pay to kill a simple Warg and return with a block of ice. Within seven days. Arrive late and there is no pay for you. It is a mere day's journey by foot to the lake. The boy was carrying a map, although it is a tad smudged in the middle, perhaps it will help. Here."

Development

Your players might want to talk to Olgar to gather more information. If they don't, **go to Cliffhanger (Blizzard)**.

As your players descend the stairs into the basement of Highwatch, they hear Olgar snoring. He wakes when the players enter the store-room where he was napping on a stack of surplus mattresses, crumbs stuck to his face.

He asks the party to let his father Yongar know that he is okay. He refuses to leave if freed, initially claiming to fear the retribution of the sorceresses, then claiming his stay is voluntary.

If he is pushed, however, he reveals that Clarisse is using him to test finger foods for the party, rich food that he's never tasted before, so he'd prefer to stay for the moment. If asked, Olgar offers to fill in smudged map if asked and provides his account of the monster's attack:

"Monster came out from under the ice during the first night shift an' killed the cutter boys we had hired for the season — father says it dragged them under the ice. I didn't see it so well, father sent me to get help, but it wasn't no wolf like the blond woman thinks. Wolf won't swim in this cold unless it's necessary. And they never hunt alone. I wouldn't venture onto the lake if I were you."



Olgar

Negotiations

A player can attempt to negotiate with Louise to increase their pay.

Mentioning information learned from Olgar increases their roll by 2.

Persuasion or Business

| Total | Result |
|-------|-----------|
| 10 | 62 Bizant |
| 14 | 65 Bizant |
| 18 | 70 Bizant |
| 20 | 75 Bizant |

Currency Exchange

Kovir & Poviss use the Bizant as currency. One Bizant is equal to four Redanian Crowns.

Snow & Ice

Snow and Ice are a benefit and a hindrance. When tracking in the snow you gain a +3 to Wilderness Survival to follow recent tracks, but a -3 to follow old tracks. When fighting on snow and ice you must make a DC:14 Athletics check after running or attacking to stay standing. If naked or lightly clothed in icy conditions, you can survive without shelter for a number of hours equal to your Stun. After that time has elapsed you enter Death State.

Cliffhanger (Blizzard)

The players make their way on the barely defined hinterland trail with the goal of getting to Lake Tankred swiftly. Progress is slow, and weather conditions take a quick turn for the worst. Four hours into the trek, a blizzard hits, quickly covering everything with both snow and ice, introducing snow and ice conditions. See the Sidebar Snow & Ice.

Have the party choose one of the players to lead the expedition through the storm. That player must make a Wilderness survival check at **DC:18**. If Olgar fixed the smudged map, they may add 2 to their check. If they succeed, after a four-hour trek, **go to Cliffhanger (Found)**, otherwise, **go to Cliffhanger (Lost)**.

Cliffhanger (Lost)

The party has lost the trail in the blizzard. To make matters worse, the sun has just set, giving -2 to Awareness. The howls of wolves can be heard nearby, over even the still howling blizzard. Give your players five minutes to make preparations, then a number of wolves equal to the players plus one attack the party, led by a Warg. They are unaffected by the Snow and Ice Conditions. The Warg doesn't like to engage in direct combat, and tries to escape when it feels threatened, sacrificing wolves if necessary. The Warg is special. While it is blind in one eye, which

is a dull milky white, its other eye shines much brighter. A **DC:12** First Aid or Monster Lore check reveals that it is unaffected by its injury. When the wolves are routed, your players may wish to rest and continue in the morning. If they choose to do so, **go to Development (Making Camp)**. If they choose to press on, after a four-hour trek, **go to Cliffhanger (Found)**.

Development (Making Camp)

Tired, possibly wounded, and still at the mercy of the ongoing blizzard, the party decides to rest. How they go about this is up to them. With a successful Wilderness survival check at **DC:16**, a player can make a camp in the open to protect the party from the effects of the blizzard. Alternatively, following the fresh wolf tracks is **DC:14 Wilderness Survival** check, which lead to a nearby abandoned den inside which the players can make camp protected from Snow and Ice conditions with no check. When they wake, the blizzard is still raging. Should they press on to the ice-cutting village, after a daylong trek, **go to Cliffhanger (Found)**.

Cliffhanger (Found)

It is nightfall by the time the players make first sight of the ice-cutting village, lit by a bonfire at its center. Moonlight gives a -2 to Awareness. The blizzard abates, ending icy conditions, though the aftermath of the storm remains. Treat all outdoor surfaces as covered in snow. The players exit the forest surrounding the ice-cutting village and Lake Tankred, so that their first sight of the village is across the surface of the frozen lake. Make a **DC:10 Awareness** check for each player secretly. If any succeed, they are made aware that they are being followed by another pack of wolves, and have five minutes until they are set upon. The wolves are equal in number to the players plus two if the Warg had been defeated in Cliffhanger (Lost), or equal in number to the players plus one, and lead by a Warg if it was not killed or encountered in Cliffhanger (Lost). The Warg is special. It doesn't usually like to engage in direct combat, but in this second area, it fights to the death. While it is blind in one eye, which is a dull milky white, its other eye shines much brighter. A **DC:12** First Aid or Monster Lore check reveals that it is unaffected by its injury. If none succeed, the wolves and Warg attack the party immediately, and one wolf is able to make the first attack as an ambush (+5 to an attack made against an unaware target) before initiative is decided. The wolves are immune to Snow and Ice Conditions. Neither the wolves nor the Warg follow the players onto the frozen lake.





If the players notice the wolves coming, they have options. If they don't want to run onto the ice, defend against the incoming attack in place, and would prefer instead to run around the shore, perhaps because of Olgar's warning, they can get 5 minutes closer to the village in either direction along the shore before being attacked by the pack.

If the players choose to cross the frozen lake, the wolves do not follow them onto its surface. If the players make a deliberate effort to avoid the center of the lake, carefully circumventing it while still staying on the ice just off of the shore as to avoid the pack of wolves, the pack of wolves retreats after two minutes of following the party along the shore's edge, growling at them from the safety of land. Your party is either sufficiently paranoid for their own good, or taking a significant risk given their current understanding of the situation. Either way, it might be a good idea to roll a couple of dice secretly to heighten the tension. **Go to Development (A Village Welcome).**

Should your players attempt to cross the center of the lake, make a **DC:10 Awareness** check for each player secretly. Any player that succeeds notices abandoned ice-cutting equipment partially covered by snow, and drag marks carved by edged tools into the lake's surface leading toward one of several 5 by 5 meter square holes in the center of the lake. If everyone manages to fail the Awareness check or the immediate party response to discovering the drag marks isn't to Run Away Very Fast (see Table), have any Witcher medallions begin to hum, giving your players one last opportunity to Run Away Very Fast.

Run Away Very Fast

Each player must roll an Athletics check on this table simultaneously.

| Total | Result |
|-------------|---|
| 13 or Under | You fall flat onto the ice. If you aren't picked up, the party must either leave you behind or roll initiative against the Beast. |
| 14-17 | You are able to outrun the Beast, but you cannot both escape to safety and pick up a fallen party member. |
| 18-20 | You are able to outrun the Beast and have enough time to take a single fallen party member with you to safety. |
| 20 or above | You are able to outrun the Beast and have enough time to take up to two fallen party members with you to safety. |

Otherwise have The Beast of Lake Tankred attack. It fights to the death, preferring to ambush an unaware member of the party from underneath the ice with a bite to make use of its Gulp Ability. If your players escape without killing the beast, **go to Development (A Village Welcome).**

If by some miracle the party kills The Beast of Lake Tankred, **see the Sidebar Veni, Vidi, Vici**, and afterward **go straight to the Ending.**

Herb Run

If Yongar knows there is a Witcher in the party, he asks them for a shopping list of herbs of Common or Everywhere availability that can typically be found in mountains. Yongar can return with five herbs every day until the party leaves the ice-cutting village.

The Longhouse

The longhouse is a single open sleeping area containing eight beds, each with a trunk shoved underneath it, and a large hearth at the end of the long room. The room is in partial chaos. Half of the beds are strewn with clothes and other personal effects. The other four beds are neatly made.

Players that search the room for all usable objects find:

- ◆ 4 Sets of cold weather clothing
- ◆ 3 Pairs of ice skates
- ◆ 2 Units of clotting powder
- ◆ 2 Gwent decks
- ◆ 1 Bar of soap
- ◆ 1 Bottle of Dwarven Spirits

Veni, Vidi, Vici

The village elder, Yongar makes his way onto the ice hurriedly, waving his cane in the air and screaming:

"It's dead! I can't believe you killed it! Who are you people?"



Yongar

Development (A Village Welcome)

The ice-cutting village is a spartan collection of buildings on the shore of Lake Tankred, consisting only of a long building, two small family cabins lit from inside, and a burned building covered in snow. At present, a large bonfire is burning at the center of the settlement. The arriving party is met by Yongar, who totters out from the cabin closest to the lake with the help of a cane, which he smacks against a metal triangle, causing a middle aged man, Henrick, to join the gathering, who waits for the village elder to speak. After letting the party catch their breath if they were running away from the beast, hearing the party out and inquiring about his son, Olgar, Yongar offers the party aid:

"Our customs demand we show you hospitality. Henrick, you are to feed these travelers. I will keep the bonfire burning tonight in your stead. Travelers, you may sleep this evening in the longhouse and help yourself to any of the equipment left in there that may be of use to you. See me in the morning, we will discuss the Beast. In the meantime, stay away from the burned building. It is haunted."



Henrick

If Yongar sees a player wearing a Witcher medallion or carrying two swords, he turns to them directly:

"Master Witcher, we have no coin to interest you, though I suspect you are already being paid. If there is anything you would need for one of your potions from these mountains, please make me aware so that I may find it for you. I know these lands well, and I am heartier than I look!"

When Yongar is finished, Henrick speaks:

"I will begin cooking now, should only take an hour or so. In the meantime, please unpack your things in the longhouse. You'll want to start a fire in the hearth so it's warm enough for sleeping tonight."

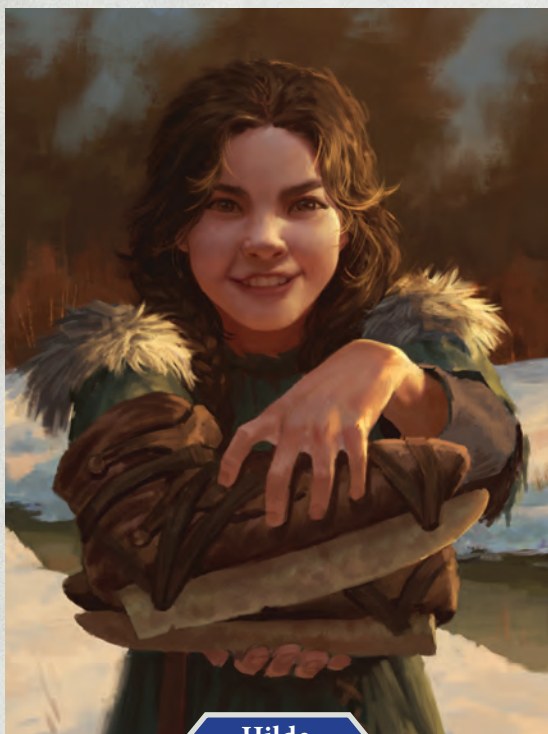
If your players go to the longhouse, see the Sidebar. When your players attend the dinner, **go to Development (Family Dinner)**. If you need to move the story along, have Henrick come find the party and insist that the stew is hot and ready to eat.

Development (Family Dinner)

Henrick's cabin is warm and simply decorated, one room with two sleeping areas sectioned

off by curtains made from wolf furs. Henrick has pushed boxes and sacks of gravel around his tiny table to make up for the cabin's lack of adequate seating. When the players arrive, Henrick is arguing with his young daughter Hilde, who is begging to stay up to meet the strangers. While Henrick initially disagrees, he quickly relents to Hilde's childlike enthusiasm. The meal is a meager helping of watery stew made with winter vegetables and local forage. Because there is not enough food, Henrick does not eat. During the meal, Hilde and Henrick have plenty to talk about:

- ♦ Henrick apologizes for the stew's quality.
- ♦ Hilde complains to Henrick about a stomach ache.
- ♦ Hilde talks to the party about how cool her dad is. He is teaching her to read, and promises to take her hunting next summer when she is older. He's also really good at drawing.
- ♦ Hilde asks when uncle Olgar is coming back to teach her how to ice skate.
- ♦ Henrick tells Hilde that until the Beast has been killed, she shouldn't go near the lake or the ruined building.
- ♦ If a Witcher is in the party, Hilde asks if they have killed any monsters.



Hilde

- ♦ Henrick asks if they found everything all right in the longhouse.
- ♦ When the meal is over, Henrick puts Hilde to bed.
- ♦ When you want to move things along, Henrick stands and thanks the party for coming.

Let the party plan as much as they like before sleeping for the night. At this point in the adventure they have a couple of open threads that they might want to follow:

Yongar has asked to see them in the morning to give them information about the Beast, in **Optional Development (Elder Wisdom)**. He tells players to return in the morning if they see him immediately after the dinner, as he needs to focus on keeping the bonfire burning.

The ruined building could also be investigated, in **Optional Cliffhanger (Ruined Building)**, which could be investigated immediately after the dinner instead of in the morning. Your party might want to search other parts of the village for clues too. If they do, see their descriptions in the maps section.

Finally, the party could always march right onto the lake for the **Climax**.

Optional Cliffhanger (Ruined Building)

On the other end of the ice-cutting village is a ruined burned building covered in fallen snow. The area sets off a Witcher's medallion. Despite being covered in snow, the charred chunks of rubble are still warm. This rubble area is difficult terrain, giving a -2 to Dodge/Escape and Athletics. With a successful Awareness check at **DC:14**, players discover a trapdoor under a slab of rubble that leads to an underground larder by way of a ladder. Without a form of illumination, the larder is shrouded in darkness, which gives a -4 to Awareness and -2 to Attack and Defense. Additionally, the underground larder is home to four emaciated bodies, all huddled together. A small wooden platform has been placed near the bodies, on which charcoal portraits and pressed flowers are arranged.

Ice Skates

While ice skating, you ignore the effects of Snow and Ice conditions.

Treat ice skating as being mounted on a horse with a +2 control modifier and a SPD of 12 that is incapable of charging or ramming. Additionally, making a control check on ice skates is also a little different:

REF + Athletics Skill + Control Mod. + 1d10

If you fail a Control check on ice skates, roll once on the Ice Skates Control Loss table.

Ice Skates Control Loss Table

| Total | Result |
|-------|--|
| 1-2 | Skid: Slide 1d6 meters sideways in the direction of travel. If you hit an object, you stop. |
| 3-4 | Stumble: You stumble. Make a DC:15 Athletics check to stay standing. If you fall you are considered prone. |
| 5-6 | Stumble: You stumble. Make a DC:20 Athletics check to stay standing. If you fall you are considered prone. |

The Curse of Lake Tankred

If players approach Hilde with an accusation about Henrick, she says that they are stupid, are just afraid of killing the Beast themselves, and that they should make their own stew from now on if that's how they feel.

If players approach Yongar with an accusation about Henrick, the elder reveals that he already knew, but believes more suffering won't bring anyone back, and would just cause pain for Olgar and Hilde.

If players approach Henrick with an accusation, he confesses to his crimes. He is truly remorseful. He committed the arson after his wife died from a combination of illness and starvation, to cover his crime of stealing their stockpile of food for the winter. He says that he was mad with grief. He reveals his belly, which is transparent along with his stomach, through which food can be seen digesting, as a mark of the curse.

Ending the Curse

After Henrick confesses, or the players otherwise discover the full story, a Monster Lore check of DC:14 can discover that the curse can be ended in two ways: Either the Beast must be slain, or the Beast must kill Henrick.



Optional Development (Elder Wisdom)

In the morning, the party can visit Yongar like he asked them to discuss the beast. He begins by sharing his version of the attack:

"It was the first night of our ice harvesting season, and I had assigned the first shift to four of our temporary workers. I was looking on from my window in my cabin, making sure everything was going as planned. They had just removed the first ice block of the season from the lake center when I heard a scream. I looked out onto the lake. There were three of the workers, yelling and waving their hands. I don't think they saw what happened either. They began to run when they did. The Beast jumped up onto the ice from the hole in the lake and grabbed two of the remaining ice cutters in both of its claws. The last one was holding a torch, and the beast looked at him for a bit before stuffing both of men captured in its claws into its mouth, and crawl toward the last ice cutter, dragging its bloated body across the ice with its arms, moving much more slowly than it did before it ate the others. The boy dropped his torch and ran for the shore as fast as could. The

beast dived again into the lake, and I saw the ice open underneath the last boy seconds later. I didn't see him or the Beast again. After seeing it avoid the torch like that, I got the remaining temporary workers to band together to make a bonfire in the center of town in exchange for food for their trip back south, as all four of them were ready to run naked into the forest if it meant not being here. Then I sent my son to get the help of the mages, and I've been keeping the bonfire burning in the days since with Henrick's help."

From Yongar's detailed account of the Beast, players can make a **DC:16** Monster Lore, Tactics, or Deduction check to learn the following about the Beast of Lake Tankred.

- ◆ It is primarily food motivated.
- ◆ It dislikes fire and avoids it if possible.
- ◆ It is a capable swimmer.
- ◆ Its stomach is somewhat stretchy and can hold three humans before it is full.
- ◆ Once full, it is incapable of moving quickly on land, but is still perfectly capable of swimming.
- ◆ Despite being full, it continues to seek out nearby food.
- ◆ It can break the thick ice on the surface of the lake easily.

Yongar doesn't prescribe the party tactics for the upcoming confrontation with the Beast. The Climax is written flexibly enough to accommodate the majority of plans your players may come up with.

Now is an appropriate time to remind the party of their time limit of seven days to return to the mages with a block of lake ice.

Your players may want to **explore the ruined building** if they have not done so already.

When they are ready to fight the Beast of Lake Tankred, or end the curse in another way, go to the **Climax**.

Climax

Your players are ready to face the Beast of Lake Tankred, using whatever plan they have come up with. Or they've chosen to do something awful, which you should play by ear. If something deeply emotionally scarring happens to Hilde, her extreme negative emotions may even curse those responsible.

Use the Bandit stat block from the core book for Olgar, Yongar, or Henrik if they are convinced to join the battle.

Sneaking up on the Beast requires a **DC:20 Stealth** check or to lure or distract the beast in some way, either by engaging it elsewhere, or by baiting it with food. The Beast responds to a lure as far away as the shore of the lake. Baiting the Beast is always effective if enough bait is presented. Given a choice between two halves of a split party, or a party and a potential lure, the Beast attacks the group that represents a larger potential meal. The Beast also prefers a meal that does not come wielding fire, unless no other meal is available, in which case it attacks despite its aversion to fire. If Henrick is used as bait, the Beast always prefers to attack him.

A character that begins their turn swimming in the freezing water of Lake Tankred loses 10 points of stamina. If this stamina drain causes a character to hit 0 stamina, they enter Death State.

When the Beast of Lake Tankred is slain, its body turns slowly to ice. **Go to the Ending**.

Ending

With the Beast slain, ice-cutting resumes at once, whether or not the curse was ended. It doesn't take long for a fresh block of ice to be cut from the lake and loaded onto a sled for transport down to Highwatch. The trip takes the remain-

der of the day, and passes without incident. If the players return with the ice in time, they are promptly paid, and the High Mountain Society's party is "saved." Olgar is "released" from "captivity" and heads back north with the empty ice sled to reunite with his father and the rest of the ice-cutting village. Any Sorceress in the party (including potential non-alumni of Aretuza, for whom they make a special exception) are invited to stay for the High Mountain Society's gathering, and are welcome to bring along a guest as their plus-one. Sorceresses who attend the party may find themselves invited to join the society should they not embarrass themselves at the gathering. Such membership has its privileges, namely, that Louise, Catrin, and Clarisse would be willing to teach them their signature spells, **listed at the back of the adventure**. Membership would also come with certain responsibilities, however.

Any other member of the party also has a chance at being invited by one of the High Mountain Society sorceresses, should they fancy them enough to invite them as their date. This can occur if a party member made a positive impression on them during the Hook. Such positive impressions may have been made by having a base 14 or higher Grooming and Style in the case of Catrin, a BODY of 7 or higher in the case of Louise, or a base Alchemy of 15 or higher, in the case of Clarisse.

Crashing the party, of course, is also always an option.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

You should have your Players attend the party. At the party, have a mage with a prosthetic leg named Barend Anselberg feed them a rumor about a magical disturbance in Kaedwen in the Alderwood. Barend believes the source of the disturbance is a powerful artifact named the Alderwand. He doesn't plan on going south again anytime soon to figure it out though, as he's looking to get as far away from Nilfgaard as possible. When your Players arrive in Kaedwen chasing down the rumor, proceed to the next adventure, **In The Alderwood**.

Party in the Dragon Mountains

The party is a perfect place to set a hook for your party's future adventures. Louise's guest list is long, and full of the continent's most magical sorceresses. Who knows who might also be attending as a plus-one? The party itself isn't without danger, either, especially considering the current climate.

Who knows what might happen?

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 8 |
| Awareness | 9 |
| Brawling | 9 |
| Courage | 10 |
| Endurance | 10 |
| Intimidation | 9 |
| Physique | 8 |
| Resist Magic | 10 |
| Stealth | 10 |
| Wilderness Survival | 8 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Armor | 10 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|-------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| Poison | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|------------------|--|
| Cursed Oil | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 14 |
| Reposition Base | 8 |
| Block Base | 15 |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Bounty | |
| — | |

| Loot | |
|------------------------|--|
| Essence of Water (x12) | |
| Zoria Runestone (x1) | |



**Hard
Complex**

Intelligence
Feral

Senses
Night Vision

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 1 |
| REF | 10 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 15 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 1 |
| WILL | 5 |

| | |
|------|-----|
| STUN | 100 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 50 |
| ENC | 150 |
| REC | 10 |
| HP | 80 |



| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Height | 4m |
| Weight | Around 1000kg |
| Environment | Lake Tankred |
| Organization | Solitary |

The Beast of Lake Tankred

Description

The monster is four meters tall, and most of that height is taken up by its huge mouth, made to feed its gargantuan translucent stomach which spills out in rolls underneath it. Two long arms flank the pale mass, on which sit long fingered hands tipped with jagged claws, built to shovel victims into the massive orifice. Tiny beady eyes are perched atop the monstrosity, watching you. Waiting...

Combat Tactics

In combat, the Beast of Lake Tankred prefers to bite its closest enemy. It prefers to bite enemies that it hasn't yet used its Gulp ability against. If there aren't any to be found in its immediate surroundings, it prefers to use its claws to attack enemies that it has already tasted. If it is being attacked purely from range, and cannot reach its ranged attackers in one round, it jumps underneath the ice to hide from their missiles, preferring to approach them from underwater and attack through the ice if possible. During a turn where the Beast attacks an enemy through the ice, it always ends its turn on land if possible.

| Attacks | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-----|------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect | ROF |
| Bite | 15 | P | 5d6 | 20 | — | Gulp Ability | 1 |
| Claws | 15 | P | 4d6 | 15 | — | Long Reach | 2 |

Vulnerability: Boated Belly

While the Beast has an enemy in its stomach, or is stuffed from a recent meal, while on land its SPD is halved and it gets a -4 to Attack and Defense.

Vulnerability: Curse of Lake Tankard

If Henrick is killed by the Beast, the Beast of Lake Tankred dies at the end of its next turn

Ability: Amphibious

The Beast can survive indefinitely underwater and cannot be drowned. It does not take penalties for acting underwater.

Ability: Gulp

An enemy that gets hit by a Bite is swallowed by the Beast. A character swallowed in this way is grappled and can be seen from the outside though the monster's translucent stomach. From the inside however, the stomach is opaque. A character can escape the Beast's stomach by making a DC:16 Physique check or after a total of 15 points of damage has been dealt to the inside of the Beast's stomach, which has SP 10. When either is achieved, the beast surfaces if it was underwater and promptly empties the contents of its stomach (including any other players also inside) onto surface of the ice. They are considered prone.

Ability: Ice Breaker

The Beast can break through ice without impediment.

Ability: Stomach Acid

Enemies that start their turn inside the Beast's belly take 2 points of acid damage to each of their (presumably 6) body locations, for a total of 12 damage per round. If a location is armored, the armor takes 3 points of ablation damage. Drawn weapons or weapons worn but not stored in a sheath take 3 acid damage when their wielder takes damage from this effect.

Ability: Traction

The Beast is unaffected by Snow and Ice Conditions.

Ability: Feral

For the purposes of Awareness and Wilderness survival, instinct gives it an INT of 8.

NPCs

The three sorceresses each have stats identical to the Mage Stat block in the core book, apart from three additional skills. Their spell lists are also unique.

Louise van Adelaide

NPC

Louise van Adelaide is the strong-willed head of the newly formed High Mountain Society of Sorceresses. In an age where students of magic are in danger, she has seen close friends burned, and many more estrange themselves in self-preserving isolation. A social butterfly, this didn't sit well with Louise, who created the Society of Sorceresses to re-create the nostalgia she holds for the magical

community that she was a part of during her study at Aretuza. She has a tendency for bold action, a desire for perfection, and a stubborn streak that can get her in trouble. Her close companions at the Society regard this as the defining aspect of her character, even though holding herself to the same lofty standards sometimes leaves her frustrated.

| Spells |
|--------------------------|
| Aenye |
| Glamour |
| Magic Healing |
| Stammelford's Earthquake |
| Teleportation |
| Urien's Shelter |
| Van Adelaide's Gale |

| Rituals |
|-------------------|
| Telecommunication |
| Ritual of Magic |

| Hezxes |
|------------------|
| Hex of Shadows |
| The Eternal Itch |

| Extra Skills | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| +5 to Grooming and Style | +5 to Leadership | +5 to Human Perception |

Catrin Preece

NPC

A classmate of Louise's at Aretuza, Catrin was the first sorceress she recruited for the High Mountain Society of Sorceresses. Born the youngest child of a noble family of Kovir & Poviss, she was sent away for schooling in Aretuza to keep her away from a then pressing family succession conflict when she was discovered to be practicing magic on her own. Thanks to magic extending her lifespan, she has now

outlived her siblings, leaving her to inherit her family's fortune. One could say that this was opportune for Catrin, and quite fortuitous. But if you knew her, you might suspect otherwise. With her fortune she is backing the Society financially, which was essential to construct Highwatch. From its defensible position in the Dragon Mountains, she is planning her next move.

| Spells |
|---------------------|
| Eilhart's Technique |
| Freshen Air |
| Glamour |
| Mind Manipulation |
| Preece's Procedure |
| Rhewi |
| Teleportation |

| Rituals |
|-------------------|
| Telecommunication |
| Hydromancy |

| Hezxes |
|------------------|
| Hex of Shadows |
| The Eternal Itch |

| Extra Skills | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| +5 to Grooming and Style | +5 to Deceit | +5 to Social Etiquette |

Clarisse de Claudine

NPC

Clarisse de Claudine was the third member recruited for the High Mountain Society of Sorceresses. She was offered membership when she was discovered by Louise and Catrin to be living isolated nearby what is now Highwatch to hide from the widespread persecution of the age. Their offer of an influential founding position in a budding magical research community and a stipend for alchemical components was ultimately too good to turn down. While she was initially skeptical about the

arrangement, and indeed the newly formed Society as a whole, she began to warm to both Louise and Catrin, eventually sharing with them friendship as well as alchemical secrets. Typically quiet and reserved, she opens up into an entirely different person when discussing alchemy. She particularly enjoys the lighthearted and sometimes cathartic stories alchemists tell about their most spectacular alchemical failures, the ones that usually end with singed eyebrows and acid burns.

Spells

Bronwyn's Gust

Codi Bywyd

De Claudine's Substitution

Elgan's Theory

Glamour

Puro Dwr

Teleportation

Rituals

Telecommunication

Cleansing Ritual

Hezxes

Hex of Shadows

The Eternal Itch

Extra Skills

+5 to Grooming
and Style

+5 to Teaching

+8 to Alchemy

Signature Spells of the Sorceresses of the High Mountain Society

De Claudine's Substitution

Level: Journeyman**STA Cost:** 8

Effect: Popular with Alchemists and useful when looking for rare substances in a region, De Claudine's Substitution allows you to permanently change the Alchemical Substance of one Unit of an Alchemy ingredient to a different Alchemical Substance. Only one unit of any such transmuted Alchemical Substance can be used in an Alchemical Formula without ruining the concoction.

Range: 2m**Duration:** Permanent**Defense:** None

Van Adelaide's Gale

Level: Journeyman**STA Cost:** 12

Effect: Created by Louise Van Adelaide to help escape capture in the North, Van Adelaide's Gale uses powerful wind to launch you in an arc up to 30m away. Upon casting the spell, a rush of wind bursts out from you in a 2m sphere, knocking anyone who fails to defend back 6m. This attack also does only 1d6 damage, but if someone effected by the spell strikes something they take ramming damage. While in the air, wind cushions your fall, meaning that you take no damage upon landing.

Range: Self**Duration:** Immediate**Defense:** None

Preece's Procedure

Level: Journeyman**STA Cost:** 10

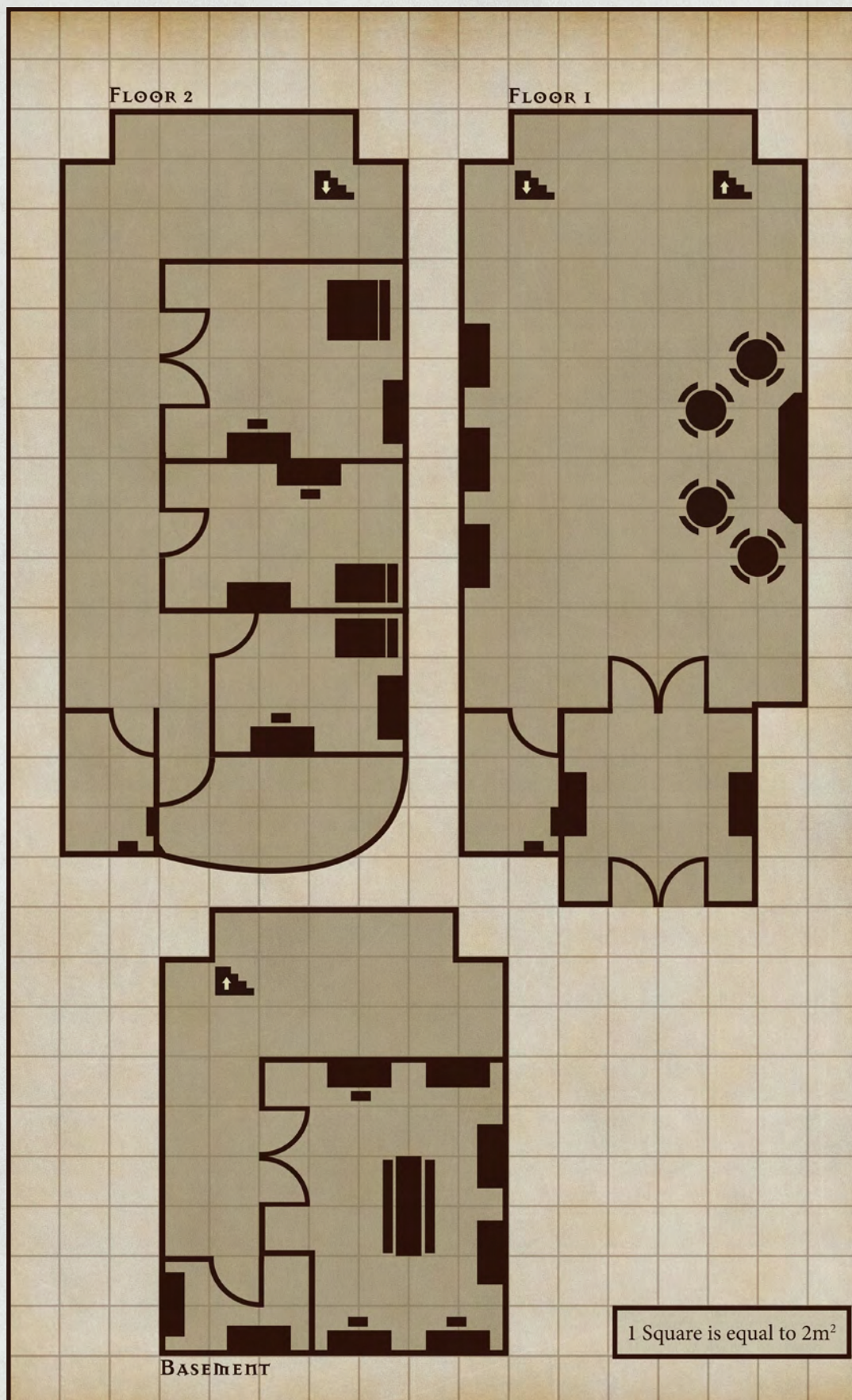
Effect: Developed by Catrin Preece to navigate the dangerous waters of high society, Preece's Procedure allows you to temporarily lock away one of a target's emotions. When the spell is cast, you can choose one of the following emotions to lock away: Hatred, Love, Depression, or Euphoria. For the duration of this spell, the target is incapable of having this emotion and is unaware they have been affected with magic. At the end of the spell's duration, the target's locked emotion returns but they are still unaware they were affected by magic. Each time the spell is cast on a single target that is currently being effected by the spell, the Stamina Cost to cast Preece's Procedure raises by 2.

Range: 3m**Duration:** 8 Hours**Defense:** Resist Magic

Highwatch

Light Level: Un-modified

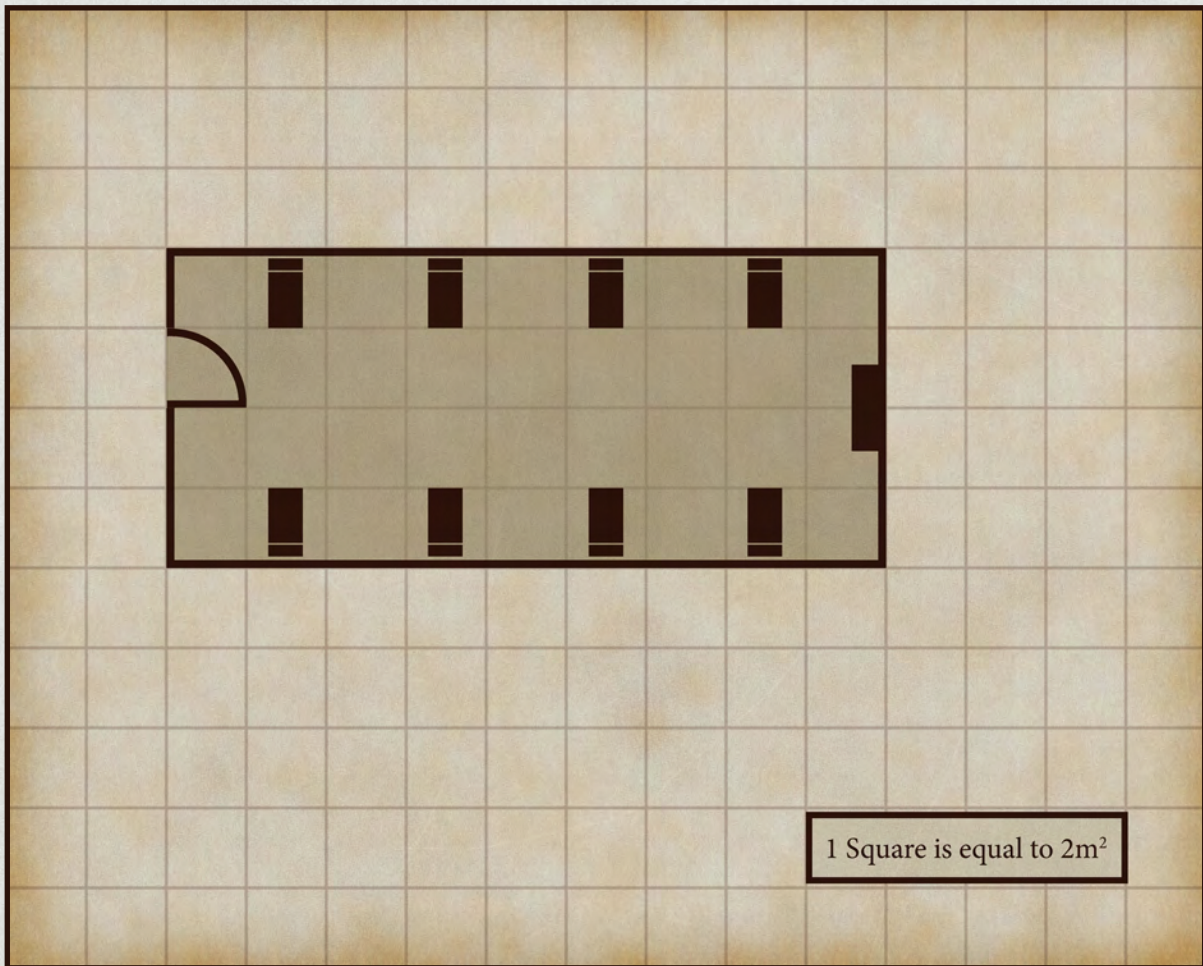
Highwatch is the recently built headquarters for the High Mountain Society of Sorceresses. The sorceresses here are a cliquy bunch, but could be interested in interacting with the players further than they absolutely have to should an arrangement be in any one of their self-interests. They hope to turn the new headquarters into a magical social hub, and have designed the building's first and second floors with hosting in mind. The balcony on the second floor provides a romantic view of the surrounding landscape, and is magically heated in the winter. The basement, in contrast, houses a laboratory capable of cutting edge magical research.



The Longhouse

Light level: Un-modified

The Longhouse was built to house the temporary workers necessary to meet the ice-cutting village's demand for labor during the brief peak season for ice-cutting. The building is a spartan affair, meant as a simple sleeping quarters for young men. Should players search it for clues about the Beast, they find nothing of interest to the mystery amid a number of useful things those men have left behind, which are listed in the Sidebar *The Longhouse*.



Henrick & Hilde's Cabin

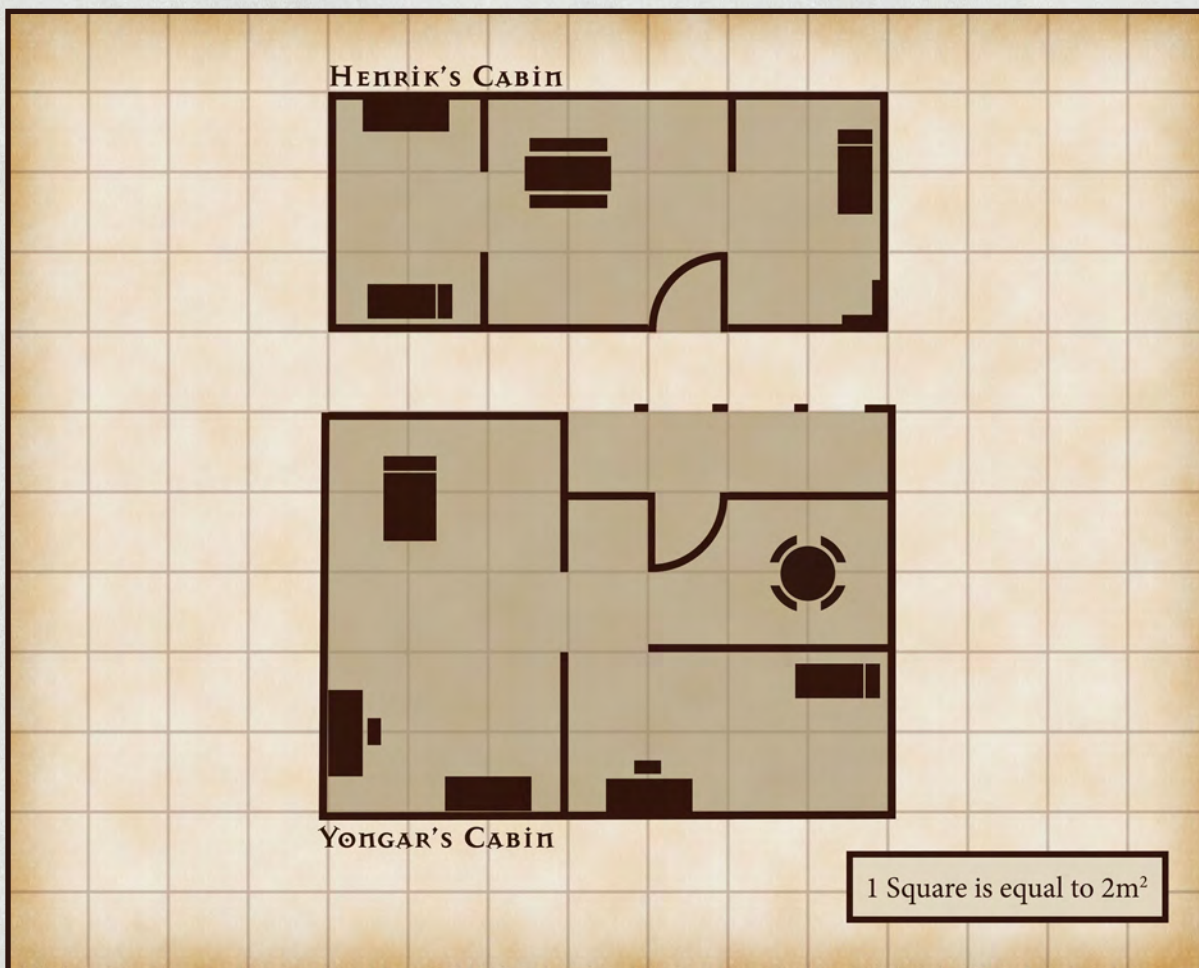
Light level: Un-modified

Henrick & Hilde's cabin is small, and the party has difficulty all squeezing in for supper. But for Henrick and Hilde, it's the only home they've ever had. Rustic as it is, the lodgings are tidy and well cared for. Hilde takes pride in her housework, and her father takes pride in her too. With a DC:14 Deduction or Awareness players can find Henrick's private journal, in which he confesses to arson, theft of food, and murder of the third ice-cutting village family

Yongar & Olgar's Cabin

Light level: Un-modified

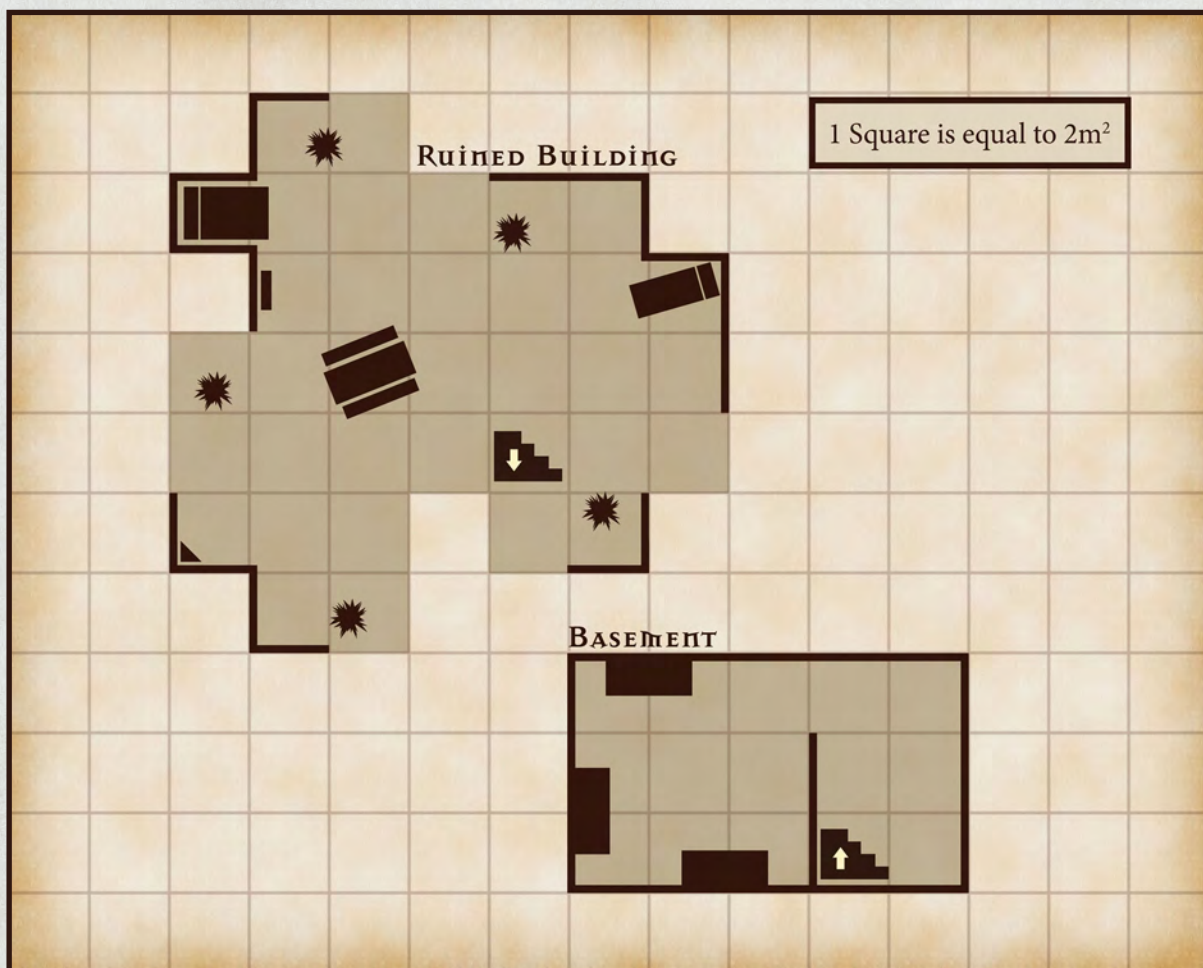
Yongar & Olgar live in a slightly larger cabin near the shore of Lake Tankred. The porch is the most used part of their home. Both men prefer to be outdoors, anyway. The small living area is barely used except for meals. Yongar's room is covered in small trinkets that he collected from across the continent in his younger years, and he has an impressive collection of pressed flowers. Olgar's room is messy. He was in the middle of repairing some ice-cutting equipment before he left for Highwatch.



Ruined Building

Light level: Un-modified; Dim Light in the Basement

The ruined building was home to a third family that was only last year part of the ice-cutting village community, until a horrible fire swallowed them up along with their home while they slept. The players might go here to investigate, and might find out what happened on that terrible night. Nobody in the ice-cutting village likes to speak about the fire, and the remains of the family were never able to be found, nor can they bring themselves to clear the site of debris. A DC:14 Awareness check can discover the hidden entrance to an underground larder. See Optional Cliffhanger (Ruined Building).





There are times when I feel
the Continent is a brutal place,
populated by barbarians and monsters
with no love for poetry, drama, and the
like. These cynical thoughts must be turned
inward. If there is a lack of art, then I must
create it. If this is to be my role, I must not
fall into despair. There is beauty
in this world, and it must be
discovered, and brought to the
people by those bold enough
for the task.



In the Alderwood



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

The party has just arrived in Kaedwen from Kovir & Povis, crossing the Kestrel Mountains on their trip. They end up in an inn in Riverbend, at the edge of the Alderwood, which is where this adventure begins...

Background (Read Aloud)

There's a funny thing about traveling across Kaedwen. It always happens that, somewhere near the middle of your journey, the rugged countryside seems to stretch out before your eyes, yawning toward the horizon. It's no wonder those of magical means prefer to teleport across Kaedwen whenever possible. At least you are never more than a day's journey from another tiny, sleepy village with a rundown alehouse. This morning, you passed through one named Saint's Crossing. This one's name is Riverbend — that's the name of the village, not the alehouse. You aren't sure of the name of this alehouse at the moment. But here, you find yourself thankful that you can't get food poisoning from beer, and enough of it makes you forgive the rustic accommodations for another night.

The Rest of the Story

The priest, **Tabbart**, prays for the arrival of a capable party of travelers, or perhaps even a witcher to arrive. His flock thins in number as of late, and he hears similar stories from two nearby settlements: the Bartok-Barrow Company's mining operation and the merchants of Saint's Crossing. Without exception, all three communities share a paranoid hatred for one another. From their villages, those missing seem to exclusively be adolescents. The priest believes the disappearances to be connected, the fault of a monster or an otherwise evil force that must be destroyed. The two neighboring communities share this view. All suspect the Alderwood, a dense forest at the center of the three communities. Recent attempts by rescue-minded villagers to enter the Alderwood, even those led by experienced foresters, have ended exactly where they began, as if by magic. While the villagers are correct that the missing adolescents are currently in the Alderwood, they are not being held there against their will. A **sylvan** named **Oberhasil**, fancying himself a playwright, has recruited them all into joining his troupe of thespians. They live with

him in a small, self-sufficient community within the confines of the forest. The sylvan carries a wand that grants him prescience throughout the Alderwood, making him a terrible foe to double-cross.

Setting

In Kaedwen, the players search for missing adolescents from among three neighboring communities along the Lixela River, Saint's Crossing, the Bartok-Barrow Mines, and Riverbend, all of which border the dense Alderwood where the missing children are supposedly held. Upon finding their way inside the forest and discovering the missing children not only safe but also not in favor of returning, the players must convince their furious parents to give up the search, which turns sour when one village hires a *professional* to do some kidnapping of their own.

Forces

This adventure works with up to six players. Non-combat focused characters in particular will have plenty of chances to shine. Bards, priests of Kreve, merchants, and dwarves will find a warm welcome. Hopefully someone more martial-minded will be around to defend them, too.

The Opposition Will Be

- ◆ Oberhasil is a sylvan who claimed ownership over the Alderwood with the help of a magic wand known as the **Alderwand**, and used it to start an acting troupe. Use the sylvan **stat block at the end of the adventure**, but give Oberhasil +8 to both Performance and Fine Arts.
- ◆ Oberhasil's troupe consists of six adolescent runaways, whose **stat blocks** can be found **at the back of the adventure**.
- ◆ **Flip** is a rock troll who joined with Oberhasil's troupe, only partially for the vodka. Rock troll stats can be found in *The Witcher* TRPG Core Book.
- ◆ Drunken miners equal in number to the players plus two might start a fight with the players at the Bartok-Barrow Mine. Use bandits from *The Witcher* TRPG Core Book for their stats, except that they are unarmed with a 1d6 punch and are also **Intoxicated**.
- ◆ **Pardus of Korath** is a witcher who poses the single largest threat to the party. See the stat block at the back of the adventure for his stats. If your party is just starting out or has fewer than three people, use the alternative difficulty Pardus presented **in a sidebar near the Climax**.

Set Up (Read Aloud)

In the morning, the gruff dwarf innkeeper wakes you by banging on the bottom half of your door.

"You and your companions have a visitor from the Church of Kreve. Seems he's keen to make friends, too. He just ordered breakfast to for you all. Already paid, too. Said he's happy to wait — something about the virtue of patience and charity. At least eat before you tell him to sod off."

Hook

Give your players an hour to dress and prepare themselves for the day. Ask each how their character goes about their morning routine to help them get into character if they need a warmup. If you need to move things along, the innkeeper serves breakfast and knocks on their door again to beckon them downstairs. Otherwise, the players wander down to breakfast at their leisure.

Tabbart sits downstairs, a youthful man dressed in clean white robes accented with crossed red thunderbolts, the symbol of the Church of Kreve. When he sees the party, he stands and raises both arms. His hair, styled in a bob, bounces behind him with equal enthusiasm.

Once the party sits, he speaks:

You have come, just as I prayed! Strong, virtuous, resourceful, just as Kreve demands! Welcome to Riverbend. Enjoy the onion soup and potato wedges. I want to hear of your prowess. Tell me a tale of your travels...



Tabbart

Tabbart gestures his hands toward the party and dunks his potato wedges in the soup. He waits for the players to finish their introductions or a tale of their exploits. Should he be impressed, he begins his pitch to the players. If unimpressed, he continues anyway, albeit with forced enthusiasm:

“Strange things have been happening in our village — travelers, you arrive in a time of great strife for my flock. Young people go missing at an alarming rate. We lost two just recently, Macklin and Winnie, and my heart aches, as do their parents. Some evil monster, we suspect, lairs within the Alderwood, a forest just outside the village. Our rescue attempts are turned away, seemingly by witchery. Since Macklin’s disappearance, Flann, his father, waits up all hours of the night, watching the forest for clues. He says he hears strange noises and sees distant lights through the dense wood. Just last night I prayed for deliverance in the form of outside aid, and Kreve has delivered you. You will not go without pay. Our church is blessed with the great charity shown by our flock. Upon the safe return of Macklin and Winnie, you will be paid 200 crowns. Should you slay the monster holding them hostage, I will see you are paid an added 200 crowns for your heroic deed. What say you, travelers?”

Development (Initial Investigations)

Your players likely have questions for the villagers of Riverbend, and nighttime investigations they may want to conduct before making their way into the Alderwood. If they choose to enter the Alderwood, go to Cliffhanger (Lost in the Woods).

The majority of the villagers know absolutely nothing about the incidents. They keep to themselves, but feel sorry for **Flann** and **Gitta**, who lost their son Macklin, and **Venetia**, who lost her daughter Winnie.

Tabbart, if pressed for more information about Macklin or Winnie, reveals that he doesn’t know them as well as he knows their parents, because they aren’t always in attendance for his services. He directs the players to their parents if they want to know more about them.

Flann and Gitta, when questioned, initially reveal the same information about their son Macklin, his appearance, what they last remember him wearing, and that his room was undisturbed when he vanished. Gitta also mentions that Macklin is a kind, sweet boy. A **DC:14** Human Perception, Charisma, Persuasion, or Seduction check leads Flann to reveal that he had a fight with Macklin the day before he disappeared; the fight concerned the boy’s upcoming arranged marriage to Winnie. Macklin had cold feet, typical of a boy his age. Still, Flann worries that something terrible has happened to Macklin, because he didn’t take any of his things. If asked about Winnie, he tells the players that they should talk to his sister, Venetia.

If asked about his nightly watch at the edge of the Alderwood, Flann has this to say:

“Been watching the Alderwood for a few nights now. Sometime around midnight, there’s faint music and distant amber light that creeps out from the forest. Always the same music, too. I don’t know what it is. You all are welcome to watch tonight alongside me, of course.”

Venetia’s eyes are bloodshot red and puffy. Anybody can see she’s been crying a fair amount, recently, and it’s been keeping her up. If asked about Winnie, Venetia starts crying again. A **DC:14 Charisma** roll helps her stop crying. Otherwise, the information she gives between sobs. Venetia mentions how Winnie is her treasure, the only connection she had left to her husband, who died in the war with Nilfgaard. They are all each other has left. She has no idea why she would disappear so suddenly, unless a monster dragged her into the Alderwood. She shares basic information about Winnie, her appearance, what she last remembered her wearing, and that her room was undisturbed when she vanished, save for an amulet that belonged to her father. If asked about Macklin, she tells players that they should talk to her brother, Flann.

If the players bring up Flann’s fight with Macklin, Venetia blames Macklin for Winnie’s disappearance, saying that his love for her is impure. If he does not desire marriage, then he is only after her womanly virtue. He stole her off to the forest to commit sin, and there they were captured by a monster, she is sure of it.

Haggling with Tabbart

If Tabbart was sufficiently impressed by the party’s tale of their exploits in the Hook, he is more open to haggling. Otherwise, any attempt to haggle is made at a –4.

Persuasion

| Total | Result |
|-------|-----------------|
| 10 | 25 Crown bonus |
| 14 | 50 Crown bonus |
| 18 | 75 Crown bonus |
| 20 | 100 Crown bonus |

Keeping Watch with Flann

Players can accompany Flann on his nightly watch, held at the edge of the Alderwood, to experience the strange lights and sounds for themselves. The lights remain undiscernible, but after succeeding on a **DC:14 Awareness** check (which already factors in the -2 to awareness given by moonlight), a character can use Fine Arts to attempt to identify the distant music:

| Total | Result |
|-------|--|
| 10 | It's a harp melody accompanied by a wind instrument. |
| 12 | It's a harp melody accompanied by a pan flute. |
| 16 | It's an experienced harpist leading an amateur pan flute player; you can tell because of the hesitation of the flutist. The overture is inspired by the recent work of notable Redanian Trobairitz Callonetta, with the harp taking the place of her favored instrument, the lute. |

Cliffhanger (Lost in the Woods)

Upon entering the Alderwood, a witcher's medallion, if present, begins to hum. When the party has lost sight of the edge of the forest, each player must make a **DC:20 Resist Magic** check. If anyone succeeds, those characters are able to lead the party through the forest to arrive at Development (Alderwood Grove). Oberhasil didn't see them coming, but pretends he did, and attempts peace as a first strategy.

If nobody succeeds the check, the party wanders through the forest for five hours until approached by a stag with white cloth tied to both antlers. It is unafraid of the party and walks directly up to them. If the party doesn't immediately attack the animal (use the war horse statblock from *The Witcher* TRPG Core Book) and accepts the message of peace, it leads them through the forest. **Go to Development (Alderwood Grove)**.

From the moment the animal makes contact with the party, Oberhasil watches them through the forest using the power of the Alderwand. If they draw up a battle plan, or otherwise act violent, dangerous, or aggressive, Oberhasil plans to defend against an attack. When the players arrive in the grove after one hour, **go to Optional Cliffhanger (Assault the Alderwood)**.

Optional Cliffhanger (Assault the Alderwood)

Oberhasil knows the players are coming. Along with the rest of his troupe, he puts into action a plan devised in case the Alderwood was attacked. Despite only being moderately trained, their coordination presents a real threat to the players, especially considering the objective is likely to nonlethally deal with at least Macklin and Winnie, if not the entire troupe, so they can be returned home.

When the party passes through the Alderwood's magic, detailed in **Cliffhanger (Lost in the Woods)**, Oberhasil and his troupe wait for them in their battle positions, detailed in the **Alderwood Grove Assault Map** description found at the end of the adventure.



Oberhasil at this stage does not call for retreat, and fights to the death to protect his troupe. He also rejects any surrender or deals the the players offer if any members of the troupe have been killed. So long as his troupe lives, and the players haven't already been to **Development (Turning Point)**, a **DC:20** Charisma, Persuasion, or Leadership check convinces Oberhasil to agree to a temporary ceasefire, so long as nobody makes any sudden movements. If successful, he offers the party the same deal as in **Development (Turning Point)**, albeit in a much less jovial manner, warning that this is their last chance to avoid bloodshed. If the party refuses his offer, he calls his troupe to resume hostilities, and this time they fight to the death.

If the players capture Macklin and Winnie and deal with Oberhasil, **go to Ending (Against the Alderwood)**.

If the party agrees to help Oberhasil, the fighting ends, and they can freely roam the camp. They can come and go through the Alderwood unaffected by its magic (a benefit Oberhasil can revoke at any time). Depending on which village they begin brokering peace toward, go to **Development (Convincing Riverbend)**, **Development (Convincing Saint's Crossing)**, or **Development (Convincing Bartok-Barrow Mine)**. These can be completed in any order.

Development (Alderwood Grove)

When the players enter the inner grove of the Alderwood, they immediately notice the large wooden stage constructed at its center, in front of which several long benches serve as seating for an audience. Behind those benches sits a single, tall chair which could comfortably fit two men sitting side by side.

Covered wagons flank the back and sides of the stage in a crescent shape. From behind the stage, smoke rises from a cooking fire.

A loud voice rumbles out from behind the stage:

"It seems we have guests! Come, meet the family!"

Oberhasil's massive form lounges on the forest floor by the fire pit, warming his hooves and furry black goat legs, a considerable stench resulting from the activity. He is surrounded by his troupe, who sit on benches surrounding the fire pit, **Macklin**, **Winnie**, **Maeve**, **Lorcan**, **Nola**, and **Ambrus Bartok**. They all eat from an oversized communal pot of stew cooking over the fire.

Oberhasil speaks first, intending to calm the party:

"Welcome! Please, make yourselves at home. We pose no threat to you. I am a monster, but I am no killer, and certainly no killer of cultured folk like yourselves. This forest is my home, and you, my guests. Please, be at ease. Let us all share food as friends and speak freely. This is now a party!"

Oberhasil and his troupe try to be as helpful as possible, answering any questions the party may have, and generally attempt to get on the party's good side. For specific answers about individual members of the troupe, each member happily and openly shares information from their character backgrounds found at the end of the adventure. After the party starts, the friendly rock troll **Flip** makes an appearance, carrying several bottles of spirits. They try to get everyone drunk, especially themselves.

Introduce each member of the troupe to the party, giving each some speaking lines if possible. As long as the players remain friends of the troupe, they freely share information from their character backgrounds in this way.

After the party dies down, Oberhasil asks the party if they wish to watch their planned rehearsal for their new play, *The Comedy of Hearts Entwined*, set to start at midnight. If they do, **go to Optional Development (Rehearsal)**.

If they don't, Oberhasil calls over his troupe to overhear some important business he has with the players in **Development (Turning Point)**.

Optional Development (Rehearsal)

Oberhasil and his troupe are rehearsing Oberhasil's newest play, *The Comedy of Hearts Entwined*, nightly. The sylvan

takes his place in the tall chair and watches the performance closely. The dress rehearsal begins:

A pan flute plays an opening melody and the curtain rises to reveal a pastoral scene, with a bed at center stage. In a meadow, a newly married couple dances. They sing of their happy marriage while dancing in and around the bed. The husband (played by Macklin) suddenly stops the bawdy number mid-step, falling backward into the bed, and quickly falls asleep. Rising from the bed, the wife (played by Winnie), sings accompanied by the flute about how she only wished to dance more, if only her partner had feet big enough to dance the whole night long.

The music changes. With the introduction of the harp, a sylvan played by Tor, complete with wooden horns, papier-mâché stomach, and goat-leg stilts, joins the wife in song, asking if she would like to dance with him. There is a long dance number in which the sylvan and they wife dance luridly together around the stage, including around and on top of her husband, still asleep on the bed. The husband wakes up momentarily, and the sylvan hides in the backdrop behind a tree in the pastoral scene. After the husband goes back to sleep, the sylvan and the wife share a kiss, and the sylvan exits the stage. Now alone, the wife moves to center stage to address the crowd directly in the final line of the play:

"Feet dance well, but hooves manage better; perhaps next time, we'll all dance together."

Oberhasil claps loudly at the end of the play as his troupe takes their curtain call. After the play, **go to Development (Turning Point)**.

Development (Turning Point)

Oberhasil gathers his troupe to listen as he beseeches the party for their aid:

"Guests, give me your ears, for I have an important request to make of you. You came here to recover two of our acting family — two that were not lost, nor kidnapped, but found. I recognize that in the past, our secrecy, maintained for our own protection, may have inflamed our relationships with our neighboring communities.

"Regardless, I do not wish to be further bothered by intrusions into my wood. These fine actors, myself included, however, wish no ill will toward these communities.

"If you can broker peace between us and our neighbors — Saint's Crossing, Riverbend, and the Bartok-Barrow Mines — I will see that you are paid the same sum you would have been paid by Tabbart, with an additional 30-crown bonus for each of you.

Surprise Attacking Oberhasil

If the party decides to spontaneously attack Oberhasil, he defends himself and the rest of his troupe defends him. Troupe members armed for melee combat charge at the party and try to get between them and Oberhasil. Troupe members who prefer ranged combat take cover behind the wagons or on the stage, and fire on the party. Flip the rock troll joins in defending Oberhasil by throwing rocks from afar. For the troupe member's statistics, see the character summaries at the end of the adventure. If players succeed in their surprise attack, **go to Ending (Against the Alderwood)**.

Why Won't Oberhasil and His Troupe Just Leave?

Your party might suggest that Oberhasil leave the Alderwood. He plans to take his show on the road, but his troupe needs closure to move on and not be pursued by their parents should they leave without reconciling. Additionally, while he worries about other groups coming into the Alderwood, the Alderwand only gives him power over the Alderwood. Leaving too early might be dangerous.

"We have only two terms that cannot be infringed upon for there to be peace: The first, that no one may enter the Alderwood without the permission of Oberhasil; the second, that none of my troupe's lives or livelihoods shall be bargained with as part of the negotiation. What say you?"

If the party refuses to help Oberhasil, he revokes their invitation to move freely in his woods, asks them politely to leave, and watches them closely over the next couple of days using the power of the Alderwand. If he sees them re-consider, he offers them the same task again, sending Ambrus Bartok to confirm their decision and re-instate their invitation to the Alderwood. If he witnesses them plot an attack against the Alderwood, he prepares to defend it in **Optional Cliffhanger (Assault the Alderwood)**. Planning such an attack locks the players into a battle with Oberhasil where the sylvan has time to prepare beforehand. When they next enter the Alderwood, they **go to Optional Cliffhanger (Assault the Alderwood)**.

If the party decides to help Oberhasil, they can freely roam the camp, and are able to come and go through the Alderwood unaffected by its magic (a benefit that Oberhasil can revoke at any time using the Alderwand). Depending on which village they begin brokering peace toward, **go to Development (Convincing Riverbend)**, **Development (Convincing Saint's Crossing)**, or **Development (Convincing Bartok-Barrow Mine)**. These can be completed in any order. Oberhasil wants a full report from the party each time they make peace with a village.

Development (Convincing Riverbend)

Riverbend, previous home to Macklin and Winnie, will be most familiar to the players at this stage.

Neither Macklin nor Winnie want to meet their parents in person, but both understand that it may be necessary for their parents to give up their search and to broker peace with Riverbend. They follow the party to Riverbend if they promise to keep them safe. Macklin in particular is worried about his father's temper.

The community of Riverbend's interests in the negotiation are entrusted to Tabbart.

Tabbart begins the dialogue by refusing to continue further until he can personally verify the safety of Macklin and Winnie using his priestly magic. He can be convinced to forgo this magical check with a **DC:16** Charisma or Persuasion check, or without a check by another priest of Kreve. Even if convinced otherwise, he must see Macklin and Winnie safe in person for the negotiation to continue.

If Tabbart is unconvinced, he uses the preacher invocation **Light of Truth** on both Macklin and Winnie and asks them to fill in the details of their disappearance. They reveal the sylvan nature of Oberhasil, shocking the priest, but also vouch for his character, and confirm that neither are under any magical compulsions and that they stay with the troupe of their own free will.

If Tabbart learns of Oberhasil, he worries about the presence of a sentient monster, even a "good" monster so close to Riverbend, which he sees as an obstacle to peace. Sylvan are rare monsters unfamiliar to him. He can be convinced that a sylvan does not represent a threat with a **DC:14** Monster Lore, Education, or Persuasion check, or with no check by another priest of Kreve. This check can be made multiple times, even causing the negotiation to stretch on for multiple days, with each attempt after the second being made at a -2. Tabbart tables peace negotiations until he can be convinced of this. When convinced, he agrees on behalf of the village to Oberhasil's terms, and peace negotiations end successfully.

If Tabbart was convinced against using **Light of Truth**, Macklin and Winnie both tell him all the same information about their disappearance, but keep from him Oberhasil's nature. Tabbart agrees on behalf of the village to Oberhasil's terms, and peace negotiations end successfully.

After successful peace negotiations, Tabbart pays the party 200 crowns, plus any bonus haggled for, which he says settles them. He can't be haggled with further.

Macklin and Winnie leave after successful negotiations to visit their family (Flann, Gitta, and Venetia) for the evening. They ask the party to give them privacy and promise to reunite with them in the morning at the alehouse to return to the Alderwood.

If this is the second village with which the party has successfully negotiated peace, go to the Climax.

Otherwise, players can negotiate with either remaining neighboring communities in **Development (Convincing Saint's Crossing)** or **Development (Convincing Bartok-Barrow Mine)**.

Development (Convincing Bartok-Barrow Mine)

The Bartok-Barrow Mine is the original home of **Ambrus Bartok** and **Nola**. They describe it as an unremarkable mining village, another finger of the Bartok-Barrow mining company. Being a company-owned settlement, many people are employed by the company in some fashion. Ambrus' father, Sandor Bartok, is the mine's overseer, a position which his wife, Zsoka Bartok, often fills while Sandor is away on business.

Ambrus Bartok won't allow the players to leave him behind when they travel to the Bartok-Barrow Mine, stating that the negotiation with his father will be much harder without him. Nola asks to join the party for the trip as well, but stays behind if needed.

The Bartok-Barrow Mining village was purpose-built by the company, consisting of an overseer's office, a mess hall, and living quarters all neatly packed together around a village square paved with stone from the mine, the centerpiece of which is a large, brass bell of dwarven make.

Upon discovering his son lives, Sandor rushes to greet him, followed closely by his wife Zsoka. They all share a long hug, and Sandor drags Ambrus out into the village square and rings the bell, yelling:

"My son is alive! Work cannot continue on such a blessed day! Get out of the damn mine and come celebrate! It's a miracle! Ambrus has returned!"

The miners, mostly human with a few dwarves among them, come running out of the mines. Blindingly fast, several barrels of Mahakaman Mead and Kaedwenian Stout are rolled out to the village square. Ambrus is carried off to drink with his father and some of the older dwarf miners in the overseer's office. He flashes a thumbs-up at the party as he is lifted

away, leaving the party in the village square. Players following him are quickly accepted into the mass of older dwarves and shuttled up to the overseer's office to drink.

The party burns on into the night. The miners, both in the village square and the overseer's office, become increasingly inebriated, and start egging one another on to play a drinking game called the "Bartok-Barrow Challenge." The game consists of filling three tankards with Mahakaman Mead and racing an opponent to finish them and stack them upside down in a pyramid shape. Players must make a **DC:15 Resist Coercion** or be pulled into the game. Playing involves making three **DC:14 Endurance** checks in succession. Write these numbers down and add them together to determine the winner. Tied games are often settled with a rematch. For each failed check, the character is affected by the intoxication condition for an additional 2 hours.

Ambrus Bartok begins drunkenly telling stories about his time in the Alderwood, asking his father to agree to peace with Oberhasil and the troupe. He doesn't lie to his father, nor does he sugarcoat that Oberhasil is a monster. Sandor is fast to promise peace at Ambrus' first request, as he only worried about Ambrus' safety.

Word reaches drunk miners who are not enthusiastic about making peace with a monster. Miners equal in number to the players plus two surround the party and threaten to straighten them out with their fists, the old-fashioned way. Use bandits from the Core Book for their stats, except that they are unarmed with a 1d6 punch and are also Intoxicated.

Unless a player calms the miners — either with verbal combat or a **DC:16 Charisma, Intimidation, or Persuasion** check — they attack the party, starting a brawl. They fight until the number of standing party members outnumber them two to one. If any of the players pull out a weapon, Sandor Bartok intervenes to break up the fight, a command the miners obey.

In the morning, Ambrus finds the party. Smiling, he claims that peace has been negotiated successfully and requests an escort back to the Alderwood.

If this is the second village with which the party has successfully negotiated peace, **go to the Climax**.

Intoxication

Effect: You're stumbling drunk. Your REF, DEX, and INT are at a -2 and you are at a -3 for Verbal Combat. There's a 25% chance you won't clearly remember everything you did while you were intoxicated.

Otherwise, players can negotiate with either remaining neighboring communities in **Development (Convincing Saint's Crossing)** or **Development (Convincing Riverbend)**.

Development (Convincing Saint's Crossing)

Saint's Crossing is the original home of **Maeve** and **Lorcan**. Neither accompanies the party to the village, as they swore to each other they would never return. Oberhasil tells the party of a noticeboard in Saint's Crossing carrying incorrect information, which is a possible obstacle to peace.

Saint's Crossing is much larger than Riverbend. All manner of general stores and workshops line its main street, eager to tend to merchant caravans bound for Ard Carraigh. Just off the main street is the Weary Traveler, Saint's Crossing's only tavern, in front of which stands a large bulletin board with notices nailed to it.

The contract *Alderwood Leshen Killing Without Mercy* is the notice Oberhasil mentioned. It reads:

"Let it be known that a reward has been gathered for the killing of the leshen preventing the collection of resources from the Alderwood. Be careful! This monster is responsible for the death of two villagers. See the blacksmith Tor for more information as well as arms and armor to protect you from this menace."

Tor's blacksmith is on the main street. When the players find him, he is repairing a large cart. When the players mention the notice, he tries to sell them overpriced armor, including a gambeson at 200 crowns, a brigandine at 450 crowns, and armored trousers at 350 crowns.

Tor is making a lot of money from the panic resulting from his posting. He's gathered 300 crowns for the reward, but has already made a good deal more in profit from selling armor to cautious visiting merchants. He doesn't even make the armor himself — he imports it from a larger workshop in Ard Carraigh. It is a **DC:14 Business** or **Deduction** check to understand Tor's scheme.

A **DC:16 Intimidation** or **Persuasion** check convinces Tor to remove the notice. A player who understands Tor's scheme can blackmail him into taking the notice down. Additionally, Tor accepts a bribe of 500 crowns to remove the notice. When he agrees to take down the notice, Tor offers to lie to the council about the leshen being destroyed, if the players haven't asked him already. If told his son Lorcan is alive, he reveals he is well aware, as he saw the ungrateful whelp leave in the dead of the night when he thought he was asleep.

The merchants of Saint's Crossing sit on a council that makes decisions on behalf of the village. The lead negotiator elected by the council when the players arrive in Saint's

Crossing is Lunn, who owns the Weary Traveler. Lunn's position is widely known.

Lunn only agrees to Oberhasil's terms if the leshen threat from the Alderwood has been dealt with, but will do so wholeheartedly, as peace is good for business. Unless told otherwise, Lunn has a preconceived notion that Oberhasil must be a mage who prefers his privacy. He has never heard of a sylvan. He admits to knowing that some mages do strange experiments, but that he doesn't understand them. If told his daughter Maeve is alive, disbelieves the party unless shown proof, in which case he excuses himself to cry for several hours.

If this is the second village with which the party has successfully negotiated peace, **go to the Climax**.

Otherwise, players can negotiate with either remaining neighboring communities in **Development (Convincing Bartok-Barrow Mine)** or **Development (Convincing Riverbend)**.

Climax

When the players next return to the Alderwood grove, or are in transit between the villages, Maeve comes running, yelling:

"There's an intruder in the Alderwood! Help!"

If the players go to help, when they arrive, Oberhasil and the other members of the troupe are taking positions detailed in Alderwood Grove Assault Map description found at the end of the adventure, and are attempting to move the benches and set up the other fortifications detailed in the map description. If the players help set up the fortifications, they are ready just in time for the intruder to arrive. Otherwise, each fortification has a 50% chance of not being set up in time and each troupe member has a 50% chance to be out of position when the battle begins. Flip the rock troll is notably absent from this battle, as he is away visiting his family in the nearby mountains.

Pardus of Korath, a witcher, has been hired by the remaining village. The village caught wind of the deals made with their neighbors, and fears an Alderwood alliance formed against them. Knowing the master of the Alderwood, Oberhasil, to be magically powerful, they hired a professional paid to overlook the possible immorality of slaying such a being while in the process of seeking peace. Pardus of Korath has been paid to do worse. For this particular job, he's been paid 1500 crowns. He would accept a bribe of 3000 crowns to leave the job unfinished, or 2000 crowns with a **DC:18 Business** check. He would also accept items in trade equaling this sum.

Before combat begins, Pardus has already taken a Katakana Decoction.

If he notices the party represents an immediate ranged or magical threat, he begins combat by targeting the area of greatest ranged and magical threat with a Samum Bomb thrown in a Fast Draw, detailed on page 254 of *The Witcher* TRPG Core Book.

His main objective is Oberhasil, not the party nor the children, though he does not hesitate if they get in his way. Whenever possible, Pardus keeps to the edges of the grove, alternating between the cover of brambles (SP 7) and moving with a Ref >10 (giving a -3 to his attackers), relying on Parry Arrows to defend him from missiles. Otherwise, Pardus picks off nearby lightly armored threats with fast strikes and nearby heavily armored threats with strong strikes of his steel sword, making use of Quick Strike each turn if able.

Pardus knows he fights an uphill battle, greatly outnumbered. If he sees an opportunity to tactically escape while below half health, he takes it. To aid in his escape, he makes use of Axii to lose his pursuers.

When Pardus returns for a second attack, which he does about 30 minutes after escaping, he attacks the grove from a different angle. Having healed himself with Swallow and White Honey, he approaches having taken Full Moon to boost his maximum health. Oberhasil ensures that the party knows from which angle Pardus approaches with the help of the Alderwand, warning them of his impending attack. On his second assault, Pardus goes directly for Oberhasil. If he finds another chance to escape while below half health, he does so, and this time, doesn't return. No job is worth your life.

If Oberhasil dies, Pardus snatches Oberhasil's wand and attempts to make an escape. He doesn't return.

When Pardus of Korath completes his task, gives it up, or dies in the process, **go to the Ending (With the Alderwood)**.

Ending (Against the Alderwood)

The children have been returned, and the party is paid. Whatever they did to get here, they must live with the consequences. If Oberhasil is dead, his troupe scatters and make new lives,

some in the surrounding communities, others at the end of a long road.

Ending (With the Alderwood)

The party is paid for their demanding work, exactly what they were offered. It's become evident to the troupe that they cannot be safe in the Alderwood anymore, and thus it's time to take their show on the road. What remains of Oberhasil's troupe, either with his guidance or inspired by his sacrifice, puts into motion his plan for the debut of *The Comedy of Hearts Entwined* in Ard Carraigh. Flip the rock troll is never seen again.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

If the party sided with the Alderwood troupe, **Ambrus Bartok** recommends that the party attend the upcoming Ale Festival in Mahakam. If they sided against the troupe, they stumble upon some revelers heading in that direction that are drunkenly enthusiastic in their recommendation of the upcoming Ale Festival. Large quantities of free alcohol, food, and a once in a generation party should be a big enough hook by itself. Once the party heads in that direction, proceed to the next adventure, **Stone Cold Lies**.

The Alderwand

In addition to its statistics below, when held in the Alderwood, the wand allows its holder to see and hear from anywhere within the forest. The wand also grants its holder the ability to grant and remove immunity from the Alderwood's magic to other creatures, even from a great distance.

| Name | Hands | Effect | Conc. |
|-----------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| Alderwand | 1 | Focus (2) Greater Focus | S |

Legend says it is a section of an ancient leshen's root severed by the final moment of the Conjunction, and that a portion of its magic is trapped inside.

Lowering Pardus of Korath's Difficulty

If your party is just starting out or has fewer than three players, you might want to lower the difficulty of this fight. For a lower difficulty fight, ignore the Parry Arrows and Quick Strike skills on his stat block, and don't allow him to cast Quen.

| Skill Base | |
|-----------------|----|
| Brawling | 12 |
| Common Speech | 12 |
| Courage | 10 |
| Deceit | 14 |
| Dodge/Escape | 13 |
| Elder Speech | 12 |
| Intimidation | 11 |
| Persuasion | 15 |
| Physique | 14 |
| Resist Coercion | 14 |
| Resist Magic | 11 |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |


| Resistances | |
|-------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| — | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Relict Oil, Poison, Fire, Stun | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 13 |
| Reposition Base | 8 |
| Block Base | 12 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| 400 | |

| Loot | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mundane Items (x2d10) | |
| Strange Items (x1d6) | |
| Sylvan Hooves (x1d6/3) | |
| Sylvan Horns (x1d6) | |
| Green Mutagen (x1) | |




Medium Complex

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 6 |
| REF | 8 |
| DEX | 8 |
| BODY | 10 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 7 |
| CRA | 3 |
| WILL | 6 |

| | |
|------|-----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 2 |
| STA | 40 |
| ENC | 100 |
| REC | 8 |
| HP | 80 |



| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Height | Around 2 Meters |
| Weight | Around 230kg |
| Environment | Forests, Caves, & Near settlements |
| Organization | Solitary |

Sylvan

Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

If yer crops are goin' missing and yer goats have all wandered off, it might just be a poor stroke of luck. But it could also be a sylvan! Heh, if that's the case, you'd best call a witcher or gather up all the wine in yer house. Ya see, sylvan ain't the deadliest beasts in the world, and they're too lazy to cause much more trouble than stealin' yer food and ploughin' yer goats — but they can be difficult to get rid of. It's best to appeal to their vices. Heh, these big, tubby bastards are just male succubi, so they love nothin' more than wine and ploughin'! I'd give 'em the wine if ya can. Shudder to think of what beddin' one of these monsters is like.

Witcher Knowledge (Witcher Training DC:14)

Sylvan are Relicts, extremely rare to encounter. They have the appearance of a corpulent man with horns and goat legs. In disposition, they are equal parts mischievous and lazy. Generally, they are harmless until angered or threatened. Despite appearances, they are exceptionally strong and agile. Besides raw strength, a sylvan has many defenses which make fighting it up close dangerous, namely breathing fire and shaking the ground beneath them with a staggering stomp. Being knocked over or staggered by the monster will almost guarantee you to be roasted. If you must fight a sylvan, start from a distance and aim to disorient it before moving in for the kill. Despite its strength, a sylvan is weak to fire, poisoning, and is weaker to being stunned than other monsters. Be sure to coat your blade in Relict Oil if you have it available.

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|------------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Fists | 12 | B | 4d6+4 | 15 | — | Knock Down (30%) |

Ability: Fire Blast

As an action, a sylvan can shoot a ball of fire with a range of 10m and deals 4d6 damage with a 75% chance of lighting the target on fire.

Ability: Stomp

Using its action, a sylvan can stomp the ground and force anyone within melee range to make a DC:15 Athletics check. If they fail, they are staggered.

Ability: Crushing Force

Due to the incredible force with which they punch, a sylvan cannot be parried and deals double ablation damage to weapons, shields, and armor.

Ability: Fire Breath

By taking its turn, a sylvan can breathe a 2m-cone of fire. Anyone in this area must make a DC:14 Athletics check. If they fail, they take 4d6 fire damage with a 75% chance of lighting on fire. This attack does ablation damage to armor regardless of whether it penetrates.

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Alchemy | 10 |
| Athletics | 18 |
| Awareness | 14 |
| Brawling | 16 |
| Deduction | 10 |
| Dodge/Escape | 18 |
| Endurance | 18 |
| Intimidation | 16 |
| Physique | 14 |
| Resist Coercion | 16 |
| Resist Magic | 14 |
| Small Blades | 20 |
| Spell Casting | 14 |
| Stealth | 18 |
| Swordsmanship | 20 |
| Wilderness Survival | 13 |

| Key Skills | |
|------------------|----|
| Witcher Training | 10 |
| Parry Arrows | 10 |
| Quick Strike | 8 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Armor | 10 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|-------------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| Coercion, Disease | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Hanged Man's Venom, Dimeritium | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 18 |
| Reposition Base | 18 |
| Block Base | 20 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| ??? | |



Hard Complex

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
*Night Vision,
Scent Tracking*

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 5 |
| REF | 10 |
| DEX | 10 |
| BODY | 8 |
| SPD | 9 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 8 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 27 |
| LEAP | 5 |
| STA | 50 |
| ENC | 80 |
| REC | 10 |
| HP | 50 |
| VIG | 2 |



| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Height | 1.7m |
| Weight | 100 kg |
| Environment | Wilderness or along main roads |
| Organization | Solitary |

Pardus of Korath

Description:

Pardus of Korath was an infant traded to the Dyn Mawr Caravan in the unimaginable heat of the Korath desert in exchange for a drink of water. This is the only thing he knows about his parents. Pardus grew up with the caravan, barely surviving the Trial of the Grasses as the caravan passed through Aedirn, which was peaceful then. Years of life as a witcher molded him into an excellent killer, but not as much as it did for other witchers in the caravan whose bodies had reacted better to the Trial of the Grasses. When the caravan

began taking contracts on men, he took to the new work, specializing in it when he left the caravan shortly thereafter. Roaming the north, cities provided him with a steady stream of work for many years. Killing humans along with the monsters that fed on them, he gathered Katakan mutagens, which he believes finally fixed his imperfection which was born of that failed trial so many years ago. The mutagen had the side effect of slightly lengthening both of his arms, but the sight has never scared away a paying customer. When you need someone dead, it makes sense to hire a monster.

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|---------------------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Witcher's Steel Sword | 20 | P/S | 4d6+2 | 15 | — | Armor Piercing, Meteorite |
| Witcher's Silver Sword | 20 | P/S | 1d6+2 | 10 | — | Silver (3d6) |

Ability: Strike Capability

Pardus can choose between a Fast Strike and a Strong Strike on his turn, just like a player character.

Ability: Enhanced Senses

Pardus takes no penalty from areas of dim light and can track by scent alone.

Ability: Resilient Mutation

Pardus is immune to diseases and is able to use mutagens and make use of witcher potions and decoctions.

Ability: Cat School

Pardus is immune to Non-Magical Charm attempts.

Gear

Witcher's Steel Sword
 Witcher's Silver Sword
 Double woven hood
 Double woven gambeson
 Lyrian leather trousers
 Belt pouch
 Samum bomb (x2)
 Swallow potion (x2)
 Full Moon potion (x2)
 White Honey potion (x2)
 Katakan decoction
 Bandolier
 Witcher medallion

Magic

Yrden Sign
 Quen Sign
 Aard Sign
 Igni Sign
 Axii Sign

The Six Runaway Teens that make up Oberhasil's Troupe:

For Oberhasil's Troupe, use the bandit statistics from *The Witcher* TRPG Core Book, with the following differences:

- ♦ Macklin (has +6 Athletics)
- ♦ Lorcan (has +4 Crafting)
- ♦ Ambrus Bartok (has +4 Grooming and Style, Social Etiquette, and Education)
- ♦ Winnie (has +8 Courage and +6 to Resist Coercion)
- ♦ Maeve (has +4 Human Perception, and +6 Performance)
- ♦ Nola (has +4 Charisma)
- ♦ Macklin, Lorcan, and Ambrus each wield an Iron Long Sword and a Dagger.
- ♦ Winnie, Maeve, and Nola each wield a Short Bow and a Dagger.

Troup Members



Macklin

Macklin was born in Riverbend to Flann and Gitta, who raised him on the family farm. When he turned 9 he began working the fields in earnest. The long hours put a strain on his relationship with his father and isolated him socially. Up until recently, his cousin Winnie was the only friend he ever had. When he learned that Flann had planned with his sister Venetia to marry them to each other to keep the farm in the family line, he became furious with his father when he learned that the marriage was against Winnie's wishes. Along with Winnie, he received a mysterious invitation to join a group of traveling actors, which they accepted, as it had come at the perfect time.



Lorcan

Born in Saint's Crossing to Tor, Lorcan's future was always decided for him. He was an apprentice blacksmith to his father from an age where he could hardly lift a hammer, so his father made hammers that he could lift, and an anvil that he could reach properly without a stool. As his interests began to grow broader, a process which only accelerated after he learned to read, he noticed his father was only interested in his development insofar that it pertained to blacksmithing. He began to resent the very craft of blacksmithing as a restriction set upon his creativity by his father. It was then that an invitation from a then unknown sylvan arrived, offering to sponsor his more creative pursuits with materials and backing. He took the offer and brought his tools with him to the Alderwood.



Ambrus Bartok

Born in the Bartok Estate in northern Kaedwen to Sandor and Zsoka Bartok, Ambrus Bartok was groomed from a young age to take over his father's position at the Bartok-Barrow Company, overseeing their mine bordering the Alderwood, for which his family was widely known. While he never resented his family, he knew deep in his heart that he desired independence, and to run his own enterprise, autonomy that he knew would never be granted to him even when he came of age. Seeing other distant relatives use higher schooling as a way to create their own destinies outside the company, he was mulling over his options when a perfectly timed invitation was hand-delivered to him by Lorcan on behalf of Oberhasil to forge his own path.



Winnie

Winnie was born to Conall and Venetia in Riverbend. She never met her father, a soldier who died on the end of a Nilfgaardian sword before she was born. Her mother, rattled by the death of her husband, and facing the horrible reality of raising a child alone, leaned heavily on her brother Flann and the church of Kreve for support. Even into her early teens, Venetia never let Winnie venture far from her sight, which, like Macklin, served to isolate her socially, with only Macklin as a real friend. She resents her mother for treating her as more of a final connection to Conall than as her daughter. When she learned of her plan to marry her to Macklin in order to keep her close, she knew she had to escape. Curiously, it was then when she received an invitation to join Oberhasil's troupe. After discussing it with Macklin, she knew it was where she was supposed to be.



Maeve

Maeve grew up crawling on the floorboards under the tables of the Weary Traveler in Saint's Crossing. Her father, Lunn, the innkeeper, was always busy with a packed house of drunken merchants, workers, and other patrons. Her best memories from her childhood were of the occasional bard that would perform there. As soon as she was able, she began working as a serving girl at the inn and tended bar when her father was otherwise busy. When he was, she would keep a coin or two from her tips, eventually saving up enough to buy a small harp. After much practice, she would perform at the inn during times when her father was absent. Oberhasil's invitation came to her just after she had a fight with her father after he caught her slipping a coin into her palm. She brought her harp with her when she left.



Nola

Made an orphan at a young age after her father Brogan was killed in a mine cave-in at the Bartok-Barrow Mine bordering the Alderwood, Nola was allowed to stay at the Bartok-Barrow mine as long as she earned her keep in the kitchen and washing room. One of her favorite duties was tending to the needs of a young Ambrus Bartok, who always treated her well. She began to idolize Ambrus and fall deeply in love with him, which she kept secret even from Ambrus, for fear his parents wouldn't allow her to tend to him any longer if her feelings were discovered. When she discovered that Ambrus had planned to run away, she packed all of her belongings in a sack and followed him into the Alderwood in secret. When she arrived, she was pleasantly surprised to be welcomed alongside him, later finding a new purpose as a pan flute player.



Village Homes

Description: Your players might want to explore (snoop around) some of the many quaint homes found in any of the three villages. These single-family residences are modest, but full of rustic peasant charm. Some carry the scenes of the meals recently prepared within. Others smell like wagon grease. A select few even smell like sweaty dwarven miners.



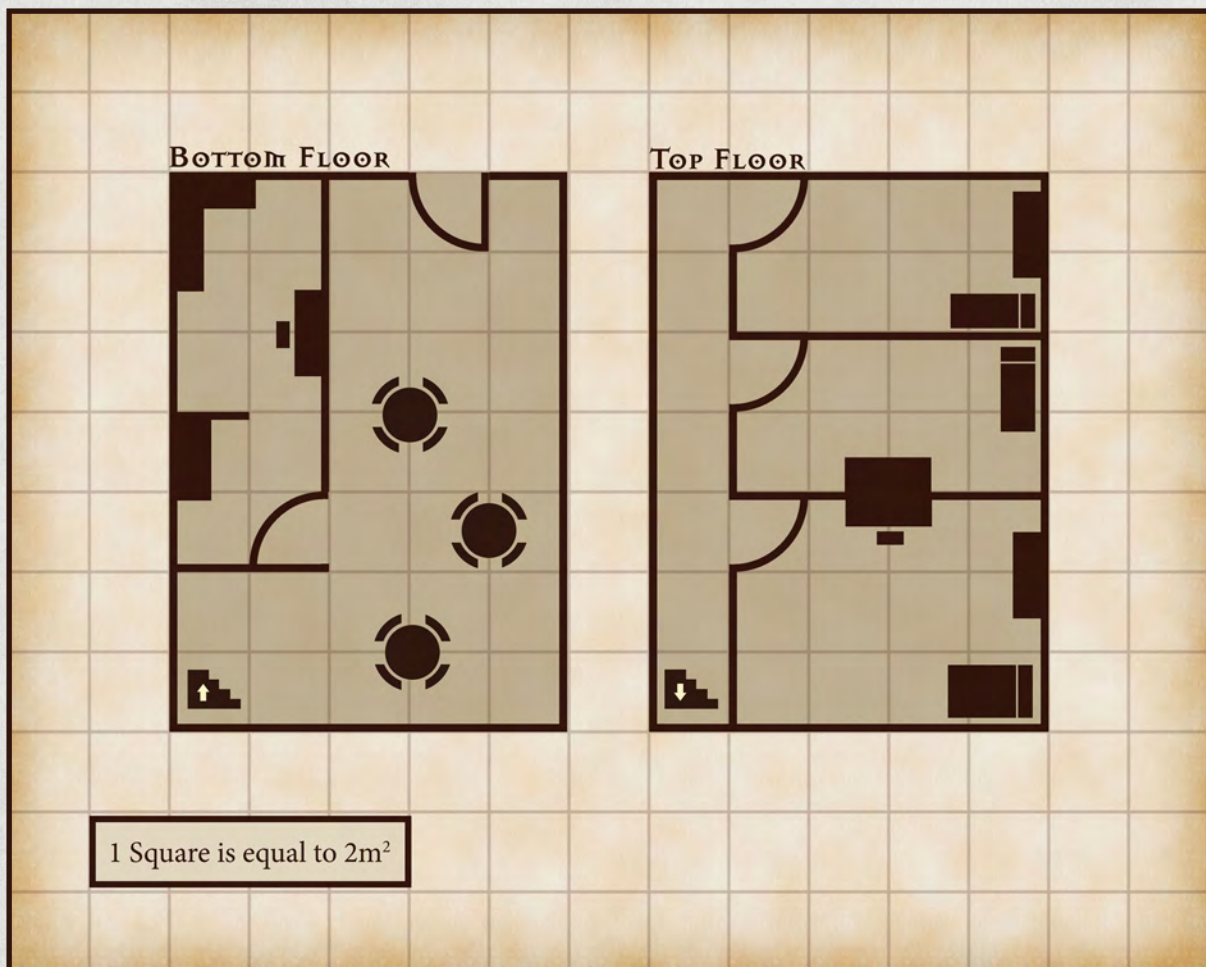




Riverwood Inn

Light Level: Un-modified

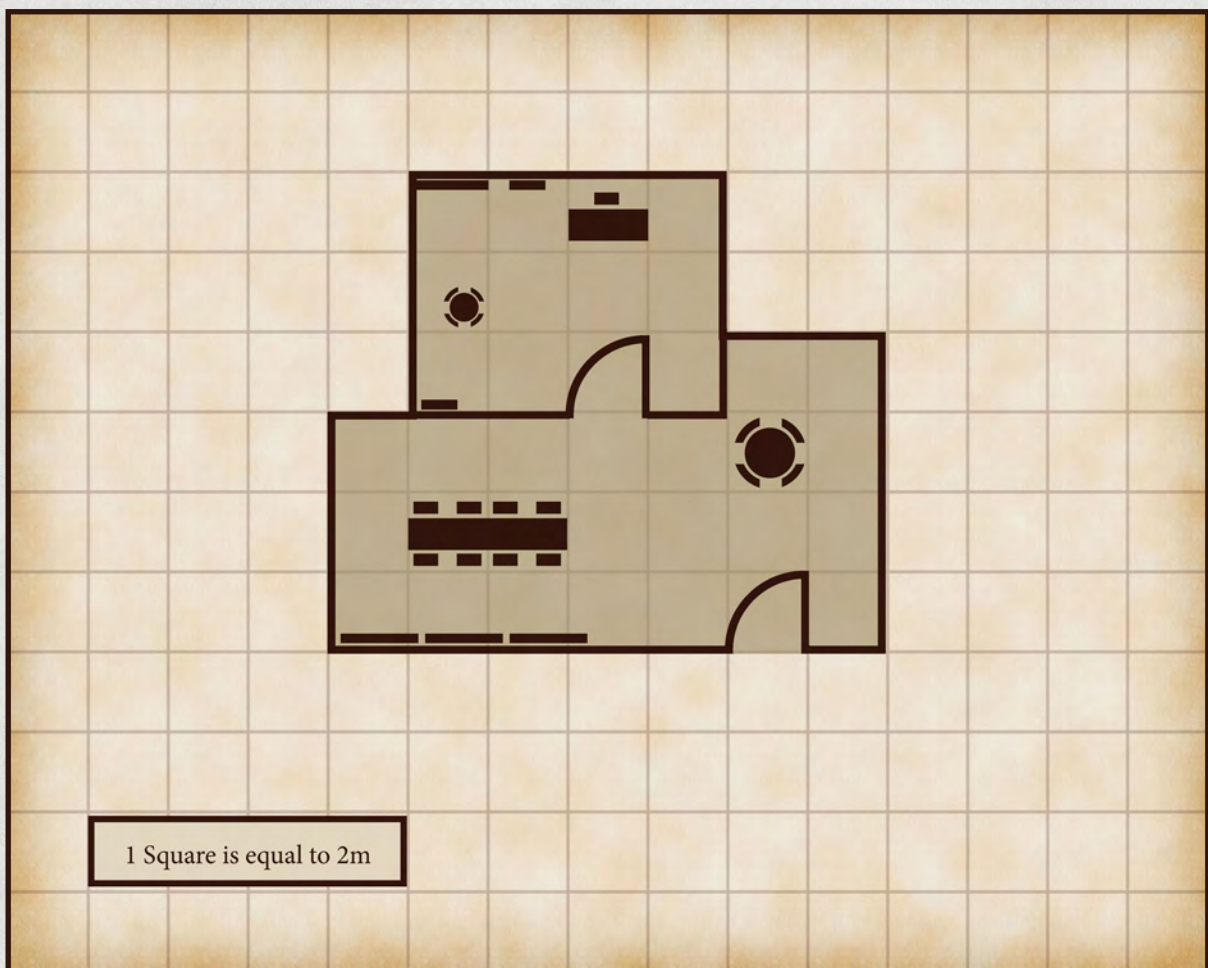
Description: The Riverwood Inn is the only place in town that a traveler can get a good night's sleep. In addition to being centrally located, the innkeeper's good cooking has made it the center of community life in Riverwood, and the go to place to relax after church. The innkeeper is generally agreeable but becomes coarse if his food goes uneaten.



Overseer's Office

Light Level: Un-modified

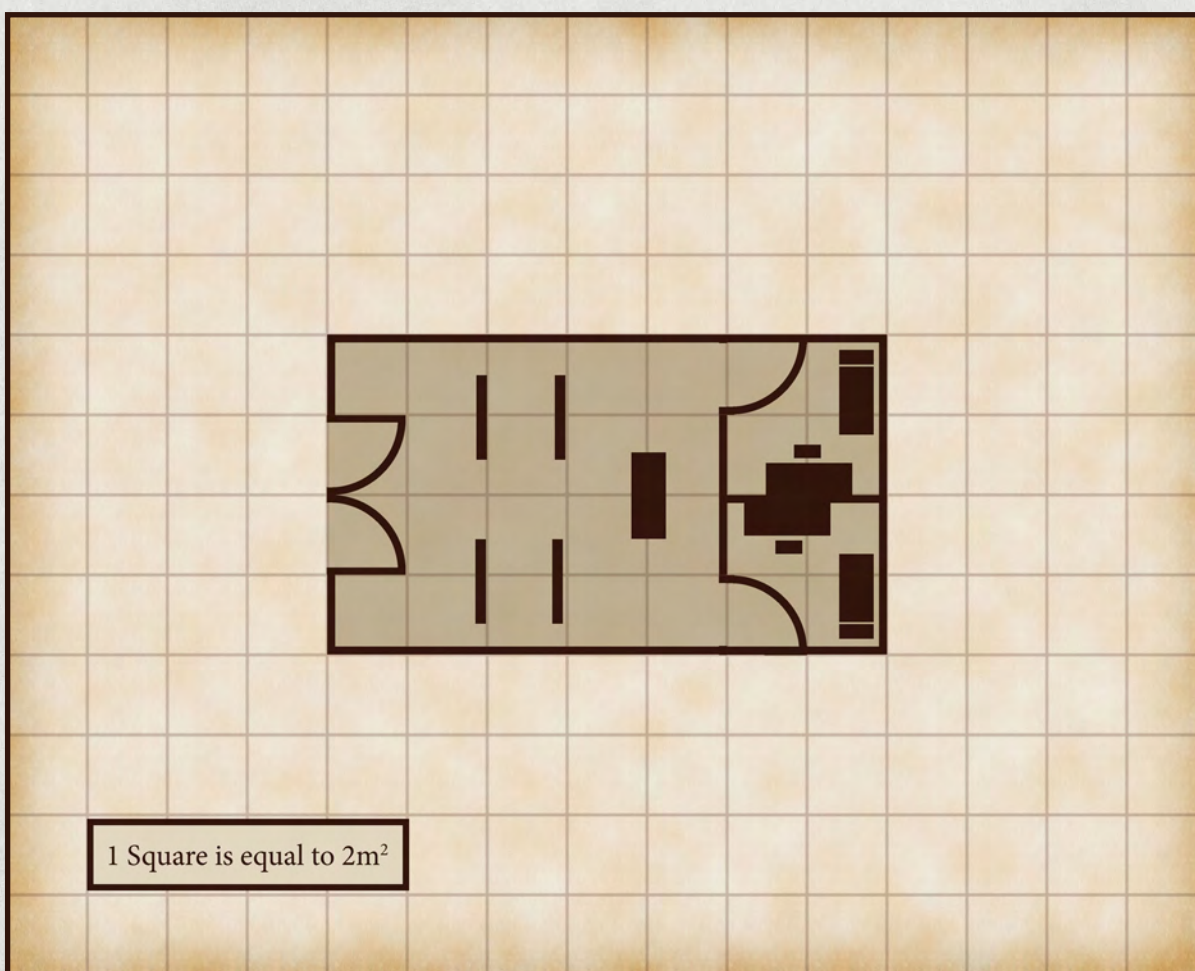
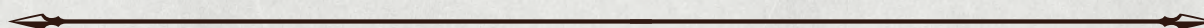
Description: Although the exterior of the building is simple, the interior is quite lavish by the area's standards. The receiving room contains an impressive amount of dwarven art, including a portrait of the entire Bartok family, painted at the last family gathering that **Ambrose Bartok** attended almost four years ago. The office in the back is equally impressive, meant to impress potential business partners.



Chapel of Kreve

Light Level: Un-modified

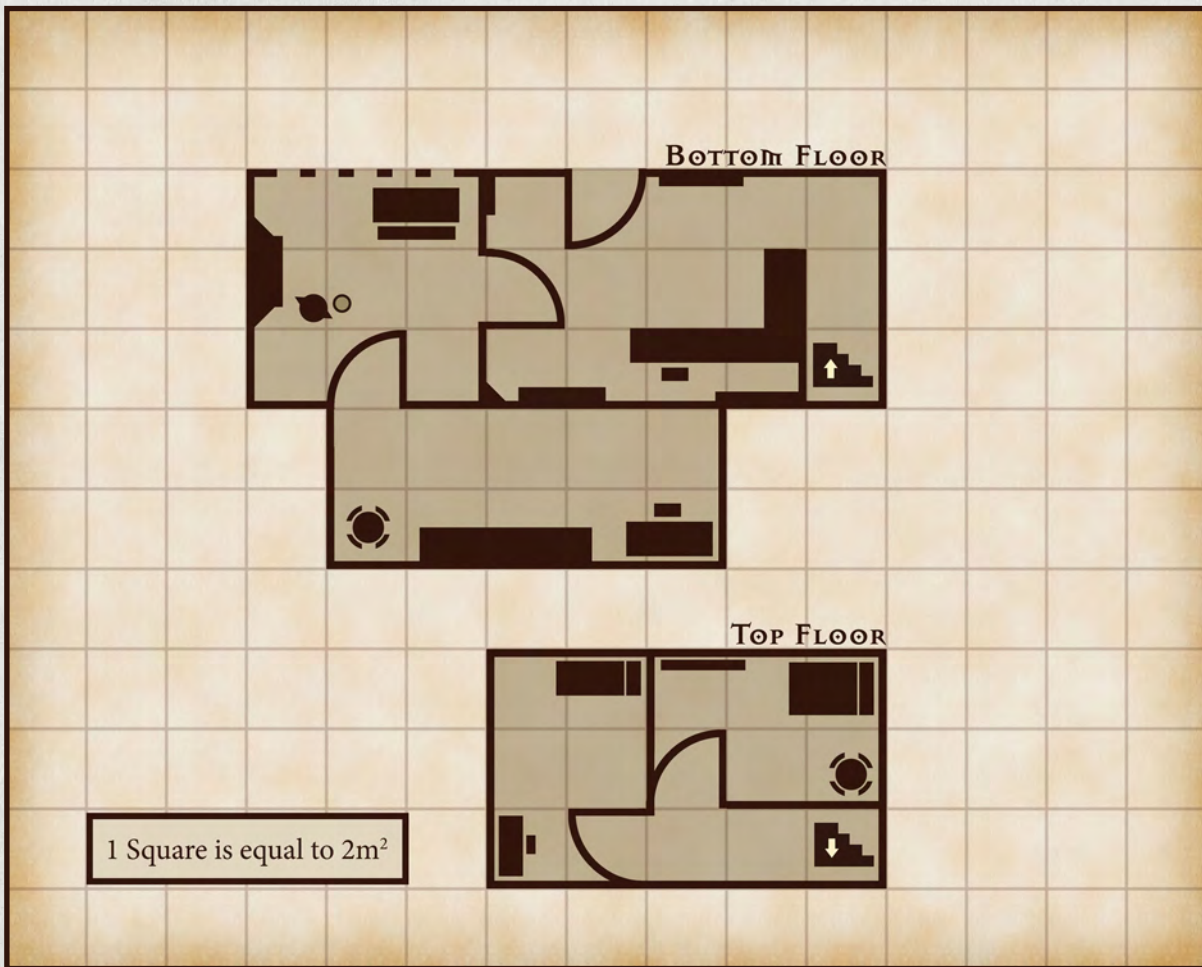
Description: Your players might want to visit the Chapel of Kreve, as it is the main attraction of Riverbend, other than the inn. Tabbart can be found here when he isn't in the Riverwood Inn, and your players may also run into any of the other villagers of Riverbend, joining him in prayer. If one of your players is a priest of Kreve, they will be welcomed with open arms and allowed to use the extra room.



Tor's Workshop

Light Level: Un-modified

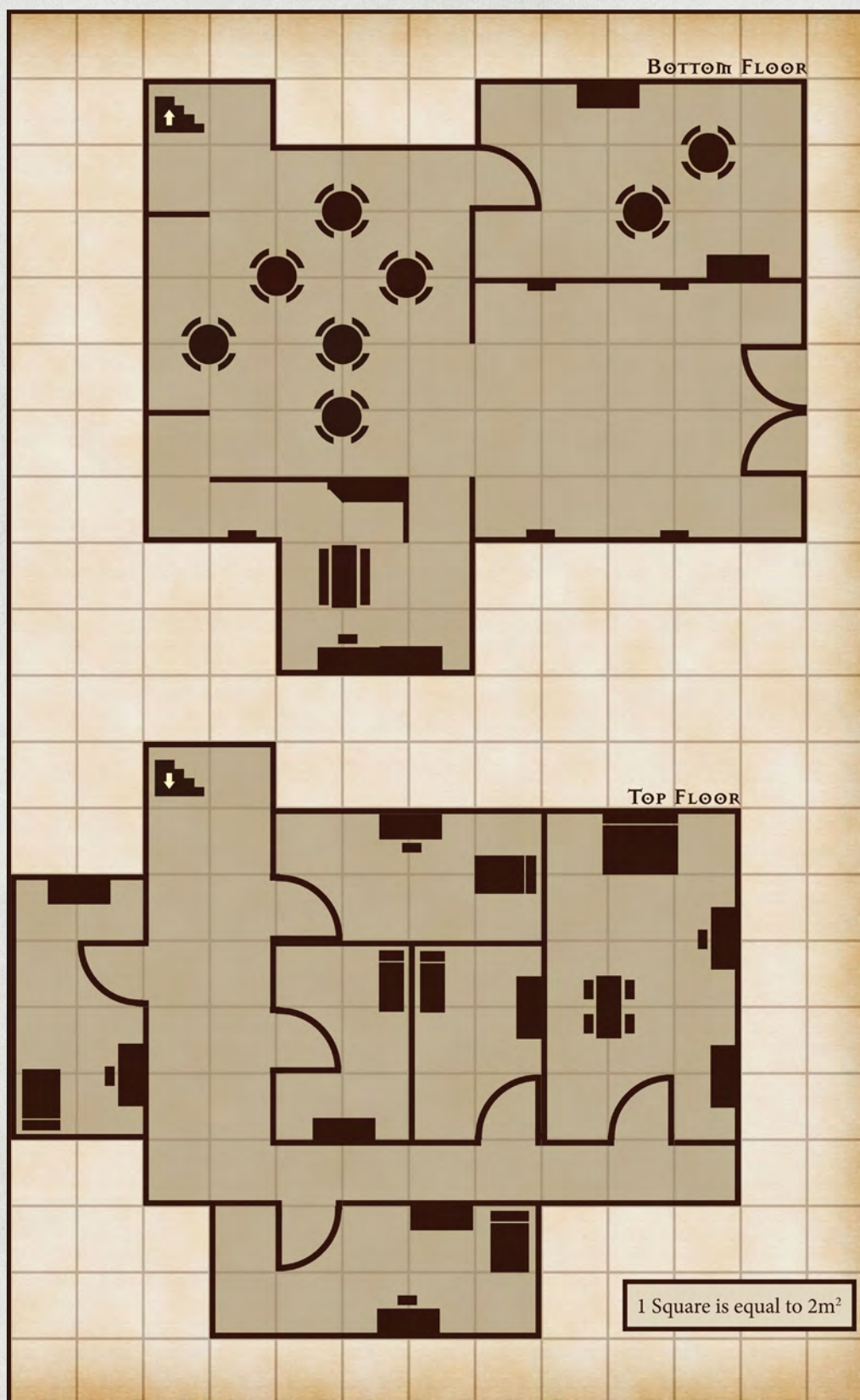
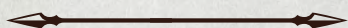
Description: Containing a full forge, and robust workshop, as well as a neatly cleaned showroom, Tor's workshop is the kind every craftsman dreams of owning for himself. Tor is doing well for himself, much better than his neighbors.



The Weary Traveler

Light Level: Un-modified

Description: The place to go to get a drink in Saint's Crossing. Whether you want to listen to a bard perform the latest songs, do business in the private dining area, or get a good night's sleep in the best bed you'll find this far from a major city, the Weary Traveler has you covered.



Alderwood Grove

Light Level: Un-modified

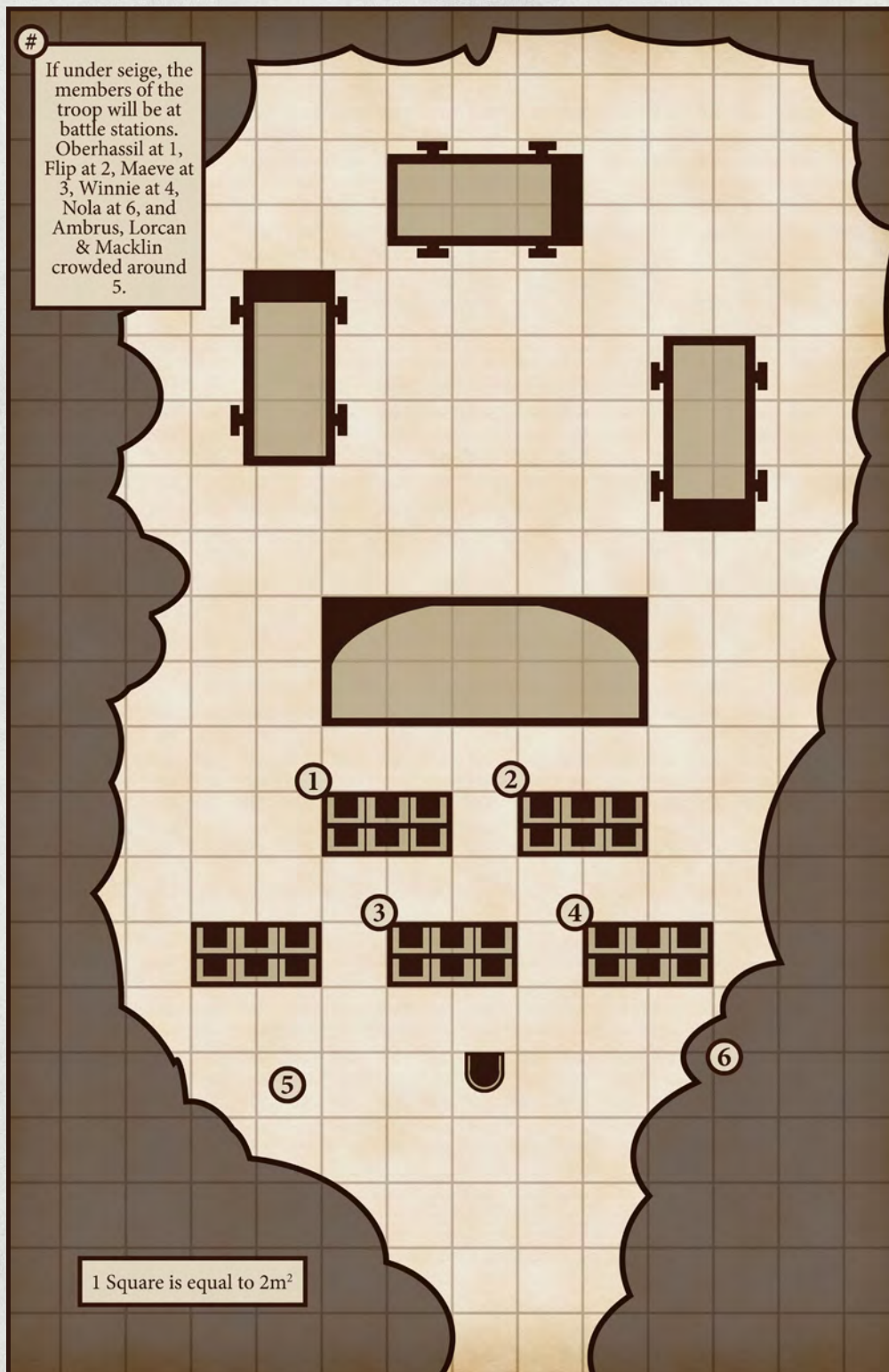
Description: At the heart of the Alderwood, Oberhasil has built his own community of actors and musicians, his troupe. A large stage with an aspirational amount of seating, including a Sylvan sized director's chair, dominates the clearing. Behind the stage, wagons are circled around a fire pit that is constantly stoked, cooking one meal after another. You can't act on an empty stomach.

Alderwood Grove Assault

Light Level: Un-modified

Description: Oberhasil and his troupe have worked out a plan to defend their grove. In the event of an attack, the benches are to be moved and turned into two rows of makeshift cover which provide 10 SP.

The members of the troupe are then to get in position and draw weapons. From the left, Macklin, Lorcan, and Ambrus are to flank the attackers with their swords. From the first line of cover, Winnie, and Maeve are to provide ranged support with their bows, Flip, from behind them is to throw his rock collection in a high arc to break the enemy formation. When the attackers reach the first line of defense, from her perch hidden up in a nearby tree, Nola is to let arrows fly at their backs. As needed, from behind the second line of cover, Oberhasil is to direct the troupe. If the first line of defense is broken, Macklin, Lorcan, and Ambrus are to fall back to defend Oberhasil, and Maeve and Winnie are to take cover behind Flip.



Stone Cold Lies



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

Seduced by the prospect of swimming in ale, the players arrive in Pierblanc, having traveled south along the road passing through Ban Ard, Ban Gleam, Vengerberg, and Aldersberg. The ale is so close, they can almost smell it, which is where this adventure begins.

Background (Read Aloud)

News of the upcoming Mahakam Ale Festival reaches far and wide. An epic dwarven party hosted in Mount Carbon, the famously secretive heart of the Mahakaman Mountains, the Festival promises the curious and dedicated drinker alike an unforgettable experience. The weight of

expectation hangs over the head of the renownedly spikey Chief Elder, Brouver Hoog, who will soon throw open the doors of Mahakam to revelers, doors which normally stay firmly closed.

Three days ago, you set off toward a shining peak dominating the horizon, standing tall like every child knows that a mountain should do in their heart.

You arrive at the village of Pierblanc, which is making a healthy profit acting as a staging post for the upcoming festival. The village of Pierblanc is doing a roaring trade in cold-weather gear for the dedicated drinkers planning to head to the peak as soon as the festival begins. A chance like this won't come for another 25 years. Plan to make the most of it.

The Rest of the Story

A few days before the players arrived in town, there was an attempted heist at Mount Carbon. Two thieves tried to make away with Cursetter's Hammer, one of the artifacts important to the Toasting the Fallen.

Cursetter's Hammer

In one of the mines in the Northern part of Mount Carbon, a little over 300 years ago, Ban Cursetter led a work crew. The crew's job was opening new shafts to be exploited by others, and to this end they were equipped with explosives. They brought their families with them, housed at an encampment close by the workings but far enough to be safe — or so they thought.

One cavern proved to have a wide void beneath it, leading to a nest of monsters. The nature of the beasts varies according to who's telling the story, but what's agreed upon is the beasts boiled up from the freshly blown fissure and set upon the crew. Realizing their families were so much fresh meat for the beasts, the crew set about a desperate defense. Using their tools and what weapons they had on hand, they drove back the tide, holding the gap until Ban Cursetter managed to strike the unstable wall with his hammer, collapsing it onto the horde and himself.

The cavern and hammer now bear his name. The rubble blocking the void was replaced with proper masonry, and at the base of the wall a pedestal was erected and engraved with the names of the crew, as a resting place for Cursetter's Hammer. The hammer itself was sundered in the fight, and was recast with a gold head, studded with jet on the flat sides. The haft is a highly polished wood shell, encasing the original for its protection, and is wrapped in fine red leather.

The Thieves

Scheyli, a **werebbubb**, and **Neniz**, a **vran**, grew up together in Scheyli's village in the South Mahakam Mountains. Neniz' family migrated to the village after they were targeted in a non-human pogrom and it's the only home she's ever known. The partners are a study in contrasts; where Scheyli is impetuous and bold, Neniz is more measured with a passion for knowledge and an eye for detail. As firm friends with a shared desire to see more of the world than snow and sky, they left home to seek their fortunes.

It was Neniz who suggested stealing the relic **Cursetter's Hammer** to finance their further explorations. Her voracious taste for historical research highlighted it as both intrinsically valuable but also portable and obscure enough

to potentially sell intact. Scheyli knew the area around Mount Carbon well enough to get them inside the enclave from where they could make their way through the tunnels to the cavern where the hammer was displayed.

The pair commissioned a local smith to customize a similar weapon such that it would appear convincing enough from a distance. The plan was that they would mingle with the crowds at the Ale Festival. By the time the deception was discovered, they would have quietly departed, leaving the inhabitants none the wiser.

Unfortunately for Scheyli and Neniz, a young miner called **Brodgar Farrag** had a similar idea and was far less cautious in his planning and execution. He accessed the cave by a small tunnel he had discovered near his work area, running along a vein of ore.

On exiting his tunnel, Brodgar failed to check the coast was clear and was caught in the act of stealing the Hammer by one Rendal Harkus, checking Cursetter's Cavern as part of his normal patrol route. Brodgar lashed out in panic with the Hammer, landing Rendal a fatal blow to the head. Seeing Scheyli and Neniz approaching, Brodgar smashed one of the support pillars, collapsing Cursetter's Cavern on his victim — and on the would-be thieves. He then escaped the way he came, trusting the cave-in to cover his tracks and the evidence.

Neniz was caught in the cascade of stone. When dwarves arrived to investigate the collapse, they found Scheyli performing first aid on the wounded vran, the Hammer's pedestal empty, and the artifact itself apparently partially buried near Neniz. The werebbubb had taken a large shard of flint in the stomach, but had healed around it remarkably quickly.

Neniz and Scheyli have been imprisoned since, and the Mountain put on high alert as the dwarves fear for further breaches of their security before the festival.

The outsiders have been accused of attempted theft and the murder of Rendal Harkus and their trial is fixed for when Neniz has recovered sufficiently to be executed. The hasty decision, however, did not sit well with Rendal's sister, Enid Harkus, and she has gained permission from Sigurd Flett, one of the Clan Elders, to seek outside aid in investigating the truth of the matter. No internal help is available, as the inhabitants are tied up in preparing for the festival or enforcing the lockdown imposed on Mount Carbon.

Setting

The adventure takes place on the way to and inside Mount Carbon, the heart of Mahakam, in the days before the Ale Festival, held once every 25 years. The players are recruited

to investigate a murder and the attempted theft of a historical artifact. This investigation leads them through a community that wants to believe they have the culprits, to reveal the real killer and expose his crimes. All before the biggest party in 25 years.

Forces

Up to six characters, ideally including at least one dwarf.

The Opposition

Brodgar Farrag is the thief, responsible for stealing Cursetter's Hammer and the death of Rendal Harkus.

Cooper Mawik and his gang of xenophobes are unhappy that outsiders have been brought in and feel insulted. They are unwilling to kill but offer the players a beating to discourage them from their investigations. There are as many dwarves in the gang (including Mawik) as there are players.

Bandits have set up on the passes to Mount Carbon to steal valuable goods from traders attending the Festival. There are as many Bandits as there are players.

Set-Up (Read Aloud)

Despite the warm sun on your faces, the occasional chill breeze sweeping down the mountainside reveals you'd be best off preparing for harsher conditions. There's no profit to be had in dying on the way to the biggest party you'll have the chance of attending. At least, that's what the barker outside the outfitters told you when he ushered you inside. The shop is filled with barrels of dried meats, coils of rope, piles of furs, and stout

walking staves. Behind the counter, a dwarf with a grizzled beard worn loose to his waist gives you a speculative look. He slides into a salesperson's patter, but the troubled frown doesn't quite leave his face.

"Well now, you look like you people can handle yourselves. You'll be heading for Mount Carbon, am I right? I've what'll keep you hale and hearty enough on your way to drink yourself senseless. So, what'll it be?"

Hook

The players doubtless want to shop for their trip and the merchant, Tankan Foulzey, is happy to provide. As they make their purchases, one of the following characters gives the party a message. Use the hook that best applies to the party.

- ♦ If they have no personal connection to Mahakam and did not ensure the safety of Ambrus Bartok in *Into The Alderwood*, then Foulzey speaks to them on the grounds that they look like they can handle themselves and "have their heads tied on right."
- ♦ If Ambrus Bartok did survive on good terms, he approaches the players as they leave the shop.
- ♦ Alternatively, if any of the party are dwarves hailing from Mahakam, they are approached directly outside by a messenger from Mount Carbon who turns out to be a distant cousin.

However they get it, the message is as follows:

Friends, I am begging for your aid. You do not know me yet, but I believe justice is about to be sent awry and none can be spared to tend to my suspicions. A heinous pair of crimes have occurred



Rumors

- ◆ Something untoward has happened in Mount Carbon.
- ◆ Messengers have been turned away from the mountain.
- ◆ Even foreign dwarves have been made to feel unwelcome.
- ◆ Supplies have been delayed and searched on entering the mountain.
- ◆ Normally outsiders have no business in Mahakam and should stay out.

and in a rush to judgment, I fear the guilty may evade punishment. Anger at the disrespect shown The Toasting of the Fallen and fears for the security of the coming Festival dominate the thoughts of all and Mount Carbon has been locked.

I ask that you come to the mountain and lend your eyes and hands to set minds at ease. I have obtained a dispensation to grant you access ahead of the Festival proper. My name will be your watchword to the gate sentries. In return for your services I can promise you a seat at a high table and a bountiful flow of ale.

Please help, time is against me,

Enid Harkus

Development

Should the players ask for more information, their messenger can only tell them that Mount Carbon is indeed in turmoil and that some outsiders were caught red-handed in the act of theft. They only know of the Harkus family by reputation, which is one of being sensible and strong-willed.

They may decide to gather some more info and ask around town regarding the Festival, Toasting the Fallen, and what Mount Carbon is like for outsiders before setting off. If so, see the **Sidebar**. If not, skip to **Cliffhanger: Bandits in the Mountains**.

Cliffhanger: Bandits in the Mountains (Read Aloud)

You have been traveling the better part of a day up a steep and rutted mountain road. The snow was slush around your boots when you started but now it's turned firmer and crisper, crunching with each step.

Your path leads you scrambling over a rise while wagon tracks take a flatter, more circuitous route. As you reach the top you hear yelling and the familiar thrum of bowstrings. In the dip ahead of you, two wagons have been waylaid, four drivers cowering behind their bulk for cover from the bandits shooting at them from cover to the left and right of their trail. Angry, trapped mules buck and pull at the wagon harnesses, stressing the wagon brakes and forcing

the dwarves to constantly shift or lose their protection. This looks bad.

The Bandits are human. Their stat blocks can be found in the Core Rulebook. One is equipped with a *Huntsman's Crossbow* (see below) instead of a *Hand Crossbow*. The dwarven merchants also use the standard Bandit stats but from their position under cover they can't defend themselves properly and take no part in the combat.

The bandits are uphill, behind rocky outcroppings. South of the wagon trail the ground drops away to a sheer cliff. There is one "tun" (large barrel) per wagon, holding just over 1,100 liters each. Each wagon is pulled by a pair of mules and they have stopped just over 4m apart on the rutted trail.

The party enters the battle nearby the wagon.

This battle takes place on snow and ice, meaning all participants must make a **DC:14 Athletics** check after running or making a melee attack to stay standing.

Each barrel is branded with a large, happy-looking bee wielding an oversized tankard. The barrels contain a blend of **Mahakam Spirit** blended with blossom honey from the valleys. Where the crossbow bolts of the bandits have pierced the oversized barrels, the thick liquid oozes out, adding a mouthwatering sweetness to the mountain air.

If the party successfully reduces the Bandits to half their strength the survivors flee, taking the opportunity to shoot flaming bolts into the most damaged barrel. After burning for 3 turns the barrel explodes. **The explosion does 5d6 damage and sets everything on Fire in a 4m radius, scattering pools of burning alcohol into the snow.**

On successfully routing the bandits, the dwarves thank the party profusely and promise them a special welcome at the Ale Festival to come. Their names are Kirril, Pollek, Birtey and Sklatte Adezon. They run a family brewing business in Mahakam and will have a booth at the Festival — just look for the sign of the Tipsy Bee.



| Name | Type | WA | Avail. | DMG | Rel. | Hands | RNG | Effect | Conc. | EN | Weight | Cost |
|---------------------|------|----|--------|-----|------|-------|------|-------------|-------|----|--------|------|
| Huntsman's Crossbow | P | +2 | C | 5d6 | 10 | 2 | 150m | Slow Reload | L | 1 | 3 | 600 |

Development: Welcome to Mount Carbon (Read Aloud)

As you approach the long bridge leading to the gates of Mount Carbon you see lines of wagons, carts, and makeshift tents. Guards patrol along the bridge, speaking to those trapped in the queue. Their tone is placating, reassuring but still you can feel the frustration build among the brewers and merchants as you head to the front of the queue and present your credentials — the message from Enid Harkus. The gate guards look dubious but escort you through the small door inset in the gate, closing it firmly behind you.

The players find themselves in a large, high courtyard filled with crates, barrels, and people. Guards are poking through boxes seemingly at random, watched by their nervous owners. The gates behind them are massive stone edifices with inset dwarf-scale doors. The guards grab a young dwarf seemingly at random, mutter a few words, and send him off at a run.

Shortly after the boy leaves, a stocky dwarf with a gray-streaked black beard strides into the courtyard, flanked by two younger dwarves. This is **Cooper Mawik**, a miner and crafter with a following among some of the more xenophobic and hot-headed young dwarves.

He marches up to guards and starts demanding to know when the gates will open once more. From the slump in the guards' posture it's clear this is not the first time they have had this conversation. Mawik harangues them for a few minutes if not interrupted, making his feelings clear that while the lockdown continues it can only be bad for the community by losing them trading opportunities.

If the players attempt to intervene, he roundly informs them that this is not the concern of "outsiders" and gives them the once-over before declaring that he's not finished and stomping off with his entourage in tow. This earns the players grateful looks from the guards but they decline to talk about it further than telling them his name and that some matters must run their course.

Toasting the Fallen

Participants in the ceremony form a procession that follows a circuit of Mount Carbon, visiting the sites of battles great and small where brave dwarves fell defending their community and way of life. Shrines stand at every stop, topped with an artifact symbolic of the conflict. The Chief Elder leading the procession, pours a libation at the foot of each shrine. The entire crowd of onlookers down their mugs in toast, then dash them to the ground at the base of the monument, ensuring any spirits remaining have both ale and something to drink from. Special mugs of unfired clay are supplied for this purpose and after the ceremony the shards are collected, ground back to powder and reused.

The procession includes the Chief Elder, as many of the Clan Elders who can make the walk, and around 300 festival-goers. They are accompanied by drummers sending complex rhythms echoing around the tunnels and by young dwarves pressed into service pulling hand-carts of ale and replacement mugs. Toasting the Fallen takes place on the second day of the Festival, after everyone has warmed up but before they are too intoxicated to appreciate the gravity of the ceremony.



Cooper

If left to finish his rant unmolested, Mawik simply takes note of the players, as they are unfamiliar faces. Either way, he sets a couple of his minions to follow them for the rest of their time in Mount Carbon. Once he discovers exactly what they are doing, he assembles some muscle and arranges an ambush to deter their interference in **Cliffhanger: Cooper Mawik Doesn't Like It.**

A few minutes later, the boy returns with a female dwarf with a plaited blond beard, blue eyes, and a strained expression. This is Enid Harkus, the recently bereaved sister to Rendal and their would-be employer.

This leaves the players some time to take in the atmosphere, which is a mixture of frenetic activity and underlying tension. The guards aren't inclined to give them much leeway until Enid arrives to vouch for them but aren't actively hostile, just wary and exasperated. They are happy to hand the party over to her when she arrives and escorts them into the mountain proper, after introductions.

Development: Meet the Client (Read Aloud)

Enid keeps up a running commentary as she leads you into the depths of Mount Carbon. You head through smoothly worked corridors and



Enid

tunnels packed with dwarves putting up decorations, setting up tables, and pushing hand-wagons filled with barrels, tankards, and all the accoutrements a lively and vital crowd might need to get blind, blazing drunk.

"I am putting my faith in your hands, my friends, and I trust the judgment of those who sent you to me that you will not disappoint me. The fact is that I cannot rely upon the attention and goodwill of those whom I normally trust and the stay I have arranged, through great pains, cannot last forever. I shall introduce you to Supervisor Sigurd Flett, who has accepted jurisdiction in this matter, but I fear he is too preoccupied to grant the investigation more than cursory attention. Up with this I will not put — if you prove that the received wisdom is correct then I shall trust the conclusions of those with nothing to gain by lying. If, however, your conclusions run elsewhere, then I demand to know who is responsible and to see them brought to true justice!"

At some stage, the players might want to know what they are here for, and what Enid needs them to do. Enid's explanation is a little flowery, deeply emotional, and quite angry. Getting the plain facts from her takes some patience.

Skill checks for Persuasion, Human Perception, and Social Etiquette are most useful here.

The facts of the case:

- ♦ Just over a week ago, there was a cave-in at a monument called Cursetter's Cavern, one of the stops on the circuit for the ceremony of Toasting the Fallen. She can expound upon this ceremony at some length if encouraged. See the **Sidebar: Toasting the Fallen**.
- ♦ Those attending the cave-in discovered a pair of "foreigners" at the cave entrance; one was partially buried, and the other was injured. If asked what she means by foreigners, Enid says that only dwarves and gnomes live in Mount Carbon all year round, and that these outsiders were neither. She knows what werebbubbs and vran are, but it doesn't occur to her to go into more detail unless specifically asked.
- ♦ Next to the buried foreigner, they found the hammer that normally stood on the monument in the cavern; the body of Enid's brother Rendal was found beneath the rockfall near said monument.
- ♦ The Elders rushed to declare it a theft and a murder, saying that the thieves clearly triggered the rockfall by some incompetence while making off with their loot. The assumption was that Rendal caught them in the act or was complicit in gaining them access. It's this latter idea that has Enid most upset, as she refuses to believe her brother would do such a thing.
- ♦ Chief Elder Brouver Hoog has called a lockdown on the Mountain while the breach in their security is checked.

Enid wants the party to confirm the innocence or guilt of the Accused and find the guilty party if it's not them. Something over the situation rang false for her and she has raised a stink with Sigurd Flett, the Supervisor in charge of the investigation and a cousin to her. This won her the right to send for help as the overwhelming opinion is the case is resolved and everyone is terribly busy with the upcoming Festival.

While the conversation continues, Awareness checks at **DC:14** reveal that the workers in the corridors are paying attention. Human

Perception at **DC:18** reveals that both the players and Enid are receiving covertly hostile glances as they pass. At least two of Mawik's Minions keep them in sight, mingling with the crowds of workers.

At the end of the network of corridors, there is a massive set of double doors, easily 4 meters high. These stand open and they can pass into the Great Hall. **Go to Development: Sigurd Flett and The Great Hall** when they do.

Development: Sigurd Flett and The Great Hall (Read Aloud)

The smell and the noise hit you like a wave as you step across the threshold. All around you are dwarves setting up stalls, testing drinks, decanting brews, and adjusting valves on copper vats mounted on wheeled platforms. The warm scent of yeast, the tart of alcohol, and a blend of fruits and spices assail your nostrils. The workers chat, call instructions and give opinions on their brews, loudly and at length.

The central floor space is set with long tables — it's hard to say how many could be seated but it must be in the thousands. Each has easy access to at least two ale stations and is already laid with stacks of tankards and a row of unlit candles run down the center.

The Great Hall of Mount Carbon is designed to be as intimidating as possible, a triumph of engineering and architecture. The space is designed with faceted sides, designed to resemble the octagonal cut of a gemstone. Along each long wall stand alcoves with heavy black velvet curtains drawn back to leave them exposed, these alternate with doors, almost all firmly shut but speaking to the Hall being the hub of the Mountain.

Above, the arches of the vaulted ceilings meet in three places, artfully designed to look nearly natural. Golden light flows from innumerable lamps along the walls. These contrast starkly with the cold, white light coming through deep channels set into the roof, capped flush with crystal, piercing the mountain peak to deliver sunlight into its heart.

Asking Questions

The attitude of witnesses determines how likely they are to willingly answer questions and volunteer new information. Empathy skills such as Persuasion, Intimidation, and Charisma can modify their attitudes up and down. Allow the players' actions to lead the way. As a general recommendation, the skill DCs should run as follows:

Reluctant DC:30

Cautious DC:20

Neutral DC:18

Co-operative DC:14

Helpful DC:10

Reading the Room

The atmosphere is busy but there is an underlying tension.

Some of the stallholders appear to be paying a lot of attention to the players' conversations.

Some of the same faces the players saw in the tunnels appear again in the hall, though it's hard to be sure in the hubbub.

Red Herrings and Distractions

If you think the players are having it too easy and you want to muddy the waters, use these!

- ♦ A young dwarf appears to be following the players in a crowded area, taking care not to be seen (he's trying to catch the eye of his sweetheart nearby).
- ♦ The players overhear that Enid had argued with her brother shortly before his death (true but minor – she bought a new dress he disliked). Enid is unhappy that people are talking about her, but urges the players to find who killed Rendal.
- ♦ The players overhear that Cursetter's Cavern is haunted, strange noises have been heard there in darkness (true – Brodgar's burrowing was noisy). If they investigate, **go to Development: Cursetter's Cavern**.

At the far end stands a dais, where several older dwarves sit, handing out instructions and answering questions from those setting up. One of these is Supervisor Sigurd Flett, who looks as busy as his fellows but also deeply tired. Enid strides up to him and performs the introductions but then steps aside to allow the players to converse.

Sigurd Flett is a dwarf of middle-age, with a beard neatly braided, and close-cropped mahogany brown hair. Close up, Flett bears several scars on his face. His left knee has a metal brace strapped around it, immobilizing the joint, and he walks with the aid of a heavy stick, currently leaning against the table next to him.

Flett is not especially happy to have the players there but is also glad of the help as he is swamped with concerns about the Festival. Persuasion has better results than trying to intimidate or impress him. Social Etiquette improves his demeanor. Human Perception gives insight into both Flett and the mood of the Hall.

Flett's Information

- ♦ Flett can confirm the sequence of events as told by Enid.
- ♦ The thieves are imprisoned under guard.
- ♦ Their trial is expected to lead to execution immediately thereafter.
- ♦ The Hammer was retrieved and is in the hands of an expert to ensure it's not damaged.
- ♦ Rendal Harkus' body has been placed in respectful storage before his funeral.
- ♦ He can give permission to interview the thieves and view the body.
- ♦ Cursetter's Cavern, the scene of the crime, is currently "being made safe" and he will send word when they can visit (the cavern opens after **Development: Meet the Accused**).
- ♦ If the investigation does not reveal any new information, he expects lockdown to be lifted and Enid to abide by his judgement.



From here, the players can visit most of the locations in any order and can choose whether to take Enid with them. The only thing she insists upon being present for is examining Rendal's body. The exception to the location rule is Cursetter's Cavern which is not accessible as noted above.

Development: Meet the Accused (Read Aloud)

Enid leads you away from the Great Hall and down several flights of stairs, dodging runners who barge past with unconscious ease. After some turns she stops at a solid looking wooden door, with a barred window. She tells the guard beyond that you are here to see the prisoners and you are granted admittance.

In the cell ahead of you are two people unlike anyone you've met. A long-limbed, scaly humanoid lies on a bed with its head wreathed in bandages and some sort of herbal poultice. Tending to the lizard is a short, woman, scarcely taller than Enid, covered entirely in snow-colored fur and with delicate claws at the tips of her fingers. She wears leather trousers, knee boots, and an open leather jerkin, under which you can see a bandage almost a foot wide around her belly. The center is stained a dark reddish-brown.

The furry woman gives you the once-over and says "We've had breakfast, must be gawking time." She seems inclined to continue but the injured lizard puts one hand on her arm and she stops, her jaw working furiously.

Scheyli and Neniz have been housed in a secured cell. They are under guard but have been made comfortable as Scheyli tends to her wounded friend. The cell has a wide window with a stunning view of the sheer mountainside, down which they have been told they will be thrown after their trial. The werebbubb was wounded in the cave-in with a stone sliver in the stomach and wears a wide bandage with a bloodstain in the center. The quick metabolism of her people means that she has already healed and is wearing the bandage for show. Neniz suffered a head injury and is recovering more slowly.

Although Scheyli comes across as initially hostile, she is frightened as the dwarves have made it clear that as soon as Neniz is well enough, they will both face a show trial and summary execution. For her part Neniz would like to talk their way out as technically they only planned a crime, they didn't commit one.

Scheyli has a light voice, whereas Neniz' is softer and in a slightly lower register. They are both keen to win allies but are uncertain who they can trust for fear of incriminating them-

selves. Assume a Neutral attitude until the players modify it with their behavior. Persuasion is most useful skill to get the best information out of them. Scheyli speaks quickly, while Neniz contributes only occasionally and makes sure to play up her head injury when she does.

What the Thieves Know

- ♦ They maintain they did not kill Rendal Harkus.
- ♦ The two of them never entered the Cavern, they only got as far as the entrance.
- ♦ They are in desperate need of money.
- ♦ They brought an imitation of Cursetter's Hammer.
- ♦ They saw a second person in the Cavern, over the body of Rendal.
- ♦ They had planned to steal Cursetter's Hammer.
- ♦ Scheyli could escape any time she wants but will not leave Neniz. She keeps a set of picks concealed in her fur.

Development: The Body (Read Aloud)

Enid stands outside strong, thick wooden doors, apparently deep in thought. At your approach, she pulls herself together and opens the way.

Inside, the natural cave is rimed with frost and an icy breeze plays around your ankles, blowing through tiny slots in the back wall. To the right are racks of hanging meats on hooks, baskets of fruit and vegetables and netted wheels of cheese standing upright in rows.

To the left is a heavy canvas curtain, behind which are three rows of marble shelves. In front of them stand hastily filled storage crates containing more produce. The former contents of the shelves have clearly been moved to accommodate the lifeless form covered in an embroidered blanket.

Rendal Harkus' body has been stored in the cold cave before his cremation and can be examined for clues. The dwarf shared his sister's coloring, and his beard has been freshly plaited. His body has been battered from cave-in, with extensive bruising. Although it has been cleaned — and Enid can confirm she did this — it can be examined for clues. She insists on being present when the body is examined, though it is clearly painful for her.

Appropriate skills are Awareness, Deduction, First Aid, Healing Hands, and Melee.

Important Facts

- ♦ Rendal's body has bruising all over but this is concentrated on his back and the backs of his legs, indicating he was face down when the roof fell on him.

- ♦ His forearms are almost entirely undamaged. From this may be deduced both that they were under him when crushed and that he didn't attempt to shield himself from the rockfall.
- ♦ The fatal injury has left a large bruise on one temple, just at the edge of his hairline.
- ♦ The bruise shows a clear, square profile, showing that it came from a manufactured weapon rather than being an impact from a natural rock as the roof collapsed on him.

Cliffhanger: A Chance Encounter

Loda and Brodgar (see **Development: Narrowing the List**) have come up from their mining camp to the cold storage to acquire food superior to their allocated rations. Technically not theft, equally they shouldn't be here during their appointed sleeping hours and are consequently somewhat nervous.

If the players pulled the curtain back across, then Brodgar sneaks a peek, gasps, and retreats. If not, then when he sees what's going on, he tries to back-pedal to the door.

Loda, by contrast, attempts to front it out but neither wants to engage in an extended conversation and pleads duties elsewhere before making a hasty retreat with a cheese and the nearest haunch of meat.

Development: The Gnomish Expert and the Hammer

Aloysius Graver is a gnome artisan who was up from the deep mines where he lives when his services were called upon to examine the retrieved Hammer for damage and repair it if necessary. He's a precise and slightly pedantic person, and can be found in a small workshop that clearly doesn't belong to him, as it's filled with tools scaled for larger, dwarven hands. Graver is not impressed with the situation, as he was anticipating a drunken holiday, not to be roped in as a sober expert witness.

Graver wears well-tailored gray clothing in shades ranging from "light charcoal" to "deep shadow." Although not dressed for work, he always carries a waxed leather wrap on his belt containing his own set of artisan tools.

Determining the Hammer to be a forgery was easy (the fake is not of gnomish make, after all), but nobody has asked him for his report and he's been slightly grumpy about that. Left to his own devices, he expounds upon the level of detail employed in the genuine item, dismissing the forgery as a crude fake.

If the players are polite to Graver, he happily reports his findings with a successful Persuasion check. He knows nothing about the demise of Rendal, as his interest is purely historical. He can provide a description of the Battle of Cursetter's Cavern in more detail than needed and has access to all the information in the **Cursetter's Hammer** passage, including a description of the true Hammer.

The most obvious tell-tale signs of the forgery are:

- ♦ The head is gold-plated lead, not solid gold.
- ♦ The black stones are glass, not jet.
- ♦ The haft is solid wood, instead of a shell.

Development: Cursetter's Cavern (Read Aloud)

You take in the cavern before you, partially filled with rubble and stalagmites reaching to the ceiling and with a thick layer of dust covering everything. Straight ahead, a carefully worked wall reaches floor to ceiling, standing in stark contrast to the otherwise unworked cave.

Standing in front of the wall is a wide pedestal, covered with carvings in Elder Speech, with a panel showing a heroic dwarf smiting something huge, mostly made of teeth and claws, before a deeply carved fissure.

The entrance to Cursetter's Cavern is partially blocked by fallen rubble. It's clear some clearance work has already begun, and there are two dwarves hard at it with shovels and a stack of props in the cavern mouth. They are focused on providing access to the cavern and the memorial. Stone pillars hold up the archway leading from tunnel to cavern, carved from the natural formations. Although the cavern is large, a combination of the rubble and stalagmites lend to the claustrophobic feel.

Behind a cluster of stalagmites to the right-hand side of the wall is the entrance to Brodgar's tunnel. This does not require a skill check to find, simply looking in the right area reveals it — it's simply that nobody looked.

Awareness and Deduction are the primary skills here.

Clues to be found:

- ♦ One of the pillars to the right of the cave as they look from the tunnel stands broken.
- ♦ Further examination reveals it has been struck from the side, causing a flat plane rather than a slanted spike as might be expected, indicating deliberate damage.
- ♦ If present, Enid can confirm that Rendal's body was found near the monument, while Sheyli and Neniz's account places them at the entrance.

- ◆ Behind a cluster of stalagmites to the right-hand side of the wall is the entrance to Brodgar's tunnel. This does not require a skill check to find, simply looking in the right area reveals it.

When the players have fully entered the cavern, Cooper Mawick and his gang appear from the tunnel entrance, and the workers quietly leave to avoid trouble. The gang moves quietly, so unless the players left someone on guard, they require an opposed Stealth/Awareness check or a successful Practiced Paranoia to notice. When they do, **go to Cliffhanger: Cooper Mawick Doesn't Like It.**

Cliffhanger: Cooper Mawick Doesn't Like It (Read Aloud)

An angry-looking dwarf with a long black beard steps into the entrance, flanked by hangers-on, blocking your only way out. The dwarves clearing the rubble have evaporated, leaving you face-to-face with what looks like a mob in the making. The leader sneers, clearly unimpressed with what he sees.

"Heard you've been asking questions about things that're none of your business. You and that idiot girl can't leave well enough alone and are ruining our reputation. It's a shame the Harkus lad died, but that's what happens when foreigners think they have the run of the Mountain. Justice has been done, and the sooner it's done and dusted, the sooner life can go back to normal.

"If you can't see that, maybe we'll have to educate you. You're not welcome.

"Don't kill 'em lads — we don't want to be mopping that kind of mess before the party."

Mawik and his Minions want to deliver a beating, not kill the players, so use only their fists to deal non-lethal damage unless the players pull out weapons, in which case they swap to their knives. There are as many dwarves in the fight as there are players, plus Mawik. Additionally, three more stay on the outskirts of the fight in the entrance, blocking the way and cheering on their fellows but without fighting themselves. These dwarves flee if Mawik falls.

If Enid Harkus is present, none of the dwarves attack her, but if she attempts to get involved, she is shoved aside. They do not fight to the death, and once more than two have been defeated (or if Cooper Mawik goes down) the rest flee, taking the fallen with them and hurling curses at the players.

Once Mawik is defeated, the players can resume examining Cursetter's Cavern. If any of the dwarves are killed, Sigurd Flett is not pleased. He is practical, however, and recognizes that Mawik was a rabble-rouser, so best he and his minions be removed.

Development: The Tight Tunnel

The tunnel leading from Cursetter's Cavern is low and narrow. It must be crawled through and would be close on a dwarf but touching the shoulders on a substantially built human. The first couple of meters are fresh but after that the tool marks on the wall are older and Awareness **DC:14** shows them to be following a vein of ore.

The tunnel is claustrophobic, with every movement and word echoing. There are a couple of bends which might prove problematic for anyone carrying a bow or longsword, forcing them to push the weapon ahead of them. There is absolutely no room to turn around.

The tunnel trends at a slight downward angle and the bottom is coated in a rusty mud formed in puddles where water has run down the wall. The overall impression is nasty, dirty, and tight.

If Enid has accompanied the players to Cursetter's Cavern, she requires a great deal of persuasion and reassurance before entering the tunnel and declines to go first.

Development: Emergence and a Trail

The tunnel ends at smooth ceiling slab with handholds chipped into it. When lifted, it opens into a storeroom for mining gear. Tools, rope, props, oil flasks, and lanterns are artfully arranged on wooden shelves, wrapped in

Memorial Carving

"Let it be known that this stone does represent and commemorate the battle fought here between Ban of Clan Cursetter and forces from the deep. Let his courage and sacrifice in holding the way stand as a light to those who come after. Show respect here, for one who gave his all for the community, his family, and his friends. Let his Hammer stand in perpetuity as symbol and a reminder of our duty. Hail to the Fallen."

greased paper against corrosion. There are traces of the mud that now covers the players' hands and knees on the floor. Awareness at **DC:14** identifies them as boot prints.

The only door leads to a worked tunnel which can be followed out into a cave that has been partially cleared of stalagmites and stalactites. A rougher tunnel leads further into the mines while a neater, cleaner one leads upward. Smears of dried grime in the corridor indicate that whoever left the tunnel came through here. Unfortunately, the smears do not extend onto the rougher, dusty floor of the cave.

Where the rock formations have been cleared, three stone bunkhouses have been constructed, incorporating some of the rubble in their structure, with uneven chunks mortared together. The bunkhouses have windows and in one, lights shine through.

Development: Narrowing the List

The bunkhouses are home to a mining crew of six dwarves, two to each building. Water comes from a small, clear pool fed by a stream that bubbles up from the rock at the edge of the cave and vanishes back under just outside the pool. The dwarves work on a rotating shift, with four at work at any given time, and the other two resting or repairing gear.

Their names are

Hut 1: Brodgar Farrag, Loda Baikey

Hut 2: Yesnaby Grindwater, Inkster Grindwater

Hut 3: Nave Ruddick, Magnus Hobb

The Grindwaters are presently at home, making dinner. The players take them by surprise, emerging from an apparent dead-end, and if they explain who they are and what they are doing, Yesnaby heads into the mine proper to retrieve the others.

The dwarves have heard of the death and the theft but assume that the culprits are in custody. They are far more concerned that the Festival may be delayed.

The players must choose their approach to these dwarves, who are the obvious suspects, or at least witnesses. Depending on their hostility, Intimidation, Persuasion, Deduction, and Human Perception are the most appropriate skills here.

Personalities

Yesnaby and **Inkster Grindwater** are a couple. Yesnaby has reddish hair and a sandy beard, cut shorter than traditional styles. Inkster has a shaved head and long beard

he wears looped away from his chest. They have a helpful demeanor but stress that they are busy trying to complete their tasks before the Festival starts. They know nothing of the crimes.

Nave Ruddick is the nominal shift boss and shares a bunkhouse with **Magnus Hobb**. His beard is a striking platinum blond and heavily oiled. Of average height and build, his blue eyes are always moving, looking for hazards. He's measured but not particularly trusting of outsiders. If Enid is present, or if the players invoke Sigurd Flett's name, he proves more helpful. Again, he doesn't know anything about the crimes but has noticed **Brodgar Farrag** and **Loda Baikey** have been falling behind on their work quota this last week.

Magnus Hobb is a veteran miner who rarely speaks but gives the impression of constantly listening. If questioned, he tells the players there are dark things in the shafts, and someone must listen for them. His beard is almost solid gray and he moves with a slight stiffness, though he is also strongly muscled.

Loda Baikey is a vaguely grumpy person who tends to respond in short, snappy sentences. If their mediocre performance is mentioned, Loda maintains it's because they can't get any decent sleep. Their beard is neatly trimmed and their hair falls to meet it, both only braided when they are on shift and brushed out immediately upon returning to the bunkhouses.

Brodgar Farrag is the youngest member of the crew and the culprit. He is nervous, which he puts down to not having had much to do with humans before. This nervousness increases once he recognizes the players from their earlier encounter. His beard is wispy and brushed loose and fluffed to appear more voluminous. **He's the murderer — try not to make this immediately obvious.**

Important Facts

- ♦ Loda and Brodgar have not been working well this last week.
- ♦ Nobody has been to the storeroom for a month, as they have all the gear they need.
- ♦ Brodgar recently returned from his drekthag (a year-long dwarven rite of passage).
- ♦ Loda complains that Brodgar has been keeping her awake at night.
- ♦ Brodgar has developed a bad back, and Loda now must fetch the water for their bunkhouse.

If the players don't suggest it themselves, Yesnaby "helpfully" suggests they have a look around so the crew

can return to work. A high Human Perception check reveals Brodgar is unhappy at this suggestion.

Development: Searching the Bunkhouses

The bunkhouses stand upon pillars with stairs leading to the door. They are each of similar layout: two cots in alcoves with privacy provided by a heavy curtain. The front of each bunkhouse has a small stove and seating where they take their meals. The bunkhouses are floored with stone flags, which get moved around from job to job.

Each dwarf has a footlocker at the end of their cot for a few personal belongings.

If the players choose to investigate Brodgar's footlocker thoroughly, they notice that the flagstone in front of it is loose and shows recent scratches.

Raising the flagstone, or crawling under the bunkhouse itself, reveals a sack, containing a quantity of gold and some small gems, and a letter talking about the "priceless" nature of Cursetter's Hammer. The letter is addressed to "Master Farrag" and is signed "Cattic of Aldersberg." An uneven bundle of sackcloth turns out to be the Hammer itself, bound tightly in rope.

Climax: Confronting Brodgar

The most damning evidence against Brodgar Farrag is the letter and the missing Hammer itself. All the guilty young dwarf can do is stand by as the characters expose his hoard, surrounded by the crew who thought they knew him and trusted him. Brodgar is in as much danger from his friends as from the party, and he tries to talk, rather than fight his way out.

His denials escalate with each piece of evidence presented to him.

Initially, he tries in vain to pass off the blame to those not present to defend themselves.

Read Aloud:

Brodgar looks appealingly to his crewmates for support, his voice high and tight.

"It's all just a big misunderstanding! I was there, yes, but I saw Rendal talking to those outsiders, so I just hid. I didn't know what to do, but I knew they must be after Cursetter's Hammer. It was just my honest duty to get to it before they did. I just did what anyone would have done to keep it safe."

By now the party should have enough information to challenge this version of events. Feel free to encourage their best detective fantasies to pressure the thief into a confession. Deduction or Human Perception checks can be used to guide them.

Confronting Brodgar with the demise of Rendal Harkus is what finally takes the wind from his sails. Once this has been presented, skip to **Brodgar's Confession**.

Should the players need a reminder, the available evidence they may have found is as follows:

- ◆ There was only one normal way to access the cavern.
- ◆ The concealed tunnel linked the cavern to the nearby storeroom.
- ◆ A trail led from the storeroom to the miner's bunkhouses.
- ◆ The impact marks on the broken support pillar.
- ◆ The head wound that killed Rendal was square and regular, inconsistent with a rockfall.
- ◆ Cursetter's Hammer was found underneath Brodgar's cot.
- ◆ The letter discussing the hammer was addressed to him.
- ◆ Scheyli and Neniz maintained they never made it as far as Cursetter's Cavern and their survival would seem to confirm this.

Brodgar's reaction to the evidence grows shriller and more indignant, before finally confessing.

Cattic's Letter

My dear Master Farrag,

I was gratified to hear from our mutual friends that you could find your way clear to making such an extremely welcome donation to my little collection as you offer. Of course, I realize that such a donation cannot be obtained without an element of personal risk, so rest assured you will find yourself more than adequately compensated.

When I use the term priceless, I am of course referring to the Hammer of Ban Cursetter's historical value. Though I do appreciate the craftsmanship involved you must realize that the true aficionado must look beyond mere material factors.

None the less, I think you will be fully satisfied by what I have prepared for you. In my own little way, I wish to aid you in beginning a whole new existence in Aldersberg, leaving your old life quite behind as if it were merely a bad dream.

*Signed,
Cattic of Aldersberg*

Read Aloud:

The young dwarf goes pale and looks around, appealing to the stern figures around him

“This is all so unfair! You’re just trying to protect the other outsiders! It’s not like I was going to KEEP the Hammer, I was going to put it back and nobody would have been the wiser. I’M the real hero here!”

“It was all an ACCIDENT! Rendal shouldn’t even have been there, and if he hadn’t then I’d have been away by now! I just wanted a life, that’s all. Somewhere away from the mines, and the snow, and the boredom. A little nest-egg, that’s all I needed — I met friends this year gone on drekthag. Real friends who liked me and said I was special. They said they could set me up in a shop of my own. I just needed a bit of gold to pay my share, that’s all. There were going to be so many outsiders here soon I thought I could slip away, and nobody would notice. It’s not my fault.”

Tears well in Brodgar’s eyes, but they are for himself, not the unfortunate victim. His shoulders slump and his steps are heavy as his crewmates take his arms to escort him to justice.

The group forms a somber procession to Sigurd Flett, who, on hearing the facts of the matter, orders that Brodgar be removed to a cell, to face his punishment later. The last you see of Brodgar is his pale, sweating face as he is led away to captivity. His demise would not be allowed to sully the month-long Ale Festival, but would come soon enough.

Conclusion: The Ale Festival (Read Aloud)

The Ale Festival was as amazing as the stories promised, although there are parts that you’re sure you’ll never remember, and more that you will probably never admit to. Throngs of all races swarmed Mount Carbon, completely oblivious to the tensions of the previous week.

At the opening ceremony, you were brought by a tearful Enid and a stoic Sigurd Flett to the grand dais where you were presented to Brouver Hoog, a gruff, elderly dwarf who gave you the impression he could tear you limb from limb if the occasion demanded, despite his advanced years.

As he took a breath to speak a signal gong sounded, silencing the Hall.

“You’ll all well know my feelings on outsiders. Well, it seems some may be worthwhile. These here have saved this Festival, and they honor Mahakam. In recognition of their service to Mountain, Clan, and Hall, I hereby award them the Leaden Ring. May they make free use of it and consider Mahakam as a place where they will always be welcome.”



He then presented each of you with a small bag, in which was a simple ring, cast from lead, etched and burnished to a dull gleam. The crowd cheered and the drinking resumed.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

Receiving the Leaden Ring increases the general reputation of the party immensely, putting them on the tongues of the important. Because of their newly heightened reputation, a courier arrives carrying a message from Alwyn de Claremont, the Quartermaster in Nilfgaardian-occupied Maribor. Alwyn has heard of the player’s penchant for problem-solving, and would like them to hire them to solve a problem for him. Proceed to **Murder in Maribor**.



NPC

Medium
HighIntelligence
SapientSenses
—

Humanoid



Cooper Mawik

Description:

Cooper Mawik has pretensions toward joining the Council of Elders. He is a miner and passable craftsman who produces weapons for export. Mawik has a dislike for humans and takes pride in fleecing them as far as possible for his goods. This is not for personal profit; he simply regards it as another indication of human inferiority to slip a bad bargain past them.

The lockdown of Mount Carbon has interfered with his trade and this has made him terribly angry. What makes matters worse from his point of view is Enid Harkus' behavior. To Mawik, she causes trouble by not accepting the judgement of, as he sees it, her elders and betters. He is offended that Scheyli and Neniz weren't summarily thrown off the mountain and does not take kindly to the players investigating.

Once they get his attention on meeting Enid, Mawik has some of his minions watch the players. Cursetter's Cavern is an ideal location for this ambush, as it is

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 5 |
| REF | 10 |
| DEX | 10 |
| BODY | 8 |
| SPD | 9 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 8 |

| | |
|------|-----|
| STUN | 100 |
| RUN | 27 |
| LEAP | 5 |
| STA | 50 |
| ENC | 80 |
| REC | 10 |
| HP | 50 |
| VIG | 2 |

| Skill Base | |
|------------------|----|
| Awareness | 12 |
| Brawling | 12 |
| Courage | 11 |
| Dodge/Escapes | 12 |
| Human Perception | 9 |
| Intimidation | 12 |
| Physique | 12 |
| Resist Coercion | 12 |
| Small Blades | 10 |
| Stealth | 10 |
| Tactics | 12 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 5 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|-------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| — | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|--------------------|--|
| Hanged Man's Venom | |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 18 |
| Reposition Base | 18 |
| Block Base | 20 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| N/A | |

slightly isolated and he's on good terms with the dwarves clearing the rubble. With one eye on his potential future position, Mawik doesn't have the players killed but wishes to make them leave voluntarily and orders them beaten. He only uses his knife if they attempt to use lethal force.

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Punch | 12 | P | 1d6+2 | — | — | — |
| Kick | 12 | P | 1d6+6 | — | — | — |
| Dagger | 10 | S/P | 1d6+2 | 10 | NA | — |

Mawik's Minions

Mawik's Minions are a group of young-adult dwarves who have fallen for Cooper Mawik's rhetoric regarding the untrustworthiness of non-dwarves. They run errands and report on what they see as "disloyal" behavior to Mawik. They have not yet killed anyone for him, and it is unclear as to whether their loyalty stretches that far.



NPC

**Medium
High**

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

Humanoid

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 5 |
| REF | 7 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 8 |
| SPD | 7 |
| EMP | 4 |
| CRA | 6 |
| WILL | 6 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 7 |
| RUN | 21 |
| LEAP | 4 |
| STA | 35 |
| ENC | 80 |
| REC | 7 |
| HP | 35 |

| Skill Base | |
|------------------|----|
| Awareness | 10 |
| Brawling | 13 |
| Dodge/Escapes | 11 |
| Human Perception | 8 |
| Intimidation | 10 |
| Physique | 11 |
| Resist Coercion | 10 |
| Small Blades | 10 |
| Stealth | 10 |
| Streetwise | 8 |

| Bounty |
|--------|
| N/A |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 5 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Punch | 12 | P | 1d6+2 | — | — | — |
| Kick | 12 | P | 1d6+6 | — | — | — |
| Dagger | 10 | S/P | 1d6+2 | 10 | NA | — |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 11 |
| Reposition Base | 6 |
| Block Base | 13 |



Brodgar Farrag

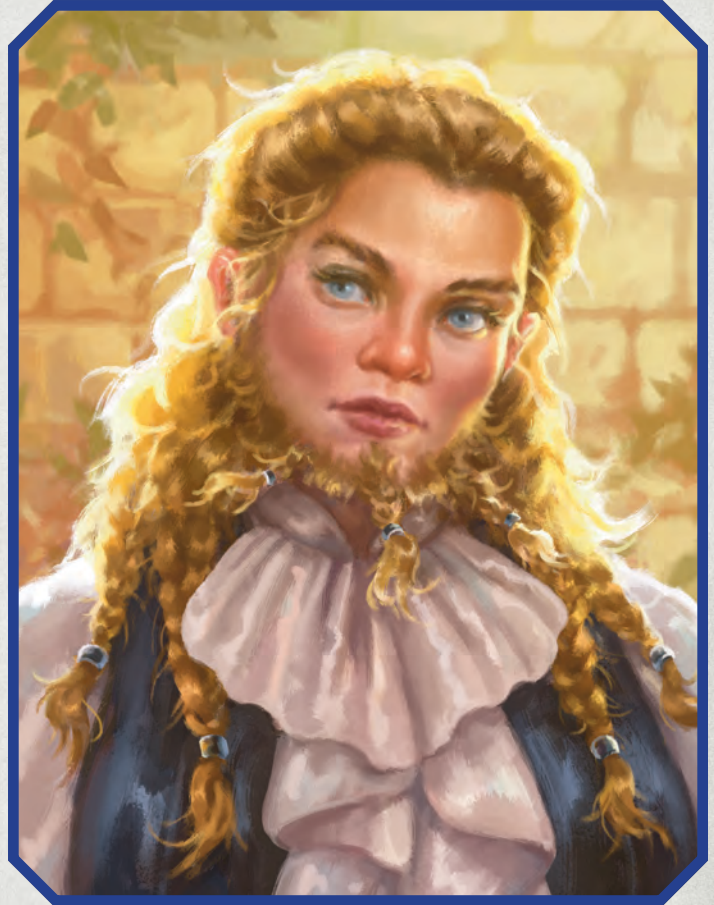
NPC

Something of a tragic soul, Brodgar is young and gullible. When on his drekthag, where young dwarves spend time away from Mahakam to experience the realities of life in a human-dominated world, he fell in with a group of con artists. They flattered his ego and spun him stories of what a wonderful life he could lead once “free” of the rules of Mahakam.

Once Brodgar was on board with the idea of striking out on his own, the gang explained he’d need some seed money and put him in touch with a collector, a fence who would be interested in purchasing some hard to find items from within Mount Carbon.

On returning home, Brodgar was directed to steal the solid gold Cursetter’s Hammer for its “historical value” and started making plans. His nerves were not suited to the endeavor, and his panic at being discovered cost Rendal Harkus his life.

Brodgar is trying to put it all behind him and escape with the Hammer to meet his new friends. The players arriving terrifies him. Brodgar has made unwise associations and bad choices and doesn’t want to take responsibility for any of it.



Enid Harkus

NPC

A serious-looking young dwarf woman with blond hair, blue eyes, and a braided beard that looks haphazard and wispy. She wears a high-necked cream shirt and a black leather waistcoat.

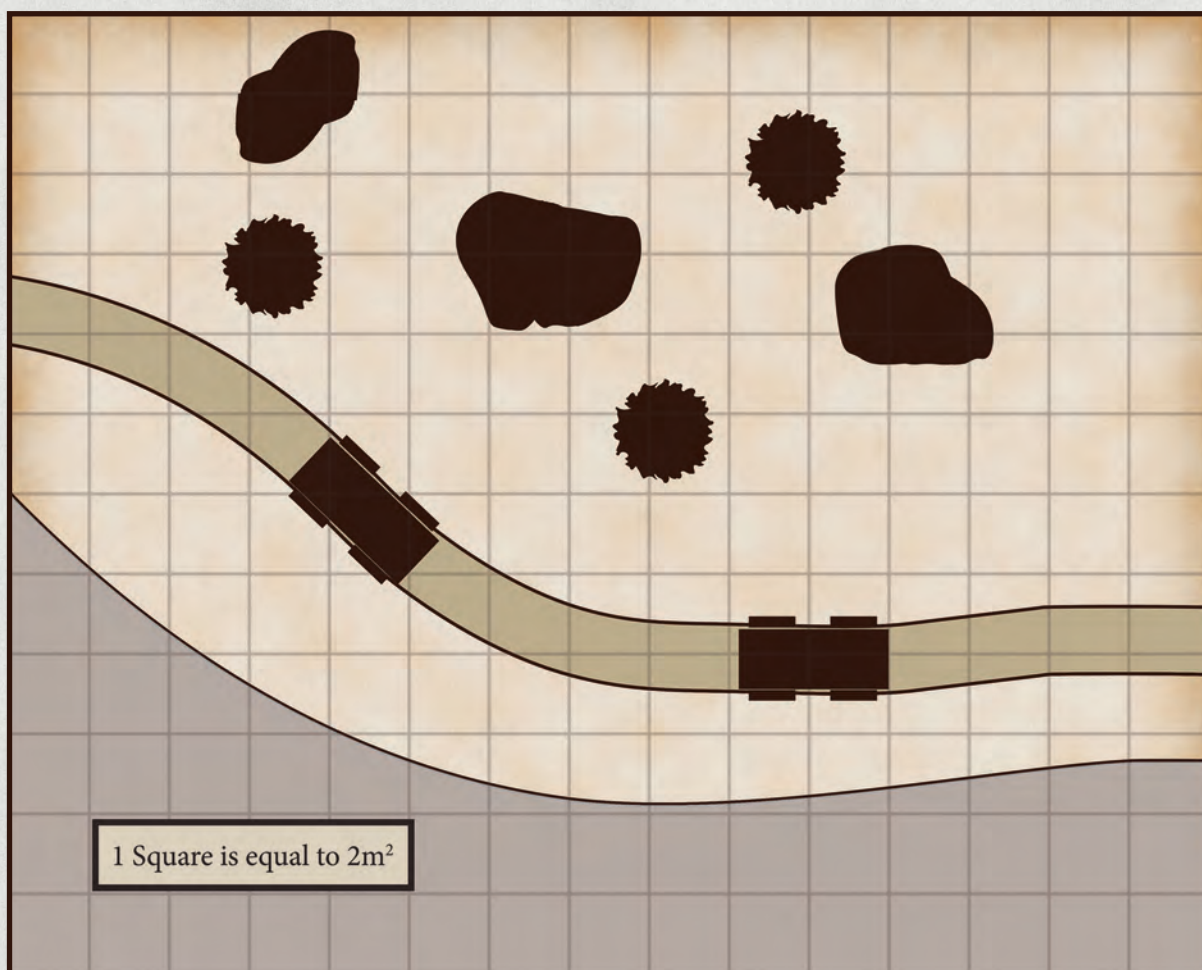
Enid has been hurt terribly by the death of her brother Rendal and is keen to see the true culprit brought to justice. Her passion for the truth has led her to browbeat Sigurd Flett until he got Brouver Hoog to lockdown Mount Carbon. She’s determined and wants the investigation to succeed.

Bandit Ambush

Terrain: Ice and Snow

Light Level: Daylight

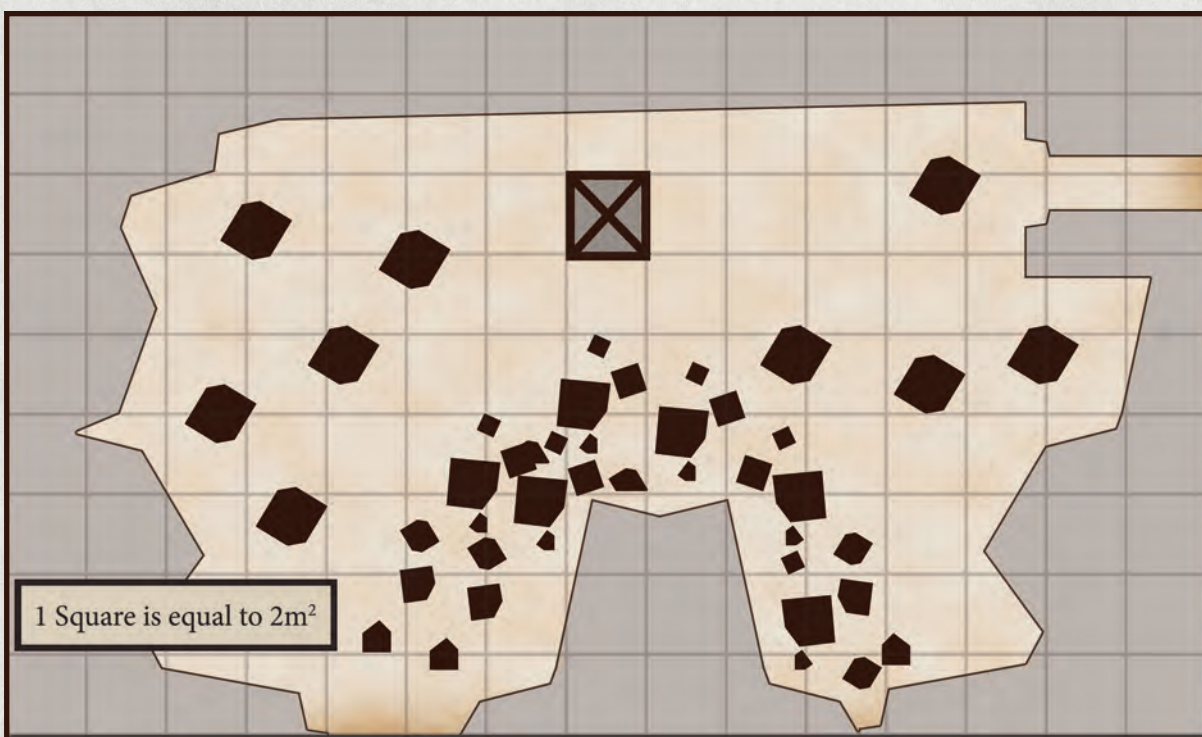
Description: The bandits have ambushed the wagons as they traveled. The road winds up the mountainside to take advantage of the shallower slope. Downhill there is a sheer cliff face, uphill there are scattered trees and rocks, which the bandits use for cover, giving them an elevated position over the road. Immediately behind the bandits is a meter-high escarpment. The whole area is ankle-deep snow over ice.



Cursetter's Cavern

Light Level: Dim Light

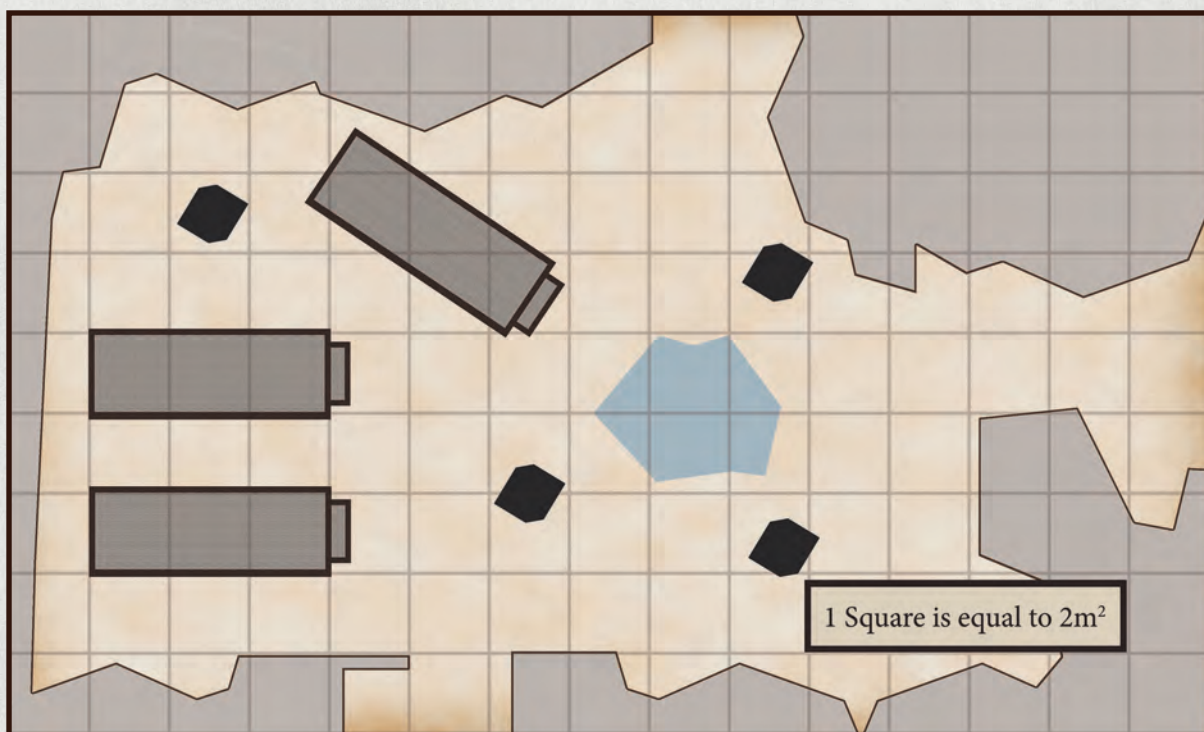
Description: This natural cavern boasts many rock pillars, and would be mostly clear between the entrance and the memorial, if not for a rockfall which has blocked half the entrance and most of the floor to the south. There are sconces along the back wall and the entrance, but only one is lit to give the workers light to see by as they work to clear the rubble. To the east is the exit to Brodgar's tunnel.

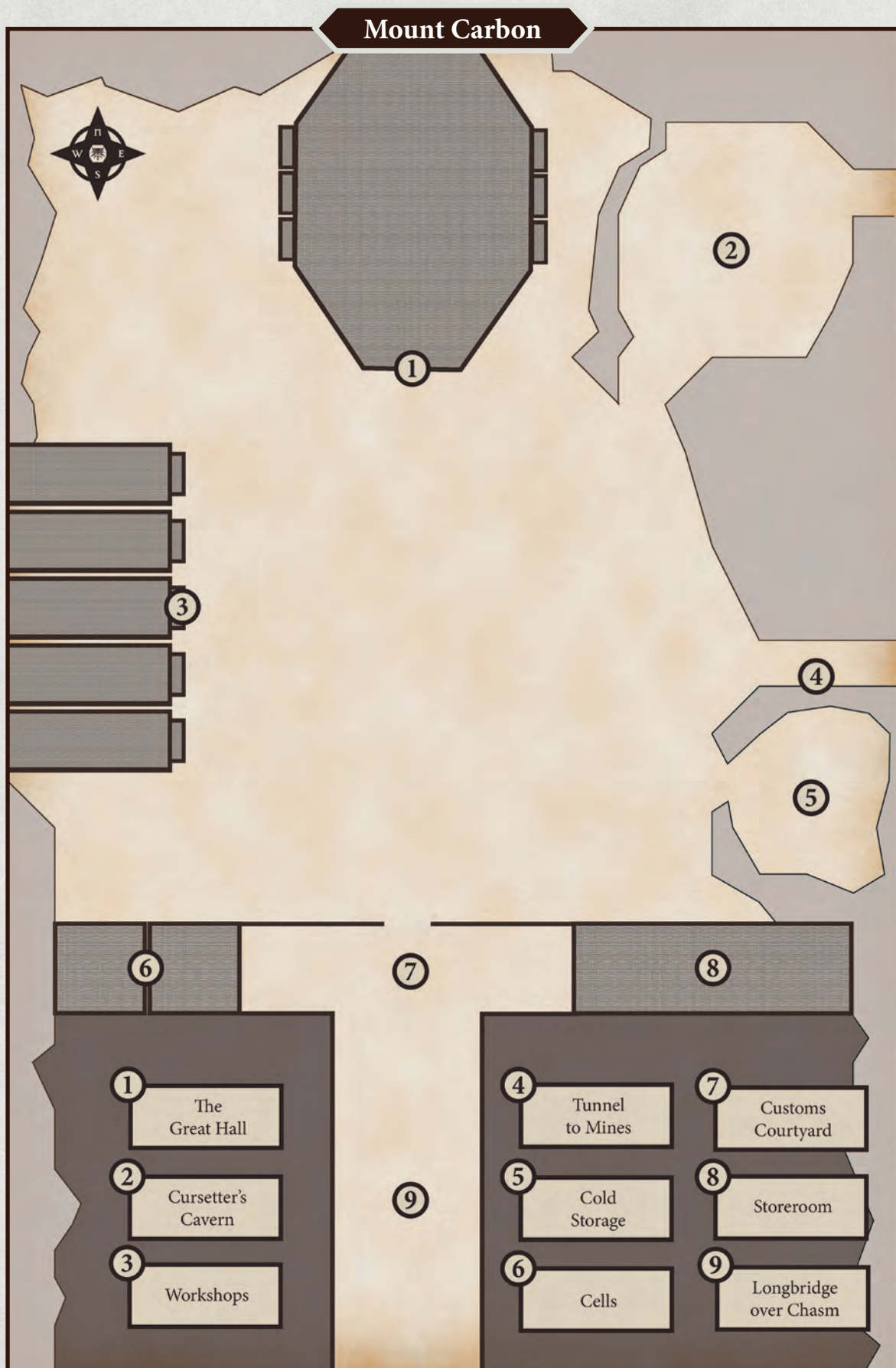


Bunkhouse Cavern

Light Level: Dim Light

Description: This natural cavern has had most of its stalagmites cleared to serve as material to build the three bunkhouses. The air is cold and damp due to a spring-fed pool. The walls and floor are uneven. There is always at least one lantern lit above the door of Bunkhouse 3 to illuminate the pool.





Murder in Maribor



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

Your Players have traveled east from Mount Carbon to arrive in Maribor. On the way, they passed the Nilfgaardian front, their letter from Alwyn de Claremont insuring their safe passage. When they arrive in the city, the adventure begins...

Background (Read Aloud)

The fires of war are a terrible thing, scorching all they touch, casting soot to conceal even the blackest of sins. Temeria smolders still from the army of Nilfgaard, which prepares to lay siege to Vizima, a mere two hundred miles to the north. You arrive in the city of Maribor, a week into the occupation of its new

Nilfgaardian masters. The stench of death permeates the city, wafting from its sewers, stagnating in the still air of the streets. You came here to do a job — and it isn't a clean one, either.

The Rest of the Story

The Cult of the Lionheaded Spider indeed murders people in Maribor on a weekly basis — but they are not responsible for the deaths of the Nilfgaardian officers. The real culprit behind these murders is a priestess of Melitele named Annegina of Maribor, who, acting alone, sneaks through the sewers at night between the temple quarter and the wealthy district and eliminates high-ranking members of the Nilfgaardian army. She uses her time treating the officers during

the day to plan their deaths. She then frames the cult for her murders. She sees the presence of Nilfgaard in the city as an existential threat to her temple of Melitele — she fears that as their occupation continues, they will eventually convert her temple into one devoted to the official religion of Nilfgaard, The Great Sun. She isn't wrong, either. The Nilfgaardian army merely tolerates the priestesses of the temple because they provide medical services for their soldiers. As your players discover the truth, they must make a decision.

Setting

The players arrive at the recently occupied city of Maribor in Temeria. They receive lodgings in a house commandeered by the Nilfgaardian army to serve as their base of operations. The cult discovers their intentions at once and hexes the party each night at midnight, putting them on a countdown of sorts. The players enter the sewers to search for the Cult of the Lionheaded Spider. After a dangerous trek through the sewers, they find the hidden entrance to the cult's headquarters in an elven ruin deeper still underground. After dealing with the cultists, they discover a place of power at the center of their temple. Upon returning to receive their reward, they discover that the string of murders has continued in the cult's absence. After an investigation, the players discover the identity of the murderer, a priestess of Melitele named Annegina of Maribor. The players must decide whether to turn her in.

Forces

This adventure can be run with up to six players from either side of the war, so long as they are not known widely as enemies of Nilfgaard. Followers of Melitele will feel especially welcome, as will doctors, and anyone with a high reputation in Nilfgaard. The enemies you deploy should reflect the number of players.

The Opposition Will Be

- ♦ **Layton Herman** and his **Cultists** of Coram Agh Tera are the main antagonists of the adventure. They are encountered in two waves, one of four and one of six in their temple underneath the sewers. Their stat blocks can be found [at the back of the adventure](#).
- ♦ An **Arachas** guards the entrance to the Temple of Coram Agh Tera in the sewers. Its stat block is found in the core book.
- ♦ **Drowners** equal to the number of players plus two lurk in the sewers. Their stat block is found in the core book.
- ♦ **Annegina of Maribor** is the real culprit of the murders. She might not come quietly. Her stat block is found [at the back of the adventure](#).

Set Up (Read Aloud)

In the wake of the army of Nilfgaard, the temple quarter of Maribor has been converted into a massive hospital of black and gold checkered tents adorned with golden suns, in which priestesses of Melitele tend to a horde of injured Nilfgaardian soldiers. This is where you find the Quartermaster Alwyn de Claremont, whose call for a group of able-bodied problem-solvers capable of completing difficult tasks in dangerous environments drew you here. When you find him, Alwyn is doodling a tiny aardvark in the margin of his ledger. He looks up, puts away his papers, and leads you into a nearby abandoned house, closing the door behind him and checking the windows to ensure you are alone. When he is satisfied, he begins to speak:

"Please relax. I am not one of those Nilfgaardian officers. I prefer rewarding success to punishing failure. For this job I can give a reward of 300 crowns for each of you. There, I can see the fires in your eyes. Loosen up — no need to continue as if we had sticks so deep in our arses that they could paint us black and gold for the mounted division's banners. But before we continue, I need you to take a vow that what you learn here cannot find its way to the rest of the soldiers, as it may cause panic. Discretion will be paramount, so I need your oath. Do you swear?"

Hook

Each player must swear to Alwyn to keep his information secret. Only then does he take a seat and continue:

"You have seen the hospital in the temple quarter, have you not? Well, those are all lower-ranking soldiers. Most of us higher-ranking officers have taken up residence in these lovely homes, to heal from our injuries in accommodations more fitting to our station. Regretfully, two of my fellow officers, Gwerydd and Eion van Tremorli, are dead, both stabbed in their beds during the night while recovering from their injuries. On both of their chests, a spiderweb draped a lone fatal wound. I have learned from Gertrud Janssen, the temple's head priestess of Melitele, that this signifies that the Cult of the Lionheaded Spider, also known as Coram Agh Tera, is the culprit. Their presence in the sewers beneath Maribor is an open secret among the priestesses, who have had to treat many of the hexes cast on the people of this city over the years. While they are few in number, they should not be underestimated. They likely walk among us as spies. The sewers supply a natural fortification for them, full of monsters. The only entrance to the sewers is in the temple quarter. Feel free to take residence in this home for the duration of the job. Gwerydd shouldn't need it any longer, poor bastard. Kill

every sodding one of these cultists and I'll fill your hands with gold."

Alwyn leaves the players in the house after they agree to the job.

Go to Development (Headquarters).

Development (Headquarters)

The building given to the players as a base of operations is the recently abandoned residence of a mage named Barend Anselberg, who abandoned it due to the approaching Nilfgaardian army. Your players likely want to settle in and take an inventory of the building before moving on.

The first floor of the home has a living room and a kitchen with a beautiful bay window overlooking a private garden brimming with plants of alchemical significance ([see the Anselberg's Garden sidebar](#)). A portrait of the house's previous owner adorns the mantle above the fireplace alongside portraits of two other mages, his classmates from Ban Ard. Stairs lead to the upper floor and down to a basement. The upper floor consists of a bathroom, a guest room, and a master bedroom. Gwerydd's blood stains the bed in the master bedroom. The basement consists of a small library of cheap books. The lock on the basement door has been broken.

Investigating the basement with a **DC:15 Deduction** check reveals a secret entrance to **Development (Abandoned Laboratory)** deep in the sewers below.

Taking a complete inventory of the residence, players find:

- ◆ 9x Jar of Pickled Asparagus
- ◆ 2x Fashionable Clothing
- ◆ 1x Cold Weather Clothing
- ◆ 1x Soap
- ◆ 1x Cologne
- ◆ 1x Hourglass
- ◆ 1x Lantern
- ◆ 5x Candles
- ◆ 1x Dice Poker Board
- ◆ 1x Hand Mirror
- ◆ 1x Map of the Continent
- ◆ 1x Prosthetic, Quality (Left Leg)

If your players enter the sewer at once, **go to Development (Temple Quarter Sewer Entrance)**. They may also use any other entrance to the sewers they've discovered.

If your players want to talk to Gertrud Jansen, Head Priestess of Melitele, **go to Development (Gertrud's Advice)**.

Development (Gertrud's Advice)

Gertrud stands upon the steps of the Temple of Melitele when the party finds her, managing the chaos of the makeshift hospital. She is extremely busy, and with only three priestesses left in the city to aid her, she must fill in for multiple roles.

Gertrud confirms Alwyn's claims, and adds that she knows the Cult of the Lionheaded Spider holds a ritual each night around midnight to hex enemies of their cult.

She can be bothered for more information, but becomes increasingly impatient with each question, and leaves the players if she feels they are wasting her time.

Her temple's resources are stretched thin, but she promises to provide them with treatment if they find themselves in need. If your players want to take advantage of her offer, **go to Development (Melitele's Healing)**.

If the players enter the sewer now, **go to Development (Temple Quarter Sewer Entrance)**. They may also use any other entrance to the sewers they've discovered. The party may also return to **Development (Headquarters)**.

Development (Melitele's Healing)

As long as your players remain in the good graces of the Temple of Melitele, they can receive medical treatment from the priestesses of the temple quarter. Each priestess is a Doctor with a Healing Hands skill of base 15.

If asked to heal a hex, the priestesses teach the party how to lift that particular hex. They even lend the party the required materials,

Anselberg's Garden

The mage's garden brims with alchemical plants. From it, players can gather 1d10 of each of the following components: Balisse Fruit, Balisse Leaves, Celandine, Bryonia, and Berbercane Fruit. There is also a sizable allotment of asparagus. These plants regrow after a month.



with the exception of infused dust, for which they charge the party 50 crowns per unit. If the party can't pay, the priestesses request they complete a charitable act for a stranger in return for each unit.

If the players require healing from these priestesses a second time, the current Nilfgaardian quartermaster orders

the priestesses of Melitele to rotate daily tending to their wounds at the party's headquarters as their private nurse. Choose your player's favorite to take the first shift, then rotate between them daily.

Each of the three priestesses of Melitele are unique. Use the chart below to help bring out their individuality.

| Name | Hobby | Preferred Topic | Disposition | Favorite Food | Guilty Pleasure | Hair |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Annegina of Maribor | Gardening | Melitele | Calm | Peppermint Candy | Nighttime Reading | Brown |
| Ciska Voigt | Gwent | Food | Kind | Chocolate | Men | Red |
| Eva of Maribor | Poetry | Weather | Charming | Mahakaman Spirit | Drinking | Brown |

Development (Temple Quarter Sewer Entrance)

After descending a long and rusty ladder leading them underneath the streets of the temple quarter, the party arrives in the sewer. The air here is extremely unpleasant, but not dangerously so. In the absence of a light source, the darkness of the sewer gives -4 to Awareness and -2 to Attack and Defense.

The ladder drops the players onto a walkway that follows a rainwater collection channel before waterfalling out of sight through a series of iron bars. Just before the walkway curves, an archway leads to an adjacent chamber, from which light flickers.

If this is the first time the party has descended into the sewers, word reaches Coram Agh Tera of their plans, and the cult targets them with hexes each midnight until either the players kill the leader of the Maribor chapter of the Cult of the Lionheaded Spider (Layton Hermann), or they leave Maribor for good. **See Sidebar (Midnight of the Spider).**

If your players wish to enter the archway to the adjacent chamber, **go to Development (Destitute Camp).**

Development (Destitute Camp)

This chamber houses makeshift shelters and several huddled war-refugees, starving and disease-ridden. They hide, albeit poorly, from the party. Light from a sewer grate in the ceiling barely illuminates the room in the absence of other light sources. Across the chamber, stairs descend sharply into a miasma-filled chamber lit magically with amber light.

The refugees suffer, but they also seem to be receiving medical attention from the priestesses of Melitele, most likely in secret, as none of them are Nilfgaardian. If asked about the cult, they claim to have seen them to the south. One bulky refugee claims that a cult member attempted to capture him while he was defecating, so he pushed him into the main waste line in the chamber below. He also claims that

the golem in that chamber is harmless, but everyone other than him fears it.

Most of the refugees are afflicted with Sewer Pox. Each time your players cross through the camp, they must succeed on a **DC:12 Endurance** check (or a **DC:16 Endurance** check if hexed with Pesta's Kiss). Characters who fail contract Sewer Pox (**see sidebar**). A character cured of Sewer Pox previously cannot contract it again.

If attacked, the refugees rally together and fight back, using the statistics of a number of **bandits** equal to the number of players plus two, except they are unarmored. Since they are backed into a corner, they fight to the death.

If the players descend the stairs into the miasma, **go to Cliffhanger (Main Waste Line).**

Cliffhanger (Main Waste Line)

Each time the party descends into a miasma-filled chamber like this one, they must make a **DC:12 Endurance** check or be subjected to the nausea condition until they leave the area containing the gas and get a full night's rest. A player affected by Pesta's Kiss must succeed a **DC:16 Endurance** check instead.

If the **drowners** from Cliffhanger (Flooded Chamber) are still alive, they rush in from the north walkway and attack the players when they first cross to the east side of the main waste line. They are equal in number to the players plus two and are immune to the effects of the bubbling watery waste, and can also swim through the main waste line without disturbing the deeper viscous black sludge layer. Drowners are particularly unintelligent and often simply attack the closest thing to them in combat.

The main waste line runs through the center of this chamber under a solid iron gate that hangs from a mechanism in the ceiling, and it forks in two directions at the end of the chamber, each fork with its own iron gate, one raised, and one lowered, diverting the sewage to the east. Several bridges cross the main waste line to the other side. From the bubbling surface of the main waste line, a rotting hand reaches, attached to a skeletal body buried in the vis-

Midnight of the Spider

Each night at midnight, from the moment the cult learns the party's plans until Layton Hermann dies, roll a Resist Magic check for each of your players secretly against a Hex Weaving check of 15. Roll on the following table to determine which hex affects which players that failed to resist. If a player would receive a hex that already affects them, give them the other one. Hexes are hard to detect when their effects are not in play, and thus, you should keep this information secret — for now.

| Roll | Result |
|------|------------------|
| 1-2 | The Nightmare |
| 3-6 | The Pesta's Kiss |

Sewer Pox

Characters who contract Sewer Pox take a -2 to all actions and must halve their maximum stamina for as long as they remain diseased by Sewer Pox.

Sewer Pox can only be removed by a Doctor with a DC:15 Healing Hands roll, after which the patient must get a full night's rest.

After a character has been cured of Sewer Pox once, they cannot contract it again.

Dangerous Sewage

There are two varieties of sewage present in the sewer. When a character ends a turn during combat in either substance, touches it, crosses half of a body of it out of combat, they are subjected to its effect below.

cous black sludge layer. It grasps something tightly in its hand, impossible to reach without entering the main waste line to retrieve it, draining the main waste line, using Telekinesis or other magic, or using a weapon with Long Reach. In the corpse's grasp is **a key with an hourglass shaped stem**.

The depths of the channel are choked with a mass of viscous black sludge atop which flows — and in some areas of the walkway, overflows — a layer of bubbling watery waste. For the effects of contact with either form of sewage, **see the Sidebar (Dangerous Sewage)**.

On the east side of the channel, a **golem** stands in front of a lever console mounted to the wall, moving its arm back and forth in the air. It is perfectly harmless until its task is interrupted for even a moment, or if it is attacked. If your players try to manipulate the levers in the console, **see Development (Lever Console)**.

On the west side of the main waste line, the walkway extends to the south, eventually bending to the west, leading to a chamber

behind the lowered right gate. If the players head along the path, **go to Cliffhanger (Flooded Chamber)**.

On the east side of the chamber, a walkway covered in a bubbling layer of wastewater bends to the east, leading to a flooded chamber. If your players head along the walkway, **go to Cliffhanger (Dry Chamber)**.

| Sewage | Effect |
|-----------------------|--|
| Bubbling Watery Waste | Deals 3 points of ablation damage to armor immersed in it, or 5 acid damage to all exposed body parts immersed in it. |
| Viscous Black Sludge | Adheres itself to anything immersed in it, subjecting them to the Poison condition and rendering them unable to move until they make a DC:12 Athletics check to break free. |



Development (Lever Console)

The console contains three levers, each linked to an iron gate that controls the flow of sewage in the main waste line. The leftmost lever is broken. Refer to the chart below for what happens when each lever is pulled, and what state each lever is found in at the start of the adventure. Fixing the left lever requires a **DC:15 Crafting** check, one unit of any metal component, and a forge. If the lever is fixed, the golem pulls the lever and ceases malfunctioning, after which it will switch the direction of the main waste line once per day. Through manipulating these three levers, the water level of the area between the iron gates chamber can be drained, and the direction of the main waste line can be diverted, including to the west, which harms the **arachas** that has made its lair in **Cliffhanger (Dry Chamber)**. If the main waste line is ever blocked for longer than 30 minutes, it overflows, covering all the walkways along the main waste line with bubbling watery waste for the rest of the adventure.

| Lever | Initial Position | Purpose |
|--------|------------------|---|
| Right | Up | Raises the east gate if up, lowers the east gate if down. |
| Center | Up | Raises the north gate if up, lowers the north gate if down. |
| Left* | Down* | Raises the west gate if up, lowers the west gate if down. *Broken: Must be fixed to operate. |

Cliffhanger (Flooded Chamber)

Most of the floor of this chamber is covered in bubbling watery waste and is lit magically in amber light. The miasma continues into this chamber. For the effects of entering an area with miasma, see **Cliffhanger (Main Waste Line)**.

If this is the first time your players have entered the sewers, word reaches Coram Agh Tera of their plans, and the cult begins targeting them with hexes each midnight until either the players kill the leader of the Maribor chapter of the Cult of the Lion-headed Spider (Layton Hermann), or they leave Maribor for good. See the **Sidebar (Midnight of the Spider)**.

A pack of drowners has made this chamber their lair. If they had not already attacked the party in **Cliffhanger (Main Waste Line)**, they do so now. They are equal in number to the players plus two and are immune to the effects of the bubbling watery waste. Drowners are particularly unintelligent and often simply attack the closest thing to them in combat.

Plague Mask

Grants a +3 bonus to Endurance to resist airborne illness, poison, and nausea when worn.



Other than the filth in which the drowners live, the room is uninteresting except for the walkway leading to **Cliff-hanger (Main Waste Line)** and a reinforced metal door on the south wall, the seams around it sealed with resin. The metal door is locked with an average lock (**DC:15 Pick Lock**) that accepts a *non-hourglass-shaped key*. Behind the door is a small metal room with space only for a bench and coat rack, atop which rests a heavy cloak and a plague mask (**see sidebar**). The metal room also contains yet another reinforced door, locked with the exact same average lock. On the inside of both doors is written in chalk:

Remember to lock the door behind you.

The second metal door leads **to Development (Abandoned Laboratory)**.

Development (Abandoned Laboratory)

All manner of magical implements line the walls of this chamber, which appears to be a laboratory. The air here is sterile, and the room is magically lit. A large writing desk with an impeccably made chair sits in front of a chalk circle,

where a megascope stood until quite recently. Several prosthetic legs line one shelf on the wall, each made of different material. A basket of scrolls sits on the ground beside an impressive alchemy lab and a small tinker's forge. A staircase ascends into a room above. To the north of the laboratory is a reinforced metal door marked:

To Sewer

Taking a complete inventory of the laboratory players find:

- ◆ 2x Undelivered Message
- ◆ 1x Tinker's Forge
- ◆ 1x Writing Kit
- ◆ 1x Hardened Leather Armor Enhancement Diagram
- ◆ 1x Hardened Leather Ingredient Diagram
- ◆ 1x Acid Solution Formulae
- ◆ 1x Sterilizing Fluid Formulae
- ◆ 1x Clotting Powder Formulae
- ◆ 4x Wax
- ◆ 4x Resin
- ◆ 4x Hardened Timber
- ◆ 2x Leather
- ◆ 1x Mandrake Root
- ◆ 3x Prosthetic, Quality (Left Leg)

The Undelivered Messages read:

Message #1

My little peppermint flower,

If you are reading this, then I was unable to say goodbye in person before I made my escape north in light of current events. I will not here make a final plea to change your mind and come with me, as I understand your vows to Melitele are a part of you, the amazing woman that I love. I would never stand between you and a patient in need of healing, no matter what ruler they serve. I will wait for you. Inquire after me in Port Vanis in Kovir & Povis. I shall plant another garden there, and I would love share it with you.

Your Barend

Message #2

My most delicious Gwent rival,

If you are reading this, then I was unable to say goodbye in person before I made my escape in light of current events. I will not here make a final plea to change your mind and come with me, as I understand your vows to Melitele are a part of you. I would never stand between you and a patient in need of healing, no matter what ruler they serve. I always will think of you fondly. You will always be in my heart.

Your Barend



The reinforced metal door (which from this side is unlocked) leads to inside the metal room **in Cliffhanger (Flooded Chamber)**.

The stairs lead to a hidden room behind a bookshelf in the basement **of Development (Headquarters)**.

Cliffhanger (Dry Chamber)

The miasma continues into this chamber, magically lit by amber light, which consists of a single bridge that connects two walkways on either side of a large basin. One walkway follows this western waste line as it narrows into darkness, eventually leading outside the city. Across the bridge is an archway leading into a small chamber lit by green fire.

If the main waste line is currently pointed west, the basin of the chamber includes a stream of bubbling watery waste riding atop a layer of viscous black sludge. If the main waste line was directed west once during this adventure, only the viscous black sludge layer remains in the basin. If the main waste line hasn't yet been directed west this adventure, the chamber's basin is dry.

A massively corpulent arachas, twice the size and weight typical of its species, is the lone inhabitant of this room. It has grown too big to leave the chamber, and is dependent on the Cult of The Lionheaded Spider to provide its meals. It attacks anyone not wearing the cult's robes on sight.

Due to its size, the ambush tactics typical of arachasae are impossible for it. If the basin of the chamber is dry, it uses the underside of the bridge when possible to shield the soft spot of its back. If the basin is filled with sewage, it parks its bulk on the entire width of the bridge in an effort to protect its back. As it is backed into a corner, it fights to the death. It cannot chase the party into an adjacent chamber, but can fill the archways into its chamber with webbing to stop a ranged assault.

Use the arachas statistics from the core book, but its Claws have the Long Reach property, and its Rate of Fire (ROF) is 1. Additionally, due to its massive bulk, the arachas cannot make use of its Camouflage ability and is immune to Aard or any effect that would knock it off its feet.



If the main waste line has been pointed west once during this adventure, the arachas' carapace still boils from the acid wave of bubbling watery waste that poured through its chamber, reducing the armor on each of its body locations to 10.

The room lit by green fire across the bridge is **Development (Green Fire Chamber)**.

Development (Green Fire Chamber)

This chamber is lit by a green flame in a brass brazier at its center, which casts flickering shadows on the only other feature of the space, a fist-sized black widow spider painted on the wall. The spider is painted in impressive detail, right down to its distinctive red hourglass marking, which is set further into the wall than the rest of the image.

The red hourglass marking on the spider accepts a key with an hourglass-shaped stem. When placed into the spider, the entire southern wall of the chamber rotates, allowing access to a secret staircase behind it, also lit with green fire. Activating the wall's mechanism without its key requires a **DC:18 Pick Lock** check. The staircase spirals deep into the earth, eventually leading to **Cliffhanger (Temple of Coram Agh Tera)**.

Cliffhanger (Temple of Coram Agh Tera)

Lit green by fire and free of miasma, this large chamber was once an ancient elven ruin. The main hall of the temple boasts an impressively large ceremonial table topped with a layer of polished obsidian. Scattered bones adorn the ebony surface. Beyond, stairs rise to an octagonal ledge surrounding an incredibly deep pit over which a massive spiderweb is stretched. The great web is lit from below by green fire burning in the pit's distant bottom, from which an intense magical power emanates.

When the party arrives, Layton Hermann and three cultists (capable of magic) chant around the pit. If the cultists notice the players, they attack immediately. They cannot be reasoned with, fighting viciously and to the death.

Immediately after three cultists are dead, three additional cultists (incapable of magic) burst from a secret door hidden in the western wall and three more (capable of magic) descend the southern staircase. They also cannot be reasoned with and fight to the death. If taken prisoner, they kill themselves, biting their tongues if they need to. As the last cultist dies, they sputter:

Our temple may be destroyed, but you have done nothing to stop us.

There are many more temples ... other cities ... the great web is vast, and we were insignificant in it.

Behind the secret door in the western wall is a staircase leading outside Maribor.

At the base of the pit is an Earth Place of Power, which can be drawn from anywhere around the octagonal ledge. Characters with a Vigor of 1 or higher feels its pull and recognizes it for what it is (detailed in the core book).

A character who falls into the pit gets stuck in the giant web. A character stuck in the web is grappled until they can make a **DC:16 Physique** check or do 15 points of damage to the webbing; succeeding in either means a return to safety on the octagonal ledge. If the web is dealt 30 damage, it is destroyed entirely. Each character grappled in the web when this happens must succeed on a **DC:15 Athletics** check to grab the ledge or fall, most likely to their death.



A fall into this 100-meter deep pit lined with slick walls of polished obsidian is most likely fatal, and any character at the bottom of the pit is also set on fire.

Climbing out of the pit is nearly impossible (**DC:30 Athletics**) without a long rope, which makes it a **DC:15 Athletics** check. Pulling one such unfortunate character up from the pit with a rope tied around them is a **DC:20 Physique** check, reduced by 5 for each additional character helping pull.

When the party returns to the surface to collect their reward, **go to Development (Another Murder)**.

Development (Another Murder)

The party returns to Alwyn de Claremont to collect their reward, and he is overjoyed to hear that the job is done, but also surprised that they were able to handle it so quickly. He apologizes that he wasn't able to get their reward ready in such a short time, promising to deliver it in person tomorrow afternoon. In the meantime, he gifts the party two bottles of Nilfgaardian Lemon.

In the morning, Alwyn de Claremont doesn't arrive, having been stabbed to death that night in his bed in the same manner as the previous two murders. His newly promoted replacement, Cadfan aep Cadell, for easily understandable reasons, claims that the party hasn't yet completed their job. Either they missed some cult members, or there is a traitor among them.

Go to Climax (Investigation).

Climax (Investigation)

If players don't already have an idea about the identity of the murderer, they likely have an idea of where to start their investigation.

Whenever they check an area for clues, they must roll a **DC:14 Deduction** check, wherever it may be. Whenever they interrogate an NPC, they must roll a **DC:14** in Charisma, Human Perception, Persuasion, or Intimidation. Set up smaller clues based on your player's style of investigating to lead them toward the three major clues of the investigation:

- The murderer escaped from the scene of the first two murders into the sewers.
- Other than the cult, the three Melitele priestesses — Ciska Voigt, Eva of Maribor, and Annegina of Maribor — are the only people who freely entered or exited the sewers.
- The unsent messages found in **Development (Abandoned Laboratory)** are crucial pieces of evidence in the case, giving both Ciska Voigt and Annegina of Maribor reasons to be at the site of the second murder.



Try not to provide more damning physical evidence than the unsent messages **in Development (Abandoned Laboratory)**, unless your players are stuck.

If Ciska Voigt is presented with evidence of her guilt, she confesses to being involved with Barend Anselberg, but denies any involvement with the cult or the murders. If she has reason to fear the players reporting her to Nilfgaardian forces, and isn't imprisoned, she leaves Maribor through the sewer under the cover of night. Her sudden disappearance, considering the investigation, is seen by the Nilfgaardians as an admission of guilt. **Go to Ending.**

If Annegina of Maribor is presented with evidence of her guilt, she attempts to save her own hide by deflecting their suspicions toward Ciska Voigt, which requires a **DC:16 Human Perception** to detect. If she gets away with lying, and isn't imprisoned, she leaves Maribor through the sewer under the cover of night. Her sudden disappearance, considering the investigation, is seen by the Nilfgaardians as an admission of guilt. **Go to Ending.**

If Annegina of Maribor is called out for lying, she confesses, including her reasoning that the presence of Nilfgaard in the city is an existential threat to her temple of Melitele. She shows no remorse. She offers to leave town

quietly in exchange for the party going back into the sewers and bringing up a dead cultist to pin the murders on. Should the party not agree to her request, a **DC:18 Persuasion** or **DC:19 Intimidation** is required to make her agree to any counteroffer, including coming quietly. Failing causes her to become hostile and attack. Her goal in such a conflict is to escape. **Go to Ending.**

Ending

If Nilfgaardian forces were convinced either by the players or by their silent escape that either Annegina of Maribor or Ciska Voigt were responsible for the killings, they are executed if captured. If the Nilfgaardians are convinced that the murderer was a priestess of Melitele, the Head Priestess, Gertrud Janssen, is also executed to set an example.

If the Nilfgaardian forces are instead presented with a dead cultist and the truth is kept from them, they are successfully deceived. Annegina quietly escapes north to Kovir & Povis to seek out Barend Anselberg in Port Vanis. If encountered again, she provides the party with free medical care.

Either way, the party is paid 300 crowns per person, and not a crown more.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

The party learns of an upcoming exclusive and generously prized tournament in the southern reaches of Nilfgaard from some of the injured Nilfgaardian soldiers. These are a group of soldiers who are returning home to Ebbing from the front, as their injuries have ended their career as frontline warriors. In a somber tone, they offer to let the party hitch a ride on their wagon. Apparently,

this offer was one that Alwyn de Claremont had told the soldiers who were assigned to return home that he planned to extend to you himself. As he is recently dead, the soldiers have invited you in his stead to honor his last wish. Indeed, if Alwyn de Claremont is somehow still alive, he does extend the offer himself, and travels down with the party to watch the aardvarks fight, even buying them their aardvark at the beginning of the tournament. Proceed to **Enter the Fighting Pits**.

Layton Hermann

Description:

A true believer, Layton Hermann has been spreading terror, disease, and death to the people of Maribor as leader of the city's temple of Coram Agh Tera for 10 years now. He was promoted into his current position when the previous leader fell into their temple's deep pit while making repairs to the decorative giant spider web stretched atop it. Under his tutelage, the cult has focused on bolstering their temple's defenses in creative ways and developing the casting abilities of their more arcane-inclined members, making good use of the temple's Earth Place of Power.

NPC

**Medium
High**

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses

Humanoid

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 7 |
| REF | 7 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 5 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 5 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 8 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 7 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 30 |
| ENC | 50 |
| REC | 7 |
| HP | 30 |
| VIG | 10 |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 11 |
| Awareness | 14 |
| Courage | 14 |
| Dodge/Escape | 15 |
| Endurance | 10 |
| Hex Weaving | 15 |
| Resist Coercion | 15 |
| Resist Magic | 15 |
| Ritual Crafting | 13 |
| Spell Casting | 15 |
| Staff/Spear | 13 |
| Stealth | 11 |
| Teaching | 11 |
| Wilderness Survival | 12 |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|----------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| Fear, Coercion |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom, Dimeritium |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 15 |
| Reposition Base | 11 |
| Block Base | 13 |

| Bounty |
|--------|
| N/A |

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Maribor Sewers |
| Organization | Coram Agh Tera |

| Loot |
|---------------------------|
| Crowns (10d10) |
| Staff |
| Fine Coram Agh Tera Robes |
| Strange items (1d6/2) |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|-------------------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Staff | 13 | B | 1d6+2 | 10 | — | Long Reach Focus (1) |

Ability: Fueled By Rage

Layton Hermann cannot be reasoned with or intimidated.

Ability: Invocations

Layton Hermann can cast these invocations: Cursed Illness, Web of Lies, Cleansing Fire (*the fire is green*).

Ability: Rituals

Layton Hermann can cast these rituals: Pyromancy, Cleansing Ritual.

Ability: Hexes

Layton Hermann can cast these hexes: The Nightmare, The Pesta's Kiss.

Cultist

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 5 |
| REF | 5 |
| DEX | 4 |
| BODY | 3 |
| SPD | 3 |
| EMP | 3 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 6 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 4 |
| RUN | 9 |
| LEAP | 1 |
| STA | 20 |
| ENC | 30 |
| REC | 4 |
| HP | 20 |
| VIG | 5• |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 7 |
| Awareness | 10 |
| Courage | 13 |
| Dodge/Escapes | 9 |
| Endurance | 6 |
| Resist Coercion | 11 |
| Resist Magic | 11 |
| Small Blades | 11 |
| Spell Casting* | 12 |
| Stealth | 7 |
| Wilderness Survival | 7 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|----------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| Fear, Coercion | |

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Unknown |
| Organization | Small Gatherings |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| N/A | |

| Loot | |
|--------------|--|
| Dagger | |
| Simple Robes | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Hanged Man's Venom, Dimeritium | |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 9 |
| Reposition Base | 7 |
| Block Base | 11 |

NPC

Easy
Medium

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses

Humanoid

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-----|------|-----|--------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Dagger | 11 | S/P | 1d6 | 10 | — | — |

Ability: Fueled by Rage

Cultists cannot be reasoned with or intimidated.

Ability: (Optional) Spell Casting

Cultists that can cast magic have a Vigor of 5, a Spell Casting skill of base +12, and are capable of casting the following spells: Brand of Fire, Blinding Dust, Dispel. Cultists with Spell Casting are also vulnerable to Dimeritium.

Annegina of Maribor

Description:

Born and abandoned at birth in Maribor, the daughter of a farmer's spouse and a traveling Priest of Kreve, Annegina joined the Temple of Melitele in Maribor at a young age to get away from a lifestyle that she regrets deeply. As a priestess of Melitele, she took to healing the sick and wounded, excelling as a doctor. She carries with her deep emotional scars, manifesting in a need to be useful in order to feel wanted, and a need to be in control of whatever situation she finds herself in for her personal safety. She struggles with the idea that she is still deep down the person who she used to be, that she is an impostor simply pretending to be good. When backed into a corner, she lashes out, dropping what she fears was always a facade.

NPC

Medium
Medium

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

Humanoid

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 7 |
| REF | 7 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 7 |
| SPD | 6 |
| EMP | 7 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 9 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 18 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 40 |
| ENC | 70 |
| REC | 8 |
| HP | 40 |
| VIG | 0 |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 11 |
| Awareness | 14 |
| Courage | 15 |
| Courage | 14 |
| Deception | 11 |
| Dodge/Escape | 15 |
| Endurance | 10 |
| First Aid | 11 |
| Human Perception | 14 |
| Resist Coercion | 15 |
| Resist Magic | 11 |
| Small Blades | 13 |
| Stealth | 11 |
| Wilderness Survival | 15 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom |

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Unknown |
| Organization | Melitele |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 15 |
| Reposition Base | 11 |
| Block Base | 13 |

Bounty

N/A

Loot

Crowns (10d10)
 Jambiya
 Numbing Herbs (1d6)
 Clotting Powder (1d6)

Attacks

| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|---------------------------------|
| Jambiya | 15 | S/P | 2d6+2 | 10 | — | Bleed (100%)* Armor Piercing |

Ability: Healing Hands

10

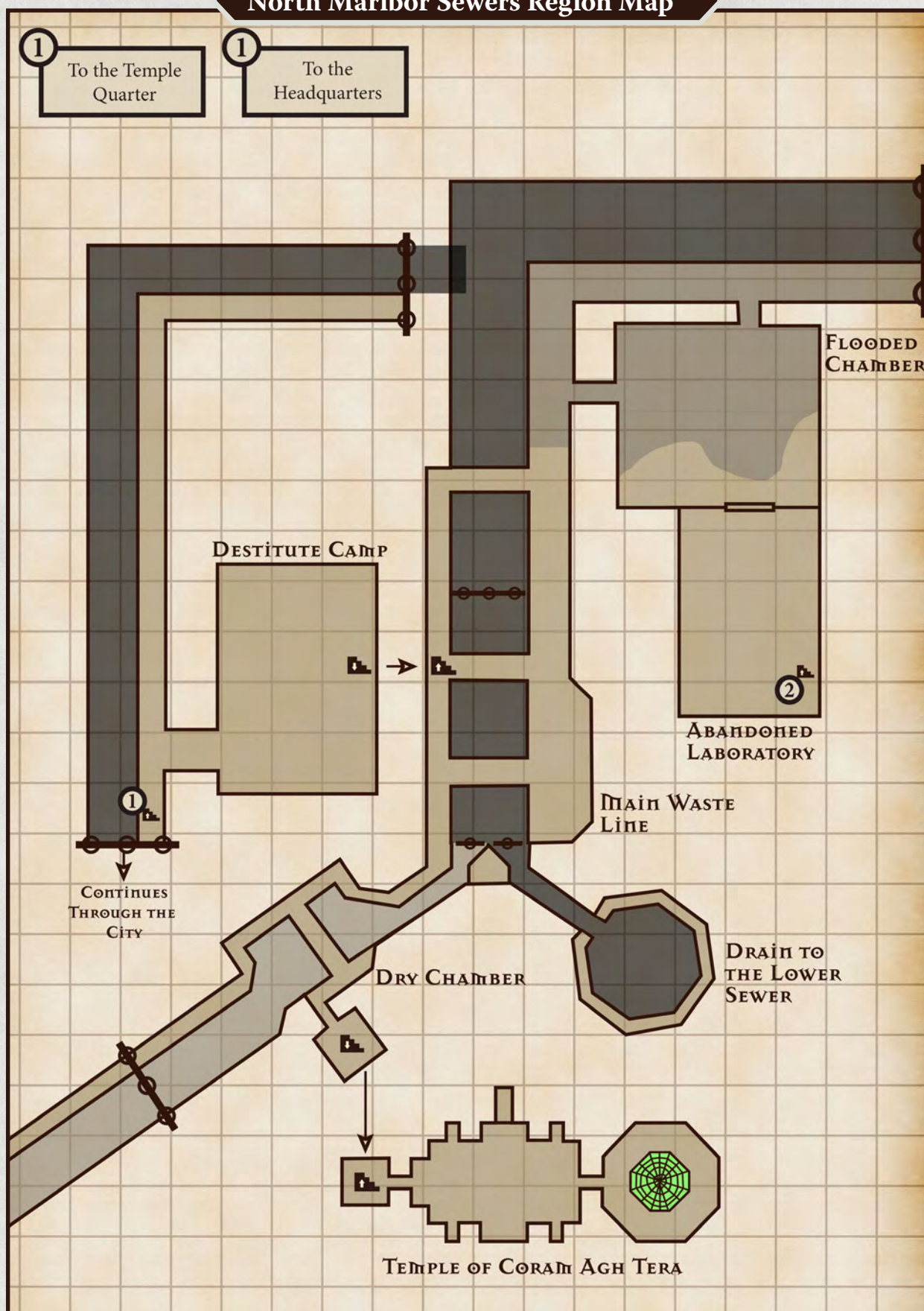
Ability: Anatomist

Critical wounds made by Annegina heal half as fast.
 Damage dealt by Annegina with a bladed weapon has a
 100% chance of causing the Bleed condition.

Certainly, she had a strong will, not unlike the sorceresses that a friend of mine seems to attract like flies. Despite outwardly appearing to be a rather quiet woman, I quickly gathered that the lady must have a bit of a wild streak buried somewhere beneath her priestess robes. Though remembering it saddens me so, I never did get the chance to investigate underneath for any evidence myself, albeit not for a lack of trying. Alas, it is nothing less than a recurring tragedy that the comeliest flowers are often the most poisonous to consume.

— Dandelion

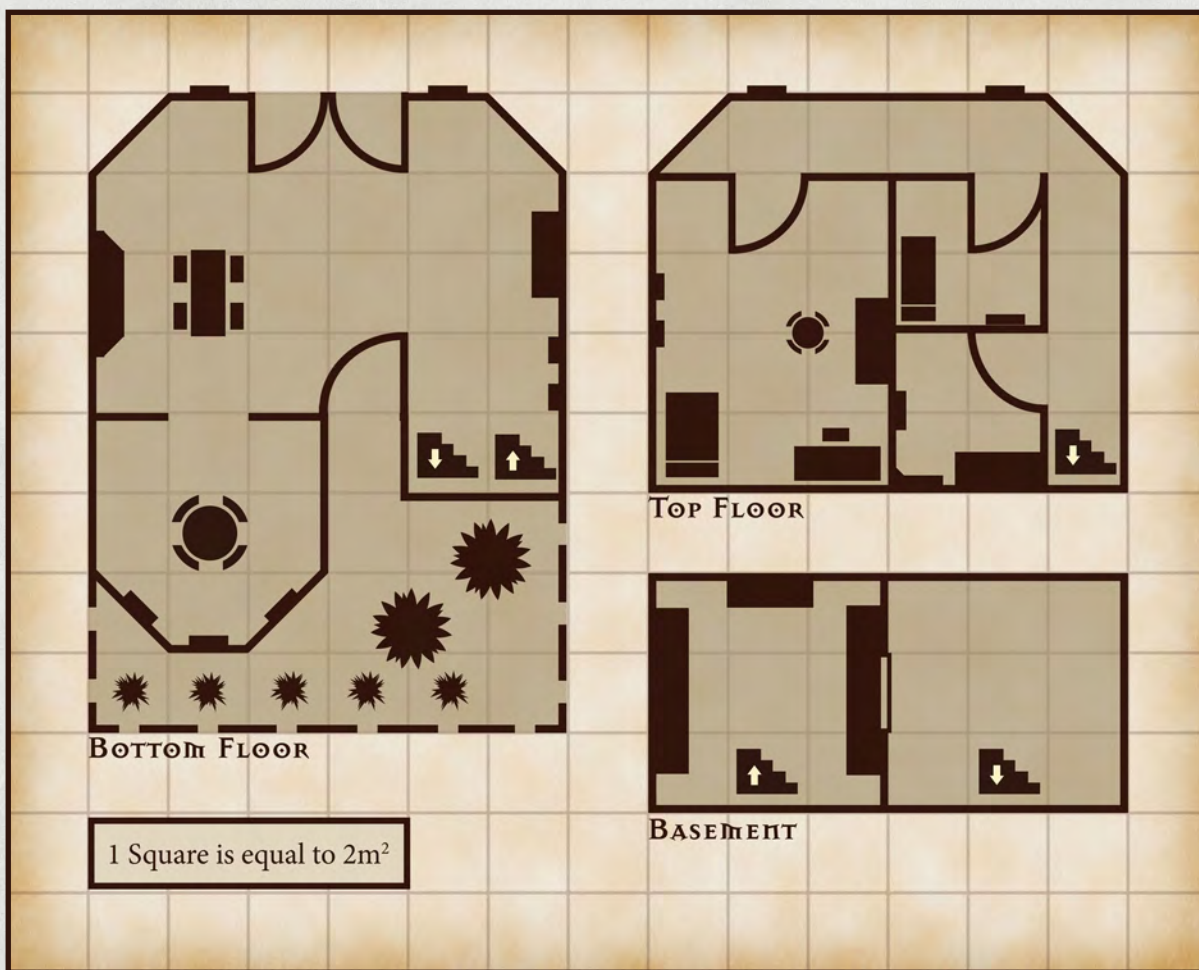
North Maribor Sewers Region Map



Commandeered Headquarters

Light Level: Un-modified

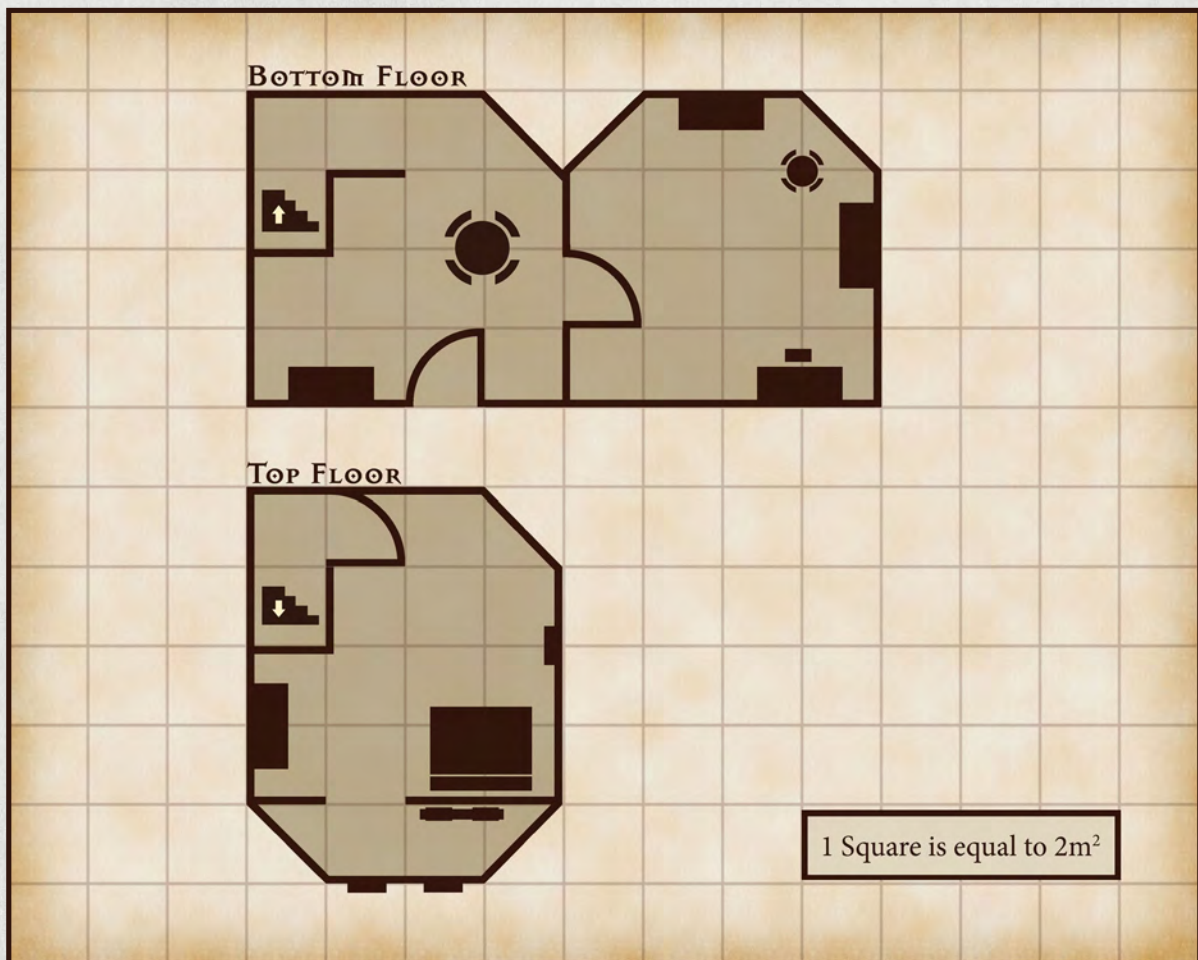
The exquisite two story home of a mage, hastily evacuated due to the approaching forces of Nilfgaard. It is lent to the players as a headquarters for the duration of the adventure.



High Class Home

Light Level: Un-modified

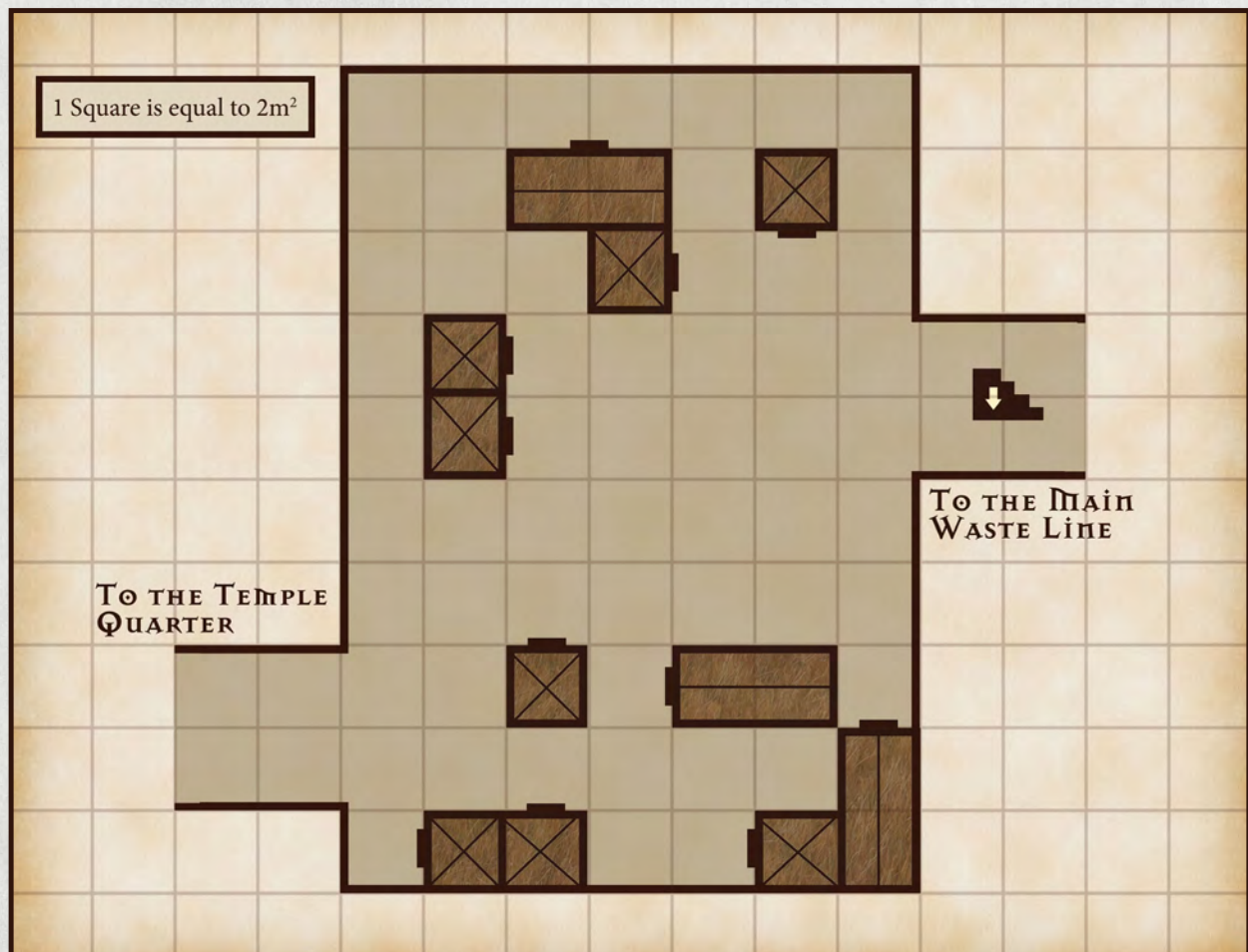
A two story home of a wealthy Maribor resident, recently commandeered by a Nilfgaardian officer who was murdered in his sleep in the master bed room. Use this map if your players want to investigate the scene of one of the two murders that didn't occur in their headquarters.



Destitute Camp

Light Level: Dim Light

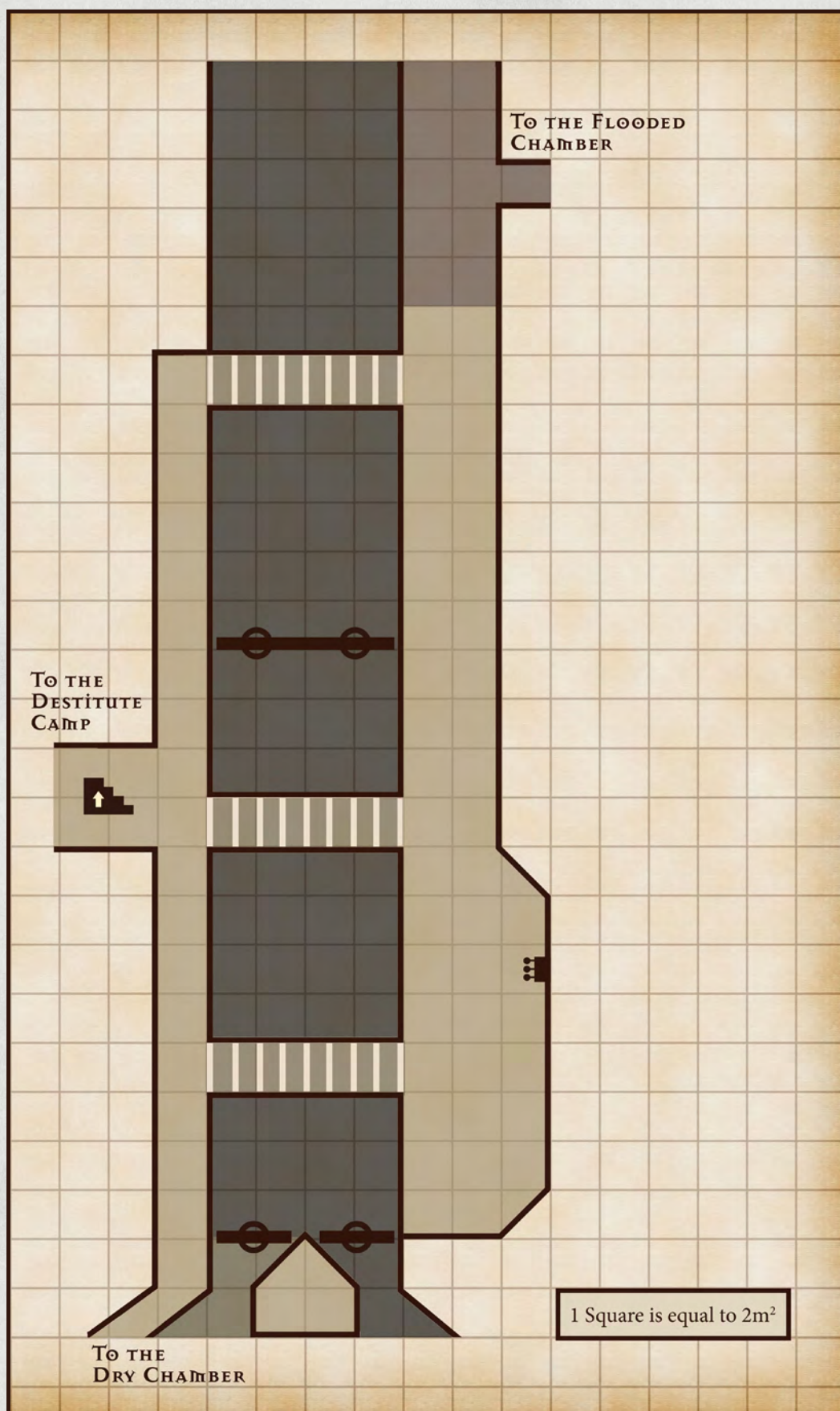
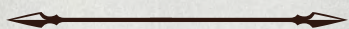
A disgusting chamber in the sewers, perched just above the miasma cloud that chokes its deeper sections. It is home to a group of ragged Maribor citizens hiding from Nilfgaardian occupation.



Main Waste Line

Light Level: Un-modified

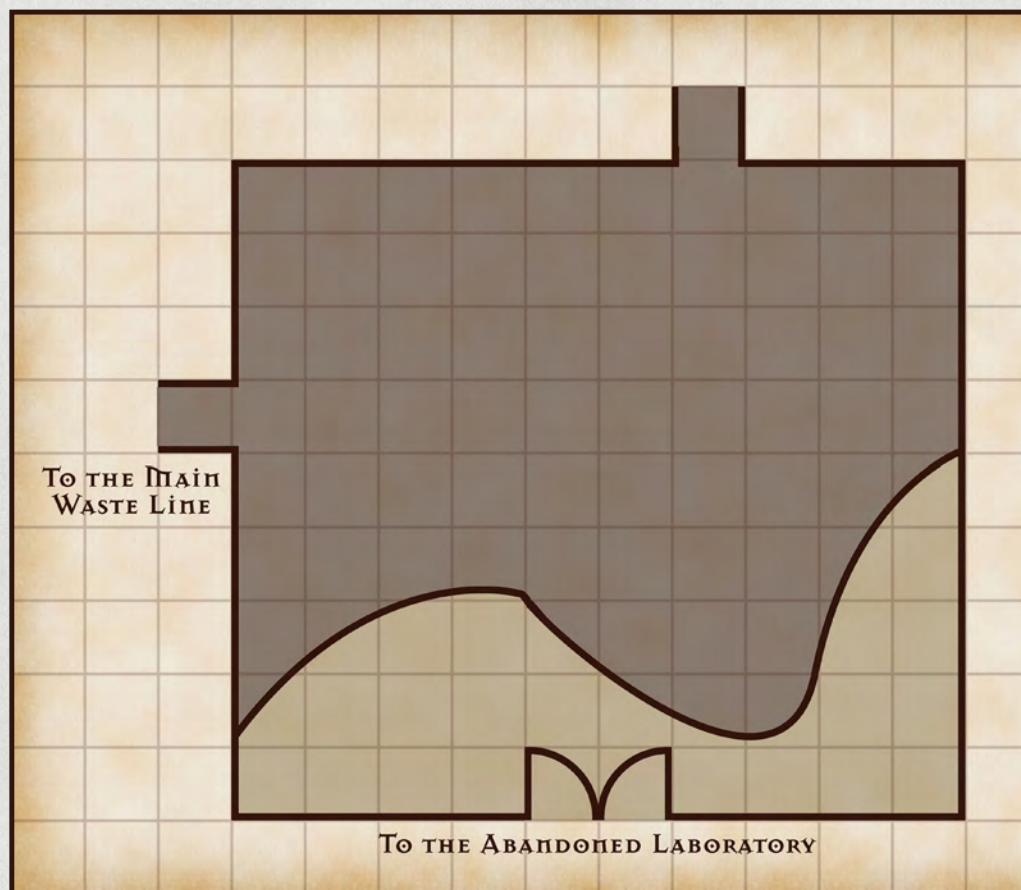
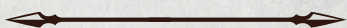
The main junction of the North Maribor Sewer. When it was in working order, it was a marvel of magical urban engineering, a sewage system made automatic by harnessing the power of a golem! Now it is just a mess.



Flooded Chamber

Light Level: Un-modified

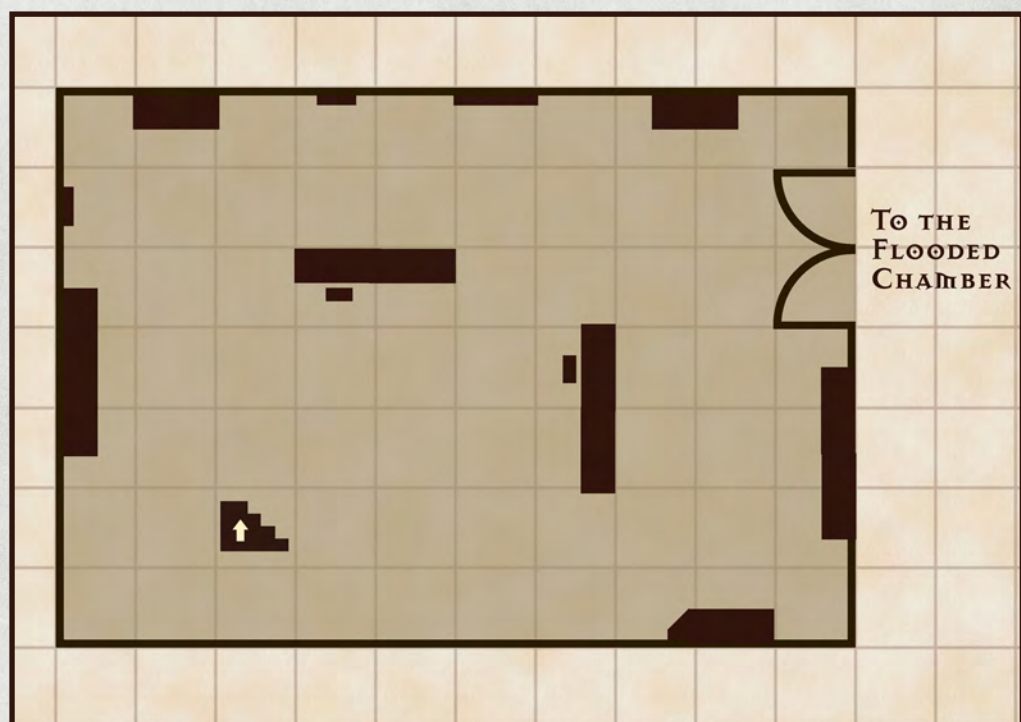
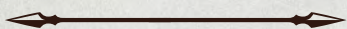
A chamber that was partially flooded with bubbling watery waste as a result of the main waste line's disrepair. Recently, drowners have made it their home. They are still unable to breach the heavy metal door on it's south wall.



Abandoned Lab

Light Level: Un-modified

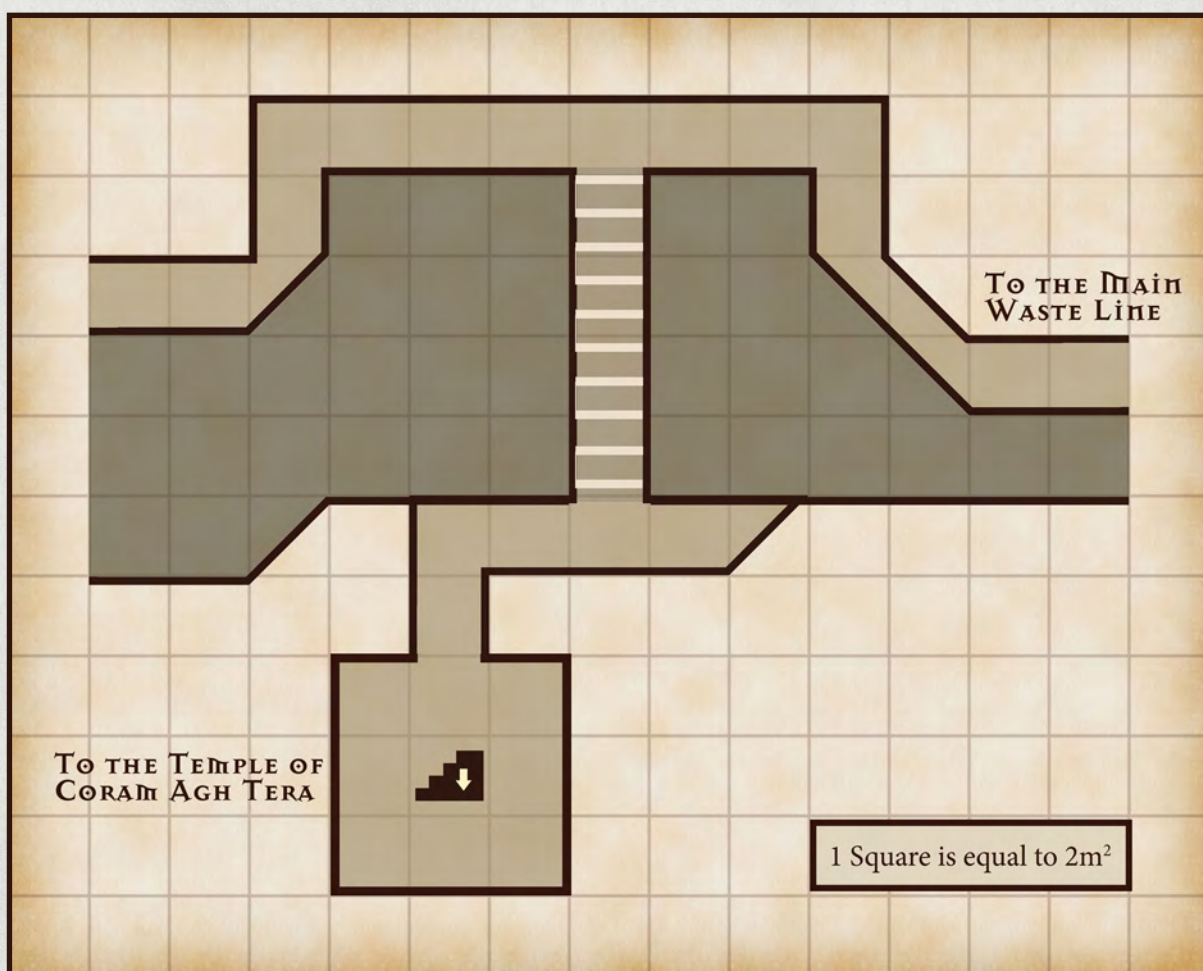
All manner of magical implements line the walls of this chamber, which appears to be a laboratory. The air here is sterile, and the room is magically lit. A large writing desk with an impeccably made chair sits in front of a chalk circle, where a megascope stood until quite recently.



Dry Chamber

Light Level: Un-modified

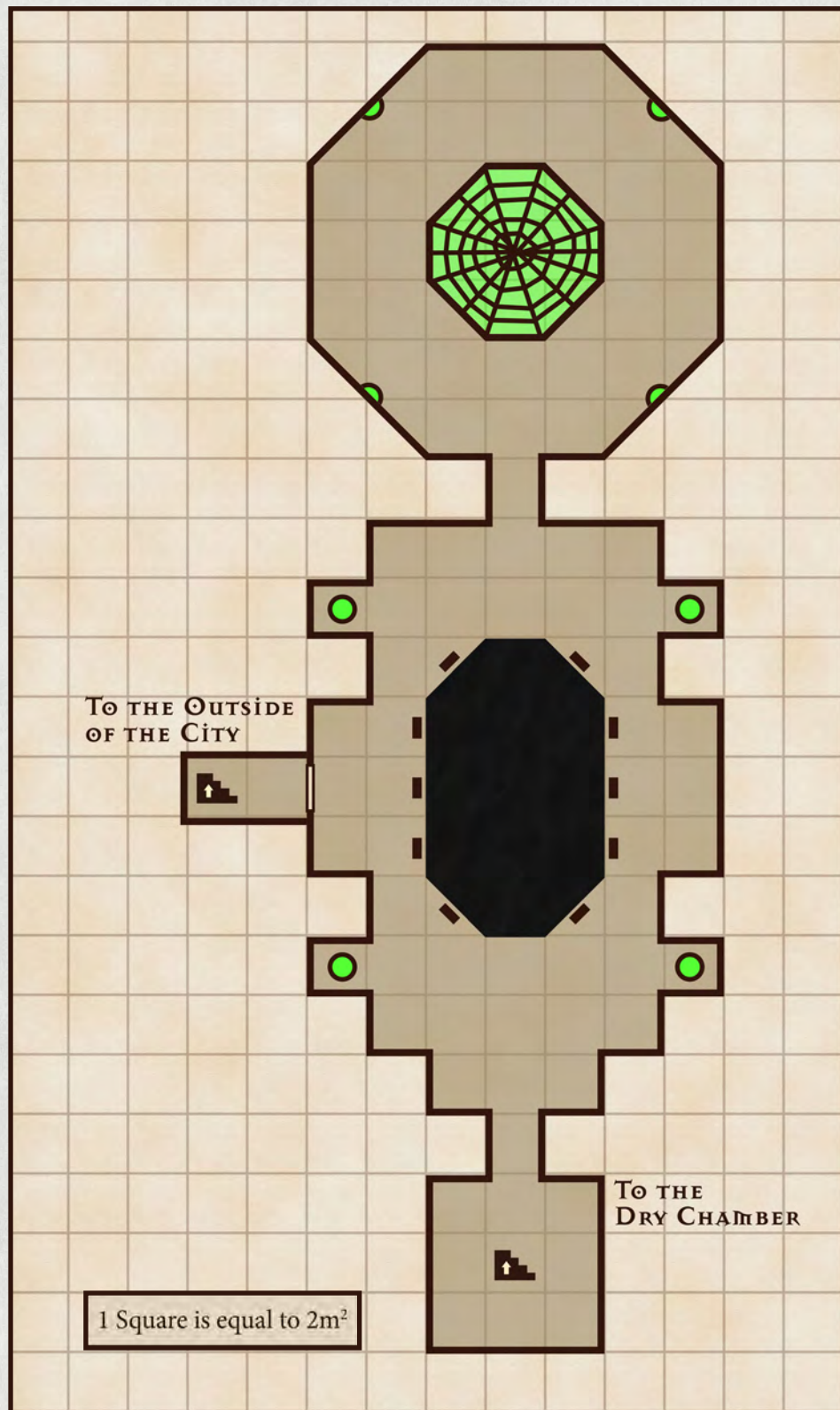
A chamber that has become the home of a massive Arachas, who loyally protects the sewer entrance of the Temple of Coram Agh Tera. The chamber has been dry for ten years as a result of the main waste line's disrepair.



Temple of Coram Agh Tera

Light Level: Unmodified

A place of great magic, lit eerily by green fire. Many have died here. Not one of those deaths was an accident.



Enter the Fighting Pits



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

After leaving Maribor with a caravan of wounded Nilfgaardian soldiers, the party travels through Cintra, Nazair, and Mettina on their way to Ebbing. In Cintra, the caravan is greeted warmly with a cheering crowd that gifts them with a basket of toffee and caramels. In Nazair and Mettina, no such basket is gifted. Once the soldiers cross the border into Ebbing, they loosen up and relax. Upon arriving in Claremont, the adventure begins...

Background (Read Aloud)

Travelling through the South of the Continent is a contained, organized sort of chaos. Though less war-riddled than the unstable North, the South is still in a state of upheaval, the once bright and abundant banners of numerous family crests replaced by the uniform golden sun on a black silk field. Between battlefields swamped with blood, ravenous necrophages, and roads swarmed with refugees and cowed deserters, the Nilfgaardian soldiers occupy every wayward stop, from

Overheard Disappointment

In order to establish the importance of the Players having an aardvark with which to compete, the Players might overhear some of the surrounding groups of people complaining that they don't have the funds to rent one, thus eliminating them from the Tournament before it begins.

Mayor Pennycuick

Pennycuick is the **Mayor of Claremont** who lives in the **large manorhouse** a few streets away from Claremont Arena. He is a short and rotund middle-aged man who dresses in simple tunics in soft, pastel colors. On first glance, he's so short that he is easily mistaken for a halfling – a comment he hears often and is increasingly tired of. Though he is a soft-spoken man with a kindly smile, he values the opinions and comments of nobles over those of the common people.

village to city, whether wanted or not. The Nilfgaardian Empire now truly holds these lands and nowhere is it clearer than in Ebbing, especially Claremont where you now find yourselves headed. And where there are Nilfgaardians, there are frivolities to be found.

The Rest of the Story

A rich faction of nobles called the Katakans has decided to host an extravagant Open Variety Tournament in the city of Claremont, famous for its arena, previously owned by Dominik Bombastus Houvenaghel, a cousin of Leo Bonhart. Famous Toussaintoi swordsman Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir is fronting the Tournament, the prize for winning all four rounds being the tantalizing offer of sword-fighting lessons with him for a group of up to six competitors. However, the Tournament is not all that it seems – it appears the organizers left out the fact that competitors will be treated as nothing more than a horse at the races, with the eccentric Katakans looking to place their bets and inspect their stock at lavish dinner parties. The Players discover just how far some of these nobles are willing to go in order to secure a win when an insidious plot is uncovered, and also come to realize how truly insignificant they are to the rich elite in a final round that could cost them their lives.

Setting

The Players arrive in the Nilfgaardian city of Claremont in Ebbing. They are immediately thrust into streets trussed with vibrant bunting, and crowds of competitors and drunken spectators alike, all spilling out from the center of the excitement: the Claremont Arena. The Players are encouraged to sign up, tempted by the reward of sword-fighting lessons, wealth, and encouraged that the Tournament is an open variety type – all skill sets welcome. Each night, the Players must attend dinner parties where they are expected to socialize not only with the fellow competing teams but also the Katakans, a group of masked and anonymous nobles who wish to inspect those upon whom they have placed wagers. As the tournament progresses, losing teams are knocked out and it becomes apparent that one noble in particu-

lar, Lady Luck, has ensured her favored group remain in the game. When her plot is revealed, the Players can decide whether to expose her cheating schemes or accept her bribery to remain quiet. As the Final Round comes about, the Players find themselves face to face with, and woefully unprepared for, a lethal monster – the Gigascorpion.

Forces

So long as no Players are widely known as enemies of Nilfgaard, this adventure can be run with up to six Players from either side of the war with as wide a variety of skill sets as they please.

The Opposition Will Be

- ◆ **The Katakans** are a group of wealthy nobles, each one masked and anonymous beyond their monikers. There are six in total: **Lady Luck, the Jarl, Prinny Prin-Prin, the Witcheress, Est Est, and Black Heart.**
- ◆ There are three other teams competing against the Players, the **descriptions for which can be found in the Competing Teams subsection of this adventure.** These teams are the **Iron Maidens** (an all-Skelligan warrior team), the **Artisans of Mahakam** (an all-dwarven team from Mahakam), and the **Claremont Quintet** (a team from the local area).
- ◆ The Final Round of the Tournament involves the Players pitted against a **Gigascorpion, the stat block for which you will find at the end of this adventure.**

Set-Up (Read Aloud)

The air in the streets of Claremont is alive with activity, excitement running along buzzing waves of chatter and movement. Golden suns on flint black fields dance with colorful streamers and bunting, running from building to building, shuddering and leaping in the breeze. Nilfgaardian soldiers watch the festivities with sharp eyes and hands on even sharper blades, especially around the Arena, of which you find yourselves outside. Here, the crowds of people press ever closer, from all levels of society – a band of trou-

badours plays jilting, lively songs as a gruff voice calls from the arched entrance to the Arena where a dwarf stands on a stack of crates:

“Test your steel in the Open Variety Tournament, first of its kind! Win fame, florens, and the honor of lessons with none other than famous swordsman Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir himself, all the way from Toussaint! Sign up, show your mettle, become legendary!”

Hook

As the Players pass, the dwarf on the crates picks them out of the crowd, hailing them over to a wooden table next to his makeshift stage where two humans – a man and a woman – also stand. The dwarf introduces both himself and his two companions:

*“I’m Merrík, the man here is Olsen and the lass is Arabelle. Now, tell me, are ye lookin’ to sign up to the Tournament? Ye look like a fine bunch – it ain’t all about fightin’ so I’m sure ye’ll find some-
thin’ fer all of you to participate in.”*

Merrík and his friends stand near the Tournament’s official sign-up desk. About it are groups of people stood together, some looking pleased, others stressed. Merrík makes the Players aware that today is the last day to sign up for the Tournament, and that they can do this by either renting or purchasing an **aardvark** from the elven sisters who have set up shop in one of the fighting pits branching off the main entrance to the Arena in the next **Development**.

If the Players wish to know more about the prize and the layout of the Tournament, they can ask Merrík, Olsen, and Arabelle, who are happy to relay what information they know which, admittedly, is only a little. The Tournament is spread out over four days, with the losing team knocked out of the competition at the end of each round. Each evening, the contestants must attend a **dinner party** at **Mayor Pennycuick’s** manorhouse, where the next day’s round will be announced, and details given. The First Round, taking place tomorrow, has already been revealed as **aardvark fighting**, a culturally traditional pastime in Ebbing. Find the **rules** for this in **Cliffhanger (Round 1 – Aardvark Fighting)**.

Players cannot officially sign up for the Tournament if they don’t own an **aardvark** or refuse to rent one. Additionally, only aardvarks born and bred in **Ebbing** are permitted to enter. The people of Claremont take great pride in their beloved pastime.

Go to Development (Aardvarks for Hire).

The Prize

If the Players win the Tournament, they claim the prize of **800 Florens** between them and **sword-fighting lessons** with the famous **Toussaintoi** swordsman **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**. For these lessons, they will be invited to travel to **Toussaint** in the **southwest** of the **Continent**.

Development

(Aardvarks for Hire)

To the right of the Arena’s entrance is a short passage leading to one of the **fighting pits** that has been turned into a makeshift shop front:

Wooden stakes driven into the compacted dirt support a hastily made fence. A stack of four empty crates serves as a perch for two identical-looking elven women, each keeping an eye on the three aardvarks snuffling about in the pen below. As you approach, one elf gets to her feet, smiling broadly as she rubs her hands together and says:

Let me guess, dh’oine, you’re looking for an aardvark so you can sign up, eh? Well, you’re in luck, my sister and I are the best aardvark breeders this side of the Continent. You won’t find any better than what we’ve got here! I’m Ceth’wyn and this is my sister, Arwen, how can I help you?

In the pen are three **aardvarks**, the **stat blocks** for which are **at the end of this adventure**. Each aardvark has a **unique name** and **skill** for the Players to choose from – there is a strict ruling of only **one aardvark per team**. The sisters will warn the characters that they must rent one as soon as possible should they wish to secure their place in the Tournament. Proud of their record for rearing high-quality aardvarks, Ceth’wyn and Arwen will flaunt their achievements

I Choose You!

The three aardvarks in the pens each have a different name and a unique skill. The names are: **Bloodsnout** “**The Warrior**,” **Dragoon** “**The Steel Aardvark**,” and **Shaelmaar** “**The Terror of Toussaint**.” **Refer to the end of this adventure for the aardvark stat blocks.**

Ceth’wyn & Arwen

Ceth’wyn and Arwen are city-born elves, not having much in common with elves like the **Scoia’tael rebels**. They have built themselves a business that is reputable in Claremont and take great pride in it. They specifically enjoy relaying the fact that one of the most **famous** aardvarks in the fighting pits – **Vordak** “**The Merciless**” – was bred by them.

Aardvark Fighting

Aardvark fighting is a great and established pastime not just in Claremont but Ebbing as a whole. Unlike dog fighting, aardvark fighting is always a big event, greatly celebrated as part of the country’s culture and traditions.

Proof of Purchase

Once the Players have rented one of the aardvarks available from Ceth'wyn and Arwen, they are given a **small writ** on parchment as proof of rental to show Merrik at the sign-up desk. The elven sisters look after the aardvark until the **next day** when the fight takes place.

A Debt

Should the Players be unable to afford their own **aardvark**, they can persuade Ceth'wyn and Arwen to waive the fee on the condition that, should they win the Tournament, the Players owe them double the amount for the aardvark (300 Florens) and must pay this money out of their 800-Floren prize.

What Team?

Encourage the Players to come up with a **team name** to use during the competition. They will love it.

and act in a carnivalesque manner, trying to tempt the Players into renting one of their aardvarks. Renting an aardvark costs **150 Florens**. If the Players don't have enough money, the sisters are willing to make a deal. See Sidebar (A Debt).

Once they have rented an aardvark, **go to Development (Signing Up)**.

Nilfgaardian Florens

Set in Nilfgaardian Empire territory, this adventure uses the currency of Nilfgaardian Florens when referring to expenses and rewards. However, if you wish to use a range of currency for the sake of immersion, refer to the exchange rates below.

1 Redanian Crown is equivalent to

1 Temerian Oren

The currency of Temeria, typically used in the kingdoms below the Pontar.

1/3 Nilfgaardian Floren

Used in Nilfgaard and the Nilfgaardian Provinces.

3 Ducats

Used in the Duchy of Toussaint and Kaedwen.

1/4 Bizant

Used in Kovir and Poviss.

½ Lintar

Used only in the Hengefor's League.

Development (Signing Up)

Returning to Merrik, Olsen, and Arabelle at the entrance and showing them the writ sees the Players officially signed up for the **Open Variety Tournament**. Merrik adds them to the list and mentions that there's been a lot more interest. A new team just finished signing up – a group of **warrior lasses from Skellige**, calling themselves the **Iron Maidens**, with their aardvark, **Leshenclaw "The Skelligan Bruiser."**

Merrik also informs the Players that if they're looking for a celebratory drink or want to scope out the rest of the competition, they should head on over to the **Dancing Cock-**

atrice Inn, sitting a street away on the main road through Claremont. He also reminds the Players that they must attend the **dinner party** that night at Mayor Pennycuick's manorhouse at **six o'clock** or be **disqualified** if they refuse. After wishing the Players good luck, he turns away and busies himself with the gatherings of people around the sign-up table.

Go to Development (The Dancing Cockatrice).

Development (The Dancing Cockatrice)

The Dancing Cockatrice Inn sits on the side of the main road cutting through the center of Claremont, a generously sized establishment nestled between the buildings rising on either side. Constructed in the Nilfgaardian fashion, the architecture is neat and clean, with oak timbers fixed in rigid dark lines and crisp white-washed mortar covering the spaces between. Its namesake is immediately apparent: a large arched window on the ground floor faces out onto the street, the brightly colored glass spilling fragments of vivid light across passers-by as you approach. Springing up in mid-leap, wings spread, large talons splaying out, a cockatrice is captured in the glass, a grace to its pose that gives it the impression of dancing a lively jig.

Inside is an establishment different to the poor-quality inns that the Players are accustomed to. In Nilfgaardian fashion, it is a canvas of frivolity inside, fashionable elegance and grace in every piece of furniture:

The interior is well-lit and colored with rich reds and shades of dark, almost black wood, the iron-cast ringed chandelier bathing the large room in a warm glow. Tobacco smoke hangs in a thin haze in the air, lingering around tables crowded by a variety of peoples – humans, dwarves, and elves alike. They gesture wildly as they talk, voices clamoring over one another in a constant thrum of laughter and song. Three tables catch your eye, two bearing a paper writ the same as the one you carry from Ceth'wyn and Arwen's shop. It's safe to say that these are your competitors and each group seems as unique and animated as the next; excitement pulses all around.



The inn is nearly at capacity. Each of the three other competing teams in the tournament are here, scouting out their competition before the first dinner party. At the end of the adventure in **The Competition**, you'll find a detailed description of the three competing teams and how they might interact with the Players. Here's what they are doing when the Players enter the Dancing Cockatrice:

The Iron Maidens

Sprawled across four chairs, four women in various states of armor slam their hands and tankards on the tabletop, booted feet keeping time on the floorboards as they sing a bawdy drinking song, drawing the gazes of many patrons. They seem a cheery bunch, ruddy cheeks and ale sloshing about as they laugh, whooping and hollering as they take turns to sing a verse, each one lewder than the last.

The Artisans of Mahakam

Gathered about a table spread with wine goblets and half-eaten platters of finger-food are five

dwarves in various states of fashionable dress, bar one who sit further away from the group, dressed in heavy armor. They eye the table of Skelligans with a haughty look of disgust before turning back to one another, murmuring in low voices as one dwarf writes on a scroll of cream-colored parchment.

The Claremont Quintet

Sat at a table closest to the arched stained-glass window is a group chatting idly, nursing tankards and bowls of stew between them as the afternoon sun outside sends muted shades of color scattering over them. Three elves are currently engrossed in a game of Gwent, their black leather armor elven in its design but embossed with small, golden suns on the pauldrons – a strange sight indeed. A half-elf leans forward on her elbow, contentedly watching a human bard tune his violin, plucking at the strings with a focused look on his face.

*After the Players have had their fill of meeting and interacting with their competition, and it's time to start the dinner party, **go to Cliff-hanger (Mayor Pennycuick's Manor).***

All Work, No Play

If the Players choose not to go to the **Dancing Cockatrice Inn**, you can choose to sprinkle out the other competitors around the city of Claremont – the Players could bump into one team at the local smithy or a shop, for instance. Additionally, you can offer the opportunity for the Players to meet these competitors or potentially overhear their excited discussions about the upcoming Tournament. Refer to **The Competition** at the end of the adventure for details on the opposing teams.

Aardvark Assignment

Once the Players have chosen and rented their aardvark, you will assign the other teams – the **Artisans of Mahakam** and the **Claremont Quintet** – who are competing against them an aardvark each. It is up to you which team gets which aardvark.

Mandatory Attendance

The Players **must** attend the dinner party at **six o'clock that evening** at Mayor Pennycuick's manorhouse or be permanently disqualified from the competition. Additionally, they must attend every dinner party after each round or be disqualified – they are strictly mandatory.

Brynn & Cerys

The Dancing Cockatrice is owned and managed by two human women, Brynn and her lover Cerys. Brynn serves from table to table, taking orders and collecting glasses while Cerys runs the bar. They are also excited about the arena's Open Variety Tournament and know the three other groups in the inn currently are officially signed up to compete and are aware of their team names: the **Iron Maidens**, the **Artisans of Mahakam**, and the **Claremont Quintet**. They are happy to relay this information to any of the Players should they ask.

Goods & Services

Should the Players wish to buy anything to drink or eat whilst at the inn, or rent some lodging for their stay, refer to **General Gear** (pg. 93) of the **Core Rulebook** and charge in **Nilfgaardian Florens**. (1 Redanian Crown = 1/3 Nilfgaardian Floren)

Local Rumors

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | A strange group of nobles were seen arriving at Mayor Pennycuick's manorhouse two days ago. No one knows who they were because, strangely, they all wore peculiar-looking masks. |
| 2 | Late last night, Cerys awoke to a loud, shrill, shrieking sound coming from the direction of the Claremont Arena. Brynn slept through it and reckons she must have dreamt it, but Cerys can't get it out of her head. It seemed so real... This screeching sound is that of the Gigascorpion that the Players will fight in Round 4 of the Tournament . |
| 3 | The table of all dwarves apparently come from Mahakam – an unusual occurrence as the South doesn't see many of them often. |
| 4 | The table of all human women comes all the way from Skellige and have been in the city for the past week, drinking and keeping half the street up with their loud and rude songs. |
| 5 | The table of mostly elves are a local team and the peasants' overall favorite in the Tournament for that reason. Apparently, the elves also fought alongside Nilfgaard a few years ago, earning the city's soldiers and inhabitants respect. |

Cliffhanger

(Mayor Pennycuick's Manor)

Mayor Pennycuick's manorhouse sits back from the main road of shopfronts that lead up to the Arena, two stories tall and adorned with the lavish styling befitting a member of the Nilfgaardian middle-class. The warbled glass windows are framed by lattices where white roses and bright pink foxgloves bloom in the early evening light, bunting trussed up from the gate to its open shutters. As you approach the cobbled stone path, a servant opens the large oak door, waiting to receive you.

Already, the other contestants have arrived, the Artisans of Mahakam admiring some of the paintings hung on the walls, the Claremont Quintet looking rather lost and awkward among

the tasteful decor. The Iron Maidens are nonplussed, Skuld leaning against a tapestry with her arms folded and legs crossed at the ankles as she laughs at something Mikaela says. Strangely enough, none of them appear to carry the weapons they had when you first met them, but an answer is offered before the question can come to mind, the servant that opened the door for you approaching with a tight bow and a polite smile on her face as she says:

"Excuse me, the master and the Katakans demand that you turn over your weapons and subject yourself to a search. Your belongings shall be returned to you at the end of the evening. I shall now inform you of the Rules of Conduct our esteemed guests have laid out for you."

The Players must acquiesce to this request or be **disqualified** from the competition and asked to **leave the premises** (or removed by **force**, if necessary). Should the Players ask to know why they must hand over their weapons, the servant explains that it is for the safety of the **Katakans** and to ensure no unsavory behavior occurs between competitors as the result of too much drink – Mayor Pennycuick detests **unnecessary violence**, especially within his home.

Before going ahead with the **search**, this servant informs the Players and all competitive teams of the **5 Rules of Conduct** by which they must abide all evening. Refusing to accept these rules or breaking any results in the **immediate disqualification** of the team from the Tournament. The rules are as follows, in the **table** below:

| The Rules of Conduct | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 | You must always be polite when speaking to the Katakans. |
| 2 | You must not ask for the Katakans' true names. You must only address them by the name which they give you. |
| 3 | You have the right to refuse to answer any question asked of you, but you must do so politely . |
| 4 | No weapons are permitted in the dining hall. All competitors are subject to a search before entering the room. Confiscated weapons are held in a room only known to the servants at the doors. |
| 5 | You are welcome to discuss topics with the Katakans, especially should they invite you in conversation, but you are not to correct nor talk over them. |



Development (Dinner Parties)

The dining hall is tastefully furnished, the walls a pale shade of gray and adorned with oil paintings of distant landscapes and portrayals of battles. Stone pedestals stand in each corner upon which fragile ceramic vases hold delicate white roses and pink foxgloves; a burst of color in an otherwise dull room. From the high ceiling hangs a pewter chandelier, cut glass cascading down by thin chains, refracting and glimmering with the light of the candles burning there.

In the center of the room, placed upon a dark embroidered rug, stands a varnished mahogany table, its carved shapes along its edge and legs simple but striking. About it are enough chairs for everyone attending, also made from mahogany with red plush seats. A single but fairly sized silver candelabra resides in the middle of the tabletop, standing tall and bright above the polished silver of cutlery and the shine of flawlessly clean plates and goblets.

However, forming a horseshoe about the center table are three more similarly adorned tables and chairs, set a few feet back. Waiting at them, two on each side, except for the one at the farthest point where the Mayor himself sits, are six masked figures, their eyes watching you expectantly and masks curving up into the points of a strange-looking head crest. The Mayor stands and the figures rise with him as he speaks, gesturing at the empty table before him:

“Ah, yes, welcome brave competitors! I am Mayor Pennycuick and these are the esteemed Katakans. I trust my servants informed you of conduct and I ask that once you have all finished here you move to the ballroom where the Katakans and I shall join you. For now, please sit. I do hope you enjoy the food.”

After his speech, Pennycuick and the Katakans sit once again. There are no specifically allocated seats for any of the competitors but, should you wish to do so, you can make your own **table plan** for your Players to follow.

Deviations, Improvisations

If the Players choose not to go to the **Dancing Cockatrice**, you can still make use of the **Local Rumors** table and **The Competition** section at the end of the adventure to scatter NPCs and information everywhere the Players go before attending the dinner party at Mayor Pennycuick's. The Players shouldn't be able to go anywhere without overhearing or seeing something that is associated with the **Open Variety Tournament** – after all, it is the first of the city's kind and everyone is excited about it.

Hired Guards

For additional safety during the dinner parties, Mayor Pennycuick has hired six guards to be at his disposal should any of the competitors or Players violate the **rules**. Use the **Bandit stats** in the **Core Rulebook** for these guards.

Before your Players enter the dining hall, learn about each of the six Katakans members, described at the end of the adventure in detail. When the Players are invited into the dining hall, **go to Development (Dinner Parties)**.

The Song of the Wolf

If the Players are interested in the musical quartet, they can make a **DC:16 Education check** to recognize that the song being performed is one of **Dandelion's** lesser-known tunes:

Look how the wolf dances in the holt.

Teeth bared, tail waving, leaping like a colt.

Oh, why does he prance like one bewitched?

The frolicking beast simply hasn't been hitched.

Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir

Jean-Lucas is in his late thirties and is tall, his hair long and black, falling to his shoulders in waves. His brown skin is littered with thin scars caused by blades. He typically wears trousers, loose cotton shirts, and shin-length heeled boots. He also has a sword belt slung about his waist but it is empty during the dinner parties.

Jean-Lucas' personality is that of someone who's dedicated his entire life to the art of **sword fighting**. He is highly experienced and an expert in the skill. He will be interested in talking to any **warriors** or those who **appreciate weaponry**.



Monstrous Masks

The masks concealing the **Katakans'** faces replicate the unfurled, pronged crest and bat-like ears of the monster they take their name from – **the katakan**. A Player can make a **DC:17 Monster Lore check** or a **DC:19 Education check** to recall that **katakans** are a type of Lower Vampire with an affinity for fine and beautiful things, such as jewelry and **expensive gems**. It is poetic then, that these extravagant nobles, adorned in fine decorations and clothes, have chosen such a monster to conceal their faces. The Katakans themselves are not monsters, though they share many qualities with vampires.

Each dinner party from this one onwards involves **three courses** during which the **Katakans** and **Pennycuick** also eat and drink. However, they also closely observe the contestants and talk among

themselves. The Players should feel as though they are being **watched and evaluated**, uncomfortable under the intense scrutiny of the **Katakans**. Though the parties initially serve as celebrations for the winners of each round, they are also a front for the **Katakans'** true intentions: to “**inspect**” the teams they will wager on, much in the same way as one would inspect a racehorse.

After the meals have been cleared, the contestants are moved to the **ballroom** where they **minge** with the **Katakans**, **Mayor Pennycuick**, and swordsman **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**. Each **dinner party** follows this same repeated structure.

Go to **Development (The Ballroom)**.

Development (The Ballroom)

The **ballroom** awaits the Players through the double doors on the far side of the **dining hall**. It is here that they meet and interact with the **Katakans**. Refer to their detailed descriptions at the end of the adventure to aid you.

Bathed in the golden light of numerous candles and a large silver chandelier, the ballroom is a stunning feat of marble and intricately patterned wallpaper. Arranged about the sides are small tables and chairs, the wood varnished a dark shade of brown. Servants hover nearby, waiting patiently with pitchers of ale and wine, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The joyful lilting of stringed instruments and a beau-

tiful voice comes from a musical quartet upon a small raised dais. Carved columns rise from floor to ceiling, three either side. Against one, a human man stands idly, holding a cup loosely in his fingers. A sword belt sits about his waist but the scabbard is empty.

The man waiting in the ballroom is the Toussaintoi swordsman **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**. The Players don't need to abide by the **5 Rules of Conduct** when talking to him and can speak with him freely should they wish. Not too long after the Players and teams have settled themselves in the ballroom, the Katakans enter, led by Mayor Pennycuick.

Go to **Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences)**.

Repeating Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences)

At each subsequent dinner party after the initial first night, a significant **Event** plays out that the Players find themselves entangled in. Refer to the table below for a summary of these Events, and **Cliffhangers (Round 1, 2, 3)** for more information on how they occur.

| Nightly Occurrences | |
|---------------------|---|
| After Round 1 | <p>Public Embarrassment</p> <p>One of the Katakans of your choosing asks a deeply personal question that upsets one of the NPCs (also of your choosing). What results is a loud and public scene between the two that the Players can either help defuse or even exacerbate (Players must make a DC:15 Charisma Check to calm everyone down or a DC:16 Social Etiquette Check if they wish to do so tactfully). If the situation does get out of hand, Mayor Pennycuick commands the few personal guards he has to get involved.</p> |
| After Round 2 | <p>The Fix</p> <p>A plot to fix the next round (the 1v1) so that it ends in Lady Luck's favor is uncovered. Her plan is to drug the Player(s) whom she expects to participate in the Single Combat Round. The substance being used is a special blend of Poisoner's Friend and a powerful Hallucinogen. The Player must make a DC:20 Awareness check during Event – Something in the Wine during Round 2 to notice that the wine they are drinking has been laced – that the drug makes the taste of it sweeter. Sometime during the dinner party, the drugged Player(s) must make a DC:15 Endurance check, if they fail, they begin hallucinating. These hallucinations last for the duration of the dinner party. What the Player sees during this time is up to you. Refer to the sidebar for the Hallucination effect. A hallucinating Player unable to make a second DC:15 Endurance check before bed that night is unable to gain any of the beneficial effects of sleep that night, after which the effect ends.</p> |
| After Round 3 | <p>Luck Runs Out</p> <p>After the 1v1 Single Combat Round and so long as they have enough evidence (refer to Cliffhanger Rounds 2 & 3), the Players can choose to out Lady Luck as a cheat before the other Katakans. However, if the Players choose to keep their knowledge of the fix between them and Lady Luck, she attempts to bribe them into silence by offering them 200 Florens. If the Players choose to let the other Katakans know of her cheating, Lady Luck will be disgraced and no longer permitted to attend nor participate in the rest of the Tournament or any future tournaments for the rest of her life.</p> |

Development (The Tournament)

The Tournament takes place each day after the first night for **four consecutive days**, each round occurring in the **mid-afternoon** until **early evening** in which the successful competitors are expected to attend the nightly **dinner parties** (go to **Development (Dinner Parties)**) back at Mayor Pennycuick's manorhouse.

Cliffhanger

(Round 1 – Aardvark Fighting)

The crowd roars as you step out into the Arena's circular fighting pit, a cacophony of sound that

shudders through the very ground under your feet. Hundreds of people swarm the stands, only separated by a viewing box that cuts through the seating before you where the masked figures of the Katakans watch on with curious stares, servants offering them an indulgence of fruit and wine.

Two three-by-three-meter pens, within which a two-by-two-meter chalk square has been lined, have been assembled out of sturdy wooden panels and posts, a winch mechanism creating a movable panel at either side where cages holding an aardvark each are attached. The creatures seem agitated, pacing their cage and scuffing at

Hallucination

The Player experiences visions that are not truly there. As the GM, it is up to you to decide what appears before the Player. It takes a **DC:15 Deduction check** to notice an image is false, rolling for each one they see.

Pure Coincidence

If the Players lose a round and find themselves disqualified from the Tournament, they might find their way back in if one of the following instances occur:

- ♦ Another team pulls out of the Tournament.
- ♦ A team is caught cheating or is disqualified for breaching one of the **5 Rules of Conduct**.
- ♦ If the **Jarl** likes or is interested in one or more of the Players, one of the winning teams is suddenly struck down with an unfortunate **illness**.

Betting

There are numerous **bookies** about the **Arena** on **Tournament Days**. The Players are welcome to place bets on any team they please except their own in order to earn some money.

On Standby

Aardvark fighting is a popular cultural sport in Ebbing, and the aardvarks themselves are highly prized and well taken care of. During the fights, two servants stand at the ready with **clotting powder**, **bandages**, and **medical treatment** for the aardvarks should they become injured in the fight.

Aardvark Technique

Aardvarks fight by standing on their hind legs and swinging their front claws. They also attempt to intimidate their opponents by splaying out their front legs to look bigger than they are.

An Alternative

If you don't want to run a fighting match between aardvarks, you can exchange this **round** for **horse racing**. Change all mentions of the aardvarks into **horses** and run this **round** as a single opposed **Riding skill check**.

the ground angrily, snorting as they do. Stood between the two pens is an official wearing neat and stuffy-looking black silk attire, her Nilfgaardian accent clear as she directs the teams to their respective aardvarks. She points at you:

"You there! Your aardvark is here. Take your place."

During this round, pair off the four teams however you choose. the winning pair secures a place in the next day's event, **Round 2 (2v2)**. The losers are then pitted against each other, the winner securing the final spot **in Round 2**. By the end of the aardvark fighting, only three teams will move into **Round 2**.

Refer to the end of this adventure for the **stat blocks** of each **aardvark**.

After the end of this round, **go to Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences), After Round 1**.

EVENT Favored

Ensure that the team favored by **Lady Luck** moves through to the next **round** of the Tournament. If this team loses the first fight and must fight another team for the final spot in Round 2, the following event occurs. The Players are encouraged to stand around the pen and watch the last fight take place. If they choose to, they make a **DC:16 Awareness Check** to notice a stranger loitering near the opposing team's aardvark cage:

As you wait for the fight to begin, you notice a face you do not recognize near one of the cages. This person is neither an official, a medic, nor one of the servants assisting with refreshments. She appears to be looking at the aardvark inside intensely, foot tapping as though she is waiting for it to do something.

If the Players choose to approach the stranger, she startles and makes some hasty excuse about needing to attend to Lady Luck. If the Players attempt to stop her, she threatens to tell Lady Luck that they were responsible for making her late – the Lady hates waiting for anything after all.

During the ensuing fight, the aardvark the stranger was seen by seems to be sluggish and sleepy, its movements slow. It takes a -2 to DEX and REF.

The Rules of Aardvark Fighting

Though many pits abide by their own rules of fighting, the Claremont Arena holds to the traditional rules upon which every other pit have built variants. The Arena prides itself as being the most elite establishment in all of Ebbing for aardvark fighting and takes the sport seriously.

The Rules – Aardvark Fighting

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Two aardvarks are released into the 2-by-2-meter square which has been marked in chalk. Initiative is rolled. |
| 2 | The aardvarks must fight only until one loses or is unable to continue due to injury. The owner of either aardvark may choose to forfeit at any time. |
| 3 | If an aardvark leaves the chalk combat square during the match, they lose. |
| 4 | If an aardvark becomes subject to the Bleed condition, they lose. An official skilled in First Aid must always be present at the fight, as must clotting powder . |
| 5 | Digging is not permitted within the arena. Any poorly behaved aardvark will not be allowed to fight. |

Cliffhanger

(Round 2 – 2v2 Wrestling)

The chanting of the crowd swells as you enter the fighting pit, hands clapping, feet stomping. The press of bodies in the stands above has caused the air to grow hot and stuffy and, on the far side of the circular pit, are simple wooden tables laden with goblets, bottles of wine, and bowls of fruit. Servants you recognize from the dinner parties at Mayor Pennycuick's manor wait patiently around them, organizing the bottles and polishing the cups. In the center of the fighting pit, a foot-high wooden platform rises from the ground, eight-by-eight meters in size covered in straw. The Katakans watch on impassively, their expressions indiscernible behind their masks.

Next to this platform is a short, stocky elven woman, all defined muscle and standing with her hands on her hips, wearing loose trousers, boots, and a blouse with the sleeves ripped off. Her Skellige accent is thick as she notices you and begins to address you all:

“Alright! Get over ‘ere. Two competitors per team – one of you from each couple draws a straw. Shortest straw means you’re fightin’ first.”

She holds up her fist where three pieces of straw jut out from her grasp.

For this round, each of the three remaining teams draws a straw offered by an official. The two teams who draw the shortest straws wrestle each other first whilst the team with the longest straw sits out the round and waits their turn. The

losing team wrestles the team that sat out whilst the winner of the first match rests. The winner of this second match is then pitted against the winner of the first match to determine 1st and 2nd place. The losers of the second match are given 3rd place and are eliminated from the Tournament. **Each match is a best of 5.** By the end of the day, only two teams will move **to Round 3**.

After the end of this round, **go to Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences), After Round 2**.

The Rules of Wrestling

Claremont Arena uses rules for wrestling that are different to rules for similar events in the North. The Arena takes these rules seriously and doesn’t suffer cheating lightly.

| The Rules – Wrestling | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | The two nominees from the two teams start in their own corners on the platform, facing each other. You can only wrestle the one person you are facing, but you can swap places with your teammate as an Action if there is only one member of the opposing team remaining in the round. Initiative is rolled. |
| 2 | Participants cannot spend STA to make extra attacks. |
| 3 | All damage is reduced to non-lethal . Weapons are banned . Choking or Tripping an opponent is also not permitted. Everything else, including Punching, Kicking, Push Kicking, Grappling, Pinning, and Throwing is permitted. Critical Injuries cannot be inflicted. Damage dealt from hits or effects is always considered non-lethal. See pg. 163 of the Core Rulebook for Brawling & Wrestling rules. |
| 4 | Each match consists of up to five rounds. The first team to win three rounds is declared the winner of the match. A team wins a round when both of their opponents are eliminated from that round. |
| 5 | Whenever a participant is knocked prone or is pinned, they must immediately make a 1d10 roll. If the roll is under 6, they take too long to get back up or cannot escape the pin and are eliminated from the current round. If they roll above 5, they are immediately able to stand up and escape any grapple they are currently in. |
| 6 | If any participant is removed from the platform, they are eliminated from the round. |
| 7 | If any participant is reduced to 0 STA, or takes non-lethal damage equal to their HP, they fall unconscious and are eliminated from the round. They return the following round, healed of all non-lethal damage they have taken, but with only 10 STA. |
| 8 | In between matches, all participants heal from all non-lethal damage they have taken, and their STA is restored to maximum. |
| 9 | Magic is not permitted. Use of magic, if discovered, will result in the offender’s team losing the current Match. You can use Spells or Signs in a discreet manner with a DC:15 Sleight of Hand check to perform casting movements as long as it is to use magic that has no visible effect . For example, a big fire spell would be noticed by all, but a mind manipulation spell may go unnoticed if performed stealthily . |

EVENT

Something in the Wine

The next day, the round of the Tournament is **1v1 Combat**. It is **Lady Luck**'s intention to have the Player(s) who are most **skilled in combat** (Witchers, Mages, Man At Arms, etc.) out of commission so that her favored team wins by default. If **Lady Luck**'s team loses the first fight and looks like they may lose 2nd place and be kicked out of the Tournament, the following event occurs. During the wrestling, **Mayor Pennycuick** has provided a variety of **refreshments** – wines, fruits, and pastries set up on tables to one side of the fighting pit with servants waiting on them to pour drinks. Should the Players be hanging around this refreshment table between the matches, they make a **DC:20 Awareness check** to notice one of the servants pouring their drinks messing with their breast pocket. If they notice, read:

As you wait for the matches to begin again, the noise of the crowd lulling as the break begins, you notice the servant who left to pour your drinks patting the pocket sewn into the breast of his

tunic. Looking around nervously, he picks the wine bottle up once again and continue filling the goblets.

If the Players choose to confront the servant about his actions, he appears nervous and makes an excuse about him simply having took medicine for his nerves. If met with aggression or interrogation by the Players, the servant glances up to the Katakans' viewing box in the stands where **Lady Luck** and the **Jarl** are watching them all and excuses himself, saying he needs to go and serve the Katakans.

The Player(s) who drink the wine must make a **DC:20 Awareness check** to realize that has been tampered with, otherwise it appears to be sweetened white wine. The substance used is a powerful mix of **Poisoner's Friend** and **Hallucinogen** that will take effect during that night's **dinner party** – **refer to Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences), After Round 2** for effects and further information.

Cliffhanger

(Round 3 – 1v1 Single Combat)

The audience seems more excited than usual today, watching avidly as you enter the fighting pit below them. The platform from yesterday has been removed and a large ring in white chalk has been drawn onto the stone floor, 10 meters in diameter. From up in their viewing box, the Katakans watch on, some of them lazily gesturing for more carafes of wine to be brought to them, holding their cups up expectantly.

Beside the chalk ring is Toussaintoi swordsman Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir, standing with one hand on his hip, and the other resting on the hilt of his sheathed sword. He smiles lopsidedly as you approach and seems to be in his element here, a striking comparison to his awkward and stiff behavior around the Katakans. He begins to speak:

"Ah, my friends! I look forward to seeing your styles today. Know that I'll be watching closely – it is my job to perhaps teach some of you after all."

For this round, the two remaining teams will nominate one person to fight. Each fighter is given an **Arming Sword** which is the only weapon permitted in this fight. **Additionally, the use of armor is not permitted.** The losers of this round are eliminated from the Tournament. By the end of the Single Combat Round, only one team will move to **Round 4**.

After the end of this round, go to **Cliffhanger (Nightly Occurrences), After Round 3**.

*I only vaguely remember Claremont.
The wine was excellent, but of course
it was, being imported from Toussaint.
It had a nostalgic flavor that made
the barbaric nature of the arena
palatable to me for a time, but perhaps
I overindulged when that notion wore
off near the end of the tournament.
Luckily, I took copious notes, which
have allowed me to reconstruct this
tale in complete accuracy. Yes, even
the part about the aardvarks.
They were adorable.*

-Dandelion

The Rules of Single Combat

Claremont Arena uses rules for single combat inspired by **fencing** – a pastime of the **Nilfgaardian elites** – and takes the sport seriously. Cheating is not only an offense met with disqualification, but also sees the cheater lose their **reputation among** the locals and their **honor** is considered stained. Use the **bandit stats** in the **Core Rulebook** for the Player's opponent.

| The Rules – Single Combat | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Any participant who leaves the ring during combat is considered to have forfeited the fight and is disqualified . |
| 2 | Participants cannot spend STA to make extra attacks. |
| 3 | Before each attack, each participant rolls 1d10 to determine which body part they can try to hit with that attack. If they do not like the result of this roll, they may instead attack with a penalty of -6 to aim for the chest of their opponent. Otherwise, aiming for a specific body part does not impart a penalty to the attacker. All damage dealt by the Arming Sword is reduced to non-lethal and is capped at 2d6+4 with no bonuses . Critical Injuries cannot be inflicted. Damage dealt from hits or effects is always considered non-lethal. |
| 4 | Attacking your opponent with your provided Arming Sword is the only permitted aggressive combat action. If a participant is disarmed of their sword, they are allowed time to retrieve it before resuming the fight. |
| 5 | When a participant is within 5 points of non-lethal damage of going unconscious, they have the option to yield , thus disqualifying them, or they can continue to fight until they reach OSTA at which point they are knocked unconscious and yield as a result. |
| 6 | Magic is not permitted. Use of magic, if discovered, will result in the offender's team being disqualified from the Tournament. You can use Spells or Signs in a discreet manner with a DC:15 Sleight of Hand check to perform casting movements as long as it is to use magic that has no visible effect . For example, a big fire spell would be noticed by all, but a mind manipulation spell may go unnoticed if performed stealthily . |
| 7 | Officials skilled in First Aid will be in attendance throughout and at the end of the fight and will offer medical assistance if it's needed. After the fight, each participant will be healed of all non-lethal damage. |

The Point System

Each part of the body is worth an amount of points. Before each attack, a participant must roll 1d10 determine **which body part** they can try to hit with that attack. If they do not like the result of this roll, they may instead attack with a penalty of -6 to aim for the chest of their opponent. Otherwise, aiming for a specific body part does not impart a penalty to the attacker.

The winner is the participant who had scored the most points when either they or their opponent are forced to yield. Refer to the **table below** for the results of the roll and the point allocation.

| Roll (1d10) | Points per Body Part |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 9-10 | Head & Neck |
| 8 | Shoulders |
| 7 | Arms |
| 6 | Chest |
| 4-5 | Stomach & Waist |
| 3 | Back |
| 2 | Legs |
| 1 | Hands & Feet |

EVENT

Enough Is Enough

The Players catch Lady Luck trying to cheat yet again and for the final time. This time, the servant Lady Luck has paid off to tamper with the weapons is being glaringly obvious about their actions. The Players don't need to make an **Awareness check** as the servant draws attention all by themselves:

The sharp metallic clatter of numerous weapons falling to the ground draws your attention. A servant clearly responsible for knocking them over flails wildly to try and stop as many as he can from hitting the ground. He is sorely failing. He fumbles as something falls out of his hand, struck out of his grasp by the hilt of a toppling sword. The item, a small glass bottle, rolls across the floor, its black liquid contents sloshing around inside.

The Player(s) must make a successful **DC:14 Deduction** or a **DC:12 Streetwise** (it's a **common poison** used in the city of Novigrad by gangs) **check** to recognize the contents of the bottle as being **Black Venom**. Refer to the **sidebar** for the effects of this **poison**. Players who succeed either check will be aware of Black Venom's effects.

Academic Aid

If the Players managed to get into the **Jarl's** good graces, he approaches them after the **1v1 Single Combat Round** of the Tournament and discuss **rare monsters** and their **venom**, asking if they have ever encountered venom more potent and lethal than that of the **manticore**. If the Players ask him why he is talking about this with them, he says:

"Simply academic curiosity, my dears. Surely there must be worse things out there than the manticore's venom, yes? Hopefully you don't end up finding out any time soon, hm?"

The **Jarl** knows that the **Final Round of the Tournament** involves the Players facing off against the deadly **Gigascorpion**, a creature he himself brought in. He will not tell the Players exactly what they'll be fighting the next day, instead he enjoys watching the Players frantically try and figure it out.

Novigrad's Choice

Black Venom is a common poison, often used by the **gangs** who run within **Novigrad**. The effects are in the table below:

| Name | Effect |
|--------------------|--|
| Black Venom | Black Venom immediately poisons the target so long as it enters their bloodstream or is somehow ingested. The target must make a DC:16 Endurance check to end the effect. However, the target can become poisoned again if they ingest more black venom or are cut by a poisoned weapon. |

Climax (Round 4 – The Gigascorpion)

Before you enter the passage leading into the ring, you are stopped by a familiar face. Merrík, from the sign-up table a few days ago, approaches, a smile on his face as he greets you all:

"Well met again! Gotta say, you've made it much farther than everyone else thought ye would! Very impressive, I must say! 'Course, I knew ye had it in ye, placed a fair wager on ye myself so ye'd best win today 'n all! Anyways, I've been told to give ye these, apparently ye'll need 'em, the Katakans said so. Good luck to ye!"

Merrík hands the Players **four small bottles** on leather cords, to be worn around the neck. These bottles have a strange, iridescent blue liquid inside, sealed with a cork stopper. Merrík has only been told by the Katakans to give them to the Players and tell them that they are "something they may need later in this fight." All of the bottles are just **water with coloring dye mixed in**, designed to trick the Players into thinking they are an **antidote** for the **Gigascorpion's** venomous sting – a cruel trick played on the Players by the Katakans who wish to add "more excitement" to the final battle. These false antidotes have **no effect**.

After speaking with Merrík and receiving the bottles, he ushers them on towards

the fighting pit where the Final Round will take place.

Impossibly, even more people have turned out for the event today, the stands heaving with bodies, the stench of sweat and alcohol pungent in the hot air. The entire ring of the Arena is open to you now as you walk under the arched entrance and into the pit. The ground is smothered by coarse white sand, shades of amber dancing across it from the lit braziers that burn around the whole perimeter, coals red hot and crackling. Heavy-looking crates are also placed haphazardly about, some of them pried open. You enter the ring amidst cheers and raucous applause, even a few of the Katakans clap their hands politely from up in their viewing box. The groan of the heavy barred portcullis gate is almost smothered by the cacophony of sound as it closes behind you, sealing you within the pit. Another portcullis gate, identical in design, sits opposite from you all, still and shut for now with the passage beyond darkened and indiscernible.

The **Jarl** rises from his seat, his smile wide and his eyes glinting from behind his mask. He holds a goblet of wine in his hand, gesturing with it as he speaks:

"Ah, warriors, congratulations on getting this far! Very impressive. But now, you must test your glaeddy again – you must earn your reward after all."

He turns to address the crowd, raising his arm quickly so that the wine in his cup splashes over his fingers in a burst of crimson:

"Let us see blood spilled! Release the Gigascorpion!"

At the **Jarl's** words, the gate on the opposite side of the pit rises, the mechanism inside groaning with the effort. For this round, the Players are expected to face off against the **Gigascorpion**, a deadly and rare magical beast that the **Jarl** himself has provided for "entertainment." The Players will **not be informed** of what to expect in this round during the dinner party the night before – the Katakans wanting to ensure the Players will be going into the ring completely unawares. The Players are permitted to wear and wield their own **armor** and **weapons**, and **magic** is also allowed. This fight

is **to the death**. The stat block for the Gigascorpion can be found at the end of the adventure.

All the Katakans, Jean-Lucas, and Mayor Pennycuick are present. Lady Luck is only present if the Players took her **bribe** of 200 Florens and didn't out her as a cheater. Otherwise, she is not in the crowds nor the viewing box, having been **banned** from both the Tournament and the Arena.

A loud chittering noise spills forth from the shadowy passage beyond the now-open gate:

The click of scuttling legs on stone rattles from the shadows as a large beast slinks into the light of the Arena. A scorpion of unfathomable proportions with huge pincers and a towering tail, its carapace is hard and rough, covered in fine black hairs and scattered markings from where blades have tried and failed to cut through. Twelve red eyes take you in curiously,

two large ones set in the top of its scarred prosoma and five lateral pairs running adjacent. Eight legs flex and shudder on the sandy ground, tail twitching in an agitated display of its razor-sharp sting embedded into the tip. A warbled chitter rumbles from somewhere deep within its body, growing in pitch and intensity until it releases an unearthly shriek that has even the Katakans wincing and hurrying to cover their ears. All except the Jarl who merely laughs:

"Beautiful, is she not?"

The Gigascorpion wails again and lunges at you all!

After the end of this round, go to the **Ending**. If the Players kill the **Gigascorpion**, go to **Ending (The Legendary Warriors of Claremont)**. If the Player characters are killed by the **Gigascorpion**, go to **Ending (Gone and Forgotten)**.

The Rules of Fighting a Gigascorpion

| The Rules – The Gigascorpion | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | The aim of this combat is kill or be killed . If the Players are killed, they lose the Tournament. If they kill the Gigascorpion and survive (not all Players must live), they win. |
| 2 | Players are not permitted to leave the arena. Both gates are closed and locked until the fight is over and the pit's walls are 3 meters tall. If any Player attempts to climb out of the Arena, they will be swarmed and thrown back in by the spectating crowds. |
| 3 | All weapons, armor, items, and magic are permitted to be used during this fight. Players are also encouraged to use the environment around them to their advantage. Refer to the sidebar for additional rulings and options a Player has available to them. |
| 4 | Taking the so-called " antidote " takes up the unfortunate Player(s) action . |
| 5 | There are officials skilled in First Aid are on hand but they are not permitted to enter the Arena until the fight is finished . |

Using the Environment

| Object | Description | Use |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Braziers (x8) | Coals and wood lit ablaze in braziers. | These braziers can be kicked or pushed over with a successful DC:12 Physique Check . Once tipped, hot coals and wood scatter out 2 meters in the direction the brazier was tipped and deal 2d6 damage to any target in their path, in addition to setting them on Fire . |
| Crates of Sand (x5) | Heavy oak crates filled with sand. | These crates can be used for cover and can take up to 10 damage before they splinter into uselessness. |
| 5m Chain (x1) | On top of one of the crates is a 5m length of chain. | This chain can be used as a makeshift weapon, dealing 2d6+4 damage when being used as such. |
| Flask of Spirits (x3) | On top of another crate are three full flasks of spirits. | These flasks can be used as flammable projectiles which deal 2d6+4 damage and set their target on Fire . |

Ending (The Legendary Warriors of Claremont)

If the **Gigascorpion** is defeated, the Players are given their reward of 800 Florens and invited to celebrate in the **large party** thrown by **Mayor Pennycuick** at his manorhouse. Unlike the previous **dinner parties**, this event is open to all and thus ends up becoming a city-wide celebration, filling the streets of drunk and excitable people.

The Players will find the Katakans, Jean-Lucas, and Pennycuick in the manorhouse itself, which is now crowded with other nobles from around Claremont. The Players can confirm their lessons with Jean-Lucas and organize a time to have them with him. The Katakans who placed their bet on the Players will congratulate them on their win. Mechanically, Jean-Lucas's lessons allow the Players to increase a Reflex skill of their choice by one.

Whilst they are at the manorhouse, they cross paths with the other competing teams who were knocked out of the competition in the previous rounds. The **Artisans of Mahakam** seem a little bitter about their losing, but regard the Players with an impressed look. The **Iron Maidens** are horribly drunk and are enthusiastically happy for the Players, congratulating them loudly and clapping them on the shoulders and back. The **Claremont Quintet** are just as pleased for the Players but far less drunk. Their Bard, **Varin**, declares them the "**Legendary Warriors of Claremont**" and promises to sing praises of their daring battle against the **Gigascorpion** at every tavern he visits. He claims he will make them known all over the Continent one day.

Ending (Gone and Forgotten)

If the **Gigascorpion** slaughters the Players, the competition ends in **Mayor Pennycuick's** manorhouse, over a dinner between him, Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir, and the Katakans:

The conversation lingers on the events of the day for a while, Mayor Pennycuick remarking that it appears Jean-Lucas' sword fighting services are no longer required, and the Jarl turning to the Katakans sat around him and explaining the intricacies of Gigascorpion poison. At some point, the talking lulls and Est Est asks over her glass of wine, words slightly slurred, if anyone caught or remembers the names of those poor souls the Gigascorpion ate. Everyone looks between themselves at the table, an awkward silence falls, lingering until the Jarl shrugs a shoulder and makes a derisive sound:

"What does it matter?"

The Witcheress asks something about the weather tomorrow. The topic changes. The conversation moves on.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

After their triumph in the arena, Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir is excited to start classes with the party as soon as possible. He offers to take them north to his villa in Toussaint, where he would prefer to hold their class, and offers to put them up in his guest house for the duration. This should prove to be an offer too sweet to pass up. The journey is one by private carriage, and is a fair deal more luxurious than their previous journey with the Nilfgaardian caravan. Mechanically, Jean-Lucas's lessons allow the Players to increase a Reflex skill of their choice by one. While in Toussaint, and learning from the swordsman in the lap of luxury, Jean-Lucas introduces the party to Rafael de Surmann, the Ducal Camerlengo of Toussaint, who upon learning of their prowess, offers them an attractive employment opportunity. Proceed to **The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies**.



Simple
Simple

Intelligence
Feral

Senses
Night Vision,
Scent Tracking

Aardvark

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 1 |
| REF | 3 |
| DEX | 5 |
| BODY | 3 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 4 |
| CRA | 1 |
| WILL | 5 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 4 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 20 |
| ENC | 30 |
| REC | 4 |
| HP | 20 |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 8 |
| Awareness | 10 |
| Courage | 13 |
| Dodge/Escape | 9 |
| Endurance | 13 |
| Intimidation | 8 |
| Melee | 10 |
| Stealth | 8 |
| Wilderness Survival | 15 |

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Height | Around 2.5 m |
| Weight | Around 250kg |
| Environment | Deserts |
| Intelligence | About as intelligent as a dog |
| Organization | Solitary |

| |
|--------|
| Bounty |
| — |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-----|------|-----|-------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Claw | 10 | B | 1d6 | 15 | — | Bleed (10%) |
| Tail | 10 | S | 2d6 | 10 | — | — |

| Special Abilities | |
|---|---|
| Each aardvark has one of these special abilities: | |
| Bloodsnout “The Warrior:” Ability: Aardvark Swagger The aardvark can now use its Intimidation Stance twice per fight. | Shaelmaar “The Terror of Toussaint:” Ability: Decisive Blow The aardvark’s tail has a 20% chance to cause the Stun effect on a hit. |
| Dragoon “The Steel Aardvark:” Ability: Thick Skin The aardvark has +1 to Armor and is immune to bleeding. | Leshenclaw “The Skelligan Bruiser:” Ability: Skilled Combatant The aardvark’s claws gain +1 to damage, and its tail gains +2 to damage. |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 4 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| Beast Oil |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|------------------|
| Beast Oil |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dodge Base | 9 |
| Reposition Base | 8 |
| Block Base | 8 |

| Abilities |
|--|
| Intimidation Stance: When fighting another aardvark, by lifting itself on its hind legs and spending its full turn, an aardvark can make an Intimidation Check opposed by its opponent’s Courage . If the Check is successful, the opponent must spend its entire movement to flee from the aardvark on its next turn. An aardvark can only use this ability once per combat. |
| Expert Climber: Will to Fight: When an aardvark begins its turn with 10 HP or less, it must make a DC:20 Courage Check to continue fighting. If the aardvark fails the Check, it must spend the turn doing nothing but fleeing from its opponent. If it succeeds, it may continue the fight. |

| Loot |
|------|
| — |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 10 |
| Awareness | 10 |
| Brawling | 17 |
| Courage | 14 |
| Endurance | 16 |
| Intimidation | 14 |
| Physique | 13 |
| Resist Magic | 13 |
| Stealth | 8 |
| Wilderness Survival | 12 |

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Armor | 15 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|----------------------|--|
| Insectoid Oil | |
| Immunities | |
| Poison, Extreme Heat | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|------------------|--|
| Beast Oil | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 13 |
| Reposition Base | 10 |
| Block Base | 15 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| 700 | |

| Loot | |
|---------------------|--|
| Chitin Scale (1d6) | |
| Venom Extract (1d6) | |



**Hard
Simple**

Intelligence
Feral

Senses
Night Vision

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 1 |
| REF | 8 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 12 |
| SPD | 7 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 1 |
| WILL | 4 |

| | |
|------|-----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 21 |
| LEAP | 4 |
| STA | 40 |
| ENC | 120 |
| REC | 8 |
| HP | 80 |

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Height | Around 2.5 m |
| Weight | Around 250kg |
| Environment | Deserts |
| Intelligence | About as intelligent as a dog |
| Organization | Solitary |

Gigascorpion

Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

Now I've never been across the Korath and if I'm all fire honest I got no plans to ever make that trip, heh! But I've heard a few tales of Gigascorpions from the few Zerikanians and Ofieri I've had my dealings with. Turns out, these bastards are a real hassle for their caravans. One lad I had a stirrin' round of Gwent with told me if your makin' your way through the desert and ya spot a big flat rock it's more than likely a scorpion and ya should steer clear! Heh, also told me the best way to fight one was to climb on its back and try to get a blade between its eyes where the armor's weakest. But that's awful close to that ploughin' tail for me!

Lore & Behavior (Education DC:10)

Gigascorpions are ambush predators which are a threat to caravans travelling across the Korath desert. In combat, they will rely on their stinger which contains a powerful, fast acting poison. Typically, one sting is enough for its natural prey. Fighting a Gigascorpion requires lightning fast reflexes to dodge this stinger. While its tail is deadly, succeeding in the fight hinges on getting through the beast's thick chitin. Insectoid Oil helps cleave through this chitin, which will make the fight much less deadly. Golden Oriole Potion is great insurance against the Gigascorpion's poison, and its protection can easily last for your entire hunt. Stock up on both before you take a contract in the Korath.

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|--|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Claw | 17 | P | 4d6+3 | 15 | — | — |
| Stinger | 17 | P | 6d6+3 | 10 | — | Long Reach Poison (100%)Bleed (30%) |

Ability: Camouflage

Gigascorpions have a +10 to Stealth in rocky or desert terrain when they are not moving.

Ability: Desert Dweller:

Gigascorpions are unaffected by the effects of extreme heat.

I loathe them. All sizes of scorpion mind you, but also all associated creatures that make a home in your shoes. And on the topic of size, as it relates to scorpions, the larger they are, the deeper my distaste for them, until we reach the foulest of their kind, these Gigascorpions, for whom my feelings would sink to the bottom of the Sedna Abyss. Good luck on your hunt, you poor bugger, just keep me out of it.

— Dandelion

Friend of An Craite

Should they ever travel to **Skellige** or meet other **Skelligans** on their adventures, the Player(s) can give use Skuld's name to ensure **hospitality** is shown to them from any member of **Clan An Craite**. Additionally, should the Player(s) ever cross paths with the Iron Maidens again, they will be able to enlist their **help** in a quest or endeavor so long as they are willing to do Skuld and her friends a **favor in return**. This **Perk** is negated if the Player(s) abuse Skuld's trust or end up insulting other members of Clan An Craite. This **Perk** also doesn't apply to other **Skelligan Clans**.

Rightly Deserved

If the Player(s) end up in a **fist fight** after insulting one or more of the Iron Maidens, they take it outside behind the **Dancing Cockatrice** where the Nilfgaardian soldiers are unlikely to notice and see them. Use the **Bandit stats** in the **Core Rulebook** for the members of the Iron Maidens.

Skuld

So long as the Players don't insult her, they will find a solid friend in Skuld should they choose to befriend her. During the **dinner parties** the contestants must attend, she tries to keep the Characters' spirits up despite the intrusive and creepy behavior of the **Katakans**. She dislikes ►

The Competition

There are three other teams who are competing in the Open Variety Tournament against the Players and are named as follows: the Iron Maidens, the Artisans of Mahakam, and the Claremont Quintet. Each team has a different set of skills and angle of approach regarding the competition and provide a variety of NPCs with which to interact with the Players. The Players may wish to create allies out of them but can also gain rivals depending on their treatment of the other teams. Each group description has a table of potential ways in which the Players may upset any of the NPCs in these teams and the rivalries that may come about in the Bonds and Insults sidebars.



The Iron Maidens

NPC

The Iron Maidens are an all-woman, all-warrior team of Clan An Craite from Skellige. There are four women in total: **Mikaela**, **Asdis**, **Thora**, and their group leader **Skuld**, their character descriptions can be found in the **table** below. The aardvark they have is **Leshenclaw "The Skelligan Bruiser"** (refer to the end of this adventure for its **stat block**) which was gifted to them by one of the **Katakans** – the **Jarl**. Like most Skelligans, these warriors love their homeland fiercely.

The Iron Maidens



Skuld

Skuld has pale blue eyes and vibrant ginger hair pulled up in a braid from her face. Her pale skin is scarred across her bottom lip and chin and her leather and chain armor is decorated partially by bear pelts and blue painted Skellige runes. She is tall and well-built with muscle and wears a heavy **Iron Long Sword** over her shoulder.



Mikaela

Mikaela has green eyes and wild, light brown hair cut in uneven lengths, and her pale skin spattered with freckles. She wears typical Skelligan armor and wolf furs. Her body stocky and short, packed with muscles. She wields a **Berserker's Axe**, strapped to her back.



Asdis

Asdis has light brown eyes and long brown hair, pulled up into a loose but practical bun. Her dark brown skin is marred by scars that rise from beneath the tunic collar of her gambeson and is tall and lean. She has **Brass Knuckles** affixed to her fingerless leather gloves and carries **Poniard Blades** strapped about her hip belts.



Thora

Thora has pale blue eyes and plaited blonde hair. Her weathered skin is littered with numerous facial scars and across her shoulders is a matted wolf pelt. She is average height but built with muscle, carrying a **Battle Axe** at her waist and a **Skellige Raider Shield** on her back.

► rich, aloof nobles, and will often mock the **Katankans** by giving crude and blunt answers to their questions and by referring to them by rude nicknames behind their backs. Skuld will offer companionship and drinks during the parties and talks often about how much she loves her homeland, **Skellige**, telling tales of monsters and enemies she and her friends have defeated and fought over the years.

A Gift from A Friend

If the Players ask why the Iron Maidens don't have a writ for an aardvark, they tell them that they were apparently donated one by a noble. They don't know who this noble is, but they have been told that they will meet them at tonight's **dinner party** at **Mayor Penny-cuick's** manor.

Mahakam Dwarves

Dwarves from **Mahakam** are different to those you will find born in cities on the **Continent**; they have a fierce sense of pride in their homeland that other dwarves – such as **Zoltan Chivay**, **Rodolf Kazmer**, and **Yarpen Zigrin** – don't really have. You can make this clear to the Players perhaps by having some **dwarven spectator** **NPCs** comment offhandedly about this strange patriotism the Mahakam dwarves have that they simply don't understand.

Bonds & Insults – The Iron Maidens

For the most part, the Iron Maidens are friendly towards the Players, if a little too competitive at times. They are not sore losers, but they will give their all in the Tournament which is typical of Skelligan culture. However, there are a couple of ways in which the Players may either **bond with** or **insult** the team:

| Bonds & Insults – The Iron Maidens | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Bond | If any of the Players are from the Skellige Isles – especially if they are members of Clan An Craite. |
| Insult | If any of the Players insult Skellige and/or Clan An Craite (i.e. implying that Skelligans are weak or that their Clan leader, Crach An Craite , is a coward). |
| Bond | If any of the Players are warriors or have Renown to their name – especially if they have some story of a great battle tied to them. |
| Insult | If any of the Player imply that any of the Iron Maidens are weak, especially if the Player(s) try to dismiss their strength because they are women. |

Ruthless

The dwarves ruthlessness becomes greatly apparent through their behavior during the rounds and the dinner parties with the **Katakans**. They spend their time asking about the rules of the Tournament, even going so far as to **bribe** the Tournament officials into giving them information with which to find loopholes to exploit – cheating to secure a win.

Rhundin

Players notice that Rhundin is a scholarly type, always watchful and alert to his surroundings and the people around him. Often, the characters see him taking notes; during the **Tournament Rounds**, he makes these notes in a small leather-bound book which he always keeps on his person in a pocket sewn into the inside of his tunic breast. Though Rhundin has no weapons on him, his words are sharp enough. Should the Players wish to **steal** Rhundin's notebook, they must wait until he removes his tunic. Whenever he takes off his tunic, he never lets it out of his sight, so the Player(s) must make a **DC:16 Sleight of Hand check** to successfully steal it. Should they then wish to read the notes inside, you may have it contain any remarks about the Players that you please.

The Artisans of Mahakam

NPC

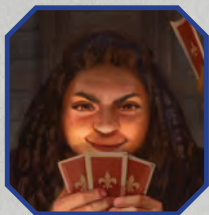
The Artisans of Mahakam are an all-dwarven team from, as their name indicates, Mahakam, comprised of **Artisans Guild Members** with an eye for the finer things and light-fingered **thieves**. There are five dwarves in total: **Bandi**, **Brouven**, **Zier**, **Arkam**, and their team leader, **Rhundin**; their character descriptions can be found in the **table** below. You choose which of the two remaining aardvarks to give to this team after the Players have chosen theirs.

The Artisans of Mahakam



Rhundin

Rhundin has light green eyes, shorn and curly salt-and-pepper hair, and a thick gray moustache and waist length beard. His skin is dark brown, and he wears fine-quality clothes and a pair of golden-framed spectacles. He is slightly older-looking than the other dwarves at the table with his wrinkles and soft, pudgy belly. He doesn't carry any visible weapons and is currently hunched over the parchment, writing in neat runes.



Bandi

Bandi has light brown eyes and dark plaited hair, her brown beard is short and neatly trimmed, standing out against her almost porcelain skin. She wears fine-quality clothes and trousers with silk seams and is rotund and heavy-set, carrying no visible weapons.



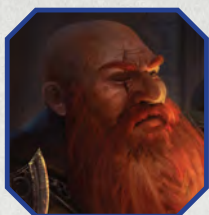
Brouven

Brouven has dark green eyes and short black hair with a waist-length beard. His tanned skin is mostly covered by black and gray leather armor with fine-quality accessories such as supple leather gloves and a silk neckerchief. He is broad and built lean with muscle and a slight pot-belly. He carries no visible weapons but there is a sharp, wicked glint in his eyes.



Zier

Zier has blue eyes and loose blonde hair with a few thin braids decorated with clasps and beads. She has a small kitten-soft beard, also thinly braided, and wears a beautiful dress with long, pleated skirts that kiss the ground as she walks. She is chubby and soft, curvy about her chest, stomach, and hips. Though she carries no discernible weapons, she walks with a cane that has a handle carved in the shape of a dragon's head.



Arkam

Arkam has one brown eye, the other slightly glassy with a ragged scar running down from his brow and curving round to the tip of his nose. Though he's bald, he has a thick belt-length red beard, and his light brown skin is flecked with moles and markings. His heavy armor has clearly seen a lot of use, the leather scuffed and worn and the metal dented in places. He is broad shouldered and heavily muscled, arms crossed over his chest and behaving a strong, stoic manner. Over one shoulder, he carries a **Battle Axe**, and over the other, a **Leather Shield** and **Hand Crossbow**.



Rhundin and the other dwarves (barring Arkam, who is the team's bodyguard) are professional and business-like in their interactions. Currently, Rhundin is invested in learning his group's strengths which he is writing down on the parchment on the table. Throughout the competition, Rhundin is concerned with gathering intel on all the competing teams, figuring out their strengths, weaknesses, and how he can manipulate them to his advantage throughout the Tournament. He and the whole of the **Artisans of Mahakam** are strongly competitive, seemingly willing to do *anything* to win the prize. As a result, the Artisans only want to make friends with the Players in the hopes that they might gather some useful intel about their rivals.

Bonds and Insults – The Artisans of Mahakam

For the Artisans, this Tournament is about winning the title and the renown that comes with it – they want to “Show the humans the greatness of Mahakam.” Because of this deep-rooted pride, they only truly take offense to Players who insult their home country, but there are ways to **bond** with these dwarves:

| Bonds & Insults – The Artisans of Mahakam | |
|---|--|
| Bond | If any of the Players are dwarves from Mahakam and share their patriotism, or they are dwarves related to the Moodie, Harkus, Flet, Wolderage, Baikey, Grindwater, and Mawik families . |
| Insult | If any of the Players insinuate anything negative about Mahakam. |
| Bond | If any of the Players have the Leaden Ring . |
| Insult | If any of the Players insult any of the Artisans of Mahakam. |

Names of Significance

The names of the families **Moodie, Harkus, Flet, Wolderage, Baikey, Grindwater, and Mawik** are all recognized within Mahakam. Both Rhundin and Bandi have had financial dealings with them in the past and will be pleased to meet any Player related to them.

Brothers of Mahakam

Should they ever travel to **Mahakam** or meet other **Mahakam dwarves** on their adventures, the Player(s) can use Rhundin's name to ensure **hospitality** is shown to them from any dwarves whilst there. Additionally, should the Player(s) ever cross paths with the Artisans of Mahakam again, they will be able to **buy provisions** and dwarven **Armor** and **Weapons** for a slightly discounted price at your discretion. This **Perk** is negated if the Player(s) abuse Rhundin's trust or end up **insulting** other members of the **Artisans of Mahakam**.

Mahakam Pride

The Artisans of Mahakam quickly establish that all they care for in the way of conversation is **discussing Mahakam** and how much more **beautiful** their country is compared to **Ebbing** and the **Continent** in general. They comment on their **distaste for Nilfgaardian architecture and fashion**, and also the lack of finesse and art crafted into human **weapons**.

Bard's Big Break

Varin is a Bard fresh out of Oxenfurt and has been travelling with the rest of the Claremont Quintet for the past three months, documenting their stories and adventures – he aspires to one day be as famous as Dandelion himself. He hopes that his team wins so he can transform the whole experience into a song – his “Big Story.” Whenever the Players see Varin or talk to him, he is usually either scribbling notes down in his journal or tuning his violin, trying to piece together words for the song he plans to write.

A New Beginning

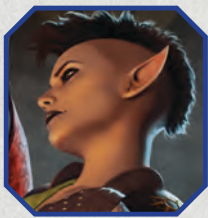
Should it become clear that the Claremont Quintet are not going to win the Tournament or are knocked out early, Varin will turn his support to the Players’ team, hoping to get a song and a tale out of them should the Players win instead. He will essentially become a tag-along – so long as the Players permit his company – and will try to learn more about the Players and try to smooth out any misunderstandings that may arise during the dinner parties with the Katakans.

The Claremont Quintet

NPC

The Claremont Quintet are an all-local group, comprised of a ragtag team of mostly elves who have seen service in the Nilfgaardian Army. There are five members in total: **Varin**, **Yaevirr**, **Galad**, **Minhal**, and their leader **Aenarinn**. You choose which of the two remaining aardvarks to give to this team after the Players have chosen theirs.

The Claremont Quintet



Aenarinn

Aenarinn is an elf with yellow-green eyes and dark brown hair shorn at the sides and mussed up into a rough mohawk. Their light brown skin is decorated down the left arm with an intricate full-sleeve tattoo depicting wyverns and, on the inside of their right wrist, an elven-style sword. They have soft, graceful, feminine features and their leather armor is embossed with a small golden sun on the pauldrons. They are shorter than average but well-built and clearly battle-hardened. They carry two **Hand Axes** attached to a belt at the small of their back within easy reach. There is also a **Dagger** strapped to their right thigh.



Varin

Varin is a human with bright blue eyes, pale skin, and dark blond hair swept about his face, a haze of neatly maintained stubble sits across his jaw. He is handsome and tall, lean, and youthful, wearing a beautifully made – if a little gaudy – black and crimson outfit and heeled leather shoes. He carries a leather and buckled case over one shoulder where he keeps a **violin** that he always brings around with him.



Yaevirr

Yaevirr is an elf with pale green eyes and short ash blonde hair, shaved at the sides and quaffed on top. A small scar sits on her cheek under her left eye and her features are stern and hard, her skin pale and weathered. Again, her leather armor is embossed with small golden suns across the pauldrons. She is average height and curvy, but it still toned with corded muscles from a lifetime of soldiering. She carries an **Iron Long Sword** over one shoulder and a set of **Daggers** over her left hip.



Galad

Galad is an elf with bold blue eyes, shoulder-length black hair pulled up into a tail. His dark skin has pale patches of vitiligo about the nose and eyes, and his facial features are strong and stern. His leather armor is also embossed with golden suns on the pauldrons and he is tall and lean, built for the bow rather than the sword. He carries a **War Bow** over one shoulder and **5 Bodkin Arrows** and **10 Arrows** in a quiver.



Minhal

Minhal is a half-elf with strange pink-lilac eyes and long, wavy gray hair. Their ears are only slightly pointed, the tips shorter than an elf’s, their face masculine in shape, and their skin pale. Under their left eye, high on the cheekbone, is a small tattoo of a celandine flower in bloom. They are tall and toned with muscle, armor designed for mercenary work rather than soldiering. They carry a **Hunter’s Falchion** and a **Steel Buckler Shield**.



In Your Corner

You can choose to use Varin's support of the Players in a manner that gives the Players a bit of reputation amongst the spectating crowd. Perhaps he could sing a small song about them or gives exciting announcements as the Players are introduced and walk into the Arena.

Tales of Grandeur

Throughout the rest of their adventures, particularly if they remain in the South, the Players may come across towns and cities where the results of their adventure here in the Claremont Arena have reached the ears of the people. It turns out that Varin has been singing of the Players' achievements and they have become a well-known tale in the taverns. As a result, their reputation earns them hospitality in the locations Varin has passed through, ensuring them lodging at a slightly discounted price. This Perk is negated if the Players abuse Varin's trust or insult him and his friends in the Claremont Quintet.

Bonds and Insults – The Claremont Quintet

Though Aenarinn is the team's "leader," it was Varin who signed them all up for the competition and is always actively encouraging them to go through with it whenever the others seem hesitant about it. The whole of the Claremont Quintet seems to only be participating in the Tournament for their Bard's benefit, not caring whether they win or lose. They behave like a tight-knit family and are, for the most part, genuine and friendly, but there are ways in which the Players can insult them:

| Bonds & Insults – The Claremont Quintet | |
|---|---|
| Bond | If any of the Players are friendly towards Varin and seemingly are willing to put up with his eccentric behavior, or are interested in his work as a Bard. |
| Insult | If the Players not only mistake the elves as being members of the Scoia'tael, but imply that they are traitors for working with the Nilfgaardian Army. |
| Bond | If any of the Players are warriors or have some Renown to their name. Additionally, if any of the Players are also Bards, regardless of their popularity. |
| Insult | If the Players are outright rude to Varin or any of the Quintet's members – they do not suffer ignorant fools lightly. |

Shared Past

The **Katakans** all know of each other in some way or another. Some have simply dealt in business before, like **Est Est** and **Black Heart**. Some are friends or “close acquaintances,” like **Lady Luck** and the **Witcheress**. Some even dislike one another, such as the **Jarl** and **Lady Luck**. It is only **Prinny Prin-Prin** who is the exception, her having left her home of **Toussaint** simply to support her **cousin’s** involvement in the Tournament – her cousin being **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**. They are all here to witness the first Tournament of this kind and to deem whether it’s a success. If it is, they would like to make this an annual event. The **Katakans** have all been known to gamble amongst themselves, betting on horses or fights, but they have since become bored with such tame things and are looking to expand their gambling onto more interesting games. As a result, they see the Players and members of the other teams as little more than horses at the races.

The Katakans

There are **six nobles** altogether who make up this masked and anonymous group. Their true names are kept from everyone involved in the competition, but they go by monikers: **Lady Luck**, the **Jarl**, **Prinny Prin-Prin**, the **Witcheress**, **Est Est**, and **Black Heart**. Each **Katakan** has the potential to interact with and favor not only certain competing teams, but also the individuals within them. Depending on how the Players behave during their interactions with the **Katakans**, there are **benefits** and **punishments** that may arise as a result. Each **Katakan** has their own set of **benefits** and **punishments** which you will find at the end of each **NPC’s description**. These **punishments** are meant to be humiliating for the person and, despite sounding pleasant, many of the **benefits** are backhanded and can cause a Player character to feel humiliated regardless. Remember that the **Katakans** will treat all the contestants in the same manner that a farmer may inspect cattle, or a jockey might assess their horse.

When the Players interact with the Katakans, they must follow the following **Rules of Conduct** or risk **Punishments**.

| The Rules of Conduct | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 | You must always be polite when speaking to the Katakans. |
| 2 | You must not ask for the Katakans’ true names. You must only address them by the name which they give you. |
| 3 | You have the right to refuse to answer any question asked of you, but you must do so politely . |
| 4 | No weapons are permitted in the dining hall. All competitors are subject to a search before entering the room. Confiscated weapons are held in a room only known to the servants at the doors. |
| 5 | You are welcome to discuss topics with the Katakans, especially so should they invite you in conversation, but you are not to correct nor talk over them. |

Lady Luck



Poised on a plush chair, as perfect and beautiful as one of the marble statues sculpted by the Aen Seidhe in Dol Blathanna, a woman sits observing those around her with keen green eyes. The upper half of her face is covered by a black silk mask, drawn up into the iconic prongs of a katakan’s crest. Her skin is a light shade of brown, her lips stained a deep, lustrous red, her eyes flashing in the light from the fireplace. Her black hair is pulled up into dramatic waves that cascade down to her shoulders in a whirl of silver pins and silk ribbons, and she is dressed in a long, black, form-fitting gown. White silken evening gloves cover her arms from hand to elbow, her heeled shoes peek out from the hem of her dress and, sitting tight against the elegant curve of her neck, is a lavish necklace, the blackened metal worked into fine, fragile shapes, framing the neatly cut white diamond that sits in the hollow of her throat.

Lady Luck is a human woman from Nilfgaard whose real name is **Emeryn Aep Bruche**, a high-born noble from **Nazair**. Despite her stunning looks, her personality is aloof and haughty, her wit sharp. Her values are placed in **wealth** and “**good blood**” and she has a taste for the finer things in life – expensive wines, art, music, etc. Incredibly clever, she attempts to befriend any **Nobles** or **Bards** among the Players to pry any secrets or information from them that she can later use for leverage.

NPC

Lady Luck – Roleplaying Prompts

- ♦ “Tell me, have you an interest in the arts?”
- ♦ “You strike me as a person with a tale to tell. Come, sit with me and tell me about your friends here.”
- ♦ “I suggest you act cautiously around our dear friend the Jarl. He’s a charming character, but it’s all a facade, I assure you. Mages are devious by nature, after all.” (Lady Luck and the Jarl **dislike** each other due to him winning a bet at the races the last time they were together. She suspects him of **cheating**.)

Fixing for A Win

Lady Luck is so named because of her seemingly perfect record of winning many **bets** in the **Claremont Arena**. She’s won so many times now that the other **Katakans** are beginning to get suspicious that it is no longer simply luck being in her favor and more that she is somehow fixing the fights. Though they currently have no proof, their suspicions are correct. She has been caught cheating before and prior to the **Tournament** starting, she was given her final warning.

Assign Lady Luck one of the teams other than the Players and have them be in her favor. She will have placed a **large bet** on this team and will do anything to ensure that they win.

♦ Benefits & Punishments

During the Players’ interactions with Lady Luck, they can end up either **insulting** or **impressing** her. Refer to the tables below for information on the potential **benefits** and a corresponding **punishment**.

♦ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to impress Lady Luck or by aligning with her ideals. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from Lady Luck, she will also gain something in return.

| Benefits – Lady Luck | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Esteemed Friend | The “Esteemed Friend” benefit is offered to any Player character(s) whom Lady Luck is interested in learning about specifically. After every meal, the Player(s) are invited to sit with her in the ballroom where she will subject them to a round of questioning, trying to glean as much information about the Player(s) as she can. She is interested in knowing the Player character’s history and abilities – every personal detail about their lives. If the Player(s) refuses to answer her questions, she will inflict her punishment . |
| Friends in High Places | The “Friends in High Places” benefit is only offered to a Player who is a Noble or Bard. Lady Luck will bestow this benefit, doing small favors (such as paying to repair a Player’s weapon or a piece of armor, etc.) in return for any information the Player can give not only about their own team’s members, but also members of the other teams. If the Player refuses to cooperate, she will inflict her punishment . |

♦ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening’s **Rules** or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to Lady Luck. The punishment is designed to humiliate the Player character through **public embarrassment** and will be enforced the **day after** the insult occurs, lasting for the duration of the day’s Tournament Round until the end of that evening’s dinner party.

Top Secret

The **Katakans**’ real names are only known to you, the GM. You can use this knowledge in any way you choose. Perhaps you could have them return in your games as **NPCs** using their **true names**, relaying to the Players that there is something hauntingly familiar about them...

Emeryn Aep Bruche

Emeryn Aep Bruche comes from a long line of bourgeois tailors in Nazair, so esteemed that her family has made outfits for the current Emperor of Nilfgaard, Emhyr var Emreis, and she is always more than happy to flaunt this fact to anyone she can. Her family are extremely wealthy and own a viewing box within the Claremont Arena itself. She will use this box during the Tournament Rounds. The other Katakans and Mayor Pennycuick have also been invited to join her.

Ermion

A skilled and highly intelligent **Druid**, Ermion is the **Hierophant of the Skellige Circle** and an advisor to Jarl Bran Tuirseach and the late Queen Calanthe of Cintra.

Extinction

The Jarl's favorite monster, the **eyehead**, was a **post-Conjunction** creature once so rare that they were considered a **Relict**, dying out due to its being cut off from its magical homeland. They appeared like dead logs when still but had four pairs of spindly legs, a segmented body, and large eyes mounted on protruding stalks. Though they were non-aggressive and generally slow, they could be quick as lightning when threatened, and their venom was highly toxic. Whilst the eyehead had no ears, it did, instead, hear with its entire body through **vibrations**, making it highly sensitive to **sound**. In particular, it hated **metallic** noises as they caused extreme pain, which was so effective at repelling them that all one needed to drive an eyehead off was to bang a cooking pot and ladle together. Players must make a **DC:20 Monster Lore check** in order to know anything about eyeheads as they are now **extinct**.

Punishment – Lady Luck

Like an Ass

The “Like an Ass” punishment involves the Player having to wear a headband decorated with a large pair of mule’s ears. When the Player wakes the next day, they find a servant from Mayor Pennycuick’s manor knocking at their door. The servant hands them a small package and a note which reads:

If you insist on behaving like an ass, be sure to dress the part.
- L.L.

They must wear this item on their head from the beginning of the next day during the Tournament Round, and then during that evening’s dinner party. The servant informs them that, should they refuse, they and their whole team will be **disqualified** from the Tournament.

The Jarl

NPC



Lingering around the Iron Maidens and watching them with rapt attention, a tall man hangs back with pale gray eyes that are only for the group of women at the table before him. His face is also covered with a katan mask and his dark brown skin is flawless, smooth, and perfect in the flickering glow of the candles, much like his bald head. His tunic is tight cut, the cloth a deep crimson and trimmed about the collar, hem, and one sleeve, the other tailored up short to accommodate his right arm which has been amputated just above the elbow. In Skelligan fashion, a thick gray wolf pelt is affixed across his shoulders, held in place by silver clasps and a chain, and down the breast of his tunic are Skelligan runes, embroidered in thick silver thread. He admires the Maidens with a sly smile on his face, heeled boots crossed at the ankles as he leans up against one of the columns in the ballroom.

The Jarl is a human Mage from the illustrious magic school, Ban Ard, and his real name is Sigurd of Spikeroog. Though he is adorned in Skellige attire and bears a Skelligan name, he is not actually from Skellige at all. He is, however, an avid historian for Skelligan culture and discovered that he is distantly related to notable Skelligan, Ermion, through an estranged cousin thrice removed. Since then, he has gone to great lengths to dress and appear as a Skelligan to all that know him. His interests also lie greatly in rare monsters with high magical auras; in particular, he is fond of eyeheads. He attempts to befriend any Mages, Academics, or Skelligans among the Players to talk to like-minded people or for the chance to talk about Skellige and his Skelligan heritage. He can always be found hanging around the Iron Maidens, seemingly not noticing the group are awkward around him and electing to ignore it if confronted.

The Jarl – Roleplaying Prompts

- “You seem a knowledgeable, well-traveled sort... what do you know of monsters and beasts?”
- “I know the Skellige Ilse to be pleasant this time of year. Have you ever been?”
- “I must advise you – dearest Lady Luck will warn you against me. She can’t stand Mages apparently. She probably believes us all to be child-snatchers; no better than a Witcher. People do like to believe the strangest things. After all, as the Nordlings say, ‘Mice are born of rotten straw.’” (The Jarl and Lady Luck **dislike** one another due to him winning a bet at the races the last time they were together. She suspects him of **cheating** but he knows that often, it is *her* who is the cheater. He finds the whole situation amusing.)

Skellige Jargon

As part of the Jarl's attempt to behave "more Skelligan," he drops **Skellige Jargon** into his everyday speech though it sounds strange and jilted in his **Kaedweni** accent. To roleplay as the Jarl, refer to the **Skellige Jargon table** below:

| Skellige Jargon | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Skellige</u> | <u>Common Translation</u> | <u>Skellige</u> | <u>Common Translation</u> |
| Aep | Of | Me | My |
| Ard | High | Modron | Mother |
| Arse | Arse | Muire | Sea |
| Bloed | Blood | Mylla | Soil |
| Blota | Wet | Nagl | Nail |
| Cuach | Crazy | Och | And |
| Dottir | Daughter | Op | Up |
| Drakkar | Longship | Rhena | Queen |
| Geas | Oath/Curse | Skjald | Skald |
| Glaeddy | Sword | Skugga | Shadow |
| Himmel | Sky | Svarm | To swarm |
| Kaarl | Man | Sverd | Sword |
| Kaer | Castle | Tirth | Wild boar |
| Konung | King | Trall | Slave/Prisoner |
| Krig | War | Trold | Troll |
| Lionors | Lioness | Vild | Wild |
| Lagman | Chief/Judge | Zvaere | To promise |

Magic Ring

On the Jarl's left fingers are a set of rings. For the most part, they are simple silver and gold bands except for the one on his index finger which is made from a **black iron** and **meteorite steel alloy** with silver filigree and a **saltwater pearl** set into it that appears to catch the light in strange ways, giving it the impression that the surface is shifting fluidly. This is the Jarl's **focus**.

The Eccentric Academic

The Jarl is so named because of his fixation on **Skellige culture** and **history** and how he has incorporated it into his everyday life. He is also a **Mage** from the illustrious school of **Ban Ard**, having been raised within the institute since birth and has the typical arrogance so often assigned to powerful **Mages**. Because of his obsession with Skellige, the Players notice that he often makes himself a part of the **Iron Maidens'** group during the **dinner parties** with the **Katakans**, asserting himself into their conversations despite the fact they do not want him there. However, he often alludes to the Maidens "**owing him a favor**" because they accepted his offer of his **aardvark**, **Leshenclaw**, to use in the Tournament; the favor he has asked of them being to let him participate in their conversations and tell him more about Skellige. The Maidens can't exactly complain about him to his face as per the **dinner party rules**, else they will be **disqualified**, but they certainly give him clipped answers. The Jarl has thrown his lot in with the Iron Maidens.

As the Players interact with the Jarl, they will find that he is a man who deals in **exchanging favors**. If any of the Players manage to get into his good graces, he may choose to reveal **valuable information** about the **Gigascorpion** in the **Final Round** in the **Academic Aid Sidebar** in **Cliffhanger – Nightly Occurrences**.

♦ Benefits & Punishments

During the Players' interactions with the Jarl, they can end up either insulting or impressing him. Refer to the tables below for information on the potential **benefits** and corresponding **punishment**.

Indebted

If the Players find themselves **indebted** to the Jarl as per the **Quid Pro Quo** benefit, you can decide what kind of favor he may ask for once the Tournament comes to an end.

The Messenger Boy

The Jarl sends a young elven messenger called **Brenwyn** (or Bren for short) to deliver his message to the Players. Though he has been paid to do so, the cheeky young boy will hang around for a moment, attempting to get a tip from the Players.

◆ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to **impress** the Jarl or by aligning with his **ideals**. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from the Jarl, he also gains something in return.

| Benefits – The Jarl | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Quid Pro Quo | The “Quid Pro Quo” benefit is offered to any Player who the Jarl is interested in. After every meal, he approaches the Player he has selected and discusses their deepest material desires with them, within reason – e.g. a new weapon, a new set of armor, etc. If he can supply the Player with their desire, the Player finds themselves unknowingly entered into a debt (refer to the sidebar “Indebted”). The Jarl can call in this favor at any time he chooses after the Tournament ends, asking the Player to get him something or do something beneficial to him. |
| Skelligan Hospitality | The “Skelligan Hospitality” benefit is offered only to Players who are either of Skelligan heritage or are impressive warriors or Mages like him. After every meal, he will invite the Player(s) to sit with him and the Iron Maidens for what he declares to be “Skelligan” hospitality. This involves copious amounts of heavy drinking, but also having to listen to the Jarl talk on and on at length about the history of Skellige, most of which is incorrect and clearly irks the Maidens who cannot correct him, as per the rules of the dinner parties. |

◆ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening’s **Rules** or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to the Jarl.

| Punishment – The Jarl | |
|-----------------------|--|
| The Geas | <p>“The Geas” punishment involves the Player character having a small hex placed upon them by the Jarl that lasts for a day. The hex is the Eternal Itch.</p> <p>Effect: The Eternal Itch causes inflamed and unbearably itchy pustules to grow on the person’s skin. The itch does no physical damage but is a great and constant annoyance, causing a -1 to all tasks, as well as a -1 to all Reflex and Dexterity skill checks for the whole day.</p> <p>This hex can’t be lifted by anyone other than the Mage who cast it. However, the Player(s) affected can make a DC:18 Resist Magic check in order to relieve the effect of the hex for 2 hours. Once the 2 hours are up, the hex resumes its work.</p> <p>The Jarl doesn’t make it a secret that he has hexed the Player(s) but they can make a DC:14 Deduction or Education check before the messenger arrives to glean that a hex is at work. A messenger boy then knocks at their door in the morning to hand the Player(s) a note in neat cursive that reads:</p> <div data-bbox="565 1623 1474 1948"> <p><i>I do hope you will have learned your lesson by the end of this lovely day. I should hate to punish you further.</i></p> <p><i>- Warm regards,</i></p> <p><i>The Jarl</i> <i>Direct relation of the Hierophant</i> <i>of the Skellige Circle, Ermion.</i></p> </div> |

Prinny Prin-Prin

NPC



Tittering as she struts around the ballroom with vigor, a young woman weaves between the guests, doing exaggerated half-steps and turns that make her dress blossom out in a flurry of pleated lace underskirts and silken petticoat. Her face is covered by a katan mask, but its color is a pale pink, clearly to match her dress, and the lower half of her face you can glimpse is powdered and rouged, lips stained a soft rose. She is cherubic and curvy; her long, blonde hair glimmers like spun gold in the candle light, plaited and curled with pink and white ribbons, leading up to a small silver tiara that catches the glow of the candelabras. She tosses her curls about her shoulders excessively as she dances and skips, bright blue eyes wide and voracious as they take in everything and everyone they see with wonder and glee.

Her dress is a sea of pink shades, intricate lace, and embroidered flowers, the excessive layers whispering as she moves. Someone says something to her as she passes and laughter spills from her pretty mouth in a tinkling crescendo. She pauses briefly in her dance from time to time, sending flirty waves and coy smiles to anyone and everyone around her, leaving lingering looks in her path.

Prinny Prin-Prin is a human woman from Toussaint whose real name is **Sabina LaPomerov**, a member of the Toussaintoi bourgeoisie. She is still young, just 19 years old, and lives for the fantasy of fairy tales and fables. This Tournament is the first time she has traveled outside of **Toussaint** – she is enamored with everything she sees and is delighted to see so many brave warriors and other nobles about her. Though she is a sweet person who truly does mean well, she is often overbearing and seen as an annoyance; a child still. She values music, dancing, and tales of valor and heroics, especially if they are about knights rescuing princesses. She will attempt to befriend anyone who is nice to her, no matter who they are, but will be drawn to anyone who seems like they would be good “**marriage material**” – though this is not for her benefit, but for her cousin’s, **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**, for whom she is attempting to find a **suitor**. Prinny is not looking for love herself, as she is young and wants to experience the world and its wonders before doing so.

Prinny Prin-Prin - Roleplaying Prompts

- ♦ “I’m sure you have stories to tell, come sit with me, I would love to hear them.”
- ♦ “Isn’t this all so exciting? It’s like the tales Mama would tell.”
- ♦ “Come, dance with me! I insist!” (Prinny Prin-Prin is only here for her cousin Jean-Lucas. She treats everything as fun and exciting and is looking for people she can enjoy herself with.)

The Matchmaker

Though her name, Prinny Prin-Prin, is childish, she is deviously smart, planning out every opportunity to find the perfect suitor for her cousin, **Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir**, the famous swordsman fronting the Tournament. So far, none of the nobles have been a perfect fit, so she has turned her attention to the competitors in the hopes she will find “the one” for him.

Assign Prinny Prin-Prin any one of the competing groups, Players or otherwise. Though she will have placed her bets, she won’t show much interest in who is actually winning or being knocked out, so enamored is she with the task of finding Jean-Lucas a suitor. The gender of the suitor doesn’t matter to Prinny, she is simply looking for someone she knows he might like. However, Prinny is assertive in her match-making and whoever she selects will be bombarded by romantic meddling.

♦ Benefits & Punishment

During the Players’ interactions with Prinny, they can end up either **insulting** or **impressing** her. Refer to the tables below for information on the potential **benefits** and the corresponding **punishment**.

Married to the Sword

Jean-Lucas de Beaumanoir has built his entire life around sword fighting so much so that it has become the only topic he talks about. He is otherwise stilted and awkward should the conversation move onto other subjects, but he tries his best to participate regardless – he comes across as endearing and respectful.

The de Beaumanoir Family

The de Beaumanoirs are an old family name in Toussaint, associated with merchants as reputable booksellers and collectors of fine art. Jean-Lucas' older sister, **Simone de Beaumanoir**, is a jousting at Toussaint's **Tournament Grounds** and encouraged his interest in sword fighting from a young age. He misses his sister dearly and is looking forward to the Tournament finally ending so he can go home to Toussaint and finally avoid Prinny's efforts to find him love.

Prinny's Family Crest

The family crest Prinny uses on the wax seal of this letter is an entirely fabricated one as she doesn't want to reveal her family name, LaPomerov. The crest depicts the **Lady of the Lake** riding astride a **unicorn**.

◆ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to **impress** Prinny as a potential romantic interest for Jean-Lucas or by simply sharing her interests and being kind to her. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from Prinny Prin-Prin, she also gains in return.

| Benefits – Prinny Prin-Prin | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Suitor Material | The “Suitor Material” benefit is offered to the Player that Prinny Prin-Prin believes is the perfect match for Jean-Lucas. This can be achieved in a variety of ways: perhaps they are intelligent, charming, pretty, or share Jean-Lucas’ passion for sword fighting. Whatever the reason, Prinny believes them to be the “one” for her cousin. The “suitor” finds themselves invited to sit with Prinny at one of the tables where she regales them with stories of Toussaint’s infamous Knights Errant and their courageous deeds. However, accepting Prinny’s offer of companionship will result in her cousin, Jean-Lucas, coming to join them suddenly at the table. At this point, Prinny excuses herself abruptly, saying she needs to go and “powder her nose,” leaving the two alone. His cousin having abandoned him, Jean realizes that he has been tricked into a date with the Player. It is up to the Player whether they decide to continue with the date, but Jean is more than understanding should they wish to leave. If they decide to stay with Jean however, refer to the sidebar “ Married to the Sword .” |
| Seeking the One | The “Seeking the One” benefit is offered to the Players that Prinny Prin-Prin is interested in assessing further, to ascertain whether she will pursue them as potential dates for Jean-Lucas. The Players she has chosen are invited to come and sit at her table where she interrogates them. However, instead of asking typical questions like “where do you come from?” or “what do you do for a living?,” she instead asks them about their adventures and whether or not they have any “grand tales” to tell. The person who tells her the most impressive story will move onto the “ Suitor Material ” benefit. |

◆ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening’s Rules or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to Prinny.

| Punishment – Prinny Prin-Prin | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Beastly Visage | <p>The “Beastly Visage” punishment involves the Player character having to wear a fearsome mask depicting a snarling wolf’s face. When the Player wakes the next day, they find a parcel has been left for them along with a neatly rolled scroll sealed with a family crest embossed in silver wax. When opened, the scroll reveals a note in beautiful handwriting that reads:</p> <div data-bbox="631 1562 1487 1799" data-label="Text"> <p><i>If you wish to be such a beast, then I shall ensure all know it. Just as in the tales of old, consider this your just reward.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Prinny</p> </div> <p>They must wear this item on their head from the beginning of the next day during the Tournament Round, and then during that evening’s dinner party. The servant will inform them that should they refuse, they and their team will be disqualified from the Tournament.</p> |

The Witcheress

NPC



Silently, a beautiful young woman leans back in her chair. The mask upon her face has been crafted to perfectly replicate the crest of an actual katakaan – the color a light brown and embroidered to capture the markings and lines accurately, and a short burst of dark fur spilling from under it to cover her cheeks either side. Her doublet is made from supple leather, form-fitting and stained black. A silver pauldron adorns her left shoulder, buffed and polished into a flawless shine that indicates its purpose for decoration rather than practicality. The black trousers she wears are a combination of thick cotton and dark leather, tucking snugly into her knee-length high-heeled boots. About her slim waist are a series of belts with empty

leather rungs for items she doesn't have. At her left hip is what appears to be a potion pouch. She tucks a stray lock of her red hair behind one ear and adjusts the small chain about her tanned, slender neck, the angular lines of the bear's head medallion catching the light in sharp flashes. Her eyes are glassy and unfocused, pupils blown wide despite the brightness of the room, and at her side is a long, silvered cane with a spherical object on the end that touches the floor – she is blind.

The Witcheress is a blind human woman originally from **Kovir** but hasn't returned to her homeland in a long time, her family having fled and defected to **Nilfgaard**. Her true name is **Erin Oswa Aep Led**. She is an upper-class member of society and enjoys spending her money on her large **collection** of **Witcher antiquities**. She is quite enamored with **Witchers**, something that took root in her during her **childhood**. She values knowledge and history of the **Witchers** and will attempt to befriend anyone who shares her interests or is a **Witcher** themselves. Although she has dedicated the better part of 15 years of her life to studying them, she has yet to meet an actual **Witcher**.

When roleplaying the Witcheress, remember that she walks using a support cane. This cane reaches out roughly a meter ahead of her when she holds it in her hand, and she gently swings it from side to side, the ball on the end rolling on the ground to warn her of any obstacles in her path. If she wishes to examine objects or the person she is talking to – she prefers to have a general idea of a stranger's face when she is in conversation – she asks for permission and uses her hands to map out what she is touching. She will not force someone to have their face touched if they decline her. She also speaks in a manner that describes senses and emotions more than visuals – for example, she will describe other people by their voices and personality rather than what they physically look like.

The Witcheress: Roleplaying Prompts

- ♦ “Come, sit. I should like to talk to you all... Would you mind if I ‘read’ your face?”
- ♦ “Tell me, do you have an interest in **Witchers**? It is heartbreaking there are so few of them left... don't you think?”
- ♦ “I would like you to meet a friend of mine. Lady Luck and I have known one another a good few years and she assists me in finding only the rarest and most genuine of **Witcher** antiquities.” (The Witcheress and Lady Luck genuinely get along well. It was Lady Luck who helped her locate a genuine **Bear School** medallion that she wears.)

♦ An Avid Collector

As a **collector**, the Witcheress is well educated on the teachings of the **Witcher** schools and somewhat educated on the process of making **Witchers**. She is entirely enamored with them. If she ever met one, she would surely be flush with excitement. If one of the **Players** is a **Witcher**, she will immediately be drawn to them, questioning them, testing her knowledge and hopefully gathering more information on them – in particular, she will ask if she can assess their armor, scars, medal-

Erin Oswa Aep Led

Erin hailed from **Kovir** in the **North** before her family fled from **King Radovid V's** tyrannical ruling and sought asylum in the **Nilfgaardian Empire**, changing their original **Nordling** surname – **Ardenn** – to a name which followed **Nilfgaardian** customs – **Aep Led**. Erin was born blind and only lived in **Kovir** for the first 10 years of her life, where she found herself enamored with the **Witcher School of the Griffin** after her mother and father – **Sabell** and **Marcan Aep Led** – were saved from a **drowner** by one. The **Witcher** who came to her mother's aid was **Kristov of White Orchard** and his bravery inspired Erin to learn all she could about them.

The Bear Medallion

The medallion the Witcheress wears is a genuine **Bear School Witcher Medallion**. If the **Players** ask, she is happy to relay to them that she won it at an **auction** of antiquities in **Kaedwen** – it once belonged to a **Witcher** called **Amerin of Attre**. She is proud of her owning such an item and loves to show it off.

The Choice

The Witcheress' punishment is based on "The Trial of Choice." This trial was one of the initial trials Witcher recruits were subjected to; placing them on a diet of mushrooms, moss, and herbs alongside harrowing physical training exercises. The diet often poisoned and killed those subjected to it. Whilst the Witcheress' version isn't lethal, it can still cause a violently upset stomach.

lion, etc. by touching them, running her fingers along each item, one at a time. Assign the Witcheress any of the competing groups, Players or otherwise. Though she will have placed her bets, she doesn't seem interested in who is actually winning or being knocked out of the **Tournament**.

♦ Benefits & Punishment

During the Players' interactions with the Witcheress, they can end up either insulting or impressing her. Refer to the tables below for information on the potential benefits and the corresponding punishment.

♦ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to **impress** the Witcheress or by simply sharing her interests pertaining Witchers. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from the Witcheress, she also gains in return.

| Benefits: The Witcheress | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| An Interesting Study | The "An Interesting Study" benefit is offered to any Player(s) who are playing a Witcher . Their School doesn't matter, but she does show favoritism to any Witcher who is from the Griffin or Bear School . The Player(s) will be invited to join the Witcheress at her table and partake in drinks and conversation. She questions them about their upbringing as a Witcher. She is especially interested in The Trials and wishes to know more about them, wanting whatever she can glean from them about their past or the secrets of their creation . |
| Great Minds Alike | The "Great Minds Alike" benefit is offered to any Player(s) who share the Witcheress' interest in Witcher antiquities . The Player(s) will be invited to join her at her table and discuss what knowledge they know. She tries to pry any knowledge from the Player(s) that she doesn't currently have in order to gain more information on the process of making and the culture of Witchers. A Player might be able to flip this conversation to their advantage and learn a new Witcher Formulae from her of the GM's choice. |

♦ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening's Rules or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to the Witcheress.

| Punishment: The Witcheress | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Trial of Choice | <p>The "Trial of Choice" punishment involves the Player character having to consume a mixture of mushrooms, mosses, and herbs. When the Player wakes the next day, they find a servant from Mayor Pennycuick's manor knocking at the door to deliver a bowl covered by a light white cloth. A note is also passed along that reads:</p> <div data-bbox="581 1514 1495 1713" data-label="Text"> <p>In light of your insolence, you must prove yourself as tough as a Witcher. Eat what I have brought you and be grateful it isn't a true Trial. - I hope your Path is a disastrous one. Dictated but not signed, by, The Witcheress</p> </div> <p>The Player must eat the bowlful of food or have their team disqualified from the Tournament. The mixture provided sickens the Player for the next 24 hours. During that time, the GM can give them the Nausea effect and take it away from them whenever they wish:</p> <p>The Player's stomach begins to churn violently, forcing them to concentrate on not vomiting. Every three rounds, the Player must roll under their BODY or spend the round either vomiting or dry-heaving painfully.</p> <p>Witchers will not be affected by this mixture, but it may bring up painful memories from their training.</p> |

Est Est

NPC



A bark of loud laughter bursts from one side of the room where an older woman sits, her posture slack and her once-pale cheeks flushed red and ruddy. Her slightly unfocused eyes crinkle under her mask as Mayor Pennycuick leans in to whisper something in her ear, to which she chortles again and pushes him playfully. Her skirts are ruffled as she slouches, silk a lustrous gold and silver, fanned out in waves. Her hair is loose, tumbling in a tangled mess around her head and shoulders as she drinks deeply from her goblet of wine. Her eyes flit randomly from face to face, not really processing much of what is happening around her besides the words spilling from Pennycuick's mouth.

Est Est is a human woman originally from **Cintra**, but defected to the **Nilfgaardian Empire** during the **Fall of Cintra**. Her true name is **Pivelli Affe Ittad**, a middle-class member of the Nilfgaardian bourgeoisie, having made her fortune on the silk trade – a fortune which she now spends on copious amounts of wine and other such indulgences. She usually gets unfathomably drunk at every social gathering she is invited to.

Est Est - Roleplaying Prompts

- ♦ “Have a drink with me! The night is still young!”
- ♦ “Tell me, what do you do for a living? What brings you here to Claremont?”
- ♦ “I wouldn’t take anything Black Heart says too seriously. He’s a little rough around the edges but a decent man – that is, so long as you know how to play a round of Gwent.” (Est Est and Black Heart have been business partners in the past and she is aware of his history with the Rivia pogroms and how harsh he comes across to others.)

An Overindulgence

Est Est is someone who enjoys **indulgence** in its many forms. She drinks, dances, and loves playful flirting and will get along amicably with any Players who share her passion for having a good time. However, her definition of “fun” can get a little out of hand at times and usually ends in some kind of **public scene**. She also prides herself as an experienced **wine connoisseur**, able to name any wine from its taste and smell. Assign Est Est any one of the competing groups, Players or otherwise. Though she will have placed her bets, she doesn’t seem interested in who is actually winning or being knocked out of the **Tournament**.

♦ Benefits & Punishment

During the Players’ interactions with Est Est, they can end up either insulting or impressing her. Refer to the tables below for information on the potential **benefits** and the corresponding **punishment**.

♦ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to **impress** Est Est or by simply sharing her interest in enjoying life. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from Est Est, she also gains in return.

Pivelli Affe Ittad

Pivelli lived on the run for two years after the **Fall of Cintra** until seeking asylum in the **Nilfgaardian Empire** after **King Foltest’s death** in the North. She and her family swore fealty to **Emhyr var Emreis** for protection and their wealth back. She prefers not to talk about what happened in **Cintra**.

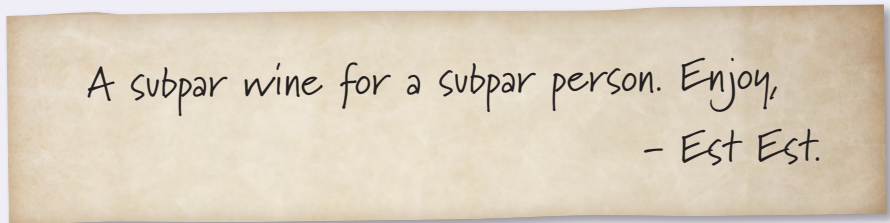
Causing A Scene

Est Est is known for causing disruption at every party she attends. It is up to you what kind of behavior she exhibits during the dinner parties. For example, she could become so drunk she passes out or begins to ask not only the Players, but also the Katkans themselves inappropriate questions.

| Benefits – Est Est | |
|------------------------|--|
| Under the Table | <p>The “Under the Table” benefit is offered to any Player(s) who enjoy drinking in excess. Est Est has a track record of drinking others under the table. She invites the Player(s) to come and sit with her at her table and as she questions them about themselves, she begins ordering multiple bottles of wine from the servants around her. She then challenges the Player(s) to a drinking contest. Players who accept must roll under their BODY each time they finish a glass. You must also roll under Est Est’s BODY (which is 7). Anyone who fails the roll three times must withdraw from the drinking contest. The last person standing wins and gains not only Est Est’s respect but also 50 Florens from her.</p> <p>The next day, the Player(s) who drank with her must make a DC:16 Physique check or be severely hungover for the first half of the day, taking a -1 to all tasks due to a pounding headache.</p> |
| A Sweet Bouquet | <p>The “A Sweet Bouquet” benefit is offered to any Player(s) who share a deep passion and knowledge for wine or alcohol in general. Players must make a DC:16 Education or DC:14 Fine Arts check to recall and relay any knowledge they have gathered throughout their life about the winemaking industry. Est Est interrogates the Player(s) on their knowledge of the subject, keen to correct any misinformation or slip ups. If the Player(s) manage to impress her, she offers them one of the bottles of wine she had specially ordered and sends a servant to fetch it. The wine she gifts to the Player(s) is a sealed bottle of Beauclair White.</p> |

♦ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening’s **Rules** or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to Est Est.

| Punishment – Est Est | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Barrel of Laughs | <p>The “Barrel of Laughs” punishment involves the Player character having to wear a barrel that once served as a cask for a poor-quality wine. When the Player wakes the next day, they find a servant from Mayor Pennycuick’s manor knocking at the door with a large, empty barrel at their feet. A note is attached between two of the barrel’s wooden slats that reads:</p>  <p>The barrel has the top and the bottom removed, and a large hole cut in either side. From the top of the barrel, a pair of leather belts are affixed. It is clear that the Player must wear this barrel over the upper half of their body, the belts serving to hold it on their shoulders. The Player must wear the barrel for the entire day until after the evening’s dinner party or be disqualified from the Tournament along with their team.</p> <p>The Player takes a -2 to all tasks whilst wearing the barrel. Additionally, it smells of foul and stale soured wine, giving a -2 to Charisma, Leadership, Persuasion, and Seduction checks.</p> |

Black Heart

NPC



Dressed in shades of gray cotton and wool, face hidden by a black katan mask, a man sits at a table alone, set back from the other Katakans and contestants. He seems focused on a stack of Gwent cards before him, organizing them over and over. Whenever he does chance a glance up, his eyes are hard, irises a stern amber set in a glare that causes servants to look away, suddenly finding interest in their shoes. His ears are drawn up into slight points, peeking out from the long locks of his black hair, pulled into a loose bun and pierced through with one long silver hairpin. He takes a long drink of his wine before returning to his cards once more, organizing and shuffling them in a steady, methodical manner.

Black Heart is a half-elf man from **Rivia** whose true name is **Hurzivelt Dran Pozan**, an upper-class member of society, his parents having inherited fortune on his mother's side and his father having founded a successful brewery. Black Heart's mother was a human, his father an elf and he their only child. He enjoys card games, specifically the most popular game on the Continent, **Gwent**, and is reserved, a man who will not use many words where one or two will do.

Black Heart - Roleplaying Prompts

- ♦ "Do you play Gwent? How about we lay out some cards?"
- ♦ "What are you gawping at? I can't believe I'm supposed to waste time on you. Either speak or leave me be."
- ♦ "If Est Est approaches you, be warned, it's never just 'one drink' with her." (Black Heart and Est Est have been business partners often over the past few years and, in his own way, he does care about her, though is loath to show that openly.)

Sharp Tongue, Quick Wit

Cold and withdrawn, Black Heart has earned his name from his cutting words that have been known to make even the servants cry. He is distant, but sincerely enjoys playing **Gwent** and will show an interest in any Players who also share his passion. Assign Black Heart to any one of the competing groups, Players or otherwise. Though he will have placed his bets, he doesn't seem all that interested in who is actually winning or being knocked out of the **Tournament**.

♦ Benefits & Punishment

During the Players' interactions with Black Heart, they can end up either insulting or impressing him. Refer to the **tables** below for information on the potential **benefits** and the corresponding **punishment**.

♦ Benefits

Benefits can be gained by the Players managing to **impress** Black Heart or by simply sharing his interest in Gwent. However, these benefits are supposed to be backhanded, whatever the Player gains from Black Heart, he also gains in return.

Hurzivelt Dran Pozan

Hurzivelt's parents were slaughtered in the **Rivian Pogroms**, leaving him to come into his inheritance and family business at only 16 years old. His father was killed for being an elf and his mother for fighting the attacking humans off. This has left Hurzivelt traumatized and scarred. He refuses to discuss it beyond saying that his parents died in the Pogroms, the memories and subject too painful. He hasn't been home to **Rivia** in eight years and has since moved his business to **Mettina**.

Jan Natalis

A **Temerian constable** and later a **Northern Commander** in the **Battle of Brenna**, Jan Natalis commanded the **Northern Armies** during the **Second War** against **Nilfgaard**. After **King Foltest's death**, he temporarily assumed power as the **regent of Temeria**. This card is a rare **Hero Card**, and it is worth 100 **Florens**. Should they put it in their **Gwent** deck instead, the card gives them a +1 to **Tactics** when the deck is used to play **Gwent**.

Black Heart's Favor

If the Players find themselves **indebted** to Black Heart, it is up to you to decide exactly what his request may entail. Black Heart values **rare Gwent cards** and **fine art**, specifically **paintings**. This favor need not be brought up until after the Tournament.

Benefits – Black Heart

Champion Card

The “Champion Card” benefit is offered to any Player(s) who enjoy **Gwent**. Black Heart invites them to his table for a round of the game and drinks. A wager will be taken before the game starts – Black Heart wagers his most treasured card, **Jan Natalis – a Northern Realms Hero Card**. He demands that his opponent wager their entire deck (should they own one) or **50 Florens**. If the Player cannot wage either, he instead has the Player become **indebted** to him should he win, able to call in a **favor** from them whenever he pleases.

The game of **Gwent** goes as a best of three. Both you and the Player roll opposing **Tactics skill checks**, comparing the results each time. The one with the highest roll wins the round. Black Heart has a Base +15 to **Tactics**.

A Sharp Exchange

The “A Sharp Exchange” benefit is offered to any Players who enjoy getting into **verbal arguments**. Black Heart enjoys insulting others and will be impressed by anyone who can stand up to him. Refer to the **Verbal Combat** section (pg. 176) in the **Core Rulebook**. If any Katakans, servants, or even Pennycuick himself try to intervene and remind them of the **5 Rules of Conduct**, Black Heart will dismiss them, ensuring that none involved are **disqualified** from the Tournament. This is the only time the **5 Rules** can be flaunted like this.

♦ Punishment

This punishment can come into effect by the Players breaking any of the evening's Rules or by outright being **rude** or **insulting** to Black Heart.

Punishment – Black Heart

Muzzled

The “Muzzled” punishment involves the Player character having to wear a leather mask over their lower face that prevents them from speaking. When the Player wakes the next day, they find a servant from Mayor Pennycuick's manor knocking at the door with a parcel and a note that reads:

“I do hope you'll choose your words more carefully next time. I should hate to silence you permanently.

Regards,

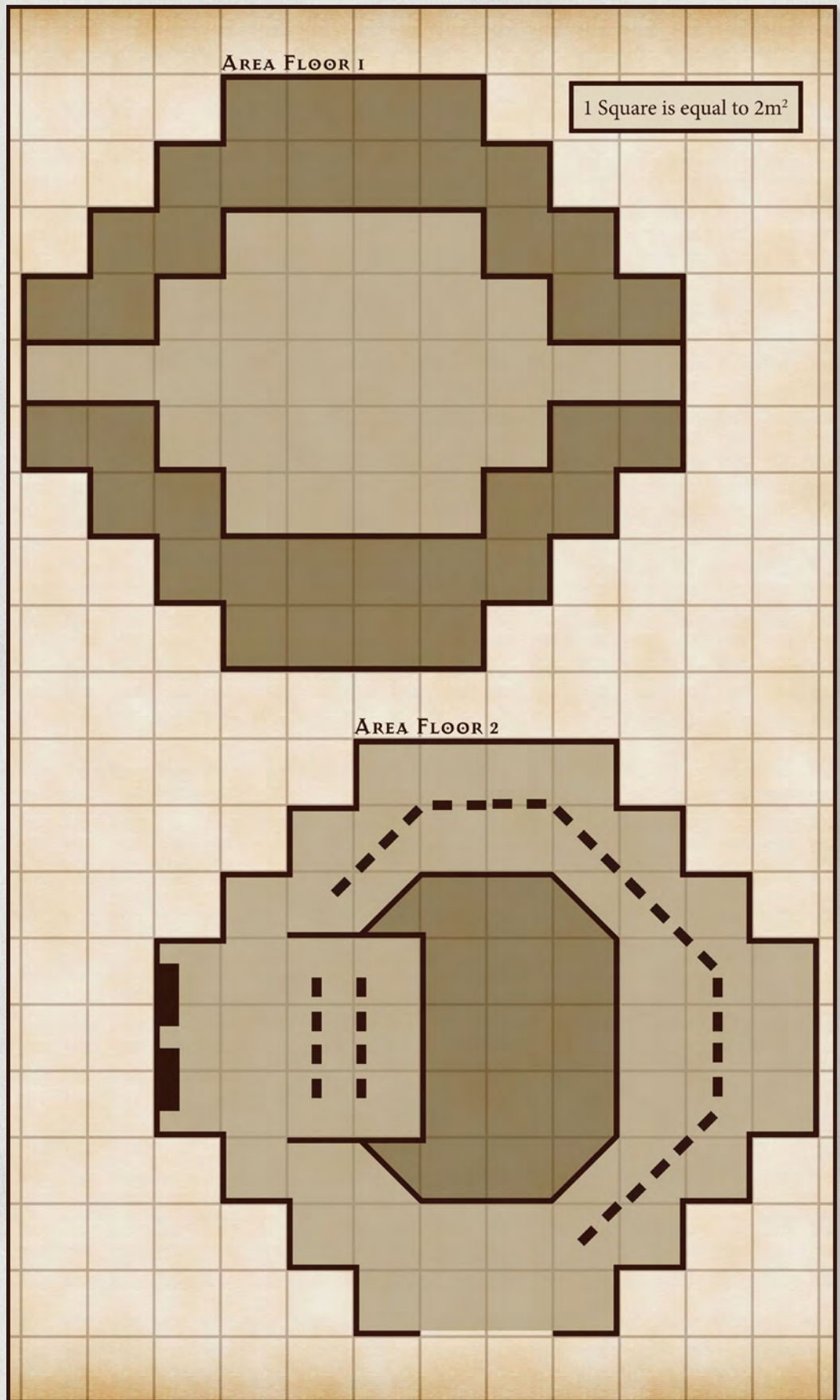
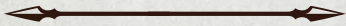
- B.H.

The leather mask covers the Players mouth and muffles their speech, giving a -2 to all actions that require speech. The Player must wear the mask for the entire day until after the evening's dinner party or be **disqualified** from the Tournament.

Claremont Arena

Light Level: Un-modified

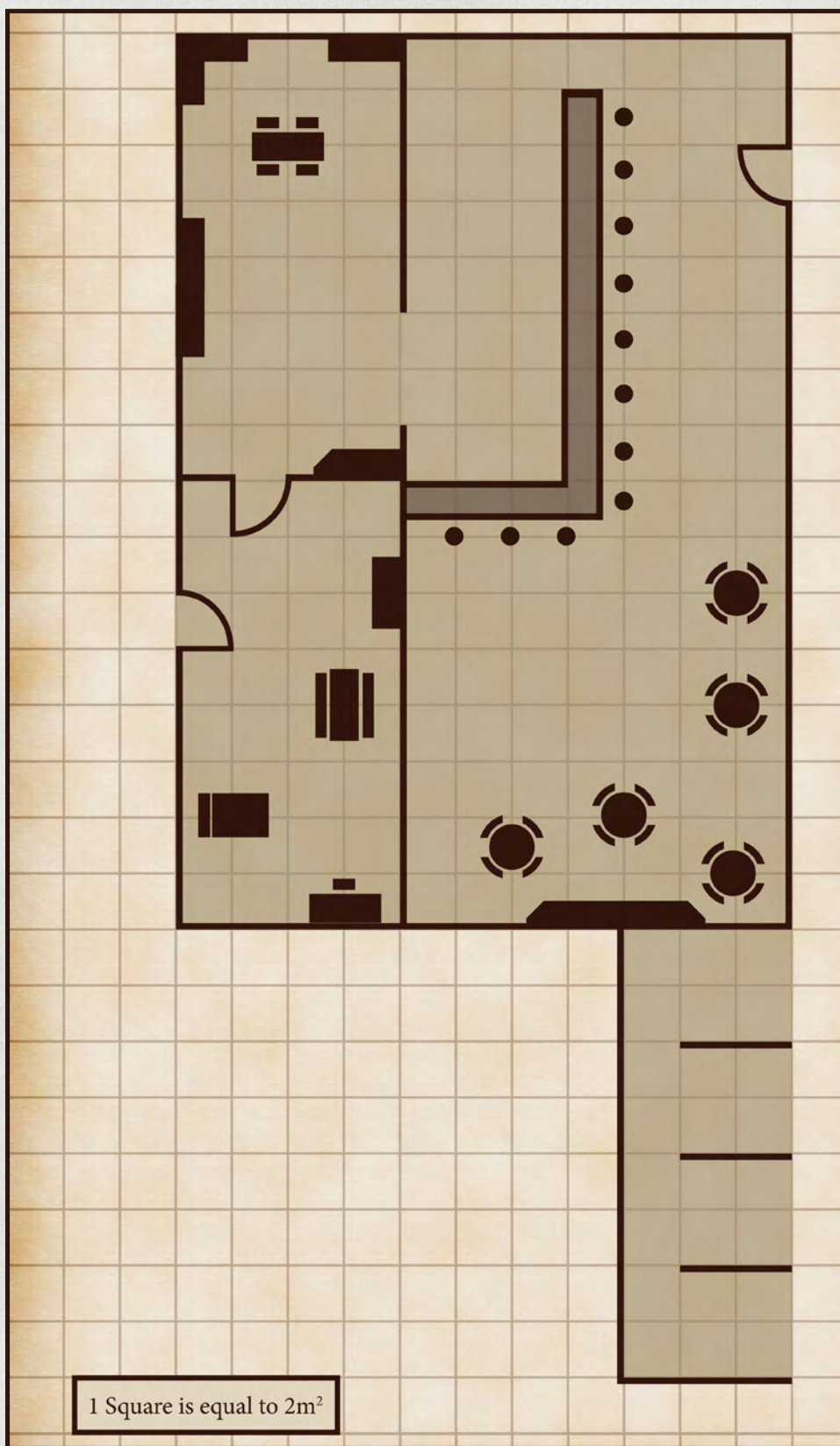
Description: Claremont Arena is a large amphitheater well-lit by candles and the large open canopy at the top where natural daylight is drawn in. The people there are always lively, a mix of competitors, spectators, and officials. Everywhere the Players turn, they will find people, the tight press of bodies awkward to navigate through, but not impossible.



The Dancing Cockatrice Inn

Light Level: Un-modified

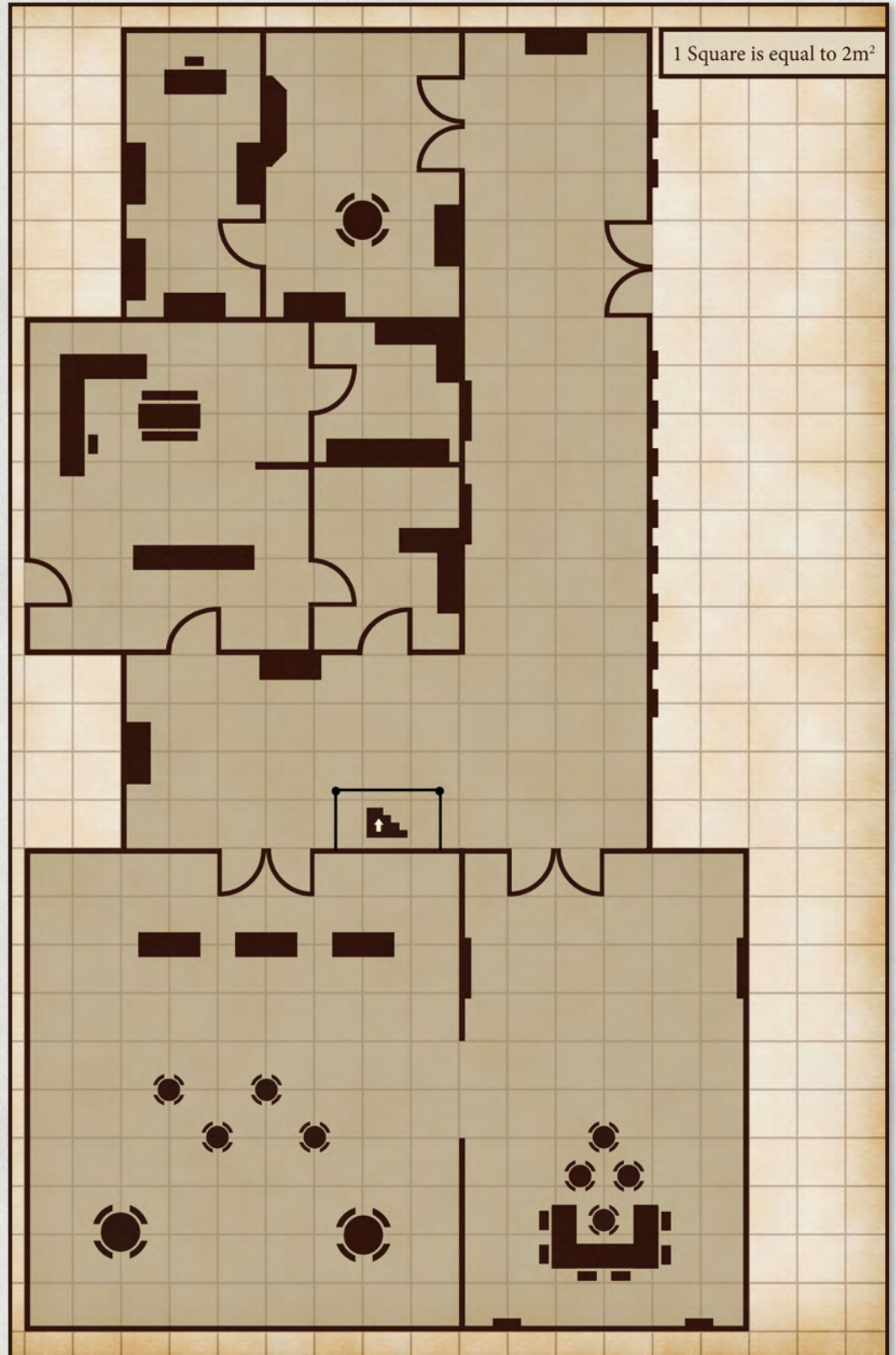
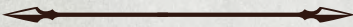
Description: The Dancing Cockatrice is a relatively large and well-lit inn. The people are lively and there is always a stock of wine, ale, and food available. There are also rooms available to rent and stables to house one's mount.



Mayor Pennycuick's Manor

Light Level: Un-modified

Description: Pennycuick's manorhouse is well-lit, decorated, and clean thanks to the servants who live in the small houses about the property's grounds. There are a multitude of windows, letting in plenty of light and chandeliers and candelabras brighten the rooms at night. The upstairs portion of the manorhouse is completely closed off to the Players and other guests and the stairs leading up are guarded.



After you leave Toussaint, do not be surprised when the lands beyond it's borders seem washed of color by comparison. Flowers bloom brighter there, and the sun takes a warmer approach toward it's lands. Perhaps it too feels the nostalgia I do for the dutchy at sunset. Perhaps that is why it returns every morning, as I yearn to do most mornings. One day, I might fail to resist the urge, perhaps to my detriment.



The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies



If Playing the Larger Campaign...

Upon the conclusion of their swordsmanship classes, the Players leave the manor of Jean-Lucas de Beaumanor, with a new job given to them by Rafael de Surmann, the Ducal Camerlengo of Toussaint that promises to test their newly trained skills and weigh their pockets with coin. After traveling northwest along a road which passes several picturesque vineyards, they arrive in Fox Hollow, which is where this adventure begins...

Background (Read Aloud)

Deep in the heart of Nilfgaard — or perhaps its liver, more precisely — lies Toussaint, one of the Empire's many vassal duchies. The lifeblood of the land flows in shades of crisp chardonnay and scarlet rouge. Knights in suits of plate armor gallivant about the duchy's gently curving roads like a tipsy fairy tale, their horses draped in vibrant barding to match the flamboyant colors of their riders.

The Ruddy Brush Auberge Menu

Prices are in florens, crown prices are in parentheses.

Lunch

- ◆ Baguette with Fish Pâte 6 (18)
- ◆ Ratatouille 4 (12)
- ◆ Flamiche 2 (6)

Dinner

- ◆ Fish Tart 13 (39)
- ◆ Beef Bourguignon 7 (21)
- ◆ Duck Confit 4 (12)

Dessert

- ◆ Tarte Tatin 1 (3)

Cheese

- ◆ Baguette with Camembert 4 (12)

White

- ◆ Duke Nicolas Chardonnay 11 (33)
- ◆ Chateau d'Adam Chevalier Pinot Blanc 8 (24)

Red

- ◆ Red Tail Reserve 11 (33)
- ◆ Count var Ochmann Shiraz 10 (30)
- ◆ Chateau de Conrad Cabernet 10 (30)
- ◆ Red Tail Rouge 8 (24)
- ◆ Saint Mathieu Rouge 7 (21)

The Rest of the Story

What the Players don't know is that the monster keeping Francine Marchand prisoner in the highest floor of Roger's Tower is actually her own hair, grown to enormous and malicious proportions. It protects her with supernatural strength and without concern for other human life. Though the village blames her for it, the Witch of Lynx Crag is not responsible for Francine's hairy misfortune. The curse was laid upon Francine by Gaunter O'Dimm, whose selection of mirrors Francine ridiculed when Gaunter visited the town three years ago in the form of a humble merchant. She scoffed that none of his mirrors would ever display the entirety of her long brown hair, of which many claimed seemed to go on forever. No one knows of O'Dimm's influence, not even the Witch of Lynx Crag. The Players should not discover O'Dimm's role in the curse until long after the adventure concludes, to maintain the aura of mystery surrounding Master Mirror.

Setting

The Players enter Fox Hollow in northwest Toussaint in the Gorgon Foothills. They can find lodgings at the Ruddy Brush Auberge, which serves as their headquarters. They can make their way to Roger's Tower, perched atop the hill to the north of town, to meet the knight Leblanc de Surmann, who has been beaten within an inch of his life and has also recently survived a three-story fall. Players can search for a doctor to heal Leblanc in Fox Hollow, which leads them to the Bushy Tail, tasting room of the nearby Red Tail Winery. Conversely, they can see to his injuries themselves, or continue the quest on his behalf without his help. Before they make it to the top of the tower to face the source of the deadly stream of malevolent hair, the Players must find a way inside. The fortified front door stands locked, choked with hair and jammed shut tight, but can be bypassed either by exploring the Tulasens Caves to get in through a trapdoor, or by climbing in through a broken window on the third floor of the tower, (risking the same outcome as poor Leblanc). Players might even be so bold as to visit the top of Lynx Crag to call

on a witch for aid not freely given. Whatever path they go by, once they get inside, they must fight their way to the top of the tower, where the climax takes place.

Forces

Your Players have their work cut out for them. Leblanc de Surmann, while competent, is no legendary hero, although he does not lack for courage. Helping him save the "*Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies*" will be dangerous. At worst, your Players may anger a powerful witch and hurtle down the side of a tall tower on the same day. Dangerous as that may be, not much could be more dangerous than being deep in Nilfgaard as a known enemy of the state. If any of your Players happen to be such, consider having them try and keep their identity hidden for the adventure. A single bounty poster in the town of Fox Hollow would go a long way. You might even want to replace the bandits in *Anytime Cliffhanger (Bandit Attack)* with Nilfgaard soldiers hunting down any particularly notorious Players.

The Opposition Will Be

- ◆ The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies is largest single threat your Players will face at the top floor of Roger's Tower. Its stat block can be found [at the back of the adventure](#).
- ◆ Marionette Armor equal in number to the Players plus two defend the second floor of Roger's Tower. Their stat block can be found [at the back of the adventure](#).
- ◆ The Witch of Lynx Crag will fight the Players if angered. Her stat block can be found [at the back of the adventure](#).
- ◆ Endrega equal in number to the Players plus two will fight if their nest is disturbed in the Tulasens Caves. The endrega hive consists of endrega warriors and one endrega drone. The endrega stat block can be found in *The Witcher TRPG Core Book*.
- ◆ Bandits equal in number to the Players plus three can attack the charming village of Fox Hollow during the adventure. The bandit stat block can be found in the Core Book.

Set Up (Read Aloud)

You arrive in Fox Hollow, in the Gorgon Foothills of north Toussaint. Fox Hollow is a charming village, with buildings painted blue, white, red, and occasionally green, each topped with a striking orange or white tile roof. A crystal-clear stream runs through the center of town, spinning a blue waterwheel and dividing the village proper from the Red Tail Winery and its bawdy tasting house, the Bushy Tail. From a nearby doorway, a woman in a flour-dusted apron beckons. The sign above the door reads “The Ruddy Brush Auberge.” She speaks:

“You are the travelers, I assume? Your rooms are set for the duration of your stay. I’ll happily extend a discount on our food and wine as my gift to friends of the Ducal Camerlengo, if you would please mention to him how you enjoyed your stay upon its conclusion. Do come in out of the open air — let’s get some food in your traveling bellies and wine to carry it along properly as the Prophet Lebioda intended. Take your bags upstairs to your rooms if you would kindly.”

Thinking back, you remember the letter that started you on this journey. It read:

Most honorable and skillful heroes of the continent, I summon you to do a job of significant importance — one that I would not trust any lesser to undertake. You are to travel to the town of Fox Hollow and protect my son, Leblanc de Surmann, from harm or unfortunate incident while on his knightly quest to rescue a maiden from a monster known to hold her in the highest floor of Roger’s Tower, due north of the village. Keep watch over him and remain mindful that the greatest danger to his safety is likely the Witch of Lynx Crag, just east of the village. Do this, and on his return triumphant, you will have made a benefactor at one of the most generous treasuries in the Great Empire of Nilfgaard. I have seen to it that your lodgings have been taken care of at the Ruddy Brush Auberge, as have your travel expenses. When you arrive at the inn, write to inform me of the present state of my son’s quest. If my son has perished, I ask that you avenge his death on behalf of our family — and complete his quest so that he may rest.

Rafael de Surmann, Ducal Camerlengo of the Duchy of Toussaint

Hook

Allow the Players time to set up their headquarters in the upstairs rooms of the Ruddy Brush Auberge. Take your time. Take care to set up a laid-back pace for the adventure. That’s the feeling of Toussaint after all. The Ducal Camerlengo left the Players 50 florens (150 crowns) each for any added expenses. The innkeeper, Adele DuBois, shows them the menu. If your Players wish to explore the town or any nearby points of interest, including Lynx Crag and the witch’s hut atop it, let them. Use the Map Descriptions provided at the end of this adventure to allow them to get a feel for their surroundings. No one in town has seen **Leblanc de Surmann**, but villagers make it clear that as a rule they steer clear of the tower north of the village, because visitors there are often never seen from again.

When your Players first visit Roger’s Tower, go to **Development (Knight Fall)**.

Anytime Developments/ Cliffhangers

Since Players may spend an extended time in Fox Hollow during the adventure, “Anytime Events” have been included **after the Climax** to keep Fox Hollow feeling fresh and exciting. Inject these events whenever you need them.

The Witch of Lynx Crag

At many points during the adventure, your Players may want to seek assistance from the Witch of Lynx Crag. If they do, go to **Anytime Development (Seeking the Witch)**. If Players approach Lynx Crag with the intention to harm the witch, she is nowhere to be found.

Bleeding

Your wound opens a vein, causing horrible bleeding. You take 2 points of damage each turn until the bleeding is stopped. You can end the bleeding by either casting a Healing spell on it or making a successful **DC:15 First Aid** check.

Development (Knight Fall)

When the Players first visit the base of Roger's Tower, they discover a knight, Leblanc de Surmann — covered from head to toe in heavily dented plate armor twisted into an uncomfortable position, his long blonde hair streaming out of his cracked sallet helmet — slumped against the base of the tower at the bottom of a long fall from a broken window on its third floor. While initially he seems dead, upon closer inspection, he is only unconscious.

Leblanc is in a coma, having sustained severe injuries. His armor has been smashed and bent around his mangled body as to render it nigh impossible to remove without tools. Removing it is a **DC:25 Physique** check, or a **DC:14 Crafting** check. He has three visible critical wounds: a Concussion, a Fractured Leg, and a Cracked Jaw (see the Critical Wound table in the Core book for details). All his wounds are neither stabilized nor treated. It is a **DC:14 First Aid** check to learn that stabilizing or treating his Concussion will cause him to snap out of his coma. Leblanc's critical wounds cannot be stabilized or treated while his armor remains on.

If Players want to take Leblanc to the doctor in Fox Hollow to be treated, rather than treat him themselves, go to **Development (Doctor Visit)**.

If the Players want to treat Leblanc themselves, they are free to try. After Leblanc's Concussion is stabilized or treated, he regains consciousness. When he does, go to **Development (Knightly Quest)**.

If Leblanc dies, Players have only the prospect of avenging him, and only their own intuition to go on as to how to access the tower. Unless they choose to explore more to learn of other options, at the moment they are likely to only know of **Development (The Front Door)** and **Cliffhanger (Dangerous Climb)**.

Development (Doctor Visit)

At the doctor's home and place of work, a sign reads "OUT TO LUNCH — Valentin," no matter the hour when the Players arrive. The building stands locked, requiring a **DC:10 Pick Lock** check to open. The building holds a separate, closed-off area optimal for medical treatment, which adds a +3 to Healing Hands and First Aid rolls made within. This room is also stocked with a Surgeon's Kit, an open bottle of Nilf-



gaardian Lemon, and five units of Sterilizing Fluid, Clotting Powder, and Numbing Herbs. The building is otherwise a modest residence. The doctor's wife sleeps deeply upstairs, and if awakened, informs the Players that her husband is at the Bushy Tail, disrespecting their vows again. If the Players broke into her home, Marie is surprisingly forgiving, and understands that they only did so due to a medical emergency.

If your Players check for the doctor at the Ruddy Brush Auberge, the innkeeper points them to the tasting house of the nearby Red Tail Winery, known as the Bushy Tail, as it's the only other place to get food and drink in Fox Hollow.

When your Players enter the Bushy Tail, read the following aloud:

The interior of the Bushy Tail is dimly lit in red-tinged light streaming through sections of silk that partition the space, creating the illusion of privacy in many of its cozy alcoves. Between these alcoves dart courtesans, their pinned-on fox tails bouncing behind them as they go.

The sommelier, Armand Beaumont, rush toward the party if they carry Leblanc de Surmann's unconscious body into his establishment, and tells them not to bring such things into his tasting house.

Valentin the doctor naps on Elaine's lap, sleeping off wine and merriment. The Players' arrival wakes him, but he is still drunk and slurs his words heavily. Immediately once he notices a medical emergency, however, he reaches for the Wives' Tears potion tied about his neck and quaffs it, sobering up immediately. He barks orders at the party and begins his treatment at once in his office across town.

Valentin charges 60 florens (180 crowns) for his services, which Leblanc promptly charges to his father. Leblanc's critical wounds are considered stabilized at the end of Valentin's operation, after which he celebrates by taking a swig of Nilfgaardian Lemon straight from the bottle. Leblanc is moved to a bed in the Ruddy Brush Auberge. He needs 10 days of bed rest until his wounds are considered treated.

After Leblanc's Concussion is stabilized or treated, he regains consciousness. When he feels like talking to the party, go to **Development (Knightly Quest)**.

Development (Knightly Quest)

Once able, Leblanc de Surmann formally introduces himself to the party:

"I am Leblanc de Surmann, Knight Errant in the Service of Her Grace and the Duchy. I am most honorably in your debt. I imagined myself dead in the moments before my injuries overtook me, and it is you I must thank for this second chance. I aim to defeat the monster lurking in yonder tower, holding the Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies hostage, and win said maiden's hand."

"My father will surely look kindly upon you for your act of chivalry. Bring to me a quill set and I will write to him, informing him of your honor at once."

Once he realizes his father hired the party, Leblanc continues:

"That is fantastic! Now, allow me to explain my struggles. The front door was choked with hair, so I was unable to open it. I did learn of a possible trapdoor entrance to the tower through the Tulasens Caves, but I quickly found it infested with endrega! So I resolved to scale the tower to reach the first window big enough to pass through, which so happened to be on the third floor. As you can see, I was unsuccessful. A great brown tentacle of wiry hair whipped out from the tower's peak as I climbed and struck me back down to earth with force, shattering the window just above me in the process."

"I am quite humbled that in my time of in need, Lebioda has seen fit to grant me companions to take up my quest while I heal from these injuries. Where do you plan to start? Are you prepared to face this great and terrible evil?"

The Players have many options in how they might proceed to access the tower, and they are free to abandon any of them in favor of another at any time. Leblanc can't be convinced to forgo bed rest to help the party, but once recovered, he joins the Players (if they want him around), compelled by his code of chivalry. However, he hopes the Players decline his aid. He fears the tower for understandable reasons. A new replacement set of armor arrives for Leblanc from his father on the day of his full recovery.

Bushy Tail Staff

Armand Beaumont:

Sommelier and manager of the Bushy Tail.

A former courtesan from Beauclair, his staff respects his experienced eye for detail in all of life's arenas.

Elaine:

A half-elf woman who immigrated to Toussaint from Nazair. Her warm, caring embrace and calming presence make her a favorite among many of the Tail's regular customers. She is currently saving up enough to return to Nazair and retire. She charges 10 florens (30 crowns).

Delfina:

A self-described lush, her quick wit and additional talents make her a perfect drinking companion. Seen as a livelier choice than Elaine, Delfina is preferred by the younger patrons of the Tail. She charges 7 florens (21 crowns), but you must also pay for her wine.

Bjorn:

Hailing from the distant northern isles of Skellige, Bjorn plays up his "exotic" heritage for his Toussaintoi clientele, wearing wolf furs and occasionally painting his face. Despite the act, he is kind and gentle, and generally unsuited for life in the isles. He charges 10 florens (30 crowns).



Leblanc de Surmann

If the Players want to enter through the trapdoor in the Tulasens Caves, go to **Cliffhanger (Tulasens Caves)**.

If the Players want to climb the tower, go to **Cliffhanger (Dangerous Climb)**.

If the Players want to try the front door, go to **Development (The Front Door)**.

Cliffhanger (Tulasens Caves)

The Tulasens Caves have two entrances: one near the base of the hill on which sits Roger's Tower, and another to the west on the bank of the Blessure River, where the villagers of Fox Hollow do their laundry. The locations of both cave entrances are widely known around town.

Upon approaching either of the cave's entrances, make secret **DC: 15 Awareness** checks for each player. Players who succeed notice the chattering noises of large insectoid monsters deeper in the cave, beyond the wooden barrier.

Both entrances have shoddy wooden barriers placed by the villagers. Breaking through these poorly-made barriers is a **DC:10 Physique** check. If the Players aren't deliberately trying to do so silently, the noise attracts the attention of several endrega, equal in number to the Players plus two. One endrega is a drone; the rest are warriors. After the combat, no further endrega show up, and the Players discover a ladder leading up to a trapdoor deeper in the cave.

If the Players try to sneak past the endrega to reach the trapdoor to Roger's Tower, a **DC:15 Stealth** check is required to not alert the creatures. Failure thrusts the Players into the combat described above.

Either way, when the Players pass through the trapdoor, go to **Development (First Floor)**.

Cliffhanger (Dangerous Climb)

Climbing the tower is an incredibly dangerous idea, but not entirely impossible.

During this section, ensure you and your Players know where each player is on the outside of the tower at all times. A prop is recommended for this purpose.

The tower in its entirety stands 20 meters tall. The broken window from which Leblanc fell is 10 meters from the ground, and is the only point to which a grappling hook could be attached — doing so is the only way a rope can be anchored for a first ascent.

Free-climbing a 5 meter stretch of the tower is a **DC:14 Athletics** check. Climbing a 5 meter stretch of the tower with a rope is a **DC:12 Athletics** check. A grappling hook gives an additional +2 to climbing while using a rope anchored by one.

A player failing a check to climb the tower falls during their attempt a number of meters equal to their position on the tower before they failed their check.

A **DC:14 Athletics** (or **DC:12 Athletics** with a rope) check allows a falling player to grab the side of the tower barehanded to stop themselves from falling.

A player unable to save themselves from falling takes a number of d6s of damage to their chest equal to half the number of meters fallen. Round up. Armor can soak this damage.

Stealth is important here. The tower would be dangerous to climb even if it wasn't the lair of a monster.

A grappling hook can be thrown silently with a **DC:14 Stealth** check to not alert the monster.

A **DC:12 Stealth** check is needed to climb the first three floors of the tower without alerting the monster.

If a player climbs to the fourth or the fifth floor of the tower, or climbs to the second or third floor without a Stealth check, the monster is alerted to their presence.

If the monster is alerted, an enormous tendril of hair emerges from the top of the tower and slams the area of the disturbance with supernatural speed, regardless of whether the disturbance was caused by a player or a grappling hook.

Decide at which point during their climb a character alerted the monster by using the same method as if they had failed their check to climb, detailed earlier.

The player who alerted the monster can avoid the attack with a **DC:14 Dodge** or **Escape** check. If hit, they take 3d6+2 bludgeoning damage to a random location, and fall from the tower unless they make a **DC:14 Endurance** check to resist the pain and hold on.

After the monster makes a single attack in response to each separate disturbance that alerts it, it returns to listening intently for more disturbances.

If a player is climbing the tower anywhere higher than the third floor, the monster continues to make this attack against the player each round until they are no longer climbing above the third floor of the tower.

When a single member of the party makes it into the third floor via the window, go to **Development (Third Floor)**.

Development (The Front Door)

The front door to Roger's Tower is massive, made from the same reinforced stone as the walls, and is designed so that its hinges are unreachable from the exterior of the building. Its SP is 30, and it can take 30 HP of damage before a player breaches it. Attacks against the door that do not deal a single point of damage through the door's SP damage a weapon's reliability by one for each failed attempt. Forcing open the door is a **DC:30 Physique** check. The locking mechanism on the door has been choked with hair, making the lock un-pickable. The hair cannot be burned. If removed, another tendril of hair immediately jams itself back into the lock.

If they manage to breach the door, the Players may enter the tower's first floor in **Development (First Floor)**.

Development (First Floor)

The first floor of the tower has no light sources, and smells of putrefaction. Beneath the veil of darkness is an elegant foyer, in which three rotting figures still clad in plate armor are posed playfully in various lounged positions upon the stained furniture. Scattered across the floor are various scraps of torn paper, fragments of love letters, and other chivalric correspondence. Two perfectly good weapons rest against the stone floor, gathering dust.

Some of the poor knights' equipment is still usable if the Players can stomach taking them off their previous owners. After looting all three dead knights, your Players can recover in perfect condition:

- ◆ 1x Great Helm
- ◆ 1x Nilfgaardian Greaves
- ◆ 2x Weapons of the GM's choice worth 750 crowns or less from the Weapons of Toussaint, found **at the end of the adventure**

If the front door is still locked shut with hair, the door can easily be opened from the inside by cutting the hair, choking it back, and pulling the door free. The hair cannot be burned.

Under a rug is a trapdoor, and descending the ladder leads to a **Cliffhanger (Tulasens Caves)**.

Going up the stairs brings your Players to **Cliffhanger (Second Floor)**.

Cliffhanger (Second Floor)

The second floor of the tower is lit by ambient light through arrow slits in the stone wall. A great mass of



brown hair writhes along the ceiling of this floor. Suits of plate armor displayed without helms, their gauntlets resting on two-handed Gleddyf swords flank the floor's central hallway which leads to the stairs to the third floor. There are suits of armor equal to the number of Players plus two. Along the hallway are also entrances to two servant quarters and a kitchen, both of which are covered in the river of brown hair.

When your Players reach the middle of the hallway, the hair covering the ceiling darts into the suits of armor, controlling them as if they were puppets to attack the party. A stat block for the Marionette Armor can be found at the end of the adventure. After the suits are defeated, the remaining hair escapes up the side of the tower via the arrow slits in the walls.

After the fight, Players can recover a number of plate armor torso pieces, plate greaves, and Gleddyf swords equal to the number of Players plus two from the fallen armors. The armor is decorative and provides no SP. They are also the property of Francine Marchand, who currently owns the tower, and she will likely want them returned at the end of the adventure.

Going down the stairs brings Players to **Development (First Floor)**.

Going up the stairs brings Players to **Development (Third Floor)**.

Development (Third Floor)

The third floor of the tower is an immense dining room, sporting an impressive circular table that seats 15, too large to have been moved into the tower without the use of magic. Unlike the other floors, this one is lined with windows, one of which is smashed. Strangely, the table is set for a fancy dinner party — silverware, plating, and two bottles of Chateau de Conrad Cabernet.

Several strands of hair, so thin they are almost invisible, are strung like tripwires throughout the room. There are a number of tripwires equal to the number of Players. It is a **DC:20 Awareness** check to notice each tripwire. It is unlikely that a character without Practiced Paranoia would know to even look for them before the first tripwire is tripped. Disabling each tripwire is a **DC:16 Trap Crafting** check; failure means tripping that wire.

When a tripwire is tripped, the monster pulls hard on the other end of the hair, sending an object in the room hurtling toward the character at an extreme speed.

Roll a D6 to determine the object that particular tripwire was attached to, where it strikes, and the effects of its impact.

| Roll | Object | Type | Damage /Effect |
|------|-------------------------------|------|--|
| 1 | Cheese Knife | P | 1d6 to Torso |
| 2 | Steak Knife | P | 2d6 to Torso Armor Piercing |
| 3 | Plate | B | 1d6 to Head (Bleeding 50%) |
| 4 | Wine Glass | P | 2d6 to Legs (Bleeding 100%) |
| 5 | Chateau de Conrad Cabernet | B | 2d6 to Head (Bleeding 50%)(Stun -2) |
| 6 | Chair | B | 4d6 to Torso(Stun -2) |

Going down the stairs brings Players to **Cliffhanger (Second Floor)**.

Going up the stairs brings Players to **Development (Fourth Floor)**.

Development (Fourth Floor)

The fourth floor is an elaborate showroom, populated by glass-fronted mahogany cabinets lined with cork. Inside each is a treasure trove of pristine pinned butterflies, some as colorful as peacock feathers, some as large as your head, others sporting fabulous patterns that dizzy the eye.

The room is quiet, peaceful, and clean. No sun enters this level of the tower, but it is lit by the magical light of an elaborate chandelier, an addition by Francine's late father. The light coming from the chandelier is harmless to the butterfly collection, and even keeps the displays free of dust.

When Players enter the room, the mass of hair that covers the floor retreats up the stairs at the opposite end of the collection room, slithering up to the fifth floor of the tower, preparing to make its final stand in the **Climax (Fifth Floor)**.

Climax (Fifth Floor)

Suspended by her own hair, formed into eight massive hair stalks, Francine Marchand, the Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies, is covered in tattered clothing, and her face is wracked with fright. She is not the enemy of the Players — her hair is, and it wants them dead. Evoking the shape of a massive, hairy spider, the monster crawls along the ceiling of the chamber.

As soon as they enter the fifth floor, the party is thrust into combat. The monster already knows the Players are coming.

Keep track of the HP of each leg separately. When using a grid, use one miniature for each leg, and one for Francine.

When the combat begins, the monster hangs from the ceiling, and its eight legs are unreachable by melee weapons without the long reach effect.

After two legs have been destroyed, or after two rounds of combat, the monster jumps down and fights the Players on the floor.

After four legs have been destroyed, it breaks the large window (18 meters from the ground) and climbs onto the slanted roof of the tower. Following it onto the roof is a **DC:16 Athletics** check. Failure means falling 18 meters. See **Cliffhanger (Dangerous Climb)** for info if a player falls.

Roll a D6 at the beginning of each player's turn while on the roof. On a 1, a roof tile beneath that player becomes loose and the player must make a **DC:14 Athletics** check or fall prone.

When it has only one leg left, Francine Marchand falls to the floor.

When all legs have been destroyed, the monster is reduced to a particularly unruly clump of hair atop Francine Marchand's head, that is easily dealt with by any edged weapon. Once this is done, go to the **Ending**.

Anytime Cliffhanger (Bandit Attack)

A group of bandits equal in number to the Players plus three attacks Fox Hollow while the party is in town. Usually, the town can be sacked to generate an easy bit of income for them, but they've picked the wrong time for a raid.

Unless your party fancies being robbed, the party must defend the town. When there are two or fewer bandits left, they attempt to escape, yelling that they'll be back.

After you party saves the town, for the rest of their stay, they can eat for free at the Ruddy Brush Auberge, and drink Red Tail Rouge (but not Red Tail Reserve) for free at the Bushy Tail. The day after the attack, Marie approaches the party with a chocolate soufflé she has cooked for them, and a bottle of Nilfgaardian Lemon.

Anytime Development (Seeking the Witch)

If Players approach Lynx Crag with the intention to harm the witch, she is nowhere to be found, and her hut is empty and without anything interesting to loot.

The Players are watched closely by two panthers during their ascent of Lynx Crag, who will not attack unless commanded by the Witch of Lynx Crag.

The witch meets them outside her hut and asks them why they came. The witch can help the Players along the adventure in many ways, but will not join their party nor fight with them.

The witch's possible services include:

- ◆ Stabilize Leblanc de Surmann's critical wounds.
- ◆ Heal the party.
- ◆ Put the endrega in the Tulasens Caves to sleep, allowing the party to sneak past them easily.
- ◆ Open the front door of Roger's Tower.
- ◆ Remove the traps on the third floor of the Roger's Tower.

In return for her help, the witch desires a lock of hair from each player's head as payment upfront. If the Players give her such a strand, ensure they come to regret it in the future.

Should your Players attempt to intimidate her or otherwise be rude to the witch, this angers her, and she attacks the party alongside her two **panthers**, making use of Akhan Daal (new spell listed in her **stat block**), Alzur's Thunder and teleporting away when she feels threatened. If she is only mildly slighted, such as in a situation where all but one member of the party is respectful, she hexes the offending member of the party with The Devil's Luck after they leave. That player should only learn of the hex when its effect first activates.

Once the Players have visited Lynx Crag once, the witch cannot be encountered again.

Ending

If still alive, Francine is overjoyed to see that her father's collection is still intact. Francine is also eager to see any of her property returned that may still be in the Players possession. If both Francine Marchand and Leblanc de Surmann survive, Leblanc proposes to Francine on the fourth floor of the tower, and, surrounded by her father's butterfly collection, she accepts his proposal. Perhaps the Players are invited to their wedding in the future? If Leblanc de Surmann survives, the party is paid 1,000 florens (3,000 crowns). If not, the party is paid 500 florens (1,500 crowns). A party that refuses payment earns instead 4 levels of reputation for their act of chivalry. Francine, after moving far away from Fox Hollow, demolishes the tower to bury her bad memories with it.

If Playing the Larger Campaign...

The conclusion of this adventure marks the end of the content provided in this book, but it doesn't have to mean the end of your campaign. The party is likely highly skilled now, and they have made connections in high places. They likely could settle down. While this would be a good place to end a campaign with a fairy-tale ending, it is also a perfect place to do something your players would never expect. Surely by now they've wized up to some of the tricks these adventures have pulled. This is your chance to flip the script, to surprise and delight them with a story only you can create. We'll leave them entirely in your hands for now. Good luck, Game Master.

NPC

Intelligence

Sapient

Senses

—



Leblanc de Surmann

Description

The only son of Rafael de Surmann, Ducal Camerlengo of the Duchy of Toussaint, Leblanc was always surrounded by knights and their chivalric acts, usually in the context of them being paid for such acts by his father on behalf of the duchy. Rafael was not a particularly empathetic father, but showed his love by hiring a virtual army of tutors for Leblanc, until it became too difficult to find tutors that could teach him, so he resorted to asking knights for favors. Leblanc has been acting as a knight errant for several years now. Recently he met a fortune teller, who told him of a “maiden surrounded by butterflies” who he was destined to save from imprisonment high up in a tower and, who destiny had determined to be the love of his life.

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 5 |
| REF | 8 |
| DEX | 7 |
| BODY | 10 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 7 |
| CRA | 3 |
| WILL | 8 |

| | |
|------|-----|
| STUN | 7 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 45 |
| ENC | 100 |
| REC | 9 |
| HP | 45 |
| VIG | — |

| Skill Base | |
|--------------------|----|
| Athletics | 10 |
| Awareness | 9 |
| Brawling | 12 |
| Courage | 12 |
| Dodge/Escape | 11 |
| Education | 10 |
| Endurance | 13 |
| Grooming and Style | 12 |
| Resist Magic | 10 |
| Riding | 12 |
| Social Etiquette | 10 |
| Staff/Spear | 15 |
| Swordsmanship | 15 |

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Armor | 20 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 11 |
| Reposition Base | 10 |
| Block Base | 15 |

| Bounty |
|--------|
| N/A |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|-------|-------|------|-----|---------------------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Partisan | 16 | S/P/B | 4d6+2 | 10 | — | Long Reach Bleed (25%) |

| Loot |
|--|
| Partisan Great Helm Plate Armor Plate Greaves |

Francine Marchand

Description

Francine Marchand was born into wealth, the only child of Lionel Marchand. Her mother died in childbirth. Her father purchased Roger's Tower to cement the family's status in Toussaint high society when she was nine, and they moved in that same year. When she was 11, her father didn't return from a business trip, and she learned of his death some time later. In her adolescence, many opportunistic scoundrels saw her as an easy target for frauds, robbery, and other schemes, as she was a young girl running her late father's business as best she could. The experience made her innately distrustful and nasty toward strangers, most especially those from the lower rungs of society. Her disposition toward the peasant population of Fox Hollow made them hate her unconditionally. One day, her hair started growing at an extraordinary rate, trapping her on the top floor of her tower with a mind of its own. She still has no idea which particular entity she slighted on any given day is ultimately responsible for the curse, even though she's had plenty of time to narrow it down. She has survived on rat meat, insects, and rainwater for two years now.

NPC

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 6 |
| REF | 4 |
| DEX | 4 |
| BODY | 3 |
| SPD | 3 |
| EMP | 6 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 6 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 4 |
| RUN | 9 |
| LEAP | 1 |
| STA | 20 |
| ENC | 30 |
| REC | 4 |
| HP | 20 |
| VIG | — |

| Skill Base | |
|--------------------|----|
| Athletics | 7 |
| Awareness | 9 |
| Business | 12 |
| Courage | 9 |
| Dodge/Escap | 7 |
| Education | 11 |
| Fine Arts | 10 |
| Grooming and Style | 12 |
| Riding | 9 |
| Social Etiquette | 11 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dodge Base | 7 |
| Reposition Base | 7 |
| Block Base | — |

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Roger's Tower |
| Organization | Solitary |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|------|-----|------|-----|--------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

NPC

Medium
HighIntelligence
*Sapient*Senses
—*Humanoid*

The Witch of Lynx Crag

Description

Although not much is known about the Witch of Lynx Crag, she is widely feared in northern Toussaint, blamed for many of the curses and other maladies that befall the area's inhabitants. Some of these tales are even true. She practices magic in the seclusion of Lynx Crag, in the company of her panthers. She does not take kindly to rude strangers, and is partial to cursing them for insult. Angering her is a horrible mistake few live to regret. Despite all this, some still come to her seeking magical aid.

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 7 |
| REF | 7 |
| DEX | 6 |
| BODY | 7 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 4 |
| CRA | 5 |
| WILL | 10 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 3 |
| STA | 40 |
| ENC | 50 |
| REC | 8 |
| HP | 40 |
| VIG | 15 |

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 12 |
| Awareness | 15 |
| Courage | 16 |
| Dodge/Escape | 14 |
| Endurance | 14 |
| Hex Weaving | 18 |
| Resist Coercion | 18 |
| Resist Magic | 18 |
| Ritual Crafting | 15 |
| Spell Casting | 16 |
| Staff/Spear | 13 |
| Stealth | 13 |
| Wilderness Survival | 15 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Armor | 8 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances |
|-------------|
| — |
| Immunities |
| — |

| Susceptibilities |
|--------------------------------|
| Hanged Man's Venom, Dimeritium |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 14 |
| Reposition Base | 12 |
| Block Base | 13 |

| Bounty |
|--------|
| N/A |

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|-------------------------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Gnomish Staff | 13 | B | 3d6+2 | 15 | — | Long Reach Focus (3) |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Lynx Crag |
| Organization | Solitary |

| Loot |
|---|
| Crowns (10d10) Gnomish Staff Halfling Protective Doublet Strange items (1d6/2) |

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Magical Training | 10 |
| In Touch | 5 |

| Ability: Spells |
|---|
| Spells: The Witch of Lynx Crag is capable of casting these spells: Akhan Daal, Mind Manipulation, Magic Healing, Cenlly Graig, Zephyr, Alzur's Thunder, Teleportation. |

| Ability: Rituals |
|---|
| Rituals: The Witch of Lynx Crag is capable of casting these rituals: Hydromancy, Pyromancy, Ritual of Magic, Cleansing Ritual. |

| Ability: Hexes |
|--|
| Hexes: The Witch of Lynx Crag is capable of casting these hexes: The Devil's Luck, The Nightmare, The Hex of the Beast. |

Akhan Daal



Level: Journeyman

STA Cost: 12

Effect: A favorite spell of the Witch of Lynx Crag, Akhan Daal allows you to create a small explosion of concussive energy at range. Anyone in the area of this spell who fails to defend takes 4d6 Damage to the Torso, is Knocked Down and Knocked Back 4m. If an effected target hits something they take ramming damage.

Range: 4m (2m Radius)

Duration: Immediate

Defense: Dodge

| Skill Base | |
|---------------------|----|
| Athletics | 16 |
| Awareness | 15 |
| Brawling | 12 |
| Courage | 14 |
| Endurance | 12 |
| Intimidation | 12 |
| Physique | 13 |
| Resist Magic | 10 |
| Stealth | 17 |
| Wilderness Survival | 14 |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Armor | 0 |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|-------------|--|
| — | |
| Immunities | |
| — | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|------------------|--|
| Beast Oil | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 12 |
| Reposition Base | 16 |
| Block Base | 15 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| 20 | |

| Loot | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Panther Hide (x1d6/3) | |
| Beast Bones (x1d6) | |
| Raw Meat (x1d6) | |



**Medium
Simple**

Intelligence
Feral

Senses
Night Vision

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 1 |
| REF | 7 |
| DEX | 7 |
| BODY | 5 |
| SPD | 8 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 1 |
| WILL | 6 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 5 |
| RUN | 24 |
| LEAP | 4 |
| STA | 25 |
| ENC | 50 |
| REC | 5 |
| HP | 25 |



| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Height | 0.75m |
| Weight | 78kg |
| Environment | Forests |
| Organization | Solitary or in pairs |

Panther

Commoner Superstition (Education DC:12)

Ah, exotic critters, panthers! I hear tell, wild women and witches in the south keep 'em as familiars. If ya see a panther's eyes glowin' in the moonlight, yer bein' spied on by a mage! Only ever seen two in my life and that's when I was passin' through Mag Turga for...ahem...business reasons. Quite strikin' if ya ask me. But I wouldn't want to be in the sights of one of 'em! The two I say, kept pace along my wagon long enough for me to put out my pipe and load a bolt. Heh, just slinkin' along in the shadows just outside the light of my lantern. I think if I'd turned that light out, or stopped the wagon for a second, they'd have been on me in no time.

—Rodolf Kazmer

Lore & Behavior (Education DC:14)

Panthers, cougars, and other big cats are an ever-present threat to travelers all over the Continent. Silently, they stalk their prey, waiting for the right moment to pounce and ambush their target, usually your least armored companion. Their staggering speed and climbing ability allows them to dart into combat and then dart away just as quickly. If they feel like they are in danger, they will use their quickness to make an escape, often up the nearest tree. Once, hidden away, a panther will wait and lick its wounds until another opportunity to ambush its prey presents itself.

If you do manage to kill one before it escapes—preferably in a less bloody fashion—you could certainly find a buyer for its hide. Clothing made from their soft and luxurious fur are always in vogue with nobles and other wealthy folk. Spotted hides in particular are quite valuable, so don't let a merchant tell you that they aren't.

| Attacks | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect | ROF |
| Bite | 15 | P | 4d6+4 | 10 | — | — | 1 |
| Claw Slash | 15 | S | 2d6+2 | 10 | — | Bleed (30%) | 2 |

Ability: Pounce

By taking its move action, a panther can leap 4m from a standing start. This leap can be made horizontally or vertically.

Ability: Expert Climber

If a panther succeeds at its Athletics check to climb, it can climb 8m per round instead of the usual 4m.

Alternate Form: Big Cats

Stories persist of feline predators larger than panthers that stalk the forests of southern Nilfgaard. These uncreatively named “Big Cats” are consummate hunters who have been known to ambush small groups of merchants and can unhorse a knight with their pounce.

These big cats have improved attacks and an armor Stopping Power of 5. Their Claw Slash attack deals 3d6+2 and is Balanced and their Bite attack deals 5d6+4 damage and has Bleed (50%). These attacks have an attack base of 17.

| Skill Base | |
|---------------|----|
| Athletics | 7 |
| Awareness | 9 |
| Brawling | 10 |
| Dodge/Escape | 7 |
| Endurance | 9 |
| Resist Magic | 8 |
| Swordsmanship | 12 |

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Armor | 20 (0 on Head Location) |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|---|--|
| Piercing | |
| Immunities | |
| Fire, Bludgeoning, Bleeding, Poison, Knock-down, Stun | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|----------------------|--|
| Slashing, Cursed Oil | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 7 |
| Reposition Base | 7 |
| Block Base | 12 |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| — | |

| Loot | |
|--|--|
| Essence of Water (x12) Zoria Runestone (x1) | |



Medium Complex

Intelligence
Incapable of Thought

Senses
—

| | |
|------|---|
| INT | 1 |
| REF | 5 |
| DEX | 5 |
| BODY | 6 |
| SPD | 5 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 1 |
| WILL | 4 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 5 |
| RUN | 15 |
| LEAP | 1 |
| STA | — |
| ENC | 60 |
| REC | 5 |
| HP | 25 |



| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Roger's Tower |
| Organization | Incapable of thought |

Marionette Armor

But as they passed through the hallway, the suits of armor so infiltrated by the malevolent flowing hair of the maiden, came to life to defend their master, controlled by the strands as if they were puppets on a string, forced into a deadly waltz with our heroes, existing only to do the will of the malevolent force that controlled them so skillfully. The enemy swung their gleddyf, desirous of efficient carnage. Yet despite their synchronicity, they were entirely devoid of the nuances of swordsmanship which separate a student of the art from a master. And it was this flaw in their construction that our heroes exploited. With one deft stroke, their dance came to a halt. Strings cut, the soldiers fell clattering to the floor.

-Dandelion

Combat Tactics

A Marionette Armor interacts with the world in a simplistic, robotic fashion. It's strategies do not evolve to respond to it's quarry. Instead, it repeats the same actions on the enemy closest to it, especially if they proved successful the previous turn. In this same vein, it is unlikely to recognize when a particular enemy is dead, and will sometimes continue to attack a dead enemy for several turns before realizing it no longer poses any threat. It's actions are also inherently violent, even if violence would be less efficient. For example, a Marionette Armor would not open a door to pursue a fleeing enemy, it would instead hack at the door until it was cut in half. The proper war to defeat a Marionette Armor is through clever strategy, not brawn. Flank the armor around an opening, present it with a decoy, or otherwise confuse the simpleminded adversary to give yourselves enough time to prepare the crucial strike to sever it's strings. With a good edge, only a single strike will be necessary to end the threat.

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Decorative Gleddyf | 12 | S | 2d6+2 | 5 | — | — |

Vulnerability: Cut the Strings

A Marionette Armor's head (the area where hair enters the headless suit of armor to control it) has no armor. Strikes to the head location of the armor do 1x damage, as the creature does not have a "head." If a Marionette Armor's head takes more than 9 slashing damage from a single strike, the attack cleaves through the strings, which effectively kills the Marionette Armor.

Vulnerability: Vulnerable to Steel

Marionette Armor takes regular damage from steel weapons and is not considered resistant like other monsters.

Ability: Constructed

A Marionette Armor is immune to bleeding, poison, fire, or spells that affect the mind or emotions. They also cannot be reasoned with and never run out of STA.

| Skill Base | |
|--------------|----|
| Athletics | 17 |
| Awareness | 16 |
| Brawling | 14 |
| Dodge/Escape | 17 |
| Endurance | 16 |
| Intimidation | 16 |
| Melee | 17 |
| Physique | 10 |
| Resist Magic | 16 |
| Stealth | 20 |

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Armor | 12* |
| Regeneration | — |

| Resistances | |
|---|--|
| Piercing | |
| Immunities | |
| Coercion, Fear, Fire, Bludgeoning, Bleeding, Poison, Knock-down, Stun | |

| Susceptibilities | |
|------------------|--|
| Cursed Oil | |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Dodge Base | 17 |
| Reposition Base | 17 |
| Block Base | — |

| Bounty | |
|--------|--|
| — | |

| Loot | |
|--|--|
| Essence of Water (x12) Zoria Runestone (x1) | |



**High
High**

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 6 |
| REF | 14 |
| DEX | 12 |
| BODY | 8 |
| SPD | 10 |
| EMP | 1 |
| CRA | 6 |
| WILL | 8 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 8 |
| RUN | 30 |
| LEAP | 6 |
| STA | 40 |
| ENC | 80 |
| REC | 9 |
| HP | — |



| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Height | Unknown |
| Weight | Unknown |
| Environment | Roger's Tower |
| Organization | Solitary |

The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies

...When they reached the highest room in the tower, they discovered The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies. Suspended from the ceiling, she looked down at them with a mixture of sympathy and dread. Though her throat was struck dry by fear, her eyes spoke of her years of torment. In that moment, she relived the grisly end of the last brave knight that had come to save her, how the room smelled of death for weeks after he was torn apart. Her eyes pleaded with the world, praying to Lebioda that these heroes would not meet the same fate, that they would slay her jailer... but also wondered if they might kill her instead, perhaps by accident, perhaps in a mad passion. Either would bring an end to her nightmare, which is how these fantasies had always ended for her. Our heroes...

-Dandelion

| Attacks | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|------|-------|------|-----|----------|
| Name | ATK Base | Type | DMG | Rel. | RNG | Effect |
| Hair Whip | 16 | B | 3d6+2 | N/A | 20m | Balanced |

Vulnerability: Vulnerable to Steel

The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies takes regular damage from steel weapons and is not considered resistant like other monsters.

Ability: Parasite

If Francine Marchand dies, her hair dies too.

Ability: Proportional ROF

If *the Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies* has 2 or fewer stalks left, the ROF of its Hair Whip attack equals its number of remaining stalks.

Ability: Critical Wound Immunity

This monster is immune to any effects or bonus damage dealt by Critical Wounds.

Ability: Feral

Tremor Sensitive: *The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies* relies on tremors to “see.” While it cannot be blinded by traditional means, it also cannot see anything that isn’t touching the ground. This means that as long as a target is not touching the ground, *The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies* is considered blind when dealing with it.

Ability: Switcheroo

Once per round, if *The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies* is being attacked with a melee or ranged attack, and it has 3 or more stalks remaining, it can attempt to quickly swap out a stalk being attacked with Francine Marchand’s body by rolling Brawling versus a player’s attack roll as a defense. If the hair stalk fails its roll, it remains the target of the attack. A player can pull back a melee attack in order to avoid striking Francine, but the attack is wasted in the process. Ranged attacks made cannot be pulled back. When this ability is used, Francine cannot defend herself. The hair knows that its life and Francine’s are intertwined and wouldn’t risk killing Francine by using this ability when she is below 10 HP. Any attacks that hit Francine as a result of this ability are taken to her torso.

Ability: Proportional HP

The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies is made up of eight massive stalks of hair growing out of Francine Marchand’s scalp. Each stalk has its own 15 HP, 12 Armor, and acts as its own individual entity for the purpose of defending. It attacks as one using its Hair Whip attack. Reducing its number of stalks to zero leaves it with only 1HP and no ability to attack.

Ability: Fueled by Rage

The Maiden Surrounded by Butterflies cannot be reasoned with or intimidated.

Roger's Tower

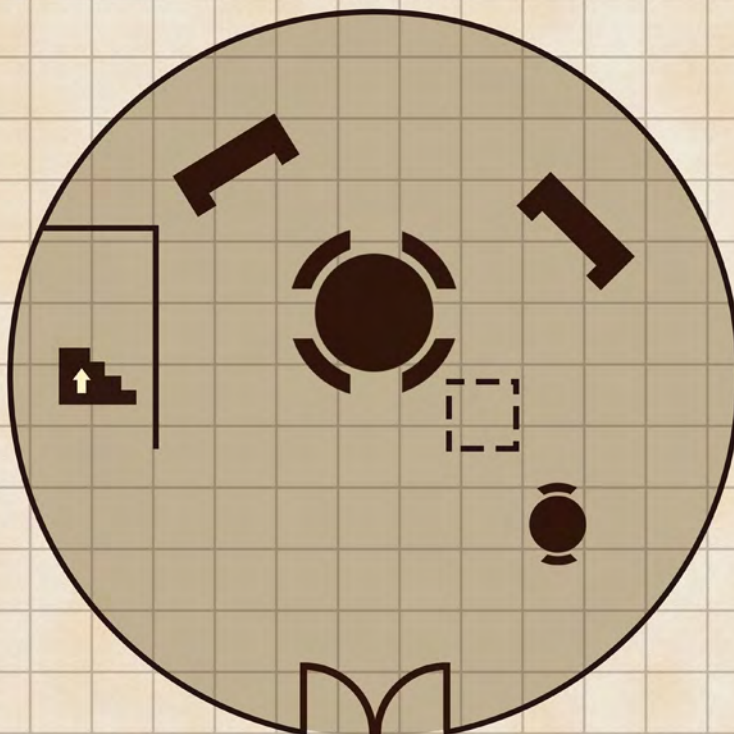
Light Level: Un-modified

Description: Roger's Tower looms above fox hollow, a titan of reinforced stone which knights enter and never return from. Protected by an equally impressive door, and the rumor of a monster, it stands defiant.

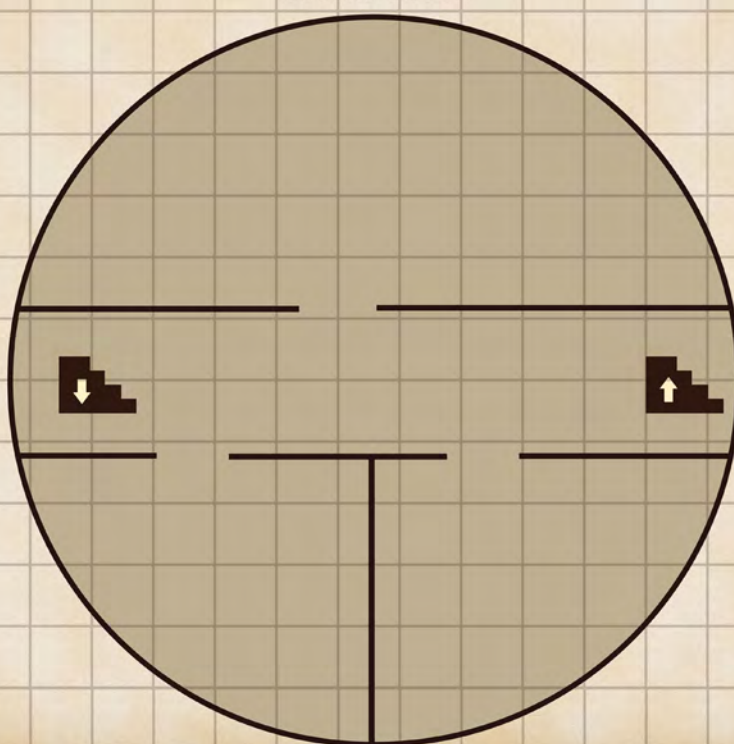


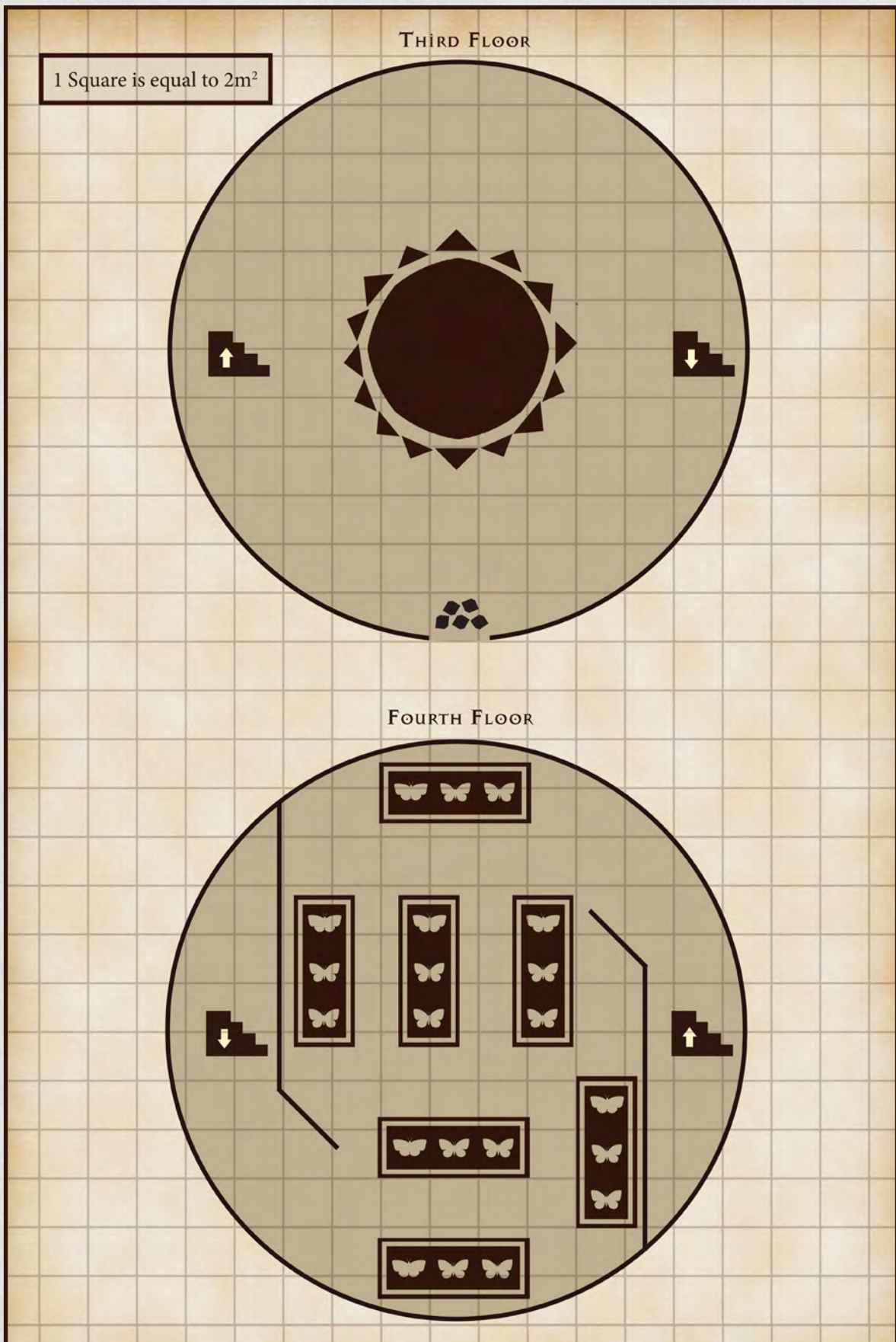
1 Square is equal to 2m²

FIRST FLOOR



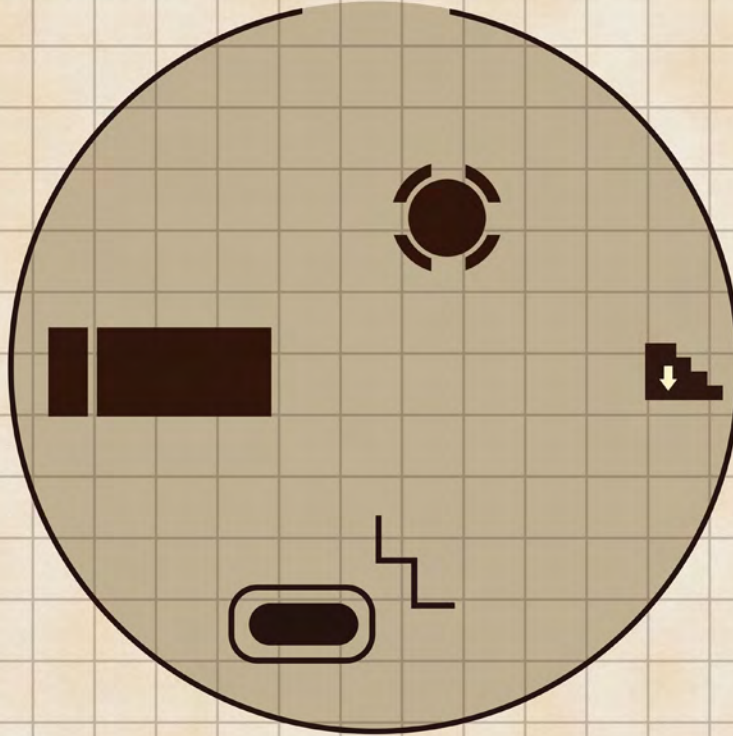
SECOND FLOOR



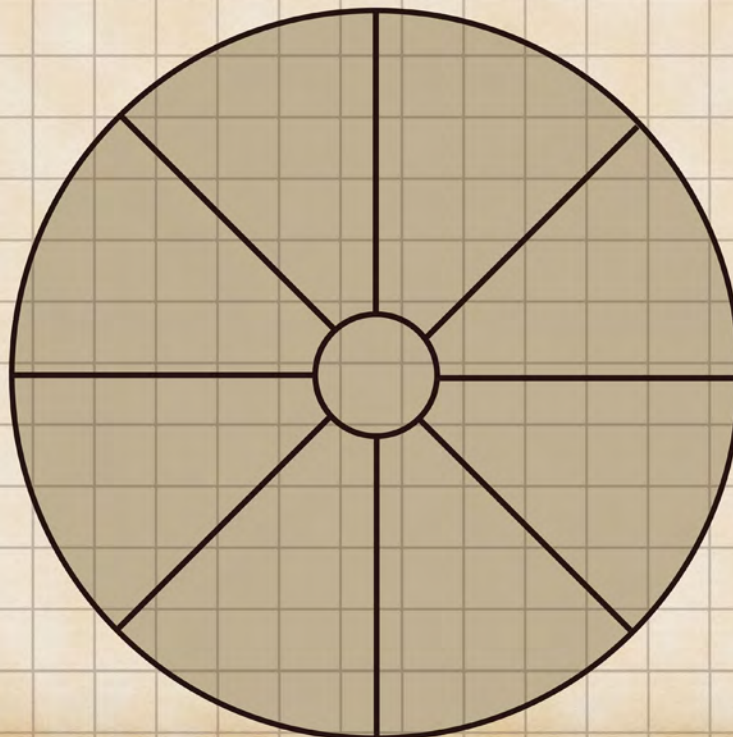


1 Square is equal to 2m²

FIFTH FLOOR



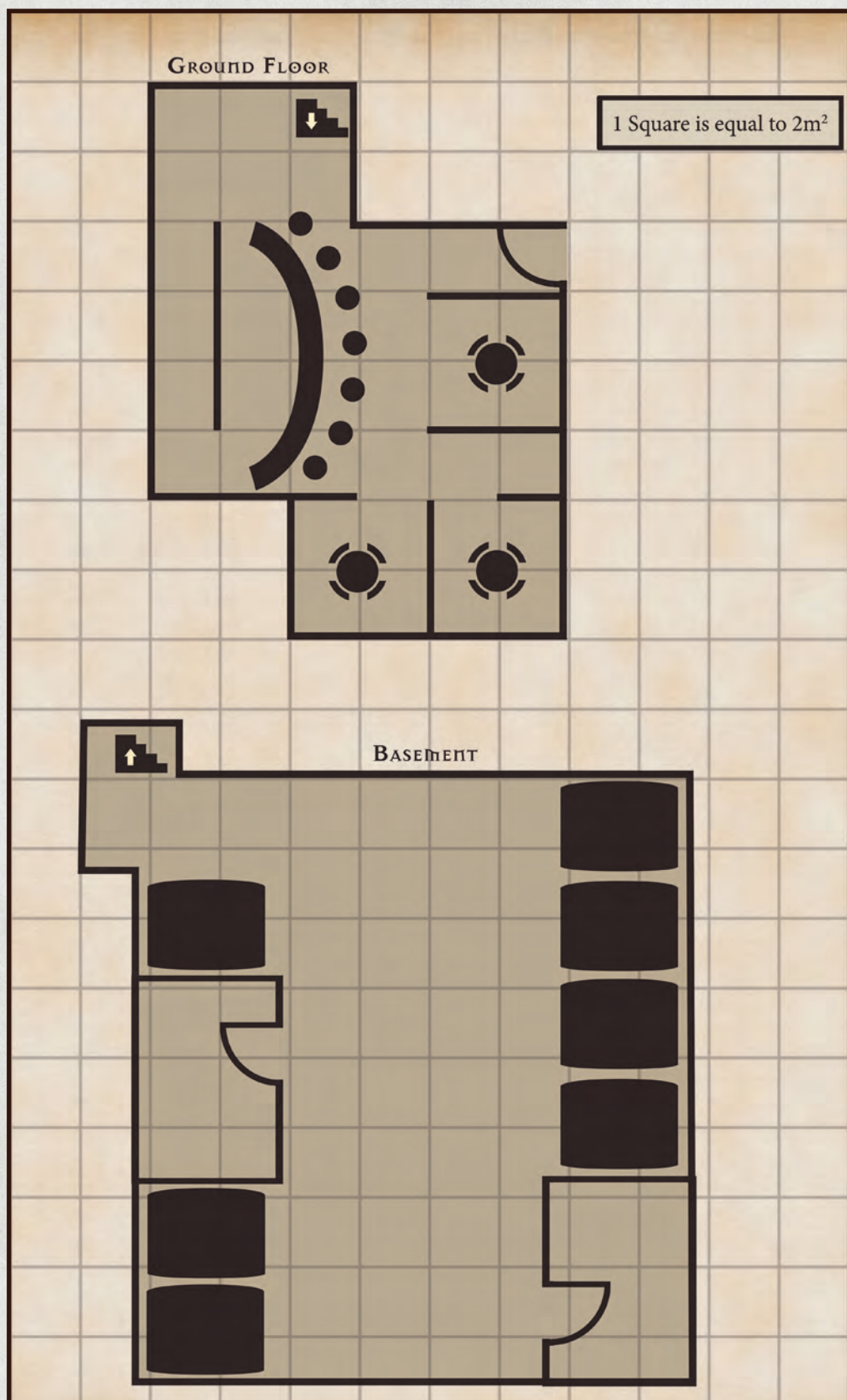
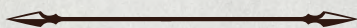
Roof



The Bushy Tail

Light Level: Un-modified

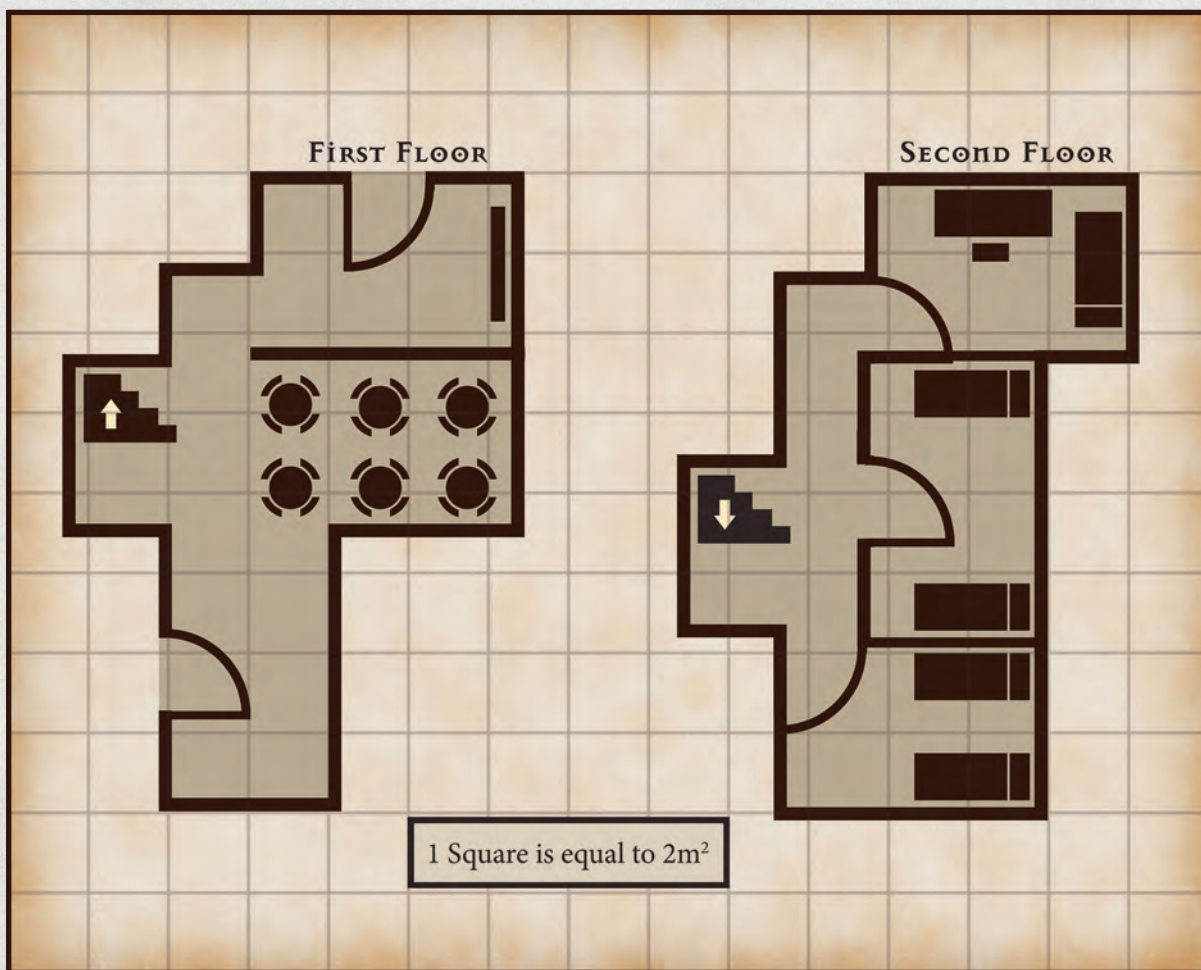
Part winetasting house, part bordello, The Bushy Tail offers an intimate setting for its clientele's worldly desires. Those in the throes of passionate wine consumption might descend the staircase into the wine cellar to drink in the privacy of an almost entirely soundproofed private tasting room.



The Ruddy Brush Auberge

Light Level: Un-modified

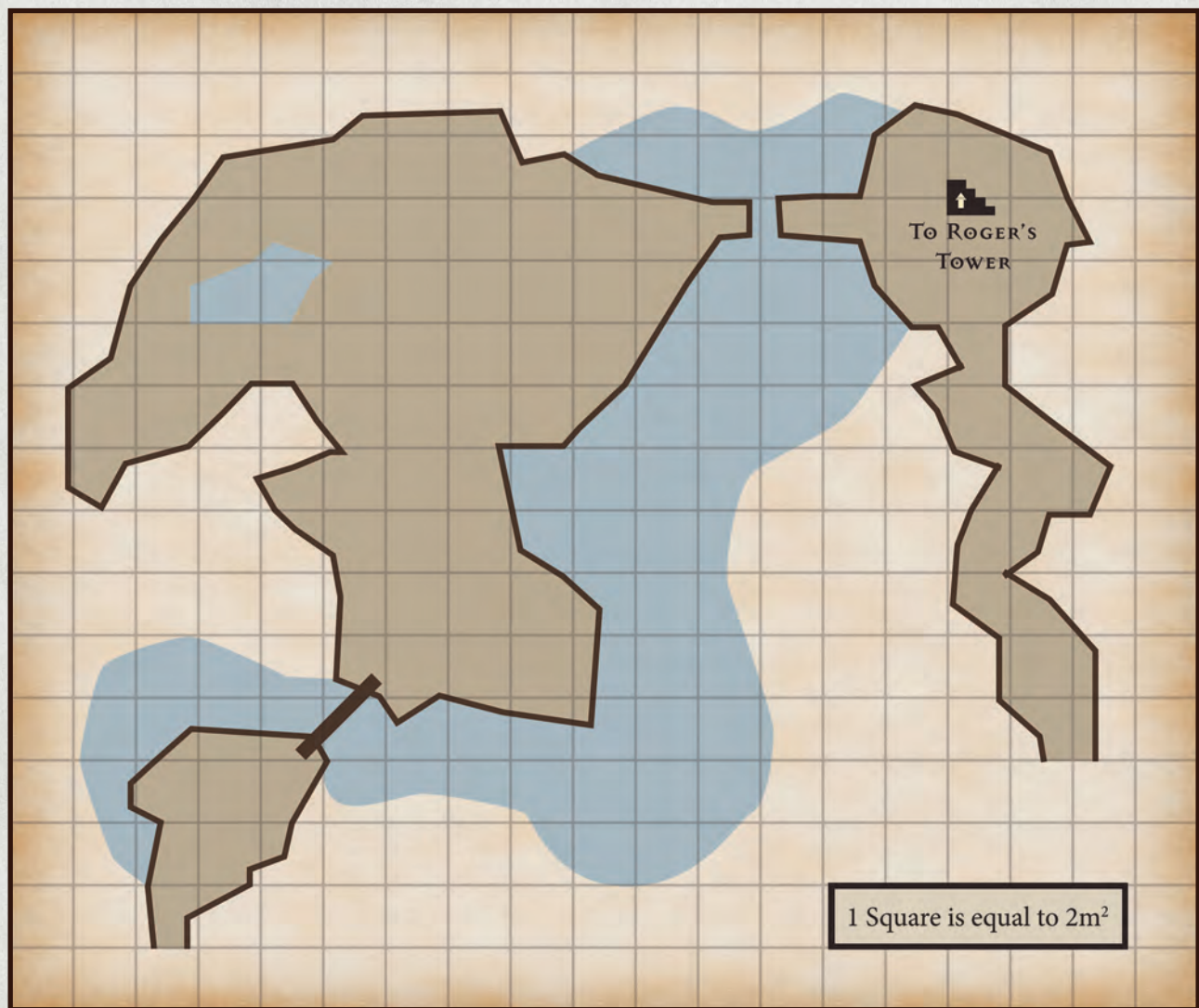
The most popular, and the only, restaurant in Fox Hollow. It's also the only inn in Fox Hollow, and thus it is always busy, though it loses some of its daytime regulars to the Bushy Tail at night. The innkeeper, Adele DuBois, is a devout follower of the Prophet Lebioda, and can often be heard praying early in the morning.



Tulasens Caves

Light Level: Un-modified

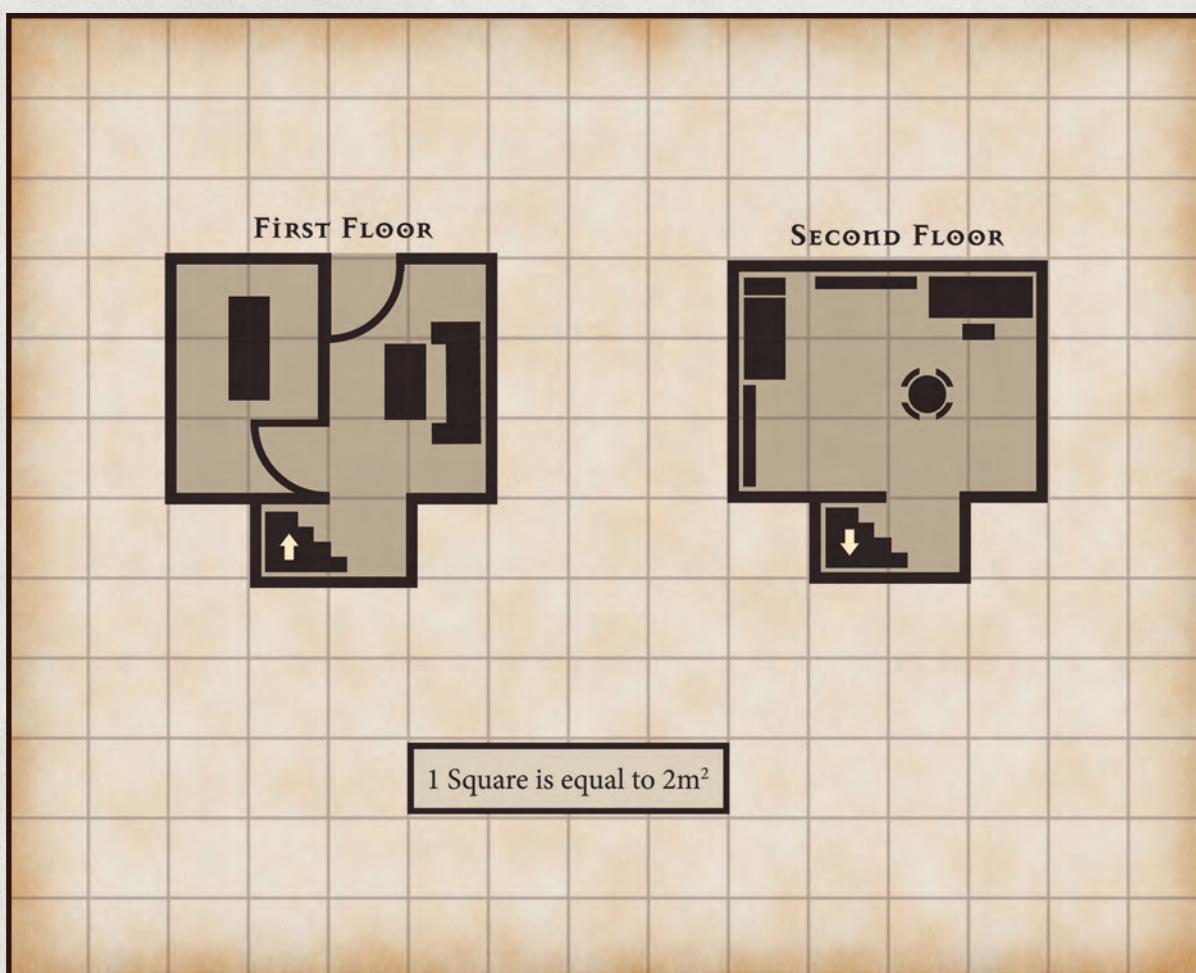
A large damp cave system just to the north of Fox Hollow, lit naturally by cracks in the roof to the surface far above, which are closed off by iron bars to keep children from falling in. Water rushes through the cavern, fed by a majestic waterfall. Once Players get past the boarded-up entrances, they must either defeat or sneak past the endrega infesting the cave. Jumping the broken bridge is a **DC:15 Athletics** check, and failure is wet and noisy. One section of the cave was used as a storeroom for Roger's Tower and contains a ladder that connects to a trapdoor on the first floor of the tower.



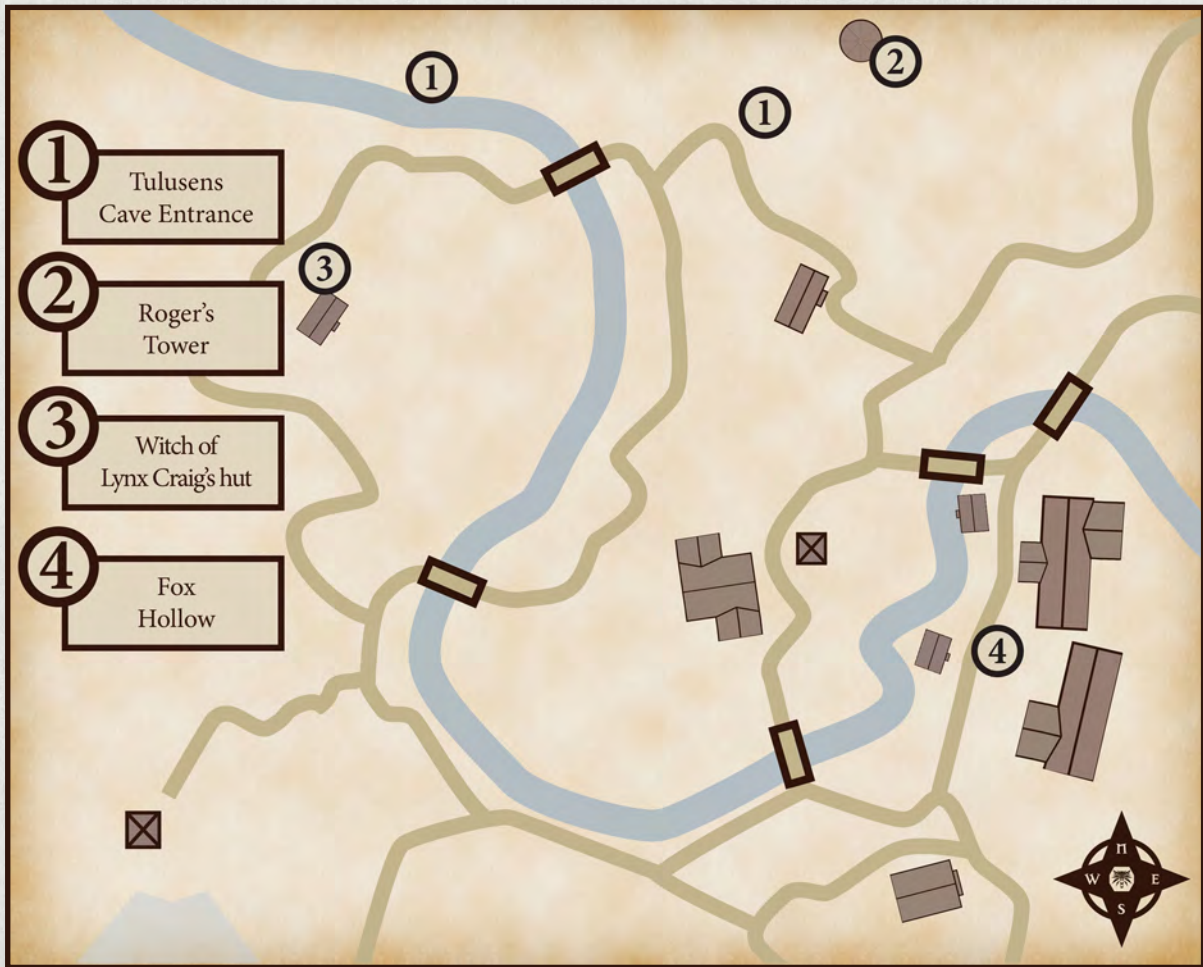
Doctor's House

Light Level: Un-modified

A quaint two-story home with part of the first floor converted into a clinic. The clinic is an optimal medical environment, which adds a +3 to Healing Hands and First Aid rolls made within. It is always stocked with a Surgeon's Kit, an open bottle of Nilfgaardian Lemon, and five units of Sterilizing Fluid, Clotting Powder and Numbing Herbs.



Fox Hollow Region





Compiled Content

Across the Continent, many peculiar things may be found, curious objects and entities a farmhand like yourself would have no knowledge of, that you would simply have no chance of experiencing. But this is why I travel! For it is through my travel that I may curl the edges of the map toward their center, to bring the exotic to the oh so very mundane, in the form of a sonnet. These strange and mysterious things are so fascinating my dear, that surely the raw knowledge of them would be worth the use of your tub, and perhaps a place to rest for the evening. My feet tire of all of this travel, stimulating as it is.

— Dandelion

Weapons of Toussaint

| Name | Type | WA | Avail. | DMG | Rel. | Hands | RNG | Effect | Conc. | EN | Weight | Cost |
|-------------------|-------|----|--------|-------|------|-------|-----|-------------------------------------|-------|----|--------|------|
| Blunted Lance | B | 0 | P | 2d6 | 5 | 1 | N/A | Long Reach, Charging, Non-Lethal | N/A | 0 | 3.5 | 500 |
| Ducal Sword | S/P | 0 | R | 5d6 | 10 | 1 | N/A | Armor Piercing | L | 1 | 1.5 | 800 |
| Flamberge | S/P | -1 | P | 6d6 | 15 | 2 | N/A | Long Reach, Ablating | N/A | 1 | 3.5 | 1025 |
| Horseman's Hammer | B/P | 0 | C | 2d6 | 10 | 1 | N/A | Charging | L | 1 | 2.5 | 860 |
| Partisan | S/P/B | 1 | C | 4d6+2 | 10 | 2 | N/A | Long Reach, Bleed (25%) | N/A | 1 | 3.5 | 750 |
| Peasant's Maul | B | 0 | E | 5d6 | 5 | 2 | N/A | Ablating | N/A | 0 | 3 | 375 |
| Viroledan Blade | S/P | 1 | R | 4d6+4 | 10 | 2 | N/A | Balanced, Bleed (30%), Poison (30%) | N/A | 0 | 2.5 | 995 |
| War Lance | P | 0 | P | 2d6 | 10 | 1 | N/A | Long Reach, Charging | N/A | 0 | 3.5 | 550 |

Weapon Effect: Charging

A weapon with the Charging Effect rolls Charging damage differently when used from a mounted position. When you successfully hit a target with a mounted charge attack, the number of bonus d6s of damage you roll for the charge is equal to the number of meters you moved instead of half the number of meters.

Huntsman's Crossbow

| Name | Type | WA | Avail. | DMG | Rel. | Hands | RNG | Effect | Conc. | EN | Weight | Cost |
|---------------------|------|----|--------|-----|------|-------|------|-------------|-------|----|--------|------|
| Huntsman's Crossbow | P | +2 | C | 5d6 | 10 | 2 | 150m | Slow Reload | L | 1 | 3 | 600 |

Plague Mask

| Name | Avail. | Effect | Weight | Cost |
|-------------|--------|--|--------|------|
| Plague Mask | R | Grants a +3 bonus to Endurance to resist airborne illness, poison, and nausea when worn. | .5 | 400 |

Ice Skates

| Name | Avail. | Effect | Weight | Cost |
|------------|--------|-------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Ice Skates | C | Allows ice skating. See next table. | 1 | 100 |

Ice Skating

While ice skating, you ignore the effects of Snow and Ice conditions.

Treat ice skating as being mounted on a horse with a +2 Control Modifier and a SPD of 12 that is incapable of charging or ramming. Additionally, making a Control check on ice skates is also a little different:

REF + Athletics skill + Control Mod. + 1d10

If you fail a Control check on ice skates, roll once on the Ice Skates Control Loss table.

♦ Ice Skates Control Loss Table

| Total | Result |
|-------|---|
| 1-2 | Skid: Slide 1d6 meters sideways in the direction of travel. If you hit an object, you stop. |
| 3-4 | Stumble: You stumble. Make a DC:15 Athletics check to stay standing. If you fall you are prone. |
| 5-6 | Stumble: You stumble. Make a DC:20 Athletics check to stay standing. If you fall you are prone. |

New Spells

Akhan Daal

Level: Journeyman

STA Cost: 12

Effect: A favorite spell of the Witch of Lynx Crag, Akhan Daal allows you to create a small explosion of concussive

energy at range. Anyone in the area of this spell who fails to defend takes 4d6 Damage to the Torso, is Knocked Down and Knocked Back 4m. If an affected target hits something they take ramming damage.

Range: 4m (2m Radius)

Duration: Immediate

Defense: Dodge

De Claudine's Substitution

Level: Journeyman

STA Cost: 8

Effect: Popular with Alchemists and useful when looking for rare substances in a region, De Claudine's Substitution allows you to permanently change the Alchemical Substance of one Unit of an Alchemy ingredient to a different Alchemical Substance. Only one Unit of any such transmuted Alchemical Substance can be used in an Alchemical Formula without ruining the concoction.

Range: 2m

Duration: Permanent

Defense: None

Preece's Procedure

Level: Journeyman

STA Cost: 10

Effect: Developed by Catrin Preece to navigate the dangerous waters of high society, Preece's Procedure allows you to temporarily lock away one a target's emotions. When the spell is cast, you can choose one of the following Emotions to lock away: Hatred, Love, Depression, or Euphoria. For the

duration of this spell, the target is incapable of having this emotion and is unaware they have been affected with magic. At the end of the spell's duration, the target's locked emotion returns but they are still unaware they were affected by magic. Each time the spell is cast on a single target that is currently being affected by the spell, the Stamina Cost to cast Preece's Procedure raises by 2.

Range: 3m

Duration: 8 Hours

Defense: Resist Magic

Van Adelaide's Gale

Level: Journeyman

STA Cost: 12

Effect: Created by Louise Van Adelaide to help escape capture in the North, Van Adelaide's Gale uses powerful wind to launch you in an arc up to 30m away. Upon casting the spell, a rush of wind bursts out from you in a 2m sphere, knocking anyone who fails to defend back 6m. This attack also does only 1d6 damage, but if someone effected by the spell strikes something, they take ramming damage. While in the air, wind cushions your fall, meaning that you take no damage upon landing.

Range: Self

Duration: Immediate

Defense: None

New Races for The Witcher TRPG

Social Standing

| Territory | Gnomes | Vran | Werebbubs |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| The North | Tolerated | Hated & Feared | Tolerated |
| Nilfgaard | Equal | Tolerated & Feared | Tolerated |
| Skellige | Equal | Hated & Feared | Tolerated |
| Dol Blathanna | Equal | Hated | Tolerated |
| Mahakam | Equal | Tolerated | Equal |

Gnomes

With their eye for detail and exceptional sensory abilities, gnomes are the finest craftsmen on the Continent. The finest swords in the world, Gwyhyr, are gnomish. They also excel in alchemy, metallurgy, and engineering. Due to their majestic works, gnomes are tolerated in human societies, though they rarely visit. Gnomes are generally known for being friendly, puckish, and liking to party. They are less abrasive than dwarves, less stern than elves, and less fussy than halflings, all of which contribute to their appeal, according to humans. In small human communities, a gnome can expect not only tolerance, but also friendship. Trouble might arise for them in larger human cities, however.



Gnomes form large communes, much like dwarves do, but tend to structure themselves in a less authoritarian manner. These communes, the most notable two being in the Tir Tochair and Mahakam Mountains, are typically led by a particularly respected gnome who gathers consensus at large peoples assemblies where the commune governs itself through direct democracy. Gnomes have a long history of friendship with the dwarves of the Continent, especially with the dwarves of Mahakam, with whom they have lived peacefully for many hundreds of years, working alongside them in mines and workshops.

Perhaps it is better that they by large sequester themselves away from human societies in their mountain communes. Human rulers have proven themselves not to be above jealousy and would love to gain gnomish secrets to better their armies; and they are certainly not above kidnapping. Many of the newest developments in human warfare could use improvements from gnomish technology, and who knows what they might do to get it.

Gnome Perks

- ♦ **Pleasant Demeanor:** Across the continent, gnomes are known for their fun-loving joyous personalities and puckish nature. Among humans, gnomes are often considered the most pleasant of the Non-humans. Gnomes gain an inherent +1 to Charisma.
- ♦ **Eye for Detail:** While elves and dwarves are among the greatest craftsmen in the world, gnomes possess the finest eye for detail on the entire continent making them excellent at many different crafts. It's not unusual to find a gnome who trades in gem-cutting, sword smith, and alchemy all at the same time. Gnomes gain an inherent +2 to any 3 Craft Skills they choose. This bonus Ignores the modifier for learning Difficult Skill.
- ♦ **Scent Tracking:** A gnome's keen sense for detail extends to all their senses including their sense of smell. Gnomes gain an inherent +1 to their Awareness skill, as well as the ability to track things by scent alone.
- ♦ **Small Stature:** Gnomes are the smallest race on the Continent, measuring in around 1m tall on average. While they can be just as resilient as other races, they are generally physically weaker. Gnomes take an inherent -5 to Physique and calculate their hand-to-hand damage, bonus melee damage, and Encumbrance as though their BODY was 3 points lower. However, a gnome can slip into any area at least 0.5m wide with no issue and can fully conceal themselves behind an item or creature at least 1m by 1m.

Vran

Sometimes referred to as Lizardfolk, the vran are among the oldest and most physically varied races on the continent and unfortunately also among the most despised by humans. In the time before the Landing of the Exiles, the vran were a prevalent and accomplished culture who spanned the Continent from the Great Sea to the Blue Mountains and beyond. Among the sapient races of the Continent, the vran were known for their carefully constructed cities, their unique architecture, and their hordes of gold and jewels. Despite being known as dispassionate and cold, vran earned a great deal of respect for their cool-headed politics, and pervasive culture. Even today, many favored aphorisms used by scholars across the continent have their origins in vrani culture.

The history of the vran is one of the bloodiest history of all the Elder Races. Though they managed decent relations with dwarves and gnomes, the vran often came to blows with the elves, who shared borders and territory with



them. Over many years, the elves attacked several vran cities across the foothills of the Blue Mountains and even covertly created biological weapons which they used to wipe out vran cities. By the time the Landing of the Exiles brought humans to the Continent, the vran were already in decline, having lost so many of their cities to the elves and having suffered great casualties. But they persisted. The vran don't believe in an afterlife and so appreciate their life, as it is the only one they will ever experience.

Unfortunately, the Nordlings' arrival on the Continent largely spelled doom for vran society. The superstitious and volatile human settlers took poorly to the vran, who did not have the luxury of looking passably human, like elves and dwarves. Many humans called the vran demons and other, more pragmatic humans took this as an opportunity to seize the great wealth of the vran. Already weakened by their many wars with the elves, the vran fought valiantly but were pushed to the edge of extinction by the Nordlings, fleeing into the depths of the Blue Mountains and beyond. Now, the vran live as third-class citizens in human settlements and as refugees in mountain societies. A vran is a rare sight in both the Northern Realms and Nilfgaard and vran travelers are often the subject of hushed conversations in local taverns.

Vran Perks

- ♦ **Calm Hearted:** Vran are known by many to be heartless creatures with no empathy to speak of. However, this is far from the truth. Vran have as much capability for empathy as any human but they are far more reserved and less likely to show their emotion. Vran gain an inherent +1 Resist Coercion.
- ♦ **Claws & Fangs:** While the vran are known to use weapons, they are also capable of dealing grievous harm to their enemies with their natural claws and fangs. A vran has two natural weapons that cannot be disarmed. A vran's punches and kicks deal lethal damage and they can make a Melee attack with their fangs, which deals 3d6 damage with a 50% chance of poisoning the target.
- ♦ **Scaled Hide:** Vran have a natural layer of scales which grant them a certain amount of natural resistance to damage. A vran's scales have a natural stopping power of 4. This SP cannot be lowered via weapon attacks or ablation damage.
- ♦ **Reptilian Physiology:** The vran are the only accepted sapient race that is also reptilian and they're physiology differs ever so slightly from that of humans and other non-human races. This difference may be small, but it makes a big impact in two ways. First, a vran's body is different enough that any doctor who

is not a vran and has not treated a vran successfully in the past takes a -2 penalty when using First Aid on a wounded vran and a -5 penalty when attempting to stabilize or treat Critical Wounds on a wounded vran. Second, if a vran is affected by the Frozen condition, they take a -2 to all actions until 1d6 rounds after the condition is ended.

Werebbubs

Werebbubs are among the less humanoid Elder Races to be nearly destroyed by the Landing of the Exiles many centuries ago. Much like their vran counterparts, werebbubs lived in the lowland valleys and mountainous foothills of the Continent, practicing age-old traditions, and seeking to live in relative harmony with the land around them. The werebbubs were and still are a proud race with a long history of heroics and valor. In fact, instead of worshiping gods, werebbubs



worship the memories of their ancestors and the spirits of the legendary heroes and heroines. Werebbubs are raised with stories of great warriors and wise sages who used their gifts to help their people and defeat terrifying enemies.

Unfortunately, the Werebbub would find difficulty negotiating with their neighbors and often found themselves displaced by the powerful Elven communities that began to crop up in the lowland valleys. As time passed and the elves continued their expansion the Werebbubs were pushed farther and farther into the foothills until they were almost entirely relegated to the mountains. There, the werebbubs attempted to make the best of their situation, forming deeply ingrained mountain communities, and adjusting to the rocky cliffs and valleys of their new home. For a time, this worked well and many werebbub communities flourished. But this peace came to an end shortly after the Landing of the Exiles. After dominating the lowland valleys, the humans looked to the mountains for ore and gemstones. Not being fond of mining, the werebbubs had hardly touched the many deposits of minerals in their mountains homes which left a treasure trove of resources for the taking. When the werebbubs refused to let the humans mine in their mountain communities the peace came to an end, and human armies marched into the mountains, laying waste to hundreds of clans and communities.

These days, werebbubs are a rare sight on the Continent. They stick to the mountains, living in reclusive subterranean and high peak communities and trading almost exclusively with the dwarves. Even after centuries of abuse at the hands of other races, the werebbubs are a proud race who refuses to bend the knee and conform to the other communities around them. Even the few werebbubs in the lowlands are loathe to change their ways and still honor the traditions of their ancestors. They are proud to be different and nothing can take that pride from them.

Werebbub Perks

- ♦ **Lionhearted:** Werebbubs are not the largest race on the continent but they are among the bravest. Their culture values heroism and young Werebbubs hear tales of ancient ancestral heroes. Werebbubs gain an inherent +1 to Courage.
- ♦ **Strange Physiology:** A werebbub's body and metabolism work in a manner entirely alien to humans and most other elder races. When grievously wounded, some aspect of a werebbub's physiology goes into high gear, often allowing them to survive wound that would quickly kill any other person. Whenever a werebbub takes a Critical Wound, they can roll an Endurance check with a DC equal to the DC required to Stabilize the Critical Wound. If they succeed, the Critical Wound is immediately considered Stabilized. Players may only make this roll in the moment the werebbub takes the wound and cannot be attempted again in the case of a failure.
- ♦ **Razor Teeth:** While werebbub don't possess the powerful jaws and venomous fangs of the vran, their teeth are razor sharp and honed to a fine edge. A werebbub can make a Melee attack with their fangs which deals 2d6 damage and has Improved Armor Piercing.
- ♦ **Poor Eyesight:** In general, werebbub suffer from poor eyesight. While their keen hearing allows them to navigate the world without any significant problems, they are far from the most perceptive race on the Continent. Werebbubs take an inherent -4 on Awareness checks thanks to this poor vision. If a werebbub is called on to make a perception check based only on hearing (such as hearing footsteps upstairs or listening for growling wolves) this penalty does not apply.

It has come to my attention that previous books on the subject contain within them incorrect estimates of my abilities. I have provided an accurate measurement on the following page to correct any confusion.

— Dandelion



NPC

Exceptional
Stunning

Intelligence
Sapient

Senses
—

Humanoid

| | |
|------|----|
| INT | 8 |
| REF | 15 |
| DEX | 11 |
| BODY | 9 |
| SPD | 10 |
| EMP | 11 |
| CRA | 6 |
| WILL | 9 |

| | |
|------|----|
| STUN | 9 |
| RUN | 30 |
| LEAP | 6 |
| STA | 45 |
| ENC | 90 |
| REC | 9 |
| HP | 45 |

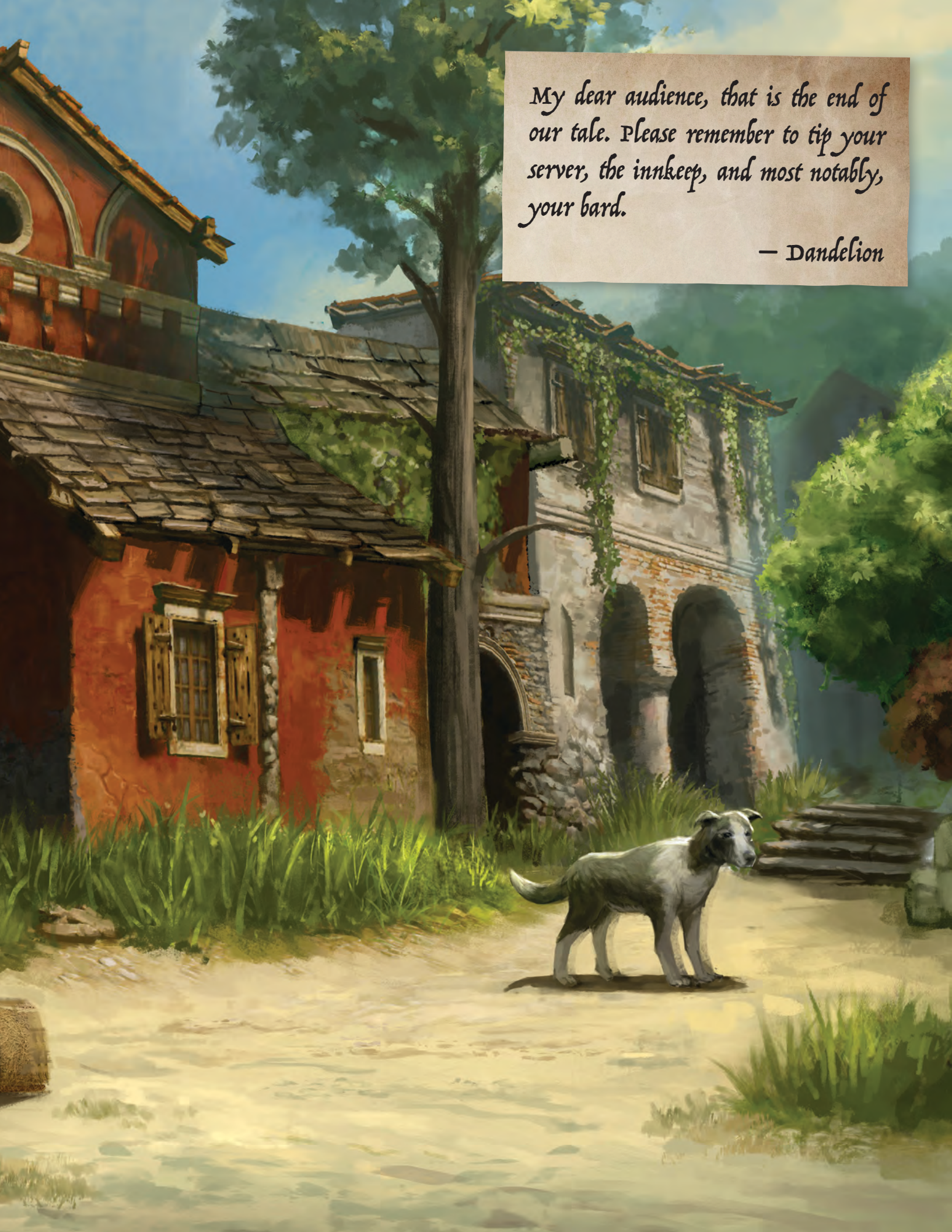
| Skill Base | |
|------------------------|----|
| Athletics | 21 |
| Awareness | 17 |
| Brawling | 21 |
| Business | 12 |
| Charisma | 21 |
| Deceit | 20 |
| Deduction | 16 |
| Dodge/Escapes | 25 |
| Education | 15 |
| Endurance | 19 |
| Fine Arts | 21 |
| Gambling | 17 |
| Grooming & Style | 19 |
| Human Perception | 20 |
| Language: Dwarven | 16 |
| Language: Elder Speech | 16 |
| Melee | 22 |
| Performance | 21 |
| Persuasion | 19 |
| Physique | 15 |
| Pick Locks | 11 |
| Seduction | 21 |
| Social Etiquette | 15 |
| Stealth | 19 |
| Streetwise | 17 |
| Swordsmanship | 26 |

Dandelion, Slayer of Dragons and Ladies

| Gear | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Flamberge | Double Woven Trousers |
| Book of muses | Spirits |
| Writing kit | Gwent deck (The North) |
| Belt pouch | Makeup kit |
| Loaded dice | Map of the Continent |
| Halfling Protective Doublet | Invisible ink |
| Cologne | Thieves' tools |
| Journal | |

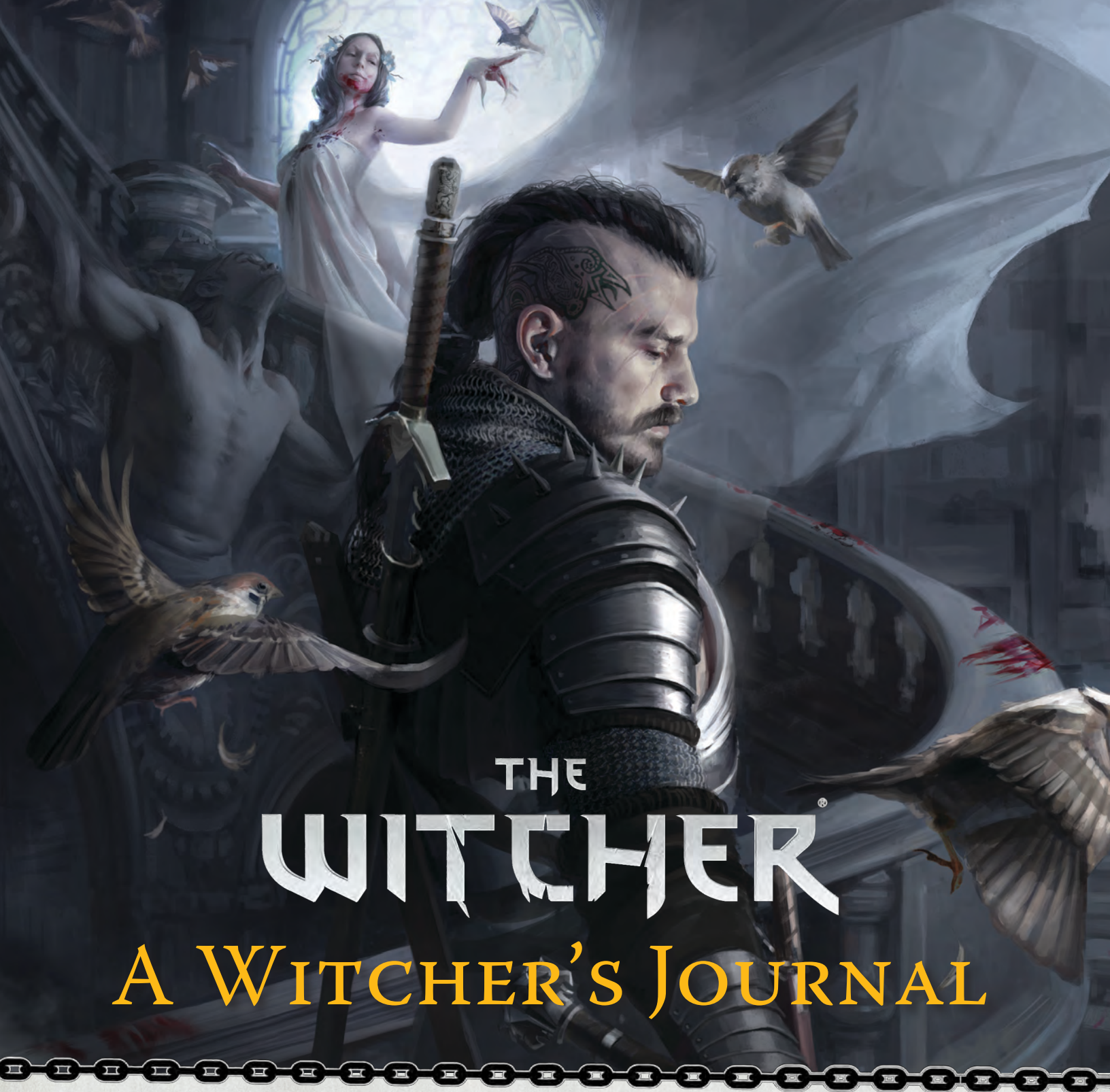
| Key Skills | Base |
|-----------------|------|
| Busking | 21 |
| Return Act | 21 |
| Raise a Crowd | 20 |
| Good Friend | 20 |
| Fade | 15 |
| Spread the Word | 16 |
| Poison the Well | 21 |
| Needling | 20 |
| Et Tu Brute | 19 |





*My dear audience, that is the end of
our tale. Please remember to tip your
server, the innkeep, and most notably,
your bard.*

— Dandelion

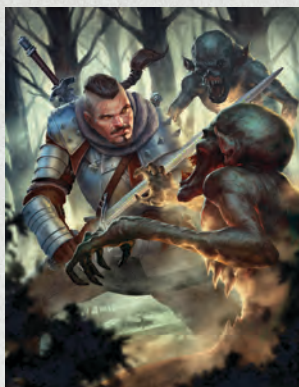


THE WITCHER®

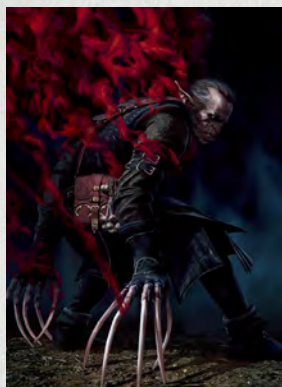
A WITCHER'S JOURNAL



New Monsters



New Witcher Lore



Vampires & Dragons

The Definitive Bestiary
for The Witcher TRPG!





Adventure across the world of The Witcher, uncovering its secrets, slaying its monsters, and bringing its stories to life, as entirely truthfully recollected by the famed bard Dandelion. In this book, you'll travel from the cold mountains of Kovir to the wine soaked region of Toussaint in Nilfgaard, meeting interesting characters along the way, with intrigue around every corner.

Book of Tales is a supplement for the Witcher Pen & Paper RPG which gives you six adventures that span the Continent, complete with new monsters, player content, and maps compiled into a larger campaign.

Featuring

- **6 Adventures:** Experience escapades across the Continent, including a murder mystery in the heart of Mount Carbon, pulse-pounding combat in the Claremont arena, and investigations in the mist-shrouded Alderwood.
- **New Player Content:** Expand your game with new weapons, spells, and three new playable races: Gnomes, Vran, and Werebbubbs.
- **A Connected Campaign:** Take your players on a journey across the Continent by weaving all six adventures into a country-hopping trek.