

AETALTIS

DEFENDERS OF  
**DUNBURY  
CASTLE**









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# DEFENDERS OF DUNBURY CASTLE

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DEFENDERS OF DUNBURY CASTLE

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## ABOUT OUR COVER

*Dunbury Castle stands regally atop a high cliff above the Kouros River. At its feet sits Dunbury Village.*

*Art by Russell Marks*



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# INTRODUCTION

**G**RIFFON SCOOTED ACROSS THE STRAW UNTIL HIS back pressed against the cold stone wall, but no matter how far he went, there was no escaping the snores from the opposite cell. The old man had been asleep since Griffon arrived. Suddenly, however, his neighbor woke with a terrific scream and slapped at the ground around his feet.

*“Wrong room!” cried the old man.*

Puzzled, Griffon decided the man must have been shooping a rat. Whether the rodent withdrew or simply vanished from his nightmare, the prisoner lay down again, his snores resuming.

Griffon himself couldn’t sleep at all, and it wasn’t just because of the snoring. Without a window, he couldn’t judge the hour. How long had he been in this Enaros forsaken place?

*Twice the guards had brought him gruel and replaced the guttering torch beside the stairs. Did that mean it had been two days? It felt longer, and he still didn’t understand why he had been arrested.*

*It happened in the village of Dunbury, a tiny fishing community beside the Kouros River with a massive castle looming over it from its perch atop a rocky prominence. Griffon stayed at the inn the night he’d arrived, and all seemed well. In the morning, five soldiers awaited him beneath the sign of the Three Hounds.*

*“Griffon Wye?” asked the woman in command.*

*“Yes,” he said. He half expected the soldiers to offer him an escort.*

*Instead, one of them confiscated his pack, another his walk-*



ing stick. The other two grabbed his arms at a nod from their commander, a lean and muscular woman with short red hair going white at the sides.

"You're under arrest."

"But I haven't—"

"I don't care." Her voice carried such a weight of ambivalence that Griffon shut his mouth. He went along without struggle, knowing his ledger would prove his innocence. They began climbing the long, spiral path to the gates of Dunbury Castle.

As they neared the top, Griffon marveled at the view. The morning mist fell like a gossamer veil from the western mountains as sunlight gilded their peaks. Forested hills dominated the far side of the river and stretched off to the north, where loggers had made camps deep in once-forbidden territory.

A sentry waved them in, and they crossed the first moat. In the outer bailey, new recruits drilled at archery while their instructor shook his head in despair at the results. Surrounded by the five famous defensive towers, a two-story garrison dominated the yard. The soldiers led Griffon across another drawbridge and into the central bailey.

There they entered a village in miniature, complete with vegetable plots, a pigsty, chicken coops, and a stable, which some poor soldier was mucking out. The unmistakable ring of hammer and anvil sounded from a smithy, and the smells of a latrine tower, bakehouse, and kitchen competed for dominance. The soldiers led him across the final drawbridge.

In the inner bailey, an herb garden balanced the austere severity of the chapel and keep. The soldiers conducted him through the place of arms and down into the dungeons, each one cooler and damper than the last. By the time they threw him into his cell, Griffon half expected to drown under the River Kouros.

Perhaps that was only a day ago, on second thought. Griffon couldn't be sure. All he knew was he wanted to see the sky again. He wanted to feel the open air.

Suddenly he felt a thump, and the stone slab beneath him lifted, nearly tipping him over. For a terrified instant, Griffon imagined a giant rat. He pressed all his weight against the stone.

"Go on," hissed the old man from the other cell. His hands grasped the bars, and he peered with such alertness Griffon suspected his snores had been a sham.

A muffled voice came from beneath the wobbling stone.

"Hurry," said the old man. "The guards will be back soon, and then you'll hang!"

Griffon began to argue that he was innocent. Embezzlement wasn't a hanging offense anyway. But at the sound of a door opening on the floor above, he felt more fear of the guards than of a rat. He moved back. The stone moved aside. Beneath it, a

small, dirty man peered up.

"Come with me, you get a chance," he said. "Stay here, you're dead for sure."

Griffon hesitated. The dirty man cursed, grabbed him by the shirt, and pulled him into the hole.

## THE LAST BASTION OF CIVILIZATION...

A lone fortress sitting on the edge of the wilds, a duchy mired in political conflict, a commander left on her own with her troops to hold back a rising tide of evil. Understaffed, under provisioned, and tasked with an increasingly difficult and dangerous mission, the heroic soldiers that defend this outpost need help if they're going to survive. Who will answer the call?

This is where you and your companions enter, courageous adventurers willing to risk life and spirit for the greater good of your people. You know the powers of darkness are growing, and the path to victory demands each and every person do their part. What fate awaits you? Hero? Legend? Martyr? There is only one way to find out.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

An ancient castle sits atop a high cliff on the edge of the known world, the front line in the war against the terrifying monsters that lurk beyond the borders of civilization. It's a staple of fantasy adventure gaming. It's often the first castle in the adventure and the first stop for heroes heading out into the larger world. Dunbury Castle is that place, and in this book, you'll find everything you need to bring it to life in your Fifth Edition games.

This is the second in a series of location books created for the World of Aetaltis Fifth Edition campaign setting. *Defenders of Dunbury Castle* expands on the campaign launchpad provided in the first World of Aetaltis location book, *The Heroes of Thornwall*, and offers more sites to explore, foes to defeat, and mysteries to solve as the adventurers increase their fame—or notoriety. At Dunbury Castle, they will get their first taste of kingdom-wide intrigue and will be forced to choose whether to ally themselves with those loyal to the late duke or to back the sinister machinations of the Warden's foresters. All the while, they must contend with rising numbers of endrori emerging every day from the Deeplands beneath the Donarzheis Mountains.



## WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

Defenders of Dunbury castle is divided into five chapters. Here is what you'll discover inside.

### CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

This short chapter presents an overview of the region, its history, and the major factions operating within its borders. You'll also find an overview of everyday life in the land, how the region is governed, and some information on the laws and how they are enforced.

### CHAPTER 2: MILITARY LIFE

Characters looking to stay at Dunbury Castle long-term have only to enlist as private soldiers. The pay is meagre, and one must submit to the orders of superiors, but the value of loyal service is the opportunity for advancement in the ranks as well as the knowledge that one has allies at the castle. This chapter details the duties and benefits of serving in the army and offers tips to the gamemaster for running an effective military campaign.

### CHAPTER 3: DUNBURY CASTLE

Dunbury Castle is a bastion against the forces of chaos, including monsters, endrori raiders, and outlaws. Unknown to all but the oldest dwarves, however, Dunbury was not the first stronghold to stand on the promontory that towers over the Kouros River. Beneath its deepest cellars lies a dwarven stonehold, sealed and forgotten since the time of its final stand against the Dark Hordes of Endroren.

### CHAPTER 4: THE SCIR OF DUNBURY

Discover the wider landscape around the castle as we explore the Scir of Dunbury. You'll find deep forests haunted by giant spiders, cruel endrori, and fickle fey, fertile farmland claimed by human, halfling, dwarf, and cheebat settlers, and a bustling river trade in lumber, fur, and crops sent south to market. The Scir of Dunbury is not only full of dangers, but also people who soldiers and virtuous heroes will need to protect against the forces of Endroren.

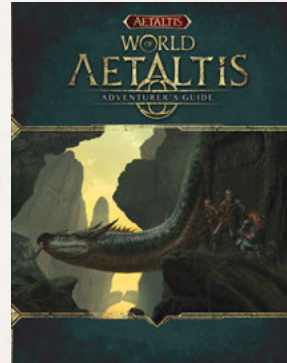
### CHAPTER 5: THE PEOPLE OF DUNBURY

From the famous Captain Brazewhite to the devious Korrella Stalk, Castle Dunbury and its environs are full of characters whom the adventurers may wish to impress, thwart, or simply delight with games, romance, or tales of their own achievements. This chapter describes some of the notable NPCs and includes their Fifth Edition game statistics.

## THE WORLD OF AETALTIS

Defenders of Dunbury Castle is set in the World of Aetaltis campaign setting. Aetaltis is a heroic fantasy world of high adventure where bold heroes stand strong against the forces of darkness for the good of all. Although this book works as a stand-alone add-on for any Fifth Edition campaign, you'll get the most value from this book when using it in conjunction with the World of Aetaltis core books.

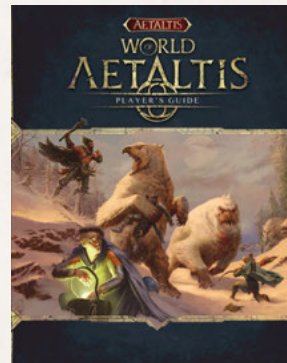
### ADVENTURER'S GUIDE



Discover Aetaltis in the *World of Aetaltis: Adventurer's Guide*, the same text used by hopeful Aetaltans to prepare before setting out to become adventurers. It is a dragon's hoard of knowledge collected by the scholars at the College of New Erinor, along with practical advice offered in the margins

from experienced adventurers and explorers. It is a must-read title for anyone that seeks to unlock all the secrets of Aetaltis.

### PLAYER'S GUIDE

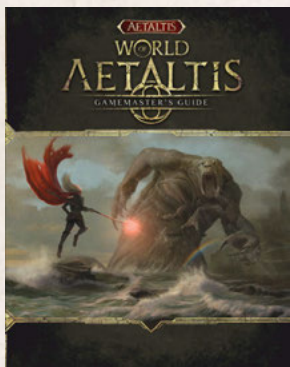


The *World of Aetaltis: Player's Guide* contains all the rules you need to create a character for a Fifth Edition compatible Aetaltis game. Inside you'll find new lineages, new classes, new backgrounds, rules for adding callings and culture to your character, and a unique point-based arcane magic

system. It's the must-have character creation tool, and the book you'll want with you at the table during your World of Aetaltis game.

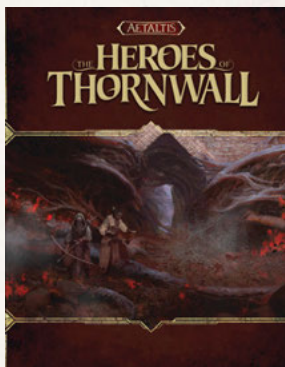


## GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE



In the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide* you'll discover everything you need as a gamemaster to craft fantastic Aetaltis adventures and run an extended Aetaltis campaign. Inside you'll discover advice for designing the perfect Aetaltis game, new monsters, rules for dark magic and corruption, and a wealth of other useful tips and tricks. Plus, a collection of gamemaster's-eyes-only secrets about Aetaltis, its gods, and its inhabitants.

## THE HEROES OF THORNWALL



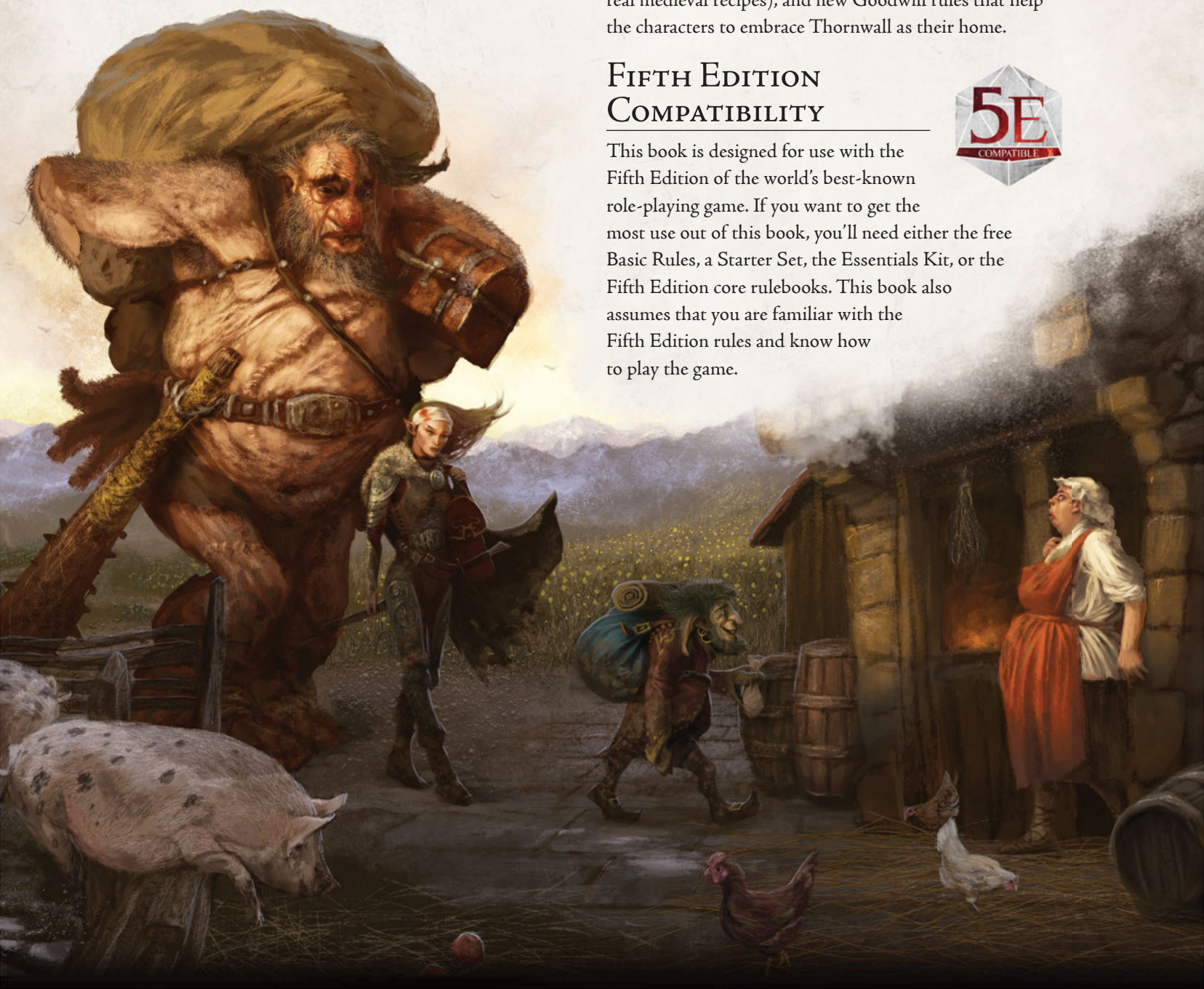
Another book you may want to check out is *The Heroes of Thornwall*, a companion book to this one centered on the town of Thornwall, located just a few days northwest of the castle. *The Heroes of Thornwall* is a campaign starter and setting book that provides you with everything

needed to launch and support your Fifth Edition campaign. It includes a fully detailed town, a classic fantasy tavern, stats for more than 20 NPCs, and a heroic starting adventure for 1st level characters. You'll also find a host of fun sidequests, a medieval menu for the tavern (complete with real medieval recipes), and new Goodwill rules that help the characters to embrace Thornwall as their home.

## FIFTH EDITION COMPATIBILITY



This book is designed for use with the Fifth Edition of the world's best-known role-playing game. If you want to get the most use out of this book, you'll need either the free Basic Rules, a Starter Set, the Essentials Kit, or the Fifth Edition core rulebooks. This book also assumes that you are familiar with the Fifth Edition rules and know how to play the game.







## CHAPTER ONE

# OVERVIEW

**G**ASPING, GRIFFON CRAWLED ONTO THE PEBBLED beach. The half-closed eye of Numos cast the strand into ghostly contrast with the dense, wooded center of the tiny island in the middle of the river. His rescuer staggered to his feet, no longer filthy but sopping wet.

"Come on, son. I heard boats push off from the docks while we were swimming." He pulled Griffon to his feet. "They're on to us."

"But how—?" Griffon shook the water out of his ears. His rescuer stood a full head shorter than he, though his shoulders seemed twice as broad. He wasn't a dwarf, despite the evidence of whiskers that seemed to have grown twice as thick in the past hour. Thatches of black hair on his bulging forearms looked

thick enough to shelter a family of beavers.

"How what?" said the man.

"How did you get into the dungeon? How do the guards not know about the water passage? How did we not drown? And how did you fit through those tunnels when I nearly got stuck—?"

The man patted his pot belly. "You calling me fat?"

"What? No, that's not— I only—"

The man put a hand over Griffon's mouth. "Quiet now. Questions later. We got to find the boat."

"What boat?"

"Questions later."

They trod along the stony shore, pausing now and then for



the man to search beneath a thicket or a pile of driftwood.

Somewhere near the center of the island, a trio of lights bobbed through the trees. Griffon felt the man's hand on his shoulder. They crouched low.

"Soldiers?" whispered Griffon.

"Much worse. Keep moving. We need to find—"

A glint of steel flashed at the man's throat. He raised his hands to show he was unarmed.

Griffon's gaze followed the long sword back to its source: a lean, muscular man in forester greens. His neat black beard encircled a dark frown. He kicked Griffon's rescuer in the chest, stepped forward, and raised his weapon to skewer Griffon.

The forester's head snapped to the side with a dull, heavy thud. His sword clattered on the ground. The man collapsed as if every bone in his body had turned to jelly. He fell into a heap, revealing a woman behind him, blood glistening on the rock in her hand.

Griffon recognized her as the commander of the group who arrested him, but she barely glanced at him. Instead, she dropped the stone and offered her hand to Griffon's rescuer.

"You need to keep your voice down, Dovey," she whispered.

The man winked at Griffon and grinned, revealing a gap behind one of his eyeteeth. "You said you didn't want any part of this, Lil."

"I didn't have much of a choice."

The man picked up the forester's fallen sword. "Want me to deal with this one?"

"No, it'd be too hard to explain. Better to let him think there were three of you, and he missed one."

"You sure?" he said.

She nodded. He dropped the sword beside the unconscious forester.

"Don't you want to keep it?" said Griffon.

"I like to travel light."

"But what if someone else catches us?"

"Then I guess I'll take his sword, too."

"You didn't exactly take this one."

"Quiet, you idiots," hissed Lil.

Lil led them back the way she'd come, pointing out a tiny dinghy hidden beneath a fishing net and fresh poplar boughs. "Except for the clever one who found you, the rest of the Warden's men insisted fugitives would shelter near the center of the island."

Griffon looked toward the distant lights, now barely visible through the tangle of woods. "You didn't warn them?"

"Must have slipped my mind."

Lil helped them pull the boat to the water. She gripped the man's hand. "All men are brothers."

"All women sisters.' Thanks, Lil."

"Don't get caught, Dovey." She gave him a gentle push toward the boat. "They'll kill you both."

As the man took up the oars, Griffon joined him in the boat. Lil pushed them into the river until the current drew them away from shore.

From the center of the island, a shriek rose above the sound of the current. It faded quickly, as if the screamer had fallen into a deep abyss. Startled and confused voices followed.

"That'll help," the man said to Griffon. He pulled the oars with a slow, practiced ease, barely making a sound.

The alarm on the island faded as they moved farther away. Griffon didn't like to imagine what was happening to those men. Rather than dwell upon it, he raised an eyebrow at the rowing man. "Dovey?"

"That's Dove to you," said the man. "Only those who fancy me call me 'Dovey.'"

Griffon smiled for the first time since his arrest. "I didn't get the impression Lil fancies you."

The man grinned. "Kid, they all fancy me."

## WELCOME TO DUNBURY

In the northern reaches of Agthor lies the Scir of Dunbury. It is a land on the edge of the wilds, where tough as nails Agthorians cling doggedly to the civilization they've managed to carve out of the wilderness. It's no easy fight, and they face a host of dangers.

Smugglers, poachers, and bandits prowl the roads and waterways, taking advantage of the thinly stretched Agthorian military's inability to guard every path. Then there are the rising tensions between the Agthorians and the mysterious fey people that inhabit the deep forests, creating the potential for unrest the people can ill afford at this time. All of this is set against the backdrop of the political fight for control of the duchy, its ducal seat empty since the death of Creesis Vaun five years ago.

Of course, this doesn't even begin to touch on the challenges the wilderness itself poses. From beasts both mundane and magical, to unforgiving mountain terrain, to the brutal snows of winter, Dunbury's people must wage a constant battle against nature. There are also the scars of the past, from forgotten dwarven ruins haunted by the ghosts of the dead to places where the very essence of the world remains corrupted by the atrocities of the Age of Darkness.

The final, and perhaps greatest, threat is that of the endrori. For centuries the endrori existed only in dark stories from days long past, but the ancient wards in the Donar-zheis Mountains that imprisoned these foul creatures in the Deeplands are failing. Goblins, orcs, trolls, and worse prowl



the hills. The sightings were scattered at first, but each day brings new reports, suggesting this ancient evil may threaten the land in earnest once again.

So why in the name of the Enaros does anyone stay? For the soldiers assigned to Dunbury Castle, the answer is simple: duty. They must stand strong against the darkness for the good of all. They are the bulwark of the north, protecting the rich southern lands from the evil that lurks in the wilds.

For young nobles, it's a chance to carve their names into the land and forge their own destiny. The crowded, settled lands of the south offer little potential, but in the north one might build a legacy to pass down to their heirs.

For merchants and entrepreneurs, it's virgin territory. Untouched timberlands, forgotten gold mines, seemingly endless game for trapping and fur trading, and a populace in desperate need of the goods manufactured in the south. If one is willing to risk everything, it's a chance for unparalleled profit.

For the common folk, the scir is a land of freedom and opportunity. It's a place where one can build a life free from the constant meddling of nobles, where land laws are loosely enforced, and where one may work to build their own fortune rather than fattening the purses of others.

Finally, there are the adventurers. For adventurers, there is no end to the opportunities offered by the Scir of Dunbury. There are endrori to hunt, Deepland halls to delve, and ruins filled with forgotten wonders to explore. It's a place where everyone from the shepherd guarding his flock to the beleaguered defenders of Dunbury Castle need heroes.

## HISTORY

The following history is provided for the gamemaster. It isn't intended for the players, and much of it is unknown even to the people of Aetaltis. That being said, it won't negatively impact the game if you decide to let your players discover some or all of this information during your campaign.

### AGE OF MAGIC

Thousands of years ago, when the fey ruled Aetaltis, a powerful elven court controlled the land we call the Scir of Dunbury. In those days, a primeval forest as old as Aetaltis itself covered the entire region, unicorns roamed the forests, and all manner of fey creatures called the region home. Little is known about this ancient court, and no significant evidence of it remains. As for the primeval forest, it no longer exists, although pockets of virgin woodland remain hidden in the highlands.

### DWARVEN AGE

After the Enaros diminished the power of magic on Aetaltis, the influence of the fey declined. As the fey retreated, the dwarves of the Donarzheis Mountains extended their kingdoms to the surface. During this period, they established a number of outposts and strongholds, including a fortress on the promontory where Dunbury Castle stands today.

### AGE OF DARKNESS

When the Dark Hordes rose and spread their reign of destruction across the land, they ravaged the once-great forest that dominated the region, although fey magic preserved a few sites. Some of these, like the Spiderwood, are now home to dangerous creatures left over from those dark days. Others serve as homes to Ellorriyan fey who fiercely defend these old growth forests and vigorously avoid contact with the destructive humans.

As for the dwarven fortress, if the fragments of ancient scrolls we have are accurate, it held strong against the Dark Hordes for more than a century. Eventually, however, like nearly every stronghold in those days, it fell. The minions of darkness razed the castle, leaving behind only the jagged ruins of its foundations. Even these ruins were largely removed during the building of the stonehold in the Age of Shadow, but bits of the old foundations remain and are visible in a few places around the base of Dunbury Castle's outer walls.

### AGE OF SHADOWS

While many dwarves fled the Deeplands when the Enaros imprisoned Endroren and his armies there, the dwarves of the Donarzheis Mountains refused to surrender their subterranean homes. So it was that when the gates closed and the wards were raised, few dwarves remained on the surface in this region. The balance of power once more shifted to the fey courts. Their agents spread throughout the land, planting great oaks, restoring the forests, and establishing new communities.

The remaining dwarves in the region regrouped at the site of the old castle. There, they set to constructing a new fortress, one of the legendary stoneholds. They did not build atop the hill as their ancestors had, but rather they carved the new fortress right into the living stone of the rocky promontory. The intent was to create a stronghold that would not only hold fast against endrori assaults, but avoid conflict entirely by having no sign of its presence on the surface. All the while they took precautions not to dig too deeply for fear of striking the monster-infested caverns below.

Their efforts were rewarded, for not even the elves of the region knew about the new dwarven stronghold. Any pass-



ing by would see the ruins of the old dwarven castle atop the hill, but there was no sign that an entire community lay underneath. The people of the stonehold lived in safety and security for many years.

The stonehold's eventual fall came not from a defeat but from a victory. Just a little more than a century after the stonehold's completion, word reached the dwarves that far to the west, in the ancient homeland of their people, a group of dwarves had founded a new country called Malador. All dwarves were welcome and encouraged to join in on the building of a new dwarven legacy.

Although a few of the dwarves stayed back, the majority of the stonehold's population decided to head west. The remaining dwarves could neither defend nor maintain the massive stonehold. So it was that they abandoned it and moved south, seeking a new home away from the elven courts and the painful memories of their lost Deepland halls.

## AGE OF ATLAN

The arrival of the otherworldly Atlan Alliance threw Aetaltis into chaos once again, especially for the elves of this region. Most notably, the notorious Alliance general known as the Wolf, furious when an elven sorceress refused his proposal of marriage, unleashed his army on the elves in the region. The violence and horrors he and his followers inflicted were nothing short of a massacre. The survivors and their descendants retreated into the deepest, most hidden parts of the forest, and they have never forgotten the wickedness of the first humans they encountered.

It was also during this age that humans first began to colonize the region. Often they established their own com-

munities, but sometimes they built on the ruins of elven villages or old dwarven outposts. Soon the humans, along with the other lineages of the Alliance and their enari allies, rose to dominate the region.

In this period, after the depredations of the Wolf ended but before the terror of the Cataclysm, the first stones of Dunbury Castle were laid. A decade later, work on the fortress finished, and Dunbury Castle became the defender of the north in the kingdom of Agthor. The Agthorian king had great plans for the region, and hoped this mighty fortress would serve as the first step in a grand effort to civilize the northern wilds.

## THE CATACLYSM

When the Cataclysm struck and the arcane world gates collapsed, it ended the flow of settlers, wealth, and supplies that had streamed into Aetaltis for a century. It also destroyed the Alliance centers of power, and almost overnight military outposts like Dunbury Castle found themselves completely cut off from the rest of the world.

Inevitably, this power vacuum allowed unscrupulous and despotic individuals to seize control in the region, often without opposition. This was the case at Dunbury Castle, where a greedy captain of the Alliance Army took control of the castle and laid claim to the surrounding countryside. He was a brutal, vicious man, and those citizens he didn't kill or enslave, he eventually drove from the land.

As the years went on, the towns and villages emptied, and the greedy captain watched his power crumble. At last, he was killed by his own troops, who abandoned the castle and headed south ahead of the oncoming winter snow.







## DUNBURY TIMELINE

**5000 years ago**—The region that includes the Scir of Dunbury is ruled by a powerful fey court.

**3600 years ago**—The fey court's power wanes.

**3500 years ago**—The dwarves rule the land that will someday become the Duchy of Vaun. The fey retreat to hidden villages in the deep forests. A dwarven fortress is constructed where Dunbury Castle stands today.

**1700 years ago**—The Dark Hordes invade the Donarzheis Mountains and surrounding lands.

**1600 years ago**—The dwarven fortress that preceded Dunbury Castle falls to the Dark Hordes.

**800 years ago**—Endroren is defeated, and the Donarzheis Mountains are sealed with most of the dwarves of that kingdom still inside.

**750 years ago**—The fey emerge from hiding. Elves work to restore the forests and begin to build new settlements. This includes the settlement that was founded on the town of Thornwall's current location.

**750 years ago**—The dwarves remaining on the surface construct a secret stonehold inside the promontory where Dunbury Castle sits today.

**600 years ago**—Nearly all the dwarves residing in the stonehold decide to leave for the newly formed dwarven nation of Malador. The stonehold is abandoned.

**425 years ago / 0 AC**—The Atlan Alliance arrives on Aetaltis.

**24 AC**—The ruthless Atlan explorer known as the Wolf starts his expedition to the Donarzheis Mountain highlands.

**30 AC**—The Wolf discovers Thornwall and desires the settlement's leader, an elven woman named Elloridan<sup>1</sup> Ellswyth. She spurns him, so he sets the settlement ablaze and cuts down the great oak at its center.

**30 AC**—Livid that Ellswyth rejected him, the Wolf begins a program of extermination, hunting the fey and burning their villages.

**36 AC**—The Alliance leaders receive word of the Wolf's actions in the north and recall him to Erinor.

**55 AC**—The Alliance begins work on Dunbury Castle.

**65 AC**—Dunbury Castle is completed.

**105 AC**—The Cataclysm brings an end to the power of the Atlan Alliance and traps the survivors on Aetaltis.

**105 AC**—Dunbury Castle begins a two-century period of repeated abandonment and restoration.

**316 AC**—Creesis Vaun's father (Gryphon Vaun) is born.

**334 AC**—A fur trapper settles the elven ruins where Thornwall sits today.

**334 AC**—Creesis Vaun's father meets Malinar Drakewyn while fighting the Pendrothan warlords.

**339 AC**—Creesis Vaun's father, Gryphon, joins his army with Malinar Drakewyn's.

**339 AC**—Drakewyn sends Vaun's army north to secure the northern border of their new country.

**339 AC**—Dreswyn is born to Elloridan Ulswyn. She is a direct descendant of Elloridan Ellswyth.

**346 AC**—The Duchy of Vaun is created by Malinar Drakewyn and awarded to Gryphon Vaun.

**351 AC**—Creesis Vaun is born.

**361 AC**—Creesis Vaun's father takes him on a survey of the duchy. They visit the village of Thornwall.

**376 AC**—Creesis Vaun's father dies at 60. Creesis becomes duke at age 25.

**377 AC**—Duke Vaun is injured during a hunting trip near Thornwall and meets Dreswyn.<sup>2</sup>

**378 AC**—Duke Vaun constructs his hunting lodge at Thornwall. The town begins to grow.

**387 AC**—Malinar Drakewyn II arranges a marriage between Duke Creesis Vaun and Lady Greta Oglind.

**392 AC**—The Duchess blackmails Duke Vaun to stop him from seeing Dreswyn.

**393 AC**—Dreswyn's mother dies. Dreswyn takes the title of Elloridan.

**418 AC**—Duke Creesis Vaun dies at age 67.

**423 AC—Present day**—An earthquake shakes Thornwall, and goblins start attacking people in the woods a short time later. A bold group of adventurers defeat the endrori and bring security to Thornwall.

1. Elloridan is the fey word for "matriarchal ruler." Many Aetaltans simply translate this as "Queen" in the Common language, but the differences between the roles of Queen and Elloridan make this a poor translation.  
2. The complete story of Creesis Vaun and Dreswyn is found in *The Heroes of Thornwall*.



## MODERN HISTORY

Very little is known about the castle's history after that point. It appears to have been occupied on and off over the next two centuries. Now and again a powerful warlord or ambitious noble would march north and occupy it, only to watch their fortunes fade as they realized there weren't enough people to rule and, perhaps more importantly, tax.

It wasn't until the year 339 AC that this changed. In that year, Gryphon Vaun joined forces with Malinar Drakewyn in the latter's drive to bring peace to Agthor. Malinar sent Gryphon and his army north with the goal of establishing Dunbury Castle as the northern border of Drakewyn's new country. Despite resistance from local warlords, Gryphon cut a path up the Kouros River and to the castle. By the end of the fighting season, Gryphon himself raised Drakewyn's banner over the castle's highest tower.

Soon after, Gryphon returned south with the bulk of his forces to reinforce Drakewyn in his final push to unite Agthor, but Gryphon left a contingent of troops behind to restore and hold the castle. The castle has been held continuously by Agthorian forces ever since.

Five years later, with the war behind him, Gryphon Vaun expressed his desire to lay down his sword. Drakewyn honored his ally by creating a new duchy in the north of Agthor, christened it the Duchy of Vaun, and named Gryphon its duke. The bequeathment included the city of Tristanford, Dunbury Castle, and all the surrounding countryside.

Gryphon Vaun passed rulership of the duchy to his son, Creesis, but sadly, Creesis died five years ago and left no heir.

## PRESENT DAY

Now it is the year 423 AC. As competing claims to the duchy's seat are contested in the High Lords court in New Erinor, the needs of Dunbury Castle and Scir of Dunbury are often forgotten. For some this is a boon, especially wrongdoers, smugglers, and bandits, but also for any who prefer a bit less noble-meddling in their affairs.

For some, however, this lack of leadership is a burden, and this is certainly the case for the defenders of Dunbury Castle. Over the past three years, sightings of and attacks by endrori have grown at a worrying pace. It is only a matter of time before a large force of endrori find their way to the surface here, an event that will threaten not only Dunbury, but all of Agthor.

## EVERYDAY LIFE

The region of Aetaltis where this book is set is a classic European medieval fantasy setting. If you're ever in doubt about what is normal in Dunbury, you'll never go wrong if you fall back on European medieval history. The primary difference is that, thanks to magic, life for the people of Dunbury is a bit better than the average medieval townspeople could expect.

## PEASANTS AND NOBLES

Dunbury is part of a country called Agthor. Agthor is more enlightened than most of the kingdoms on the Amethyst Sea in that all citizens are afforded clear rights under the law, but it is still a stratified society with clearly defined economic classes. The noble class rules and the lower classes labor. In between is the gentry, a growing class in Agthor that consists of merchants, skilled craftspeople, spellcasters, and rank and file religious functionaries.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Villagers produce most of their own food, but larger settlements may have a grocer and a shop or two that provide bread, meat, and other food products. Villagers also travel to larger towns where they may trade for foodstuffs in the weekly markets. Taverns may also serve prepared food, especially in smaller settlements where it may be the settlement's only business.

In the various industrial settlements, such as lumber camps and mines, food is usually purchased by a quartermaster and shipped in to the camp. Meals are part of a laborer's payment, so this is a typical expense accounted for by the noble or merchant that runs the mine. Meals are communal and served in large dining halls.

## HEALTH AND HEALING

Spells, potions, and the presence of magical herbs in the forests around Dunbury Castle mean the average resident of the scir is healthier than their medieval European Earth counterpart. There are, however, limits to magic. Plagues and virulent disease can overwhelm the abilities of healers. Also, the most powerful healing spells often require exotic or expensive material components most people simply can't afford.

If a person falls ill, the first stop is the local mundane healer. A visit to the healer is often followed by a trip to the herbalist to acquire poultices and potions. In the case of especially grievous injuries or deadly diseases, the injured party is taken to a temple for the attentions of the cleric, but for many, this means a long overland trip to Dunbury Castle or Thornwall.



## MAGIC AND SPELLS

Magic is an ever-present force in Aetaltis and is a palpable part of everyday life. Almost everyone has witnessed a spellcaster casting a spell, many people have seen creatures using magic-based abilities, and most have benefitted directly from magical effects.

Non-spellcasters in Agthor, however, are never completely comfortable around magic. Divine magic has many benefits, but it cuts both ways, depending on whether you've pleased or displeased the gods. As for arcane magic, its use is governed purely by the will of mortals. That is enough to make many people wary of those who wield such strange powers. What makes this worse, however, is that the fallen enaros Endroren was once the Lord of Magic. He surrendered that title long ago, but people remain suspicious of arcane spellcasters, even if they desire the utility of their spells and enchantments.

## RELIGION AND THE DIVINE

Most people in Agthor worship a pantheon of deities known as the Enaros. The most notable exceptions are the dwarves and the newardin. Newardin acknowledge that the Enaros are extremely powerful, but most do not revere them as gods. On the other hand, the dwarves still blame the Enaros for the loss of their Deepland homes, and thus they have renounced them.

## ADVENTURERS

Many, but not all, people in Dunbury have met an adventurer at some point in their lives. The residents of Dunbury Castle are more likely to have met folks on heroic quests, and Dunbury's familiarity with noble visitors means its people are slightly less impressed by adventurers than your typical outland townsfolk. That said, in these difficult times, with Dunbury Castle's soldiery stretched thin, adventurers that live up to their heroic reputations can expect a warm welcome.

## MONSTERS

The people of Dunburyscir (a common name used by the locals when referring to their home) are no strangers to monsters. The sparsely populated highlands are home to all manner of strange creatures, from corrupted forms of natural animals to strange beasts touched by magic. Typically, encounters are brief, and consist of a shepherd or hunter stumbling across some solitary monster wandering in the forest. Most townsfolk treat encounters like these the same way one might treat an encounter with a wolf or bear. It isn't common, and it's not something you want to happen to you, but when you tell the story back at the tavern, it

won't generate more surprise than a close encounter with a natural animal.

This assumes one stays within the boundaries of the lands designated as safe by Duke Creesis before his death. Travel north beyond the borders of the scir, northeast into the Grimvold Forest, or into any of the uninhabited regions of the realm is almost certain to result in dangerous encounters. From endrori warbands, to wild fey, to the spirits of the ancient dead, there is no telling what one might face in these untamed and dangerous lands. Every person in Dunburyscir knows this and most refuse, quite wisely, to enter the forbidden lands.

## MUNDANE ENEMIES

A wide variety of mundane enemies threaten the people of the region. When traveling the roads, especially those unguarded by the Dunbury Castle patrols, people know to stay alert for bandits. The same holds true for the waterways, where river pirates prowl looking for prey. To this end, most folks arm themselves when traveling and are always ready for trouble. These threats also make them more than happy to share the road with honorable adventurers, and they'll go out of their way to reward adventurers willing to travel alongside them.

## GOVERNANCE

The Agthorian duchies are divided into governmental districts called scirs (pronounced skeer). Scirs are further subdivided into ridings, each of which is roughly 20-40 miles across, or roughly the distance a person can ride in a day. It's worth noting that while every piece of land in a duchy is part of a scir, not every piece of land in a scir is part of a riding. Ridings are created as necessary, usually when a settlement in the area grows large enough to warrant the additional subdivision.

Dunbury Castle is part of the aptly named the Scir of Dunbury and sits in the Riding of Stonehill. Dunbury is a relatively large scir compared to others in Agthor, although a large portion of it is untamed wilderness. It includes not only the castle but a number of towns and villages as well, including the town of Thornwall. Although we will touch on the duchy briefly, in this book we focus on Dunbury Castle and the Scir of Dunbury.

## DUCHY OF VAUN

Vaun was created and ceded to Gryphon Vaun by Lord Malinar Drakewyn 77 years ago in the year 346 AC. There have only been two Dukes of Vaun in that time: Gryphon Vaun and his son Creesis. Five years ago, in 418 AC, Duke



Creesis Vaun died without an heir. At the time in which this book is set, the year 423 AC, Lord Valinar Drakewyn has not appointed a new duke. The ducal seat remains hotly contested, and there are a number of equally ranked petitioners for the title. Of particular note is Warden Oswald Balewick, who claims the Duke promised him control of the Duchy—in unrecorded private conversations, of course.

### DUKE'S SENESCHAL

The seneschal is the duke's representative. He is charged with the application of justice and control of the duchy's administration. The current seneschal, Crandell Crestleford, is quite old. Before the duke's death, he had intended to retire. Now, he feels he has no choice but to remain at his post until a new duke is named and they can appoint a new, younger seneschal.

Crestleford once traveled extensively around the duchy to inspect the duke's holdings, but due to his advanced age and deteriorating health, he no longer leaves Tristanford.

### WARDEN

Oswald Balewick is the Warden of Vaun. The warden is charged with managing the duchy's forests and woodlands. He ensures the land is used properly and the duke's laws are followed. His will is carried out by the foresters charged with enforcing the law. Normally, a warden visits each forester once or twice each year. Since the death of the duke, however, Warden Balewick has been in New Erinor, vying for the ducal seat. Additional details about Warden Balewick are found in *Chapter 5: People of Dunbury*.

### DUNBURY CASTLE

Commanding a position on a high bluff at a sharp bend in the Kouros River stands Dunbury Castle. The castle's occupants are charged with the defense of Dunburyscir. Dunbury Castle is a military outpost. No noble family resides there, although it's not unusual for soldiers to bring their families, especially the officers. A detailed description of Dunbury Castle and its occupants is found in *Chapter 3: Dunbury Castle* and *Chapter 5: People of Dunbury*. Information about the role of the castle and its leadership in the governance of the scir is provided in *Chapter 2: Military Life*.

### PUBLIC SERVANTS

No noble lord rules the scir. Rather, a collection of appointed officers carries out the will of the duke. In addition to the military leaders stationed at the castle, the following roles are important to the management of the scir.

### MAYORS AND BAILIFFS

The duty of mayors and bailiffs is to see that the lord's or lady's wishes, which in most cases match those of the Duke of Vaun, are carried out in the town, village, or settlement they control. In addition, they are to ensure the settlement is administered according to the duke's desires. Mayors and bailiffs may also sit in judgment of legal and civil disputes.

### COUNCILS

In larger communities, the work of the mayors and bailiffs is often supported by an advisory council. The council's primary responsibility is to manage the day-to-day affairs of a settlement. This includes maintenance of public works, collection of taxes, and provisioning for the settlement's security. The mayor or bailiff oversees the council to ensure their actions are in line with the desires of the lord or lady.

The number of members on a council varies, but typically they consist of six representatives from the community. Although the seats are initially filled by lot from a pool of likely candidates, once filled, the seats are often passed down to a chosen successor. As long as the council continues to manage the settlement effectively, most citizens have no issue with this process, but on a few occasions a councilmember who failed in their responsibilities has been ousted by the mayor, the bailiff, the other council members, or even the general populace.

### CHIEF CONSTABLE

Many larger settlements have a chief constable. The chief constable's duties are to enforce the law within the settlement's borders (which usually extends to the town walls), organize the town watch, and command the local militia. In times of need, they may appoint temporary deputy constables to assist them. The chief constable is elected in an open, show-of-hands election and continues to hold the post at the town's pleasure as long as they are deemed fit to serve. Alternatively, the constable may be appointed by the nobleperson who rules the region in which the settlement sits. The chief constable's jurisdiction ends at the town walls.

### FORESTER

Where a chief constable enforces the law within a settlement's walls, foresters enforce the law in the land surrounding it. In particular, it is their duty to see that the forests are managed in accordance with the duke's wishes. If a person breaks the forest laws, or if a criminal from town flees into the surrounding countryside, it is the forester's duty to bring the individual to justice. The post of forester is appointed by the duchy's warden.



In times of need, the forester can appoint woodwards to aid them. These are the equivalent of the chief constable's deputies. The post of woodward is temporary in theory, but in lands such as Dunburyscir, where there is a great deal of territory to patrol, many woodwards hold their positions for extended periods.

#### TOWN WATCH

In large villages and towns, every able-bodied person is expected to spend time each year as a member of the town watch. Most settlements have a meager supply of weapons and armor used to outfit citizens when they execute their time on watch.

#### TOWN MILITIA

In times of war, it is expected that the chief constable will organize a militia to defend the town and serve the duke. Every able-bodied person is expected to own a bow and know how to shoot it. Each person must demonstrate their skills bi-annually to the chief constable. Failure to pass the tests, which are relatively simple, may lead to time in the stocks, imprisonment, or a sentence of service.

### LAW AND ORDER

Within a settlement, the law is enforced by the mayor, the bailiff, the chief constable, the town watch, or any deputies the constable has appointed. Outside the town walls, the law is enforced by foresters and any woodwards the foresters appoint.

#### "DO NO HARM"

The legal system of Agthor is relatively complex because it is designed to protect people equally under the law regardless of their station. In practice, however, the difficulty of fully understanding the laws means that in outland regions like Dunburyscir, the law is often boiled down to the simple adage of "do no harm."



#### SIMPLIFYING THE LAW

Trying to decipher complicated laws and legal codes isn't what most people call "fun." That's the reason for the "do no harm" concept. As the gamemaster, you can make a simple judgment on whether or not you think a player's actions were good or bad, and how the aggrieved parties react to those actions.

#### MILITARY LAW VS. CIVIL LAW

This section focuses on civil law, the law set down and enforced by the ruling nobility of a land. Generally, these same laws are followed and enforced by the country's military, but there are some exceptions. Any differences between the legal responsibilities of members of the military and common citizens are described in *Chapter 2: Military Life*.

#### WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Of particular importance to adventurers are laws governing the ownership and use of martial weapons and armor. Those of noble blood may carry martial weapons as they will and wear whatever armor they choose. This is true throughout Agthor. In the dangerous outlands, this law has never held much weight. This is especially true since the increased sightings of dangerous creatures, including endrori, in the wilds. It's unlikely a forester or chief constable in the settlements around Dunbury Castle will take issue with someone wearing armor or wielding war weapons.

It's important to note there is a distinct difference between something being legal and its being acceptable. Although it might be legal for a person to carry a broadsword and wear plate armor, doing so while shopping at the market or hanging out in the tavern puts people on edge and will negatively color the reaction of people the character interacts with. Imagine a person from our world walked into a store wearing full combat gear and carrying a loaded assault rifle. You can probably imagine the response. The reaction in Aetaltis to a comparative show of arms in public might be slightly less dramatic, but that sort of gear has one use: fighting to the death. That's no way to start a friendly conversation.

#### JUDGMENT

Simple cases are tried on the spot by whatever law enforcement official confronts the lawbreaker. Caught urinating in public? No need for a judge. You're off to the stocks. Fighting in the street? No court case required; that's a sentence of service.

For more complicated cases, or for simple cases where the accused resists their punishment, the mayor or bailiff sits in judgment. This is typically a casual affair. Everyone shows up at the appropriate place at the appointed time. The adjudicator hears the story from both sides and makes a decision.

For serious offenses, such as murder, the same process is followed, although in some cases the adjudicator may elect to send the accused to Dunbury Castle or even the ducal seat of Tristanford for judgment. This is at the discretion of the adjudicator, not the accused.





Players will make terrible decisions. It's inevitable. This might happen because they have no real-life consequences for their actions in-game, or because they get a little carried away, or, more often, because they just make simple mistakes. It's no fun when one of these bad decisions derails the adventure, and it breaks the illusion if you simply wave these things off like they didn't happen.

When this happens in the dungeon, it's pretty easy to recover. A fighter got carried away and killed the goblin chief before he can question him? Ah, well. He's a goblin. The dwarf smashes the valuable magic mirror? Too bad. Less loot for everyone.

It gets trickier when the mistakes take place in civilized lands. What happens when the rogue gets caught sneaking into someone's house while looking for evidence that the person is a vampire? Or maybe the player decides to try out their character's ability to pick pockets, only to get caught in the act. Unless you're ready to play an extended medieval version of a police procedural or you're looking forward to a bloody melee that takes out half the town, these types of mistakes can be problematic for the campaign.

The World of Aetaltis offers a number of systems for dealing with these problems. Spending Goodwill is one of the primary tools available for getting a character out of trouble. If that doesn't work, there is also information in the Law and Order section that talks about how different crimes are handled and punished. There are, however, easier ways to handle problems like these.

## TRUST

In real life, people are actually pretty trusting. Keep in mind that generally, the characters arrived as potential heroes. The very fact that they are there to aid the locals will generate a certain amount of automatic trust. Once they start saving people, this trust will grow even more.

If the players make a mistake, have the victim behave as most people do when dealing with someone they trust:



*The party is sneaking around inside the home of the mayor at night, looking for evidence he is the werewolf, but the mayor catches them in the act. The party quickly explains what they're doing there. What happens next?*

*The mayor isn't thrilled they're in his home, but he trusts these brave heroes. He expresses his displeasure,*

*assures them he's not a werewolf, and politely shows them out with no hard feelings.*

## BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

When you're dealing with someone you like and trust, you'll often give them the benefit of the doubt (sometimes even when they don't deserve it). Use this if the players get themselves into trouble in town:



*The party's rogue swipes a silver candlestick from the mantle of a noble's home when no one is looking. On the way out the door, the owner spots the candlestick protruding from the rogue's coat. What happens?*

*The noble really likes these heroes, and he knows they wouldn't rob him. He tells the rogue that he saw him admiring the candlesticks earlier, and declares that he thinks the rogue simply forgot to put it back. To the noble, this is the only logical explanation; he hasn't even considered that the rogue might rob him. The rogue (if he's smart) blushes, agrees, returns the candlestick, and the adventure continues.*

## FORGIVENESS

In real life, people are amazingly forgiving. This is particularly true when they're dealing with someone they know and trust. Use this to let minor slights slide. If nothing else, no one wants to get on the bad side of a group of skilled adventurers:



*The fighter is convinced that the sheriff is in league with the enemy. When the sheriff walks into the tavern, the fighter draws his sword and attacks! The townspeople and deputies all leap to the sheriff's defense, and it looks like things are going to get ugly fast. The party discovers they may have made a mistake. What happens next?*

*The sheriff calls his men off and sheathes his sword. He surrenders and offers to let them use spells to prove his innocence if they like. He says he understands the pressure they are under to solve the problem, and he forgives them for accusing him.*

These approaches will help you to avoid adventurers causing accidental derailing conflicts, and will even make your game feel more realistic.



There is an appeal process in Agthor, but to take advantage of it, one must either wait for one of the traveling truth-reading priests of Toletren to come through town, or move the case to a larger court. This is a lengthy process that usually involves the accused sitting in a cell somewhere for a long period of time. There is no bail in Agthor. In addition, it is rare such an appeal results in a positive outcome for the accused, so the option is used sparingly.

#### PUNISHMENT

No matter the crime, there are a number of tried-and-true punishments favored in Dunburyscir.

##### FINES

The guilty party is fined an amount equal to roughly double the cost of their actions. The cost of their actions is determined by the adjudicator. In cases of stolen or damaged goods, this is relatively simple to calculate. In the case of lost work or other intangible costs, the amount of the fine is at the adjudicator's discretion.

##### TIME IN THE STOCKS

The point of the stocks is to publicly humiliate a person. It's also a way of announcing to the community that a person may need to be watched. Finally, it offers the aggrieved an opportunity to safely confront the guilty party.

Disturbances of the peace are typically punished with time in the stocks. Fights that don't end in serious injury, lewd acts, or just general troublemaking are all crimes where the stocks get employed as punishment. Normally a day or two in the stocks is considered sufficient in these cases.

Time in the stocks may also accompany more serious crimes. The time is significantly longer in these cases, possibly a week or more.

##### SERVICE

Some crimes may be punished with sentences of service. The guilty party may have to repair roads, work on the city walls, or spend time working on other public works projects. Sentences may last a few days or a few months, depending on the severity of the crime.

##### EXILE

Any person who is a continued nuisance may be exiled from the community, the riding, or even the scir. This is typical in cases where no one is at real risk of harm, but the actions of the person are so disruptive it is considered best to remove them from the community. In the case of exile, the person is given enough food and water for a two-day journey (if they can't outfit themselves for the trip), taken to a point a few hours outside the borders, and sent on their way.

#### IMPRISONMENT

People in the settlements around Dunbury Castle are only imprisoned if they are too dangerous to go free, are awaiting execution, or are being sent south to Dunbury Castle or Tristanford. Otherwise, the punishments described above are far more likely. Dunbury Castle has dungeons, and anyone may be imprisoned there at the discretion of the castle's commander or by order of a high-ranking noble such as the warden or seneschal.

#### EXECUTION

Execution is always an option as a punishment for crimes. The main crimes in Dunburyscir that result in execution are murder, banditry, and piracy. The typical method of execution is hanging until dead. Most executions are carried out at the Crossroads (14).

## MAJOR FACTIONS

There are competing factions throughout Dunburyscir, each with their own agendas. Some of these, such as the Agthorian military and the foresters, are formally organized and operate as a unified whole. Many, such as the bandits and the endrori, operate independently but are usefully categorized as a faction for game purposes.

### AGTHORIAN MILITARY

The Agthorian military is a force for order and good in the dangerous borderlands of Dunburyscir. Stationed at Dunbury Castle and commanded by the honorable Captain Elaris Brazewhite, the Agthorian soldiers are well-respected by the people of the scir. For honest folks, when the soldiers arrive, they know things will be all right. For dishonest folks, it means the jig is up.

The problem Brazewhite faces is there are too few soldiers assigned to Dunbury for the scir's size, especially with the rising endrori threat. Even more troubling, Warden Balewick has insisted all soldiers remain assigned to the rivers and roads to protect the duchy's economic interests, leaving most of the northern towns, settlements, and villages to fend for themselves.

### BANDITS

Like any region this close to the wilds, bandits are a regular threat the people of Dunburyscir must contend with. Organized into loose gangs, they stake out territory and prey on whoever stumbles across their paths. They're also fond of ambushing travelers, and a few of the bolder bandit captains will set up a toll station, demanding payment from any who wish to pass. Although the military breaks these up, it might



be days after receiving a report before Brazewhite can send troops. In theory, the foresters might step in to assist, but lately they've looked the other way for a cut of the profit.

## ENDRORI

Every month more endrori appear, along with other monsters from the deeps, and they are the fastest growing threat to the people of the duchy. Their presence reinforces the widely held belief that the ancient wards that locked the endrori in the Deeplands are systematically failing. As a ward fails, a passage to the surface opens, and it isn't long before some endrori warband discovers it.

To date, the endrori have not acted in an organized fashion. Perhaps a warband of orcs sets up camp in a ruined keep or a tribe of goblins start raiding the nearby village, but there is no sense that they are under the command of a powerful leader such as a wraethdari or abomonae. If such a leader should arise, however, the threat of this leader assembling the scattered monsters into a Dark Horde is one that keeps Captain Brazewhite up at night.

## Fey Court

Although the characters and the people of the region don't know this for certain, there is at least one Ellorayan fey court in Dunburyscir. It is located around 60 miles northwest of Thornwall, hidden in the depths of an ancient virgin forest. Heavy use of magic hides the paths to the court from outsiders, and the people of the court go out of their way to avoid contact with outsiders. They will aggressively defend their home from discovery, and have done so on more than one occasion. Although they have no desire to reveal their presence, if a major threat to their home arises or there is a threat to the region that can only be overcome through cooperation of all good peoples, they may reveal themselves to the outside world.

## FORESTERS

The foresters are meant to serve on the side of law and order, enforcing the duke's law in the wilderness the way the constable does in the town. Over the past two years, however, Warden Balewick has made a series of subtle changes that is slowly transforming them into his own personal army: a small army, yes, but a force that puts his commands before all others.

And the problem grows more troubling every day. By replacing foresters that question his commands and appointing additional foresters unassociated with a town or settlement, the Warden has increased their numbers. Most

of these new foresters are competent, if corrupt, but a few of the newest are little more than bandits and thugs with a title.

## PIRATES

Pirates are the nautical equivalent of bandits. When a target presents itself on the river, they deploy small, quick boats from either bank and quickly surround the target boat. If the target's pilot seems unwilling to allow them to board, they soften the crew up with a few volleys from their crossbows. Moments later they scramble up over the side of the target boat, fight off any remaining resistance, and search for booty. As quickly as they came, they climb back over the sides and disappear into the fog.

## SMUGGLERS

The smugglers of Dunbury make their profit by avoiding the taxes and shares demanded by the duchy. Poached furs are a favorite trade item for smugglers, although anything taken from the wilds against the duke's laws are fair game. This includes everything from dangerous animals to rare herbs to mundane goods, such as lumber, harvested from forbidden woodlands.

Smugglers also make decent coin bringing illegal goods into the scir. From controlled martial weapons and armor to forbidden Zhamayen spice, they're happy to provide goods the authorities don't want you to have. They also help their buyers avoid the eyes of the authorities, say when a forester wants a few dozen swords for unknown purposes and prefers Dunbury Castle not hear about it.

## WILD FEY

The Grimvold Forest is home to scattered communities of Feylariyan wild fey. They live in independent tribes, but they can and do coordinate as needed to drive off threats. They are unpredictable, rely heavily on magic, and know the forests better than even the most experienced forester. They are also deeply antagonistic toward humans, a cultural behavior formed in response to the evils committed by the Wolf.





## CHAPTER TWO

# MILITARY LIFE

**G**RIFFON MUNCED ON BUTTERED BLACK BREAD while Dove conferred with their hosts. The Thatchers were red-cheeked, middle-aged folk who made their home in a small village a few miles west of where Dove and Griffon had hidden their rowboat.

"The word from the castle is the Warden's men returned from the Trysting Isle fewer than when they left," said Mrs. Thatcher. She poured milk into a pair of wooden mugs and offered it to her guests. Her husband cracked eggs into a skillet popping with sausages.

"What about Lil?" said Dove.

Mrs. Thatcher shrugged. "She'll be all right. We still have a few other friends in the castle."

Griffon swallowed the last of his bread before speaking.

"Who are you people? I mean, I'm grateful, but why are you helping me?"

"What's your father's name?" said Dove.

"Robin Potter." Griffon saw that both the Thatchers and Dove were watching him. "The Potters raised me after my parents died. I never took their name."

"Your real father, son. What was his name?"

Griffon shrugged. "A family of tinkers found me at the edge of a plague village. There was a prayer pinned to my clothes. Nothing else."

The others exchanged glances.

"You were born in a plague village," said Mrs. Thatcher. Griffon nodded.

"I remember those days," she said. "It wasn't unknown for



dying mothers to leave their children near the road, hoping someone would raise them away from the sickness.”

Mr. Thatcher whistled as he filled a bag with fresh bread, hard cheese, and pots of preserves while keeping one eye on the frying pan.

Dove kept his gaze leveled on Griffon.

“The Potters’ children stayed home to learn the trade,” said Dove. “But you scarpered off to Tristanford to study letters.”

“I couldn’t rely on the Potters’ generosity all my life,” said Griffon. “Besides, I wanted to see more of the people of Agthor.”

“As a tax collector?” said Mrs. Thatcher. “You don’t make friends that way.”

“You might be surprised,” said Griffon. “Besides, who else meets more people? Last year I traveled from New Erinor to Castle Port, visiting every village in between. This season I was looking forward to seeing Thornwall.”

Again, the three studied his face. Mr. Thatcher filled a plate with eggs and sausage and set it on the table. His wife poured herself a cup of tea and shrugged.

All turned at the sound of a runner approaching the cottage. Iwan, the Thatchers’ younger son, threw open the door, panting. “Riders on the Bridge Road.”

Dove slapped a fried egg between two slices of bread and began wolfing it down.

“How long before they’re here?” said Mrs. Thatcher.

Iwan frowned. “Maybe half an hour,” he said. “If they don’t hurry.”

“Thanks for breakfast.” Dove rose from the table. Mr. Thatcher handed him the bag he’d prepared along with a couple of blankets.

“You stay safe, Dovey.” Mrs. Thatcher planted a big wet kiss on his cheek.

Wagging his eyebrows, Dove winked at Griffon. “Told you they all fancy me.”

“Where are we going?” said Griffon.

“Back to the boat, for starters,” said Dove. “We’ve more friends downriver.”

They stepped outside and blinked in the morning sun. The nearest neighbors went about their chores, pretending not to notice the two strangers. Even the halfling brothers who dropped off bales of river reeds beside the Thatchers’ home merely tipped their straw hats before climbing back into their cart. Griffon wondered whether all the villagers were friends of Dove’s. Perhaps they were simply used to minding their own business.

“Wait a minute, boys.” Dove called out to the halflings and pointed at the river. Griffon saw three galleys gliding swiftly downriver. “We can’t go back to the boat.”

One of the halflings jerked a thumb over his shoulder, indicating the bed of the wagon. “Where to, boss?”

“Coffin Village,” said Dove. He hopped into the wagon. Griffon balked at following, but Dove pulled him up.

“Coffin Village?” Griffon gulped.

“You said you like meeting new people.”

Dunbury Castle is far more than just a place to stop for supplies, collect bounties, and gather a bit of information. In this chapter, we’ll provide the information that will allow you to leverage Dunbury Castle to its fullest extent. Whether you just need some ways to better motivate the player characters or you want to run a complete military adventure, you’ll find what you need here.

## DAILY ROUTINE

Dunbury Castle never truly sleeps, although residents are most active during the sunlit hours. Sentries stand watch throughout the day and night. Master Foley often haunts the keep in the small hours, reading by candlelight or simply walking the battlements as a result of his frequent insomnia. The bakers boast (or complain) that they are the first to rise, since they begin work at the witching hour to ensure everyone has fresh bread for breakfast. The kitchen staff begin their labors soon after, and Sergeant Hodge makes a point of being washed, shaved, and dressed before he orders a corporal to sound the bell outside the barracks.

A simple chart of the castle routine follows, but many non-routine events take place during or between these milestones. Civilian residents attend to daily chores, sometimes personal, more often in service of the castle. Likewise, soldiers not on the patrol roster are often assigned to maintenance, repair, or crafting jobs. Often a day is dominated by a single large undertaking, like repairing a scaffold or gathering stones along the river for a masonry project within the castle. Other chores occur weekly or monthly, like cutting and fletching arrows, oiling and sharpening weapons, or repairing armor and saddles.

The gamemaster is encouraged to add chores based on the adventurers’ interests. If one is a carpenter, it just so happens that Master Foley needs work done on the dovecotes. If a character is a talented painter, Lieutenant Vance wants a new fresco in the Place of Arms. Should one deserve a comeuppance, one of the garderobes needs unclogging and repair. Gamemasters who wish to mix amusing punishment with helpful revelations might allow such work to lead to the discovery of the secret passages. Whether characters reveal the passage to their superiors might lead to another amusing or thrilling development. The gamemaster may decide to award a point of Goodwill to characters who volunteer to help and do so with good cheer.



## CASTLE ROUTINE

Time	Usual event
Midnight	Change of watch
3:00	Bakers begin work
4:00	Change of watch
5:00	Cooks begin work
6:00	Sergeant Hodge orders the reveille bell
6:30	Breakfast in the barracks; residents of the keep breakfast at various times over the next hour
7:00	Assembly for the day's briefing, usually by Sergeant Hodge, occasionally by Lieutenant Vance, on rare occasion by the captain herself
8:00	Change of watch; gates open; most patrols have left
9:00	Official opening of the Little Market Young students assemble for lessons from Mother Belenne
10:00	Sergeant Hodge or a corporal leads archery drills
Noon	Change of watch
13:00	Lunch served in the barracks
14:00	Master Foley instructs youth and adult students
16:00	Change of watch
18:00	First shift for supper
19:00	Second supper service
20:00	Change of watch

## DAILY BRIEFING

During the day's briefing, soldiers learn whether they have castle or field duty. The later usually consists of patrols out to fixed destinations and back the same day, but it can also include scouting more remote regions like the western hills or the northern forests. Occasionally, valuable shipments sent by road or river require escort, and the most serious duty is to meet the paywagon from Tristanford and escort it back to Dunbury Castle. This caravan was robbed two years ago, and the culprits have still not been apprehended. There is no special reward associated with this duty, but soldiers have a personal stake in ensuring their pay arrives and treat the job seriously.

## CASTLE ROLES

What a character can do while at the castle, where they can go, and the extent of their personal responsibilities are dependent on their role. Most characters will have one of three roles while visiting or residing at the castle: enlisted soldier, freelancer, or civilian.

## ENLISTED SOLDIERS

Most of the enlisted soldiers of Dunbury Castle were inspired as much by financial necessity as by a fervor to defend the duchy. A few noble and even fanatical exceptions exist, but by and large the ranks are filled with pragmatists. That said, loyalty toward Captain Brazewhite is strong, and while the attitude toward discipline at Dunbury is notoriously lax, the average soldier respects and obeys their officers.

Apart from meals, lodgings, clothing, arms, and armor, rank and file soldiers receive payment of 82 sp per month. Soldiers must report for duty six days out of seven on a rotating schedule. Depending on capability and seniority, each individual might spend as many as five of those seven days assigned to guard duty or labor at the castle itself. As one gains more experience on patrol and distinguishes oneself in combat or on diplomatic missions, one spends more time away from the castle.

Each year at the Feast of Grethken, Lieutenant Vance distributes bonus pay. Unless marked for disciplinary punishment, every soldier receives a bonus of 20 sp. Those who have distinguished themselves with acts of valor, courage, loyalty, or sacrifice have been known to receive bonuses of over 200 sp, although not in recent years. The continued tightening of the purse strings by New Erinor has limited the bonuses to no more than 50 sp, most often bestowed on the families of soldiers who perished in the line of duty.

## ENLISTING FOR DUTY

Any person may petition to enlist in the Agthorian Army, and very few are rejected. There are three primary requirements new recruits must meet. The first is they must possess the soundness of body to carry out the duties of a soldier. In game terms, this means the character must have scores of 8 or better in both Strength and Constitution. Exceptions to this rule are made when the recruit has skills or abilities of such value that their limitations in other areas may be overlooked. One of the most common examples are fairies, whose ability to fly makes them especially useful to the army despite their natural weakness.

The second requirement is that the person must not be a criminal. The commission of any crime, no matter how long ago, is grounds for rejection. It is up to the officer interviewing the recruit to decide if the person's crime warrants rejection or may be overlooked. The reality is that most crimes are overlooked. More often, a person with a criminal past is simply assigned to an unpleasant or dangerous post that other soldiers would prefer to avoid.



The final requirement is that you must be a citizen of Agthor. This is proved by producing an appropriate document from the noble to which you and your family owe fealty. Note that the noble themselves seldom provide this document. More often it is prepared by a representative of the noble, such as a mayor, warden, bailiff, or person of similar importance. In practical terms, someone that knows you and has an official title just needs to provide an attestation in writing that you are a citizen.

If a person meets all three of these requirements, they are accepted into the army. Typically, their service begins immediately, but it is not unusual to give a new recruit a day or two to get their affairs in order. One final note: the interviewing officer may reject any recruit at their discretion. Meeting the above requirements does not guarantee acceptance, but not meeting them almost ensures rejection.

### TERMS OF SERVICE

Once a person enlists, they are expected to serve for a period of no less than two years. Unless a soldier is formally dismissed before that period expires, they must remain in the army and carry out their duties as ordered until that time is passed. At the end of the two-year term, they may re-enlist for another two-year term, continuing to do so as long as they continue to meet the requirements of service.

It is not unusual for a term of service to be extended with or without the soldier's consent. This most often occurs during times of war, although officers have wide authority when it comes to extending a soldier's term. Individuals that try to leave before receiving a formal dismissal are charged with desertion, a capital offense.

### FREELANCERS

After making a name for themselves elsewhere (presumably in Thornwall), adventurers might be ready for their next challenge, but enlisting in the army might not be their cup of tea. These individuals, however, may still establish a formal working relationship with the army.

If the adventurers have a good reputation or a recommendation from a source known to Captain Brazewhite, she may offer them special assignments. Most often, these assignments will involve accompanying her soldiers as mercenaries, although she prefers the more romantic term "freelancers." This status includes fewer benefits and fewer obligations compared with the status of soldiers, but allows the adventurer greater freedoms.

Requirements are far less strict for individuals wishing to become a freelancer. They are not obliged to swear fealty to the duke, but they must not be known to serve enemies of the kingdom. Those who are openly loyal to other nations

may still benefit from freelancer status, so long as they are not a citizen of a country with which Agthor is at war.

Freelancers receive no pay. They may lodge in the barracks without charge, but they must pay a nominal fee (3 sp per day) for meals provided by the castle kitchens. They are, of course, welcome to make their own meals with food they purchase themselves, or they may dine at the Three Hounds as many past freelancers have done.

Freelancers are exempt from labor duties, but those who are assigned to accompany a patrol receive their meals without charge that day. Those who survive combat during such patrols usually receive an encouraging talk from Sergeant Hodge on the virtues of military life, but there is no remuneration for combat apart from posted bounties.

Perhaps the most important benefit of freelancer status is early access to the bounty notices. The day before notices are posted outside the castle, they are presented as part of Sergeant Hodge's morning briefing. Those who have established a good rapport with Lieutenant Vance or one of the ensigns may even learn rumors of an upcoming bounty a day or two earlier, before artists and scribes have drawn the posters.

Freelancers are not eligible for annual bonuses and may in fact earn the resentment of the soldiers if they flaunt the money and other rewards they receive for collecting bounties. If those freelancers have saved the lives of soldiers and local citizens while pursuing their rewards, however, such resentment is limited and more often replaced with admiration and even hero worship.

Freelancers have no set duties. Rather, they are expected to serve as needed and when needed. Those who regularly make themselves available for duty when called will retain their freelancer status. Those who refuse offered duties or are difficult to find when there is work to get done will find their freelancer status quickly revoked.

### CIVILIAN GUESTS

Anyone visiting the castle who is not an enlisted soldier or a contracted freelancer is considered a civilian guest. Civilian guests may never enter the castle armed. They also have strict limits on where they may go inside the castle. The most common place to see civilian guests is in the Outer Bailey during the hours of the Little Market. Civilians are allowed unrestricted access to the outdoor portions of the Outer Bailey from an hour before the Little Market opens until an hour after it closes.

To access any part of the Middle Bailey, the interiors of the Outer Bailey's buildings, and the outdoor portions of the Outer Bailey outside the hours of the Little Market,



civilian guests must be accompanied by an enlisted soldier. Their escort must remain with them at all times, and wandering without one's escort is treated the same as if the person entered the castle without permission.

Civilian guest access to the Inner Bailey is only granted by the express permission of Captain Brazewhite, Lieutenant Vance, or Sergeant Hodge. Even when this permission is obtained, the guest must still remain with their escort at all times.

There are exceptions. Captain Brazewhite or Lieutenant Vance may approve a special pass for a civilian guest that allows them more access and access without escort. This is not a physical pass but rather it is recorded in the castle logs and communicated to the guards on duty. Most special passes are granted for no more than a day, but this is not a hard and fast rule. Mak, for example, has been granted a pass with no expiration.

The consequences for trespassing inside the castle range from a stern warning to execution. Punishments are at the discretion of the commanding officer. Common sense should rule when selecting an appropriate punishment for a trespassing character. If the character is a friend of the castle and is clearly not causing any real harm, they'll receive a slap on the wrist and be sent on their way. If a character is discovered sabotaging the defenses or otherwise endangering the castle and its inhabitants (no matter how good their intentions), the punishment may range from imprisonment in the dungeon to hanging.

Officially, visiting nobles are considered civilian guests. They are, however, afforded far greater freedoms than other civilian guests. Normally, the requirement for an escort is waived for visiting nobles, and they may carry their armor and weapons while inside the walls. Requests by nobles for access to the Inner Bailey are seldom refused.



ABOVE | Freelancer's Medallion, by Russell Marks

## ENLISTED LIFE

In this section we take a closer look at what it means to serve as an enlisted soldier in the Agthorian Army.

### RANKS

Every enlisted soldier has a rank. Their rank determines the chain of command, their pay, and a variety of other aspects of their lives.

- ♦ **Private Soldier** Private soldiers are usually addressed as "soldier" in Dunbury Castle, although larger armies often use "private." In Agthor, the term refers to volunteer soldiers or conscripts, although there has been no conscription at Dunbury for decades.
- ♦ **Corporal** A corporal is the lowest level of officer. Corporals typically command a squad of four soldiers. This is the first rank at which a soldier earns the right to give commands.
- ♦ **Sergeant** Officially, a sergeant commands two or more squads in the field, each led by a corporal. In practice, the sergeants at Dunbury Castle are more often specialists in training, smithing, or another essential process.
- ♦ **Ensign** An ensign is a junior officer who often commands two or more squads in the field. Traditionally, these officers were the standard-bearers for full armies. At Dunbury Castle, the ensigns report to Lieutenant Vance. While they are above sergeants in the chain of command, they treat those specialists with a certain respect, seldom disagreeing with their advice.
- ♦ **Lieutenant** The lieutenant is the "left hand" of the commander, and is expected to take charge of half of any large force led by the captain. In practice, Lieutenant Vance also deals with the highest-level administrative duties of the castle. She also acts as a gatekeeper to the captain, shielding her commander from issues she deems beneath the commanding officer's notice.
- ♦ **Captain** Captain is the highest-ranking officer stationed at Dunbury Castle. Ultimately responsible for the safety of all Agthorian citizens within the scir, the Captain judges criminal cases, settles civil disputes, and occasionally tasks one of her ensigns with investigation of crimes and other unusual events. She also leads the castle defenders in any large-scale military engagements.



## REGULATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

The common opinion outside of Vaun is that discipline at Dunbury Castle is too lax. This is not entirely wrong, but it's not exactly right either. The reality is that Captain Brazewhite commands the respect of her troops and doesn't need to resort to draconian measures to keep the soldiers in line. In addition, her troops are stretched dangerously thin, money is tight, and new threats are appearing daily. In the face of these challenges, she is more interested in results than anything else. As long as a soldier conducts themselves honorably, doesn't behave in a way that reflects poorly on the rest of the soldiers at the castle, and gets the job done, failing to precisely follow orders isn't something she's going to punish.

That is not to say the castle is entirely without discipline. Sergeant Hodge sometimes assigns the less desirable castle

details to soldiers guilty of drunkenness, excessive gambling, and minor quarrels. Those found guilty of serious affray (assault resulting in broken bones or substantial bleeding) can expect to spend a day or even weeks in the dungeon. Rapists and murderers can expect severe punishment, even hanging at the Crossroads. In the more serious cases, the offender is first stripped of rank so that no one at the castle is responsible for executing a fellow soldier.

It's worth noting that lax attitude toward discipline does not mean lowered effectiveness. When it's time to go into action, the soldiers operate with military efficiency and impressive efficacy. In their duties, they conduct themselves with honor, and they are respected by the common people they serve. This effectiveness, even with the perceived lack of discipline, is part of what earns Dunbury Castle the ire of soldiers and commanders at other posts.



## GAMEMASTER GUIDANCE

### FOLLOWING ORDERS

The trickiest part of running a military adventure is the problem of "following orders." Enlisted soldiers must follow the orders of their commanding officers under most circumstances. Unfortunately, this seldom works well in a roleplaying game. Whether the orders come from a higher-ranking NPC or another character, many players chafe at the loss of independence.

If you run into the same problem with your players, the following are some ways you can run a military campaign while letting the players retain their independence:

- ♦ **Field Autonomy:** When a squad of soldiers from Dunbury Castle is sent into the field, they have broad autonomy in choosing how they carry out their orders. Captain Brazewhite might order the squad to "eliminate the goblin menace near Thornwall" for example, but she won't tell them how to do the job. Even if one of the characters is a corporal, the expectation at Dunbury Castle is that squads will work together to solve problems, not that the corporal will tell them what to do.
- ♦ **Lax Attitude Toward Discipline:** As noted elsewhere, the officers at Dunbury Castle focus more on results and less on doing everything by-the-book. As long as a soldier is effective, their commanding officers aren't going to sweat the small stuff. No one is getting garderobe clean-

ing duty for not having polished buttons. By taking a light touch when it comes to when and how orders are given, they become less of a burden and more of simple guidance toward the next part of the adventure.

- ♦ **Dunbury Irregulars:** One last thing you can try is to reactivate the old Dunbury Irregulars. The Irregulars were a squad of soldiers Captain Brazewhite could call on to perform special missions. Maybe a job requires an unusual set of skills most soldiers don't have, needs to happen quietly and outside the normal chain of command, or involves a problem strange enough that your average soldier isn't mentally equipped to take it on. The Irregulars were, effectively, an enlisted adventuring party answerable only to Captain Brazewhite and Lieutenant Vance.

Sadly, the original Irregulars were lost during a Deepland rescue expedition a few years back. If the characters prove their capability and loyalty, have the Captain reactivate the Irregulars and assign the player characters to the squad. They'll have to deal with some sideways looks from the rank-and-file troops, who always saw the Irregulars as "loose cannons," but the party will have exceptional autonomy over what missions they take and how they carry them out.



## CASTLE DUTY

For the first month of a soldier's service, castle duty is unavoidable. Only after one has satisfactorily performed all of the menial and laborious tasks of the stronghold does one earn the privilege of the more prestigious and dangerous field duty. You may expand on the castle duty options to offer characters who have special interests or skills an opportunity to shine, but the basic list includes the following details: Roll 1d10 twice. The first role represents the soldier's morning detail, and the second represents their afternoon detail. It's possible to get assigned the same detail twice in a row. Of course, you may have the character's commanding officer pick a duty for them as well if a particular task seems appropriate based on the character's recent conduct.

### CASTLE DUTY

1d10 + 1d10	Castle Duty
1	Building detail
2	Children
3	Garden and grounds
4	Kitchen
5	Garderobe
6	Map room
7	Roads
8	Stable and livestock
9	Teaching and training
10	Well

- ♦ **Building Detail** Building detail usually involves repairs to the wooden and stone structures within the castle. It can range from re-applying mortar to crumbling crenellations to replacing a door knob or white-washing the chicken coops or pig pen.
- ♦ **Children** Minding the children is a duty often considered a punishment, but it can also fall to a soldier who demonstrates uncommon compassion or exhibits a high Wisdom. Most soldiers shirk this duty, allowing the children to run rampant until one gets hurt and the soldier ends up with latrine duty instead. A few establish a rapport with the youngsters, teaching them or even acting as mentors.
- ♦ **Garden & Grounds** Garden and grounds duty means weeding, raking, scooping animal dung, and generally making the grounds more sanitary and attractive. It can also mean helping harvest the vegetables and herbs grown inside the castle. But usually, it also includes hearing and sharing the local gossip from the non-combatant residents.
- ♦ **Kitchen** Kitchen duty is one of the more desired non-combatant duties, as it is relatively easy, the kitchen staff are friendly and mostly charming, and those who perform it can help themselves, along with the regular kitchen staff, to extra helpings of the day's fare.
- ♦ **Garderobe** Garderobe duty is universally despised and considered a punishment, but everyone is assigned to it at least once a season. Those who are in Hodge's black books end up "scouring the chutes" on a regular basis.
- ♦ **Map Room** Map Room detail puts a soldier at Master Foley's beck and call for the day. Usually this is a plum job, as the Master has little time for the average soldier and is content to allow idlers to browse the maps and books. Should someone prove interesting, however, or ask an intriguing question, the master can bend their ear for the entire day. The only danger is in organizing the map room while Foley is absent on some other task. He knows where everything is, as long as no one puts it in any sort of order.
- ♦ **Roads** Road maintenance is another unpopular detail, usually assigned to two squads. In high summer, it is particularly unpleasant to grade the road leading up from Dunbury Village, not to mention collecting the animal droppings and the occasional dead bird or squirrel found on the pebbles.
- ♦ **Stable & Livestock** Stable and livestock duty consists of various chores involving the horses and other livestock in the castle, including but not limited to feeding the animals, helping groom and shoe horses, mucking out the pig pen, or—most disgusting of all—fetching eggs from the chicken coops. Only the worst offenders catch livestock duty on the equinox days in which the chicken coops must be scrubbed clean.
- ♦ **Teaching & Training** Teaching and training are duties assigned only to those soldiers who demonstrate a special aptitude for Intelligence-based skills. They are assigned to assist Master Foley in instructing the children and a few adults who wish to learn. Alternatively, characters who demonstrate exceptional weapon prowess may be assigned to lead drills in archery and melee combat. It is also possible for a poor-performing soldier to be assigned this duty as a student rather than as a teacher. Most soldiers support those who require remedial assistance, but a few bullies will taunt the "children."
- ♦ **Well** Well duty is simply a matter of raising water from the well and distributing it to the keep, the kitchen, the barracks, and the non-combatants' houses. It is not too



onerous at first, but it soon becomes a test of stamina. If your players like to throw the dice you might call for a few Constitution checks with successes indicating admiring glances and compliments, failures leading to jests and opportunities for physical comedy.

## FIELD DUTY

The work most people think of when imagining the military life is field duty. Most assignments fall short of outright battle, but combat is always a danger—and opportunity. Whether the gamemaster relies on planned or random encounters, the following three main categories of field duty present adventurers with opportunities to meet the NPCs of the duchy and perhaps to fight some of its villains.

### PATROL DUTY

Patrol duty is often boring except for the company of one's fellow soldiers and the occasional encounter with a local citizen. Naturally, the boring patrols are the stuff of swift out-of-character descriptions between more exciting events. When the adventurers are on patrol, it's best to have an encounter, prepared or random, awaiting them. Omens are a particularly good first encounter for patrols, as are local NPCs with gossip of local threats.

Patrol destinations include, but are not limited to, any named location in *Chapter 4: The Scir of Dunbury*. Destinations can also include general locations such as “the southern reaches of the Spiderwood,” “six farmsteads to the

east,” and any other location that gives you an opportunity to direct the adventurers toward mystery and peril.

### ESCORT DUTY

Escort detail has a greater chance for planned attacks, since whatever the adventurers are guarding has value. The paywagon from Tristanford, for example, never makes it all the way to the castle without passing two or more bands of would-be robbers. Usually, the sight of Dunbury Castle soldiers is enough to dissuade them. When the adventurers are part of the escort, however, perhaps one of those bands feels a bit more courageous.

### SEARCH AND CAPTURE (OR DESTROY)

The Dunbury soldiers do not only wait for criminals and monsters to attack. Once word of danger reaches Captain Brazewhite, she and Lieutenant Vance make an action plan. For great threats, one or both might lead the mission, but for what they consider petty criminals, they might have Sergeant Hodge assign one or two squads to seek out and apprehend the miscreants. In the case of endrori, the order is to kill on sight, unless command has reason to believe the monsters hold important information. In any case, the killing of bandits and other outlaws is seen as unfortunate but not a punishable offense, unless a soldier displays cruelty or callous disregard for life. Practically speaking, the castle has only so much space to hold prisoners, but if too many surrender, temporary accommodations can be made before a prison caravan takes the offenders to dungeons in Tristanford.



ABOVE | The Crossroads, by Russell Marks





## ADVANCEMENT AND MENTORSHIP

Field promotions are uncommon, especially since Captain Brazewhite took command of Dunbury Castle. Everyone at the castle is comfortably settled into their roles. The arrival of adventurers changes that. Those who choose military careers may distinguish themselves through combat, diplomacy, exploration, and even in quiet acts of mercy and kindness, assuming the actions are reported to Brazewhite and Vance. Once a character stands out as exceptional among the troops, the commanders may groom and test that character with special instruction, challenging missions, promotion, and gifts.

### PROMOTION

The first time the adventurers accomplish an exceptional goal such as defeating a well-known monster or a band of outlaws, Sergeant Hodge suggests, and Lieutenant Vance approves, a promotion from private to corporal for one member of the party. For this first promotion, she selects the character whose deeds appeared most critical to success. As for the others, she commends them but withholds promotion for the time being.

On the second and successive heroic occasions, one or more of the other adventurers receive the same promotion. Depending on the size of the adventuring group and your capacity to deal with multiple NPCs conducting potentially different simultaneous field assignments, you might either keep the characters in a single squad of higher-rank characters or appoint each adventurer as the leader of a squad of NPC soldiers.

Adventurers who both perform heroic acts and demonstrate leadership ability (through roleplaying or a suitably high Charisma) may be the first to advance to ensign. This rank allows a character to command multiple squads or to serve Lieutenant Vance and Captain Brazewhite directly. Alternatively, a spellcaster or otherwise knowledgeable character could be assigned to assist Master Foley or Mother Belenne. Such service does not disqualify a character from field duty but adds another avenue of roleplaying as the senior NPC shares information and duties with the adventurer. Eventually, these NPCs can become mentor figures to the player characters.

### TAKING COMMAND

The ultimate goal of mentorship is to provide a successor. Brazewhite is increasingly concerned about the rumors of Warden Balewick's sinister plots in the capital. Many loyal followers of the duke have encouraged her to take a more prominent and political role in the selection of the duchy's next ruler, some even hinting that she herself should accept



their nomination. While she has grown used to serving the duchy in a role whose effect she can more easily measure, she is also frustrated with New Erinor's failure to fund the duchy's defense. One day she may take on a new role, but only after she has found a suitable successor.

She would designate Lieutenant Vance as her successor, but she knows the lieutenant would refuse to be left behind. Vance will follow Brazewhite wherever she goes. Instead, Brazewhite looks to the characters, regardless of class, for signs one of them has the wisdom, courage, and personality to lead. At key moments in the campaign, determine when it is appropriate for Brazewhite to signal her choice of successor with three gifts given on separate occasions: first her whisk, then her warhorse Storm, and finally—when she is ready to step down and leave for New Erinor—her fabled sword, the *Light of Vengeance*. This last gift should be granted only after the characters have overcome the most dangerous foes of the region, a symbol of Brazewhite's trust that they can command the castle in her absence.

The commanders of Dunbury Castle are not the only ones who may adopt a character as a potential successor. Mother Belenne knows her current acolyte is too young and inexperienced to take over the chapel should she pass away. Should a cleric or paladin distinguish themselves at the castle, Belenne may ask for that soldier to be assigned to the chapel at least a few times a week.

Master Foley's "apprentice" will surely leave him soon, tired of his thoughtless treatment. Should this happen, an arcane spellcaster of high Intelligence and Wisdom who demonstrates a curious mind and a willingness to perform hard labor has a good chance to succeed Stalk. An affection for the master's doves is also essential.

Sergeant Hodge favors archers, but he also recommends outstanding rogues, rangers, and barbarians for a new role, the Master of Scouts.

Rudmilla would welcome another hand at the smithy. Perhaps Brazewhite or her successor may promote a new sergeant over her, allowing Rudmilla to concentrate on learning and perfecting her clan's armor and weapon schematics while a new leader expands the smithing operation to better arm and fortify the castle.

You may consider other specialist roles, and the players may suggest their own ideas. Positions to consider include alchemist, carpenter, cobbler, mason, smith, and herbalist.



## DUNBURY CASTLE BOUNTIES

Per the Declaration of Talimane, there are regular bounties on endrori of all types. Bounty hunters can collect their bounty by turning in a pair of ears at a military station or other designated location. Dunbury Castle is the only official place to turn in bounties north of Tristanford. At your discretion, evidence of destroying other types of evil creatures may also earn a bounty for a character.

Because of dwindling financial backing from New Erinor (due in no small part to the Warden's diversion of defense funds to bribes meant to garner political support), Captain Brazewhite has been forced to reduce the rewards for bounties. The result has been that some of the most talented bounty hunters turn in their ears to Tristanford or even New Erinor, rather than Dunbury Castle. That doesn't mean hunters don't check in for the latest postings; they simply realize only the special bounties pay well locally.

### ENDRORI BOUNTY

Goblin	4 sp
Orc	6 sp
Troll	10 sp
Skaah	6 sp
Ixit	5 cp
Peck	5 sp
Wraethdari	100 gp
Ogre	8 sp

### SPECIAL BOUNTIES

Certain endrori war chiefs develop a reputation that demands a swift and decisive response. Captain Brazewhite holds a special reserve coffer for higher bounties on these exceptionally dangerous foes. The reward can run anywhere from 100 sp to 1000 sp, or even more for a powerful wraethdari commander.

Because the challenge rating on these foes ranges widely, you should pick one that poses a reasonable danger to the player characters rather than rolling randomly. Also, these work best as goals the players themselves choose to follow. Rather than surprise them with an ambush, let them visit the sites of the bounty's attacks to gather clues and witness statements, then track the offender down and deliver justice.





## CHAPTER THREE

# DUNBURY CASTLE

**E**VEN IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, COFFIN VILLAGE FELT like a cemetery. The source of its name was obvious: rotting and unfinished coffins lay everywhere. There were also mounds of garbage around the village with swarms of flies buzzing around them. Griffon noticed the refuse was piled away from the houses but clearly visible from the road.

Most of the buildings slumped like battlefield corpses. Only a few retained their thatched roofs, which Griffon noted were in uncommonly good repair for a supposedly abandoned village.

"It's all appearances," he said. "Someone's made this place look haunted to scare people away."

"I guess a city education wasn't wasted on you," said Dove. "Come meet the ghosts."

As they approached an intact cottage, an undetectable wind blew open the front door. An eerie moaning rose from within.

"Save it, Ellma," said Dove. "He's sussed you out."

"No fair, Dovey. Why did you spoil my fun?" A specter emerged from the gloomy interior, her face painted greenish gray with bloody trails running from her mouth and eyes. She threw off the dusty ethereal tatters to reveal a snug leather jacket and trousers.

"I didn't tell him," said Dove, accepting a kiss from the ghoul. He wiggled an eyebrow at Griffon. "Griff, say hello to Ellma."

The woman inspected Griffon. "He's too young."

"Doesn't matter," said Dove. "Balewick won't take the chance."



"What chance?" said Griffon. "You still haven't explained why the Warden wants me dead."

"Something tells me you already know the answer," said Dove.

"Aw, give the kid a break," said Ellma. She touched a lock of Griffon's hair and tucked it behind his ear. "He's cute."

Griffon pulled away. "I'm not a cute! I mean, I'm not a kid. I want answers!"

"Did you hear that, Ell? He wants answers. Let's see what we got downstairs."

Dove located a concealed handle in the floor and lifted a trap door. Warm light and the smell of mead poured up from the cellar. Ellma descended first. Griffon followed, eyes darting left and right. Dove came last, closing the door behind him.

The basement was larger than Griffon expected. Fresh timbers supported the ceiling, suggesting a recent expansion of old construction. Ghosts in the dust showed where barrels and crates had recently lined the walls.

A drothmal with a pockmarked face sat beside a table, his legs too long to fit comfortably beneath it. Well, his leg that is. Just below his left knee, a carved wooden peg took over where the flesh and bone had been lost. A long-handled axe leaned against the wall behind him. Even seated, the drothmal was clearly too tall to stand upright without striking his head against the ceiling. He didn't stand, though. He watched Griffon as he took a long drink from his mead cup before returning it to the table.

"What do you think, Fenros?" Dove said.

The drothmal narrowed his eyes, giving his face an even more feline aspect. He shrugged. "Could be. I never saw the mother."

"I was thinking he's a bit young."

"I'm standing right here," said Griffon. "You could just ask me."

"How old are you?" said Dove.

Griffon opened his mouth and shut it again. "That's none of your business."

Ellma and Dove laughed, but Fenros stared at him as if trying to see beyond Griffon's face into his mind.

"He's funny, too," said Dove. "Give him a cup of mead."

Ellma fetched three wooden cups from a box. Fenros raised an improbably large jug from the floor and rolled it over his shoulder in a practiced gesture to fill their cups.

"I don't want a drink," said Griffon. "I want—"

"Answers, yeah," said Dove. He drained his cup and passed it back to Fenros for a refill. "Just hold onto your drink. You're going to want it after you hear what we have to tell you—assuming you don't already know."

"The Warden wants you dead because he thinks you may be the Duke's bastard," said Ellma.

Griffon looked from Ellma to Fenros to Dove. All three stared back at him, watching for his reaction.

Griffon lifted the mug and tasted the mead. Light and semi-sweet, it tasted of clover and pears. He drank some more, tipping back his head until the cup was empty. He set the cup down on the table and pushed it toward Fenros.

"I'll have another."

## WELCOME TO DUNBURY CASTLE

Dunbury Castle rests upon a massive stone foundation jutting into the River Kouros, forcing a detour from the waterway's gentle serpentine path through the rolling hills of the valley. With a small fishing village at its foot, the ground floor of the castle rests over 100 feet above the shoreline.

The castle holds a secret known to only a handful of smugglers: dangerous submerged passages lead in and out of the lower levels of the castle. The true secret, however, forgotten by all but a few distant dwarven exiles, is that the presumed foundation of the current stronghold is in fact a dwarven stonehold, now home to the undead remnants of the endrori who last assaulted it and the last of its brave defenders.

## USING DUNBURY CASTLE

Although the castle itself is a roleplaying site rather than an adventure site, the entries are presented in the same fashion as room descriptions in a dungeon. This provides you a few different ways to use the material found in this chapter.

### FIRST PERSON APPROACH

If you want to place your players right inside the walls of the castle, you can run it like a classic roleplaying game adventure. The location entries allow the characters to start at any of the entrances and then make their way through the fortress, discovering it room by room. They may choose to explore it all at once, or explore different parts of the castle at different times, based on their needs.

Using this approach creates an immersive experience that will make Dunbury Castle more than just a collection of equipment lists and NPCs. This approach isn't for every group. It is heavily weighted toward roleplaying, and barring any unfortunate accidents, there will be little to no combat during the initial exploration of the castle. If you plan to have the party use the castle as their base of operations for a campaign, however, this is the recommended method for introducing the site.



## THIRD PERSON APPROACH

Where the first person approach has the characters interacting with the castle, the third person approach has the players interacting with the castle. For instance, when the players want their characters to talk to someone in the castle, you just jump to the appropriate location. Perhaps you roleplay a little bit of the conversation, but you might just hand-wave the details, mark the character sheets, and move on to the next phase of the adventure.

This approach is less immersive, but it still presents the castle as a real place within the context of the adventure. For players that prefer combat to roleplay, this is a great way to keep the castle alive in their minds without boring them with too much immersion and mundane, day-to-day activities.

## META-GAME RESOURCE

In this approach, the castle is simply a collection of data that you, as the GM, use as a source of information. The descriptions include adventure hooks, NPCs, equipment lists, and a variety of other elements that will save you the trouble of writing these on your own.

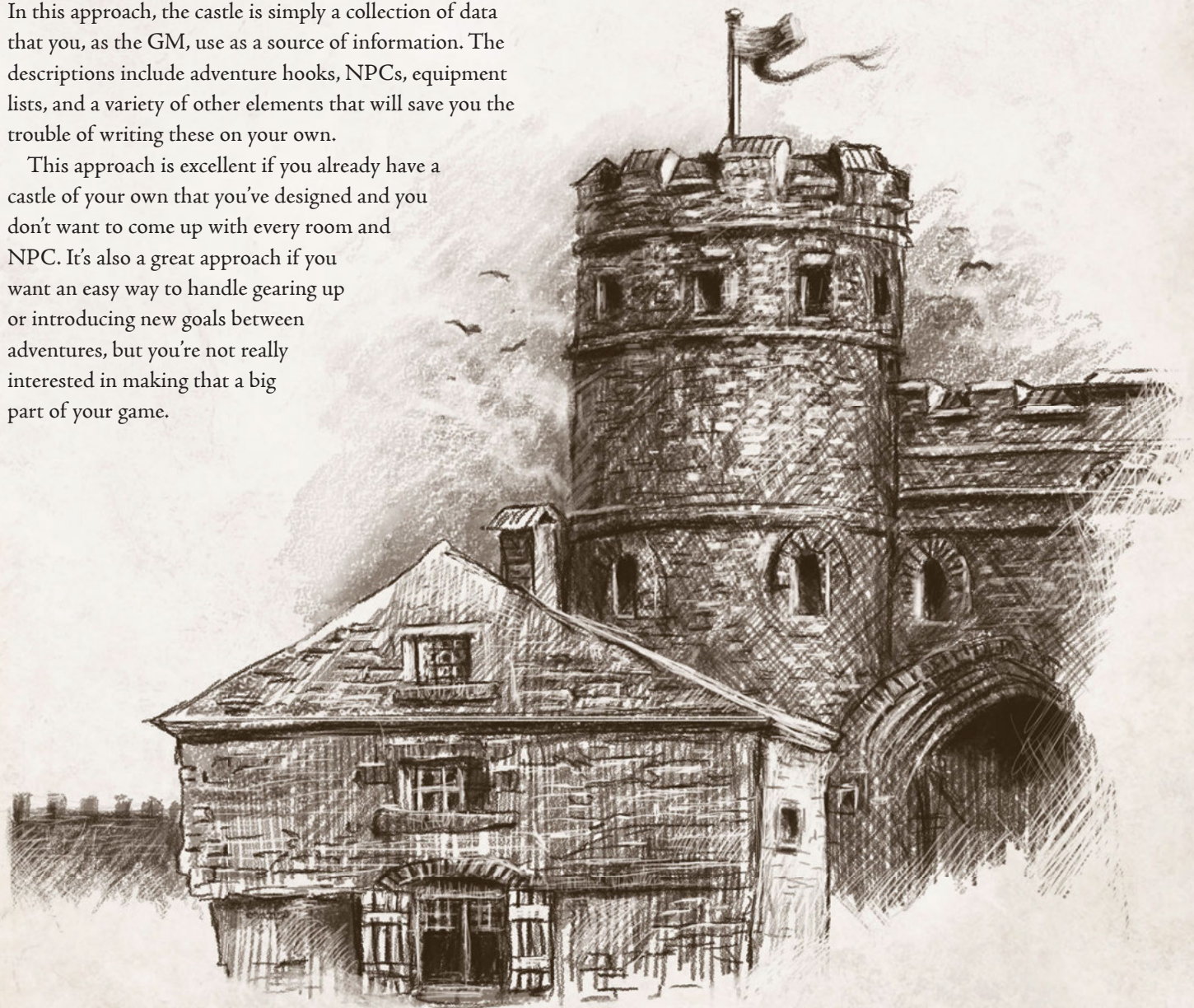
This approach is excellent if you already have a castle of your own that you've designed and you don't want to come up with every room and NPC. It's also a great approach if you want an easy way to handle gearing up or introducing new goals between adventures, but you're not really interested in making that a big part of your game.

## CASTLE STATISTICS

At some point a character is going to try to dig through, knock over, or burn down something in the castle. It is inevitable. In addition, even if it isn't a full siege, someone or something, possibly even the heroes, are going to attack the castle. To that end, we've provided basic game information about the prominent defensive features of the castle.

This information includes a description of the feature and the associated combat rules. Some descriptions also include rules for the feature's durability using the standard Fifth Edition rules for damaging large objects, as well as the rules for buildings found in the *World of Aetaltis: Game-master's Guide*.

Note that the rules here are not intended for use as a siege warfare mechanic, but rather as a tool for determining





the outcome of interactions between an individual character and some element of the castle's defenses.

Dunbury Castle includes the following defensive features:

#### **ALLURE**

This stone walkway allows defenders to see attacking forces while enjoying the benefit of half cover anytime they are walking the allure and three-quarters cover if they take a defensive position. In places where the allure passes through towers, arrow slits in the outer wall always lend defenders three-quarters cover. Defenders targeting opponents outside the wall gain advantage to ranged attacks.

#### **BAILEYS**

Also known as a ward, each separate zone of a fortress allows defenders to retreat and mount a new defense deeper in the fortress.

#### **BARBICANS**

These fortified entrances include a drawbridge, a portcullis, and heavy doors that can be barred. Treat the raised drawbridge as a wood wall, the closed portcullis as a barred wall, and the closed and barred gates as a reinforced wood wall.

#### **BASTION TOWERS**

Bastion towers located along the curtain walls allow archers atop them to attack with advantage on targets below while enjoying the benefit of three-quarters cover against incoming attacks.

#### **BATTLEMENTS**

The low wall surrounding the allure features battlements that allow defenders to make ranged attacks while enjoying three-quarters cover.

#### **CRENELLATION**

Crenels are the periodic open spaces between the merlons of a battlement.

#### **CURTAIN WALL**

The basic defensive feature of a castle is its surrounding walls, both those that form the outer perimeter and those separating the baileys. Exterior perimeter walls have the game attributes of a ten-foot-thick stone wall.

#### **DOORS**

Every door in the castle is expected to withstand invaders. They are constructed from oak and have metal bands. All may be optionally barred from within and have the attributes of a strong wooden door.

#### **FLOORS**

Unless otherwise noted in the description, ground level castle floors are stone and upper-level floors are wood.

#### **MERLONS**

The solid walls between the gaps, or crenels, on the battlements give defenders three-quarters cover from attacks originating outside the castle. In terms of hit points and armor class, treat merlons as 3-foot-thick stone walls.

#### **MOATS**

These dry ditches count as difficult terrain and grant castle defenders on the walls or in the towers advantage when making ranged attacks on targets within them.

#### **ORIELS**

These protruding bay windows allow inhabitants a view of and a line of attack to those standing directly beside the curtain wall. Attackers may only target the defender from directly below and the defender enjoys three-quarters cover.

#### **POSTERN GATE**

This heavily fortified gate, hidden from casual view, allows castle defenders to emerge for escape, scouting, or counterattacks. When the gate is closed and barred, treat it as a reinforced wood wall.

#### **ROOFS**

Unless noted otherwise in the individual description, treat all the roofs of Dunbury Castle as slate tiled.

#### **TALUSES**

The sloping bases of the curtain wall and bastions cause attackers to suffer disadvantage on all attack rolls while on the slope. Attackers also have disadvantage on Dexterity checks to climb the wall, affix a grappling hook, or secure siege ladders in these locations.

#### **WINDOWS**

Outward facing windows on defensive structures are open with interior shutters. Larger exterior windows may also be barred at the gamemaster's discretion. Inward facing windows and the windows of non-defensive structures and rooms will vary based on the building's or room's quality.

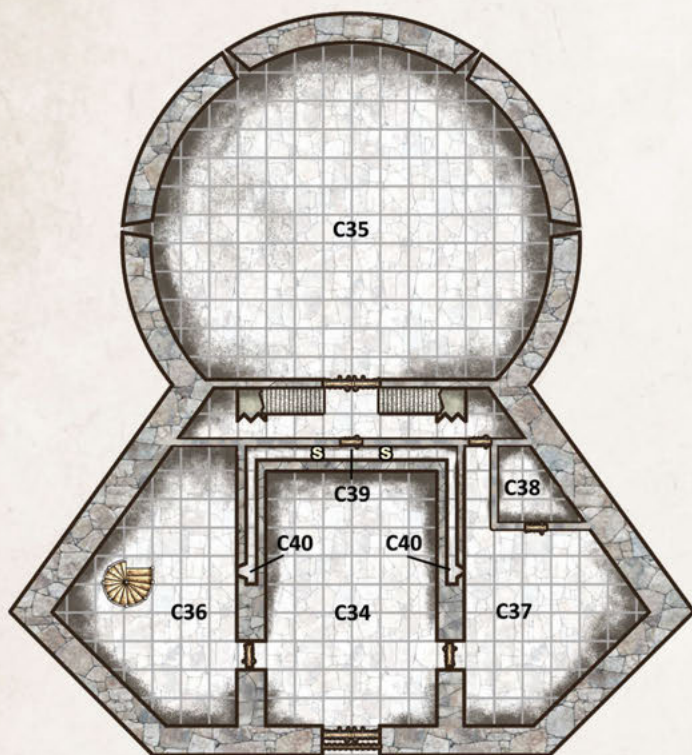




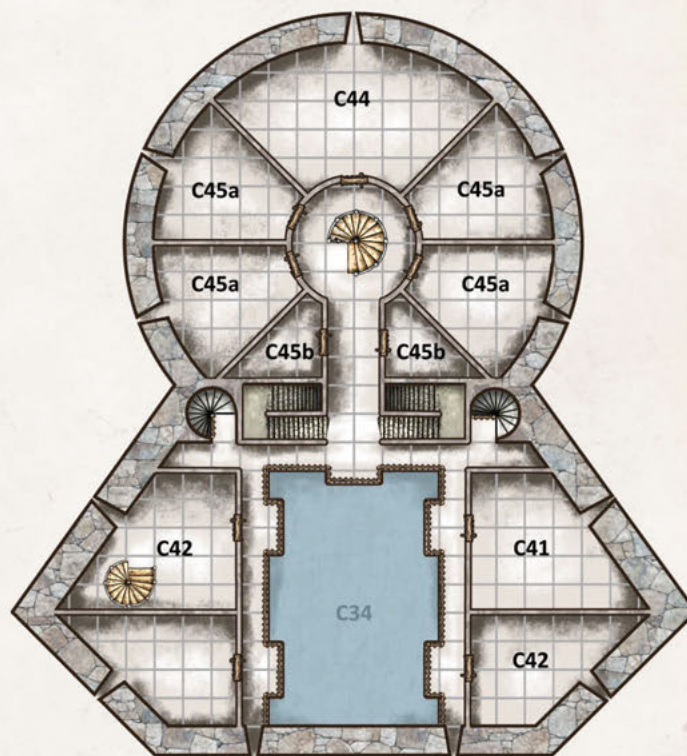


# Dunbury Castle Keep

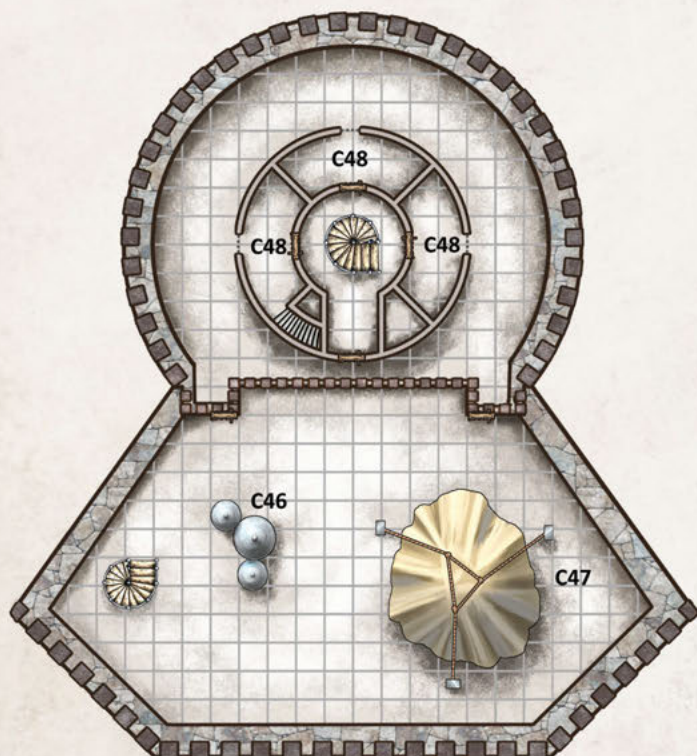
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



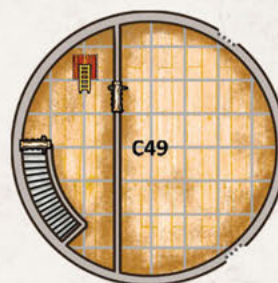
FIRST FLOOR



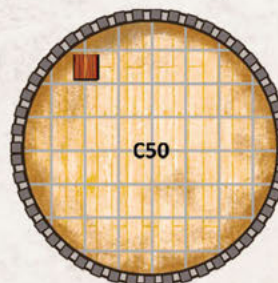
SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR



## CASTLE LOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

The location descriptions are where you'll find detailed information about the castle. Each location entry is organized as described below. If a particular piece of information doesn't apply to a location, that text is omitted from the location entry.

**Room Number and Name** The map reference number and the name of the location.

**Summary** A brief summary of the location and its game importance.

**Building Information** Information about the quality, condition, and (if appropriate) building levels, as per the rules for buildings found in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.

### Room Description

- ♦ **Description Read Aloud Text** A description of the location you can read aloud to the players or use as the basis for creating your own descriptions. If the read aloud label indicates an encounter, NPCs or other creatures found in this location are also described in the read aloud text.
- ♦ **NPCs** A list of the NPCs the characters are likely to encounter at the location. Each entry includes the NPC's gender, lineage, class, level, and age.
  - If no level is listed, use the appropriate NPC template from the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.
  - If the character's name is in bold, you can find detailed information about the character in **Chapter 5: People of Dunbury**.
  - The listed NPCs are not the only NPCs found at this location. They are simply the NPCs characters are likely to encounter there. By the same reasoning, if this line is absent, it does not mean no one is ever found there. It simply means characters won't reliably run into specific NPCs at this location.
- ♦ **Creatures** A list of creatures and monsters typically found at this location. If there is a creature name in parentheses following the name, use the statistics for a standard Fifth Edition or World of Aetaltis creature of that type.
- ♦ **Additional Read Aloud Text** An entry may include additional read aloud descriptions of important details or encounters. You can read these aloud to the players

or use them as the basis for creating your own descriptions.

- ♦ **Details** Topics, features, and events of particular importance are labeled and described in the following text. Characters may or may not discover this information, but the gamemaster may safely share it with the players if they feel it is appropriate. The characters may need to take some action to obtain this information, such as a successful ability check.
- ♦ **Goods and Services** If the characters can buy equipment or obtain services at this location, this section describes what is available and at what prices.
- ♦ **Treasure** A listing of notable treasures at this location. Mundane items are seldomly listed and are left up to the gamemaster to determine.

## C1 APPROACH

*Along a switchback approach to the castle, graffiti provides rumors, clues, and adventure seeds.*

## EXTERIOR



*A gravel-strewn switchback road zig-zags up the cliff toward the castle. At its base in the village, it is wide enough to allow two carts to pass each other, but it narrows as it rises. The outer edge declines more and more steeply as it nears the top of the promontory until, near the apex, travelers walk a narrow path with a solid wall of stone to one side and a sheer drop on the other. Here and there on the cliff wall, residents and visitors have chalked messages onto the stone. They range from pious quotes out of religious texts to lewd jokes, the latter of which are mostly, but not entirely, scrubbed away.*

The road to Dunbury Castle rises from the base of the promontory at Dunbury Village and climbs the cliff in a zig-zagging switchback before reaching the main gate.

### GRAFFITI

Characters who study the graffiti might discover something interesting depending on the result of a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check.



## GRAFFITI CLUES

DC	Result
5	"Long live Captain Brazewhite!" appears next to a poor but earnest sketch of a woman wielding a whip and a blazing longsword while leaping over the heads of a front line of orc invaders. Brazewhite has recently ordered it removed, but the sergeants keep "forgetting" to assign someone the duty.
10	"Forget the dog kennel. Come to the Unicorn for a good time." This one is recent, but it will be erased in a day or two, only for a similar advertisement to appear a few days later. The culprit is Dalbert (2b) if the handwriting and spelling are poor, Jarvis (2b) if they are good.
15	"River Rats Nest" with an arrow pointing down. This cryptic note refers to the secret passages through which a few notorious smugglers enter and leave the castle as they wish.
20	A series of arcane symbols was once painted here, although someone has since tried to obliterate them. A successful Intelligence (Arcana) check suggests that these decades-old inscriptions were from an endrori wizard who hoped to undermine the castle's foundation with a mighty (but since forgotten) spell.

Gamemasters should feel free to add more examples of graffiti and to respond to graffiti left by characters. Defacing the castle walls isn't strictly illegal, but depending on the subject matter it can affect the reaction of key NPCs, from rank-and-file soldiers to officers and even Captain Brazewhite herself.

Here are some additional ideas for the types of messages characters might find on the wall:

- ♦ Thieves or smugglers may leave each other a correspondence in code, either on the castle walls or on the cliffs nearer the waterline. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can crack these codes after viewing enough (at least half a dozen) examples and spending at least a day working out the code.
- ♦ Perhaps late on moonless nights, bold goblins sneak up to leave a pictograph to prove their courage; perhaps some mornings, the body of failed sneaks can be found at the base of the cliffs, an archer's arrow through their heart.
- ♦ Other harmless but still entertaining possibilities include yearning lovers writing their initials and those of a loved one inside a heart, or rivals insulting each other with veiled terms.

## C2 OUTER DRAWBRIDGE

*At the main gate, the heroes get a hint of the castle's formidable defenses and face vigilant guards who are on the lookout for troublemakers.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

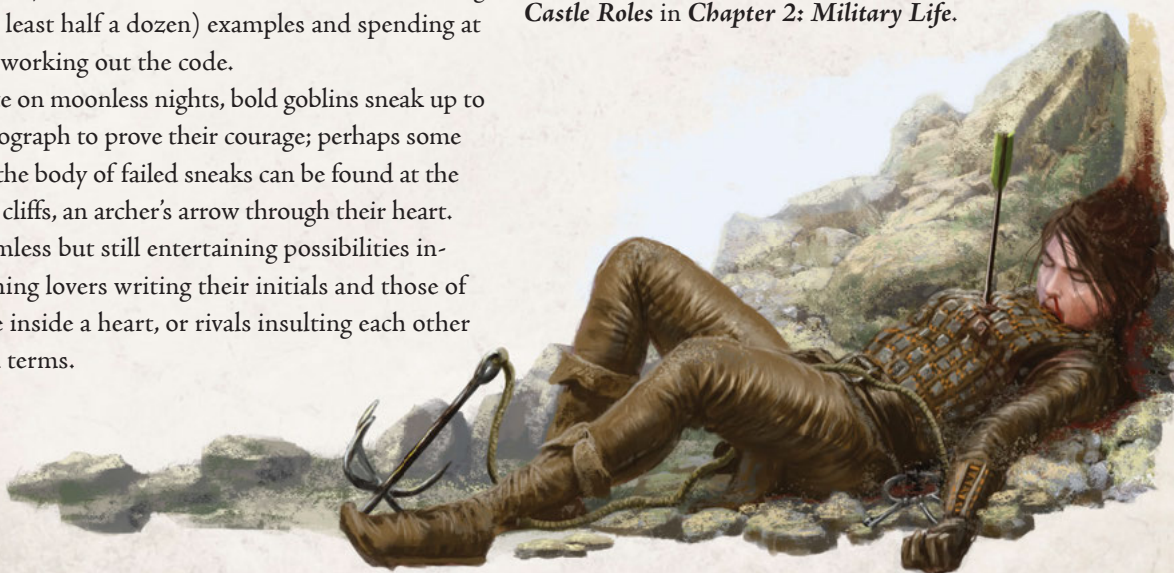
## EXTERIOR

*Beneath the drawbridge, a dry moat descends twenty feet below the level of the road, the bottom covered in sharp, loose stones. On the towers to the left and right of the main gate stand prominent relief sculptures of a dragon and griffon, respectively representing Lord Malinar Drakewyn and his friend Duke Gryphon Vaun.*

## NPCs 3 soldiers

The heavy drawbridge remains lowered except during its weekly maintenance check, and whenever the castle is alert to invaders. Otherwise, the defenders depend on the stout portcullis and door of the main gate for protection. During the day, a lone soldier stands atop one of the towers, while two more are stationed just beyond the drawbridge (in good weather) or just beneath the gate (during rain). The soldiers wave in those they recognize and challenge strangers to state their business in the castle. They search the vehicles and large containers brought by strangers, and armed individuals are not allowed inside without special permission.

On market days, there is a 5 cp fee to enter the outer bailey. See the Little Market (C8) for more information about market days at the castle. For detailed information about the rights and restrictions of different types of visitors, see *Castle Roles* in *Chapter 2: Military Life*.



ABOVE | The Infiltration Failed, by Russell Marks



## C3 OUTER GATE

*Passing through the outer gate, visitors get an up-close look at the danger invaders face if they try to breach the castle defenses.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

### INTERIOR



*The short passage between the drawbridge and the inner gate is paved in river-smoothed stones and freshly patched mortar. To either side, arrow slits indicate archers' posts beyond either wall. Overhead, long oval slots suggest death from above is an equal possibility.*

This is the castle's main gate. Everyone entering or exiting the castle by legal means passes through this portal. It features an outer portcullis, an inner portcullis, a heavy door with double bars, and a combination of murder holes and arrow slits in between. In an attack, the defenders often leave the outer portcullis open, closing it only to trap attackers in the killing hall. Those who do not surrender may suffer attacks from both the archers behind the arrow slits and from boiling oil poured through the murder holes above.

Even frequent visitors to the castle seldom dally in this entrance. While it has not been used for defense in many years, something about the constant gaze of the murder holes and arrow slits makes every visitor unwilling to linger.

## C3A MURDER HOUSE

*This small chamber allows defenders to attack anyone passing through the gate.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR



*The iron-reinforced floor of this room contains dozens of fist-sized oval holes. Four copper cauldrons rest on grates atop long-disused coal beds, and four long boxes and seven tar-sealed barrels—one marked with a green “X”—line the walls, leaving precious little room for defenders to stand on a narrow walkway.*

Soldiers are only assigned to the murder house if the castle is under attack.

### CAULDRONS

The cauldrons are meant for boiling oil, but cost-cutting measures over the past few years have forced the quartermaster to redirect the oil to other purposes. Until the castle's coffers are full, water must suffice.

### BOXES AND BARRELS

All that remains of the gate's defensive gear are four large boxes, each containing 100 arrows, fuel enough for eight fires under the cauldrons, six barrels of water (enough to fill the cauldrons three times each), and one barrel of quicklime.

### DEFENDING THE GATE

When the lime is poured through the murder holes, it fills the space below with a choking cloud of the caustic mineral. All creatures between the portcullises must make a DC 15 Constitution check, taking 16 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A cauldron of boiling water poured through the holes forces all within the gateway to make a DC 15 Dexterity check, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## C3B ARCHER GALLERY

*Another point from which defenders may attack invaders trying to pass through the main gate.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR



*The row of arrow slits in this narrow chamber give a clear shot at anyone coming toward the gate.*

This narrow chamber offers just enough room for six soldiers to take turns firing through the arrow slits into the outer gate. In times of heightened alert, Lieutenant Vance may order the galleries supplied with additional arrows. Otherwise, soldiers know to fetch them from the Armory Tower (C30) or the Murder House (C3a).

Defenders within the galleries enjoy three-quarters cover from attacks originating inside the main gate.

## C4 OUTER BAILEY

*A place where characters and commoners alike can mingle and trade in the little market, all under the watchful eye of the castle's soldiery.*



## EXTERIOR

“Beneath the gaze of the first five towers of Dunbury Castle lies a wide yard dominated by the two-story barracks. Just outside the main entrance to the barracks stands a sun dial, the hours denoted by sigils of Lensae and the Enaros. A covered well stands on one side of the barracks, the smelly entrance to a latrine tower on the other. An archery range stands beside a long wall, while an irregular gathering of tables and awnings designates the little market across the yard.

Surrounded by five towers, this is the first of the three defensive zones of Dunbury Castle and home to the garrison's barracks (C10). During daylight hours, the outer bailey hosts the little market (C8). Most of the interaction between castle residents and villagers occurs here.

### C5 LOW TOWERS

Five towers allow defenders to keep watch on activity both inside and outside the castle.

**Quality** Modest (Comfortable) **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

## EXTERIOR

“The five low towers that encircle the outer bailey provide a clear view of both the surrounding countryside and all activity inside the bailey. Upon the outer faces of the two flanking the gate are magnificent bas-relief sculptures. The one on the right depicts a rampant dragon, its scales painted gold and red. Its counterpart is a rearing griffon clutching a bundle of arrows in one talon, a bow in the other. The other towers boast no decoration, but upon one stands a massive ballista sheltered by merlons.

**NPCs** 1 soldier stationed atop each tower

Collectively these bastions are known as the Low Towers because they do not reach the heights of those in the middle or inner baileys. The towers flanking the main gate (comfortable quality) are called the Dragon and Griffon towers, after their decorations. The others lack ornament (modest quality) but are known as the Unicorn, Hydra, and Manticore towers. No one remembers the origin of those names, although Master Foley suspects a previous commander of the tower intended to add further ornamentation but never got around to it, perhaps for lack of funds.

## BALLISTA

The Manticore tower is distinguished by the presence of the castle's lone working ballista. Defenders using the ballista can attack targets from just outside the main gate to 800 feet down the castle road. When choosing targets, defenders prioritize siege weapons, vehicles, large foes, and mounted figures. One guard is always stationed atop the Manticore tower, although usually two or three must work together to operate the ballista.

The upper level of the tower contains six waterproofed hide bags protecting a total of 30 massive bolts for use in the ballista. More ballista ammunition resides in the Armory Tower (C30).

## BALLISTA

*Large object*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 40

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Bolt** Ranged Weapon Attack +6 to hit, range 200/800 ft., one target. Hit 22 (4d10) piercing damage.

The ballista is a siege weapon used by both attackers and defenders in siege warfare. Ballista used for defense are semi-permanently mounted on towers or along the tops of walls, while those used by attackers may be mounted on wheels for easy transport.

The ballista is essentially a giant crossbow with a 6-foot lathe. It fires 5-foot-long wooden bolts with iron heads. The shafts are around 2 inches in diameter. The feathering is typically achieved using metal, wood, or horn.

A team of three with proficiency in siege weapons can fire every third round (1 round to draw, 1 round to load, and 1 round to fire). For every person fewer than three, add an additional round to the time needed to prepare the weapon to fire. Non-proficient operators require double the time (2 rounds to draw, 2 rounds to load, 2 rounds to fire). Mixed teams (proficient and non-proficient operators working together) are treated as non-proficient operators, although the work is less taxing thanks to the extra hands.

If a critical failure is rolled on the attack, the weapon fails catastrophically. Either the arms snap, the rope snaps, or the weapon rear fires. When this happens, each operator must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Operators take 11 (2d10) damage on a failed save or no damage on a successful save. The ballista is now broken and may not be used until it is repaired, a task that can take hours if not days.



A ballista bolt packs a powerful punch. Targets struck by the attack not only take damage but should treat it as a shove and must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, there is no additional effect. On a failure, the target is shoved 5 feet directly away from the direction of the attack.

Ballista bolts have the potential to strike more than one target in a single attack and to pin opponents to barriers. If the bolt does enough damage to reduce the target to 0 hp, and there are other people in the same space as the target, check the attack roll to see if it would hit the next possible target in the space. If so, that target takes damage equal to whatever remained from the initial attack roll after applying damage to the first target. If the bolt shoves the target, when checking to see if others are hit begin with new targets in the initial target's starting space. If there are no additional targets, continue the process in the space the target is shoved into. Continue until all damage has been allocated or there are no additional targets.

If there are points of damage remaining in the attack after striking the initial target, and there is a barrier of some kind immediately behind the target or immediately behind the target after they are shoved, check to see if the attack roll would hit the barrier. If the attack is successful and causes any damage to the barrier using the standard Fifth Edition rules for damaging objects, the bolt is embedded in the barrier, pinning the target to it. A successful Strength check is required to extract the bolt from the barrier, with a DC equal to 10 + the amount of damage done to the barrier.

## C6 ARCHERY RANGE

*An opportunity for characters to meet Sergeant Hodge and impress the castle's inhabitants with their archery skills.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### EXTERIOR

“Four stacks of hay bales form a safe foundation for targets painted on cowhide in four distinct silhouettes, further coded by color for the killing (head and heart) and maiming (thighs and shoulders) spots. The first is the outline of an enormous troll. The second depicts a halfling river rat running with a bottle of spirits in one hand. The third shows a ferocious orc. The fourth is a comical illustration of three capering goblins clutching jugs of apple vinegar.

**NPCs** Sergeant Danton Hodge (male human veteran, age 44), 4 recruits, 2 soldiers, 2 veterans

When the archery range is in use, the dominant sound in the outer bailey is that of the disgusted Sergeant Hodge berating the soldiers for their inattention and low accuracy. Most of the new recruits are poor archers, but the sergeant is doubly hard on veterans, even those who have a keen eye and a steady hand.

While the archery targets are usually for the exclusive use of castle soldiers, if a visiting character asks to have a go on the range and scores a series of excellent hits, Sergeant Hodge may take notice or be informed if he is not present. Depending on the character's behavior, Hodge may try to recruit the excellent archer. Barring that, he may offer the character a small fee (2 sp) to instruct the troops in an impromptu lesson.

### MONTHLY ARCHERY CONTEST

Once a month, Hodge opens the range to all comers, and local teens and children are encouraged to participate. The armory includes several child-sized bows and short arrows for this purpose, and both castle and village residents bring their children to socialize, even if they do not compete. For his part, Hodge hopes children and visitors alike may be inspired to join the High Lord's Army, despite the low pay and dangerous work.

Adults are also permitted to show off their skills—or lack thereof. The usual targets are replaced by white canvas painted with the traditional concentric circles of archery contests. Contestant order is determined by drawing lots; the gamemaster may have players roll for position, but always have an NPC go first each round to allow a character the opportunity for an arrow-splitter shot. Each contestant takes one shot in turn for six rounds, after which the arrows are removed from the targets and each contestant's three best are tallied for a final score.

Sergeant Hodge immediately disqualifies any character obviously using magic, including enchanted weapons, to improve accuracy. If magic is suspected but not obvious, Hodge sends for Master Foley to decide the truth (with a Wisdom (Perception) check to sense the magic or through the use of the *detect magic* spell).

### ARCHERY TARGETS

Attack Roll	Target	Score
<8	Clean Miss	0 (and see below)
10	Outer Circle (white)	1
13	Middle Circle (blue)	2
16	Inner Circle (white)	4
20	Bullseye	8
25	Arrowsplitter	Target score x2



Soldiers who win Sergeant Hodge's competition also enjoy a month of "honor duty." Usually this entails serving as the ceremonial commander on one of the castle's more popular patrols. Among these are the road to Thornwall, which usually includes a stop at the Green Briar Tavern, or to check in on farmers known for giving soldiers delicious meals. If the person won the competition through skill rather than luck, a win may also mean being dispatched on dangerous missions in which a sharp-eyed archer can mean the difference between success and death.

About one-quarter of the castle soldiers have won the green arrows at some point. All of them keep at least one of them (others have been lost in battle), often tucked through the sword belt. This informal clique of champions nod to each other as they pass, and some local vendors offer them an unspoken discount or even free drinks and food from time to time.

Characters who become archery champions will enjoy a similar effect, at first just the wordless nods of acknowledgement and the occasional drink or snack sent to their table from an admirer. Later, champions may find themselves targets of derision or challenge from scoundrels at the tavern.

It is also possible that word of their deeds reaches the ears of endrori raiders, who call out the famous archer by name before battle begins. Those outlaws who also fancy themselves skilled archers may offer a one-on-one duel of arrows—"Let's see how well you can hit a living target with that green arrow."—although those who begin to lose will invariably call on their followers to attack the enemy.

The winner takes home a tooled deer-hide quiver crafted by Vorner Vanderkett (C8d), as well as ten green-feathered arrows fletched by Sergeant Hodge personally.

Archers compete in three age categories: child (under 11), youth (11–17), and adult. The average child scores 4 points, a youth 6, and a soldier 8. Sergeant Hodge, Lieutenant Vance, and Captain Brazewhite customarily abstain from competition, but should the characters challenge the honor of Dunbury Castle, one or more of them may rise to the occasion. Should this happen, roll the elite NPCs' attacks rather than using an average score.

Likewise, other regional NPCs visiting the castle may choose to participate for reasons of their own. If the characters have established a rivalry with other archers, the castle competition provides a non-lethal opportunity to determine the better archer.

A clean miss causes general laughter from the audience if the archer is a teen or adult. Soldiers or boastful outsiders can expect mockery for a day or two as well. Children receive encouragement instead.

Any character firing at a target that already has an arrow in it may attempt a "Robin Hood shot," splitting the first arrow with the new one. Obviously, this is most dramatic only if the previous shot is a bullseye. To succeed, the archer must call out their attempt to the gamemaster (although shouting a haughty, "Watch this!" to the crowd is not out of order) and hit AC 25 or achieve a critical success on their attack. Otherwise, the shot is scored at one level lower than what they would have normally hit with the roll.

## C7 KENNELS

*Home to the castle's hounds and their cantankerous caretaker, where characters may have the opportunity to purchase a fine deerhound pup.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

## EXTERIOR



*This small stone-and-timber building looks like a large shed or small barn. The smell reveals it's a kennel, though a well-maintained one. Beside the main door, a little table stands beneath an awning. On it lies an awl, a knife, a mallet, a cup full of round copper studs, and many strips of tanned leather.*

NPCs Kerrig Ovarkett (male **dwarf thug**, age 137), 22 deerhounds (**hunting dog**), Pretty Paul (**war dog**)

Previously located in the inner bailey, the kennels were rebuilt in the outer bailey seven years ago, making this stone-and-timber construction one of the newest in the castle. The official reason for the relocation was to put the dogs closer to the soldiers, making them more familiar with those they served in the field. The unofficial but more important reason was that the Master of Hounds, Warrant Officer Kerrig Ovarkett, scowled at the chapel all day, making Mother Belenne uncomfortable enough to support his petition to move the kennels—and incidentally allowing her space to expand the herb garden, which she had long wanted to do.



**KERRIG OVARKETT**

More than most dwarves, Kerrig despises the worship of the Enaros and goes so far as to spit every time someone mentions an enaros's name. Since the kennel's move, Kerrig spends the days scowling at the fey in the little market while he personally crafts collars and leashes for "his" hounds. He doesn't believe the rumor that the barbers (C8a) are spies, but like many dwarves, he finds fey in general shallow and useless. Also, Kerrig is never content without an object of scorn nearby.

Despite his disdain for religion and all things fey, Kerrig enjoys the company of other dwarves, halflings, and humans. Orog and drothmals make him nervous, but those who show affection for his hounds can win him over. Kerrig sleeps in the barracks, in a bunk beside the nearest window. He leaves this window open in fair weather to better hear any commotion from the hounds.

**KENNELS**

The kennels have room to house up to 40 deerhounds (hunting dog). The current population is 22 hounds and Pretty Paul, an enormous old mastiff (war dog) with a chronic disease that mottles his pewter-and-black coat with patches of pink, flaking skin. In the past, Captain Brazewhite has persuaded Mother Belenne to heal his illness, but the cleric balks at regularly casting divine magic on an animal.

**PRETTY PAUL**

Pretty Paul seldomly leaves the castle grounds but is treated to snacks by all the residents, hence going a bit soft and fat. He used to follow Elaris Brazewhite into combat, but she has commanded that he be pampered and allowed to enjoy his retirement. Nevertheless, if a fight breaks out near Pretty Paul, he is quick to come to the aid of any castle resident he recognizes, even as his first loyalty remains to the captain.

**HOUNDS**

Up to 16 of the hounds accompany mounted patrols, while six, including pregnant mothers and whelps, remain in or around the kennels. Once or twice a year, Kerrig sells the pick of the litter for a handsome price to nobles looking to expand their own kennels. Hounds from Dunbury Castle have a fair but rising reputation among hunters in the region. Player characters who express an interest in adopting a pup must permanently increase Kerrig's attitude toward them to friendly. Those who succeed can buy the pick of the next litter for 100 sp, or any of the other deerhound pups for 50 sp. Note that these are the prices for untrained puppies. Checks to train the pick of the litter are made at advantage.

Several other castle dogs roam the grounds but sleep somewhere other than the kennels.

**C8 LITTLE MARKET**

*A place to meet the locals and purchase supplies, as well as a tool for the gamemaster to offer unusual items for sale through traveling merchants.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

Read the following if the characters arrive on a market day.

**EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER**

“

*The center of the outer bailey is awash with tents, awnings, heavily laden wagons, and temporary shop stalls. Tables are filled with goods from across Agthor, and the aisles between them are filled with throngs of people. The shouts of hawkers fill the air. It's as if a miniature town has sprung up in the castle overnight.*

**NPCs (During Market Hours)** 10-20 soldiers, 100 townspeople of various types (**farmers, craftspeople, laborers, merchants**)

The castle market takes place every morning except Rest-day. The number of people in attendance varies greatly depending on the day. On a slow day there might be no more than a handful of local farmers selling produce. On a busy day the entire outer bailey is filled with stalls, carts, and tents, as well as a throng of shoppers.

It is left to the gamemaster to determine how busy the market is on any given day based on the needs of the story. If the gamemaster wants the players to face a challenge when it comes to acquiring equipment and supplies, the only people that show up are an old farmer with a cart full of turnips and a shepherd selling wool. Alternatively, if the gamemaster wants to make something unusual available, the market is a hive of activity including a handful of traveling merchants from distant lands.

**GOODS AND SERVICES**

Items typically for sale include fresh fish and produce, which soldiers buy to supplement their nourishing but unspectacular meals, as well as all manner of trinkets, clothing, discounted furs, and the popular illustrated books that halfling printers have recently begun distributing—anything to part soldiers from their salaries. Fruit and small bottles of liquor—the sale of which Sergeant Hodge strictly monitors for proper rationing—are the most popular items. Whenever a tinker or other traveling merchant comes to Dunbury Village, they are certain to visit the castle as well. Outsiders must pay a tax of 5 cp for



entrance, but the tax is waived for locals and a few favored visitors who have in the past bribed the guards with gifts or strong drink.

The market features several regular vendors, but each day there is a chance that one or more traveling merchants join them for the next 1d6 days.

## C8A THE WIZARDS THREE

*An innocuous looking barber shop serves as a cover for spies from a nearby fey court.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average

### EXTERIOR

“Under a colorful awning hung with tiny cloth butterflies, faeries, and dragonflies, a pair of comfortable chaise longue rest to either side of a tidy cabinet and table. Beside harmless-looking brushes, combs, and jars, various sinister-looking tools rest atop the table. Nearby stands a little forge, several buckets of water, and a few ceramic pans. Just outside the shelter, a little fire crackles away beneath a copper cauldron.

**NPCs** Moraine (female **elf druid** 5, age 143) Brown Nutmeg (female **fairy spy**, age 170), Green Bramble (female **fairy spy**, age 212)

Wizards not of the arcane variety but of personal grooming, this elf and her fairy companions are the most popular barbers in the region. If the characters first see the place at night, the tools are locked inside the cabinet (AC 15, hp 18, Unlock DC 20) and a tarpaulin covers the furniture.

If the characters arrive early in the morning, or if the gamemaster decides there's no waiting, read the following:



ABOVE | Welcome to the Wizards Three, by Russell Marks

## ENCOUNTER: MORNING

“An elf woman cleans the handtools with a cloth still steaming from boiling water. Her long brown hair is a marvel of intricate braids and trinkets of bone, shell, and carved leather. Nearby, a pair of fairies—one with hair and clothes predominantly brown, the other predominantly green—cautiously return the lid to the cauldron.

If the characters arrive in the middle of a day or the gamemaster wishes to show off “the treatment,” read instead the following.

## ENCOUNTER: MIDDAY

“As a human soldier lies comfortably on a chaise longue, a steaming cloth on his face, an elf woman with marvelous braided hair full of trinkets trims his hair with a pair of scissors. A pair of fairies—one brown of hair and clothing, the other green—massage his bare feet while singing a soothing song with Feyen lyrics.

Moraine and her fairy companions, Brown Nutmeg and Green Bramble, are the regular barbers for both the village and castle of Dunbury. All three speak Feyen and Common fluently. Nutmeg and Bramble are both proficient in Performance (+5), and Moraine has a Charisma of 14. Villagers can request the trio visit their homes to provide services after hours, but during the day they are found at the castle with the other vendors.

Bards and other musically inclined characters who understand Feyen may ask about the song lyrics. Feel free to devise your own, borrow some from traditional Earth folk music, or simply describe them as a variety of songs ranging from mournful remembrances of a departed lover to jaunty tunes about chasing a mischievous fox through the woods. Nutmeg and Bramble love to learn new songs, and they're glad to trade the ones they know in return. Neither plays a musical instrument, but they have an initial temporary attitude of friendly to those who do, especially those who accompany their singing.

All three barbers are on good terms with most castle residents, although a few soldiers harbor suspicions that one or more of them act as spies for the fey court. In fact, enough of the officers have expressed such concerns to Lieutenant Vance that she has passed them along to Captain Braze-white, who has given a general order to keep an eye on the three. She was wise to do so, because the soldiers' suspicions are correct.



Unfortunately for castle security, no one has yet caught Moraine, Nutmeg, or Bramble in an act of espionage. All three listen to gossip, and each of the fairies finds a way to listen in on activities at the Three Hounds and the Unicorn—openly as a guest at the former, usually perched on a window at the latter. None of them, however, is seen leaving the village or passing messages to strangers.

The cautious Moraine casts *animal messenger* on a flying creature once a month. The affected creature delivers a 25-word message to an emissary waiting on Dunbury Hill. If there comes a time when 25 words will not suffice, Moraine might dare to send one of the fairies instead, but until that need arises, they maintain appearances to the best of their ability.

Until this spy cell is disrupted, Dreswyn (25d) and the fey court have a good working knowledge of current events in the castle, at least so far as the rank-and-file soldiers understand it. If the Warden's agents or castle soldiers come into direct conflict with the fey, however, Dreswyn may command Moraine to probe deeper into the officers' meetings. It is possible player characters could be the ones to notice Nutmeg or Bramble sneaking into the captain's quarters or spying on officers' meetings.

Moraine and friends have a semi-permanent station in their stall, with a stone oven (used for melting silver and gold), two comfortable reclining chairs for clients, and an awning to protect against the sun and rain.

Moraine, Nutmeg, and Bramble live in a cottage in Dunbury Village (2).

## GOODS AND SERVICES

Barber services include not only hair cutting and styling but also teeth-cleaning, manicures and pedicures, shaving, plucking, piercing, and even tattoos. Moraine is an expert tattoo artist, and the fairies are known for their talent at braiding long hair and cleaning teeth, a task for which their tiny hands prove an excellent advantage. Moraine can provide fillings or false teeth of silver or gold, depending on the client's budget.

The trio offer "the treatment," a process including teeth cleaning, hair styling, manicure/pedicure, and general "sprucing up" that takes a full two hours, during which the fairies massage the client's neck, shoulders, and feet, singing in harmony while Moraine performs wonders with hair. While the fairies take over for manicure and pedicure, Moraine crafts the client a delightful reed charm in an elven practice vaguely analogous to origami. The treatment costs a substantial 3 sp, but at a point of the character's choosing during the following 12 hours, the

recipient gains advantage on any one Charisma-based skill check and cannot gain the benefit of the treatment again for ten days.

### BARBER SERVICES

Service	Cost
Shave (face)	2 cp
Shave (legs or back)	4 cp
Shave (other)	6 cp
Hair or beard cut	3 cp
Fancy cut/braid	6 cp
Manicure or pedicure	2 cp
Teeth cleaning	4–10 cp (depending on time since the last cleaning, tusk rings, and so on)
Tattoo	1–20 sp (or even higher depending on size/detail)
"The treatment"	3 sp

## C8B FRUITS AND FLOWERS

*Characters meet three well-known members of the community and may discover a rare magical flower.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

Read the following text only the first time the characters arrive. Upon later visits, the girls and their brother are interacting with customers, sheltering from the rain, arranging flowers, or—in Skellan's case—causing a commotion somewhere just within earshot.

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“

*Two blond teenage girls sit fanning themselves beneath a tattered awning surrounded by baskets of flowers and fruit. Behind them, a tow-headed boy of perhaps 10 years aims a slingshot at an unsuspecting cat who is poised at a hole near the base of the battlements.*

**NPCs** Sarie Potter (female **human teen**, age 14), Labecca Potter (female **human child**, age 12), Skellan Potter (male **human child**, age 9)

### LABECCA, SARIE, AND SKELLAN

Labecca and Sarie sell fruit and flowers from late spring to autumn, their offerings changing from fresh to preserved depending on the season. They are meant to mind their younger brother, Skellan, but let him run wild until someone complains, whereupon they make a point of watching him until it becomes tiresome—a period seldom lasting more than an hour.



Labecca likes to pull faces at the soldiers, who return the gesture when their commanders aren't watching. Everyone loves her and calls her "Brat." Sarie has begun to find teenage boys attractive but expresses her interest with withering glances and disparaging remarks; it may be some time before she finds love. Skellan is a little brute who torments cats. He once threw a stone at a hound, but Kerrig, the castle's Master of Hounds, gave him such a hiding that Skellan will never dare do that again. Unless a mentor figure takes charge, he's destined to become a river rat or die in a tavern brawl.

The children live with their fathers (2f).

## GOODS AND SERVICES

Fruit and flowers are available seasonally; in winter months, the girls sell only dried flower arrangements and dried apple and pear slices at the same prices as fresh.

Purple lilies are a rare bloom sometimes found along the banks of the Kouros River. Legend holds that the gift of one is a sure way to win the recipient's affections. Among the fey, they are said to hold magical powers.

### FRUITS AND FLOWERS

Item	Cost
Wildflower bouquet	1 cp
Cultivated flower bouquet	5 cp
Flower arrangement	1–3 sp
Purple lily	2 sp (10% chance available)
Wild berries	1 cp/handful
Melon	2 sp
Apples	2 sp/lb.

## C8c TINSMITH AND TRINKETS

Two vendors share this stall, a merchant who deals in jewelry and trinkets (some magical), and a tinsmith first introduced in *The Heroes of Thornwall* location book.

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“

Two vendors work under a shared tent divided by a triangular shack with doors on either of its two visible sides. To the right is a dwarven man perched on a stool, intently hammering rivets into the seam of a tin widget whose purpose is not immediately obvious. On the left, a corpulent halfling on stilt-shoes paces among tables laden with trinkets and jewelry, pausing here and there to make tiny adjustments to the display.

NPCs Beldin Sternkett (male **dwarf craftsperson**, age 45), Keema Loorna Rainhollow (female **halfling bandit captain**, age 36)

### BELDIN

Beldin the Tinsmith lives in Dunbury Village and does most of his business here in the castle, although he visits Thornwall monthly. He sells a variety of useful items like funnels, flasks, pitchers, and pans. With the use of a small anvil and his trusty toolbox, he is also available for simple repairs. He'll work on site, but any large or complex job requires him to complete the task in his home workshop, returning the item the following day.

Beldin displays his finished wares on one table and uses a smaller, stouter table for his current two or three projects. Along with his stool and anvil, he keeps a dozen common tinsmithing tools hanging from pegs on the wall behind him. A locked door (AC 15, hp 18, Unlock DC 18) leads to a storage space he shares with Keema.

A few times a month, Master Foley enlists Beldin in manufacturing a replacement part for one of his second-hand gearworked devices. On rare occasions, Foley or Lieutenant Vance ask him to assist Rudmilla in creating parts to repair the long-disused siege engines. Beldin despairs of these requests, because they inevitably irritate Rudmilla and disappoint Foley and Vance. The meager pay simply isn't worth the headache. Still, he dares not refuse lest he lose the privilege of selling in the Little Market.

### KEEMA

Keema Loorna Rainhollow of Dunbury used to travel the Dalelands with her former spouse, a skilled merchant. Once a talented acrobat, Keema served as the team's security and honed her formidable defensive skills in fending off many robbery attempts, every one of which she foiled. After an acrimonious separation, Keema struck out on her own, eating to forget.

Keema wears a pair of custom-designed stilt-shoes. She says it is to keep her tables at the right height for the predominantly human customers. Secretly, she also believes the extra height has a slimming effect on her round figure. She suffers from moderate obsessive-compulsive disorder and is forever checking to ensure all of her goods are arranged just so. Should someone successfully steal from her table, Keema is sure to notice within 1d6 rounds.

Despite her girth, Keema retains the natural nimbleness common among halflings. As a bonus action she can throw off the stilts and display her considerable fighting prowess. Her weapon of choice is the stout baton (club) she keeps close at hand. If a customer fails an opposed Dexterity



(Sleight of Hand) check while trying to steal from her, she strikes the offender's hand with the baton, causing only 1 hp damage on a successful attack. "That's the warning," she advises. "Everybody's entitled to one." If the thief fails to return the item at once, Keema cries out for help, kicks off her stilt-shoes, and attacks in earnest.

## GOODS AND SERVICES

Beldin offers a variety of everyday items for sale, all items he crafted himself.

### BELDIN'S TIN GOODS

Item	Cost	Weight
Flask	3 sp	1/4 lb.
Funnel	1 sp	1 1/2 lb.
Mess kit	6 sp	1 lb.
Kettle	5 sp	2 lb.
Pan	2 sp	2 lb.
Pitcher	3 sp	2 lb.
Repairs	10%-30% of original cost	

Keema is happy to buy trinkets, jewelry, and art objects of up to 500 sp at 50% of their full value. Those who have done her substantial favors can increase that price to 60% value.

In the Little Market, she displays inexpensive rings, necklaces, earrings, combs, brooches, gellenleaf snuff boxes, medals (sold by destitute soldiers and nobles), and all manner of pretty trinkets. Her stock is always changing, and if a potential customer requests a specific but inexpensive item, Keema has a good chance of finding it in 1d4 weeks. The prices of her trinkets range from 1 cp for a simple feather pendant to 10 sp for a silver ring set with a semi-precious stone. She always has about half a dozen cut geodes from the nearby quarry for prices ranging from 2–12 sp. In addition, she displays 1d6 recent acquisitions, the nature of which may be determined by rolling on the Modest Art Objects table in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.

For discerning (read: wealthy) customers who express an interest in more expensive jewelry, Keema fetches a wooden case of the "special stock" from the locked closet she shares with Beldin. The box itself is also locked (AC 15, hp 22, Unlock DC 28), and she keeps both keys on a chain around her neck. Inside the lockbox are the following treasures:

### KEEMA'S SPECIAL STOCK

Item	Value
Amethyst (wealthy cut)	20 sp
Opal (wealthy cut)	50 sp
Polished peridot (wealthy cut)	100 sp
Spinel (wealthy cut)	200 sp
One wealthy art object	750 sp
1d4 wealthy art objects	250 sp each

To determine the nature of the art objects, select 1d4 items from the Comfortable Art Objects table in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*. Each week, Keema uses a portion of her profits to acquire new items. Roll randomly or else choose items you feel would entice the characters to make a purchase. Also, the gamemaster is free to add trinkets to Keema's list of goods for sale, pricing them as appropriate for the amount of money the characters have accumulated.

Under a secret compartment in the box (DC 20 to spot during a thorough examination), Keema keeps her "extra special collection." She never shows these items upon first meeting customers, but to those who have spent at least 500 sp on previous purchases, she has the following items for sale.

### KEEMA'S EXTRA-SPECIAL STOCK

Item	Value
Eyes of Minute Seeing	2700 sp
Mummified hand	1000 sp
Necklace of Adaptation	1700 sp
Preserved eye in a jar	1200 sp
Ring of Swimming	3200 sp

Characters might reasonably hope the hand and eye are fabled magical artifacts. In fact, they are merely overpriced curios—unless the gamemaster wishes to use one as the seed for a high-level quest for the genuine articles. Cruel gamemasters may hold out hope that foolish characters maim themselves, but merciful gamemasters might have one or two wise NPCs, like Master Foley, chide the characters for their gullibility before the worst happens.



## C8D LEATHER AND LACE

*The shop run by skilled artisans whom characters may employ when seeking both mundane clothing and clothes specialized for their unique needs.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average **Levels** 1

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“

*A halfling with a mouthful of pins somehow maintains a constant stream of criticism while pinning a half-completed gown. Meanwhile, a muscular, shirtless dwarf with an oddly carved beard fits a boot around a form and occasionally opens his mouth to speak before closing it again against the torrent of the halfling's words.*

*At first glance, this stall seems to belong to both the halfling tailor and the dwarven cobbler. There is no obvious division of their tools or goods. Rows of new boots stand between neatly folded shirts and tunics, and belts hang among gowns and tabards. A trio of cats—one tabby, one tortoiseshell, and one solid gray—nap atop the tables in padded leather nests.*

**NPCs** Beremy Fenton Luster of Hiddleton (male **halfling craftsperson**, age 62), Vorner Vanderkett (male **dwarven craftsperson**, age 87)

#### BEREMY AND VORNER

Beremy Fenton Luster knows what's wrong with everything—the fit of your armor, the way you hold your soup spoon, the state of the duchy, and most thoroughly and frequently, what the cobbler just said—or, more accurately, what he'd thought about saying before Beremy corrected him in advance. Vorner Vanderkett possesses two great virtues: a masterful eye for boot sizes and the patience of a martyr.

Beremy is a perfectionist in all things, but none more so than in selecting the ideal clothes for any person. Almost always, he corrects a customer's first order, explaining as to a child that the color doesn't match the eyes or that the more fashionable cut of that cape does nothing for the profile. The extraordinary thing is that he's almost always correct, and both the castle residents and frequent visitors to the Little Market have learned not to tell him what they want but instead to ask him what they need. The result is always an improvement in the customer's sartorial impact, as he puts it.

Vorner is naturally quiet, more prone to listening than to talking, even outside of Beremy's company. When a

customer orders footwear, the cobbler takes down all the details—type of leather, fasteners, length, waterproofing or not, what type of soles—and then asks to see the customer's bare feet. He doesn't touch or measure them, just looks at them from the top, the side, and the bottom, and then grunts in affirmative. If asked whether he's got the measurements, Beremy answers for him. “Of course he does, and you make no mistake; that dwarf may not know the difference between a soup spoon and an oyster fork, but he knows feet. My uncle Abbet had a similar knack for embroidery. He could take one look at your handkerchief and tell you the age, height, and handedness of the person who made it. Why, once there was a murder in New Erinor, and the city guard hadn't a clue except for one bloodstained handkerchief, and—would you believe it?—one of them knew of Abbet's talent and had a herald summon him to the crime scene. The very scene! Pool of blood and everything. Well, before you could say ‘a stitch in time,’ they had him examining...”

Gamemasters are encouraged to perform breathing exercises and to imbibe extra caffeine before extemporizing one of Beremy's verbal rampages.

Beremy and Vorner live in a small cottage in Dunbury Village (2) (the cats follow them home each night, then back to the Little Market in the morning), but they do all their work here. Most evenings, the couple enjoy a glass of wine at the Three Hounds. Once Beremy starts talking, Vorner slips out for a few pints at the Unicorn before returning for the end of his story. After twelve years, Beremy has yet to notice.

### GOODS AND SERVICES

The items listed in the Leather and Lace table represent the items the pair can make. Although they may have a few random items available for immediate purchase, their normal practice is to make items to order.

You'll find in the list leather versions of items regularly made of wood or metal. These are more expensive but lighter. Naturally, leather is not as durable as those other materials, as the gamemaster will keep in mind when rescuers slice off the leather manacles of a captive.

Wealthy and higher quality boots are stylish, often dyed or tooled, but Beremy also makes long boots with pouches (visible or hidden) and knife-sheaths sewn in. He also offers belts, pants, and boots with hidden compartments for coins, in case one is robbed on the highway.



## LEATHER AND LACE

Item	Cost	Weight
Backpack, canvas	20 sp	5 lb.
Bedroll	24 sp	7 lb.
Belt	2 sp	7 oz.
Belt pouch, leather	3 sp	8 oz.
Blanket	22 sp	7 lb.
Boots, low	10 sp	1 lb.
Boots, high	15 sp	1 1/2 lb.
Boots, hide	22 sp	2 lb.
Breeches, cloth	15 sp	1 lb.
Breeches, leather	20 sp	1 1/2 lb.
Bucket, leather	3 sp	2 lb.
Cape	30 sp	2 lb.
Case, crossbow bolt	5 sp	12 oz.
Case, map or scroll	5 sp	12 oz.
Chest, leathern (small)	8 sp	13 lb.
Cloak	50 sp	2 1/2 lb.
Cloak, fur-lined	200 sp	8 lb.
Coat, fabric	50 sp	2 1/2 lb.
Coat, leather	30 sp	4 lb.
Coat, fur	350 sp	10 lb.
Gloves	2 sp	2 oz.
Gown	30 sp	2 lb.
Hat, fabric	10 sp	4 oz.
Hat, leather	14 sp	8 oz.
Hat, fur	22 sp	12 oz.
Leather armor	60 sp	8 lb.
Manacles, leather	8 sp	1 lb.
Money belt	3 sp	8 oz.
Quiver	1 sp	1 lb.
Robes	30 sp	2 1/2 lb.
Saddle, riding	70 sp	20 lb.
Saddle bags	20 sp	10 lb.
Scarf	1 sp	8 oz.
Shirt or tunic	6 sp	1 1/2 lb.
Skirt	15 sp	1 lb.
Slippers, cloth	2 sp	6 oz.
Shoes	3 sp	10 oz.
Tent	400 sp	150 lb.
Waterskin	3 sp	5 lb. (full)
Whip	10 sp	3 lb.
Adjustments and repairs	10-50% of original cost	

## C8F EASY STREET IMPORTS

*A merchant that carries unusual imported goods, and a connection to the duchy's political intrigue.*

Quality Modest Condition Average Levels 1

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“Under an awning decorated with the flags of many kingdoms and countries, not all of which you recognize immediately, an unusually tall and thin man sits among tables displaying wine, tinned food, colorful spices, cloth, yarn, needles, decorative cups and boxes, and other goods imported from distant lands. The tall man smiles and nods, waiting for questions rather than offering a sales pitch. When someone pauses before one of his tables, he rises with the aid of an exquisite ivory-handled cane and offers a startlingly broad smile that emphasizes the point of his pale-yellow chin-beard.

NPCs Ephraim “Easy” Street (male **human spy**, age 37)

## EPHRAIM

Ephraim “Easy” Street is a genuine purveyor of imported goods, but he has set up his stall in Dunbury Castle these past three years to listen for seditious talk (that is, any political talk that displeases Warden Balewick). Because he secretly reports to Warden Balewick, “sedition” means political leanings toward any candidate but Balewick as the new ruler of Vaun, as well as support for the late Duke’s more egalitarian policies. Street expects to see his patron installed not as the next duke but as the first king of Agthor, and he expects the king to be generous with his loyal followers, even those who pose as lowly merchants in out-of-the-way castles.

Ephraim lives alone in a small cottage in Dunbury Village (2). He sends a weekly letter to his “mother” in New Erinor, but on the back in invisible ink is his report to Warden Balewick.

## GOODS AND SERVICES

As with Keema’s offerings, the gamemaster should feel free to expand on Ephraim’s stock on a weekly basis, using the trinkets and equipment charts from the World of Aetaltis and Fifth Edition core books.

In addition to textiles and knick-knacks, Ephraim offers a wide variety of preserved food items ranging from grape wine, jars of olives, olive oil, confections sealed in wax paper, and most notoriously, tinned meat and fish. The latter



make for excellent high-protein rations, but there is a risk due to the relatively new process of soldered tin containers, an invention of a New Erinoran dwarven partner of Ephraim's.

Even if opened soon after purchase, there's a 10% chance that any tinned meat or fish is tainted. The chance increases by 10% for each month after purchase, until it inevitably goes rotten. The sniff test and a DC 10 Wisdom check is enough to determine it would be foolish to eat the spoiled food. The victim must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer the poisoned condition for 2d4 hours. Success indicates discomfort as well as noisome and noxious emanations for that time, but no other debilitating effect.

#### EASY STREET IMPORTS

Item	Cost	Weight
Box, decorative (Callios)	20 sp	1 lb.
Cloth, red linen (Port Vale)	22 sp/sq. yard	8 oz.
Confection (Dalelands)	1 sp	—
Cup, decorative (Malador)	1 sp	9 oz.
Needles, sewing	2 cp	—
Olives, jar (New Erinor)	15 sp	1 lb.
Olive oil (New Erinor)	10 sp	8 oz.
Tinned Fish (Port Vale)	3 sp	6 oz.
Tinned Meat (Free Kingdoms)	2 sp	6 oz.
Thread, spool	2 cp	—
Walking Stick (Dalelands)	1 sp	2 lb.
Wine, modest (Agthor)	2 sp	2 lb.
Wine, wealthy (Callios)	8 sp	2 lb.
Yarn, skein (Dalelands)	1 sp	1 lb.

### C8G ITINERANT VENDORS

*An area where the gamemaster can drop in whatever vendors they need to support the story.*

In addition to the regular vendors, there are a variety of traveling merchants, crafters, and performers that will visit Dunbury Castle. Most bring their own wagon or donkey-borne stall. Some, like jugglers and fur traders, may carry their entire stock in a single backpack.

When two vendors of the same type arrive, both are permitted entry. Rivalries regularly arise; sometimes heated, sometimes friendly. Characters who employ a little persuasion (via roleplaying or ability checks, as the gamemaster prefers) may incite a price war. Only the greatest successes should reduce prices below a 20% discount, and never below 50%.

#### Chance of Vendor

1–7	No visiting vendor
8–15	Roll d20 once on the Visiting Vendors table
16–19	Roll d20 twice on the Visiting Vendors table
20	Roll d20 two times and d20+d6 once on the Visiting Vendors table

#### Visiting Vendors

1	Farmer (livestock)
2	Farmer (produce)
3	Fishmonger
4	Potter
5	Hunter
6	Trapper
7	Trader (fur)
8	Trader (ale and lager)
9	Trader (exotic animal)
10	Trader (spirits)
11	Trader (wine)
12	Performer (acrobat)
13	Performer (acting troupe)
14	Performer (fortune-teller)
15	Performer (jester)
16	Performer (juggler)
17	Performer (minstrel)
18	Performer (puppet show)
19	Bowyer/Fletcher
20	Artist
21	Bounty hunter
22	Fortune-teller (real)
23	Bookseller
24	Mercenaries
25	Wizard
26	Freelance adventurer



ABOVE | Mungo the Magnificent, by Russell Marks



## C9 SHRINE OF ZEVAS

*A small shrine dedicated to Zevas, the patron enaros of merchants, where visitors to the little market stop to ask for his blessing.*

### EXTERIOR



*Cut into the wall of the tower at chest height is a small recess. It is about two feet to a side and roughly eight inches deep. The edges of the recess are carved to resemble pillars and the top is carved into the shape of a triangular tympanum. The surface of the tympanum is painted with images of merchants in a market. Mounted on the back wall of the shrine is an oversized representation of a coin, around ten inches in diameter. A scattering of copper coins glitter on the floor of the recess.*

This little shrine is dedicated to Zevas, the patron Enaros of merchants. It houses an oversized coin made from brass. The coin glitters in the light, polished by the many people who have stopped to touch it and pray on their way past. A dozen copper coins lie at the base of the giant coin. If any of the characters take coins from the shrine, have them make their next check to bargain with a merchant at disadvantage. If they leave a coin, give them advantage on their next check to bargain on prices. The advantage only applies to the first time they leave a coin, but the disadvantage occurs every time they take coins from the shrine.

## C10 BARRACKS

*The barracks that house the majority of Dunbury's soldiers, and an opportunity to discover a mysterious well.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate **Levels** 2

### EXTERIOR



*The red-brown stone of the barracks' first story contrasts with the blue-gray granite of the castle walls and towers. Fortified at the corners and with four chimneys, its upper floor consists of wattle-and-daub walls reinforced by timber beams. Large windows with blue shutters look out over the yard. A row of small open barrels runs along the peaked roof bordered by a walkway offering archers an advantageous perch but no clear view beyond the castle walls.*

*A well-worn path leads from the front entrance between a covered well and a carved stone sundial, which stand sentinel about 30 feet from the barracks.*

### BARRELS

The roof barrels collect rainwater. Each individually, or all at once, can be tipped by pull-ropes inside the attic in the event flaming projectiles set the roof afire. Half are designed to tip toward one side of the roof, and the other half toward the opposite side. Unless sabotaged, the simple fire-extinguisher works as intended, although re-filling the reservoirs takes 10 person-hours of labor or a month's accumulation of rain or snow (on average). The system has not been required for a real fire in decades, although Sergeant Hodge oversees a practical drill twice each summer—the exact date depending on the temperature and the general morale. “The splash” is a festive event during which soldiers and other castle residents crowd each other for a place under the roof edges for a cool shower. On occasion, someone “wins” the surprise of a drowned rat or pigeon and is considered blessed with luck for the rest of the season, but the real prize for everyone else is the “winner's” scream of horror.

### ROOF

Roof access is easy through ladders in the upper-floor bunk room. Those climbing the exterior find it a relatively easy task requiring a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Those stepping onto the roof or the archer's walk for the first time may be surprised to hear loud creaks; this effect is by design, a security measure similar to the nightingale floors of Japanese castles in our own world. All Stealth skill checks made on the roof or surrounding walk have disadvantage on the roll. A former sergeant had the trap installed to discourage rooftop trysts among the soldiers. Naturally, it was only a matter of time before soldiers wishing to slip away for a private hour learned that ascending the roof on the river side and remaining between the ladder and the roof's peak does not trigger the creaking alarm.

### SUNDIAL

The sundial in front of the barracks is as accurate as they come, its hours marked with simple numerals, but of course it's useless on overcast days. Master Foley of the keep has a monthly ritual of observing the sundial for an hour while timing the movement of its shadow with his cherished gearworked clock. Most of the soldiers consider this habit a harmless eccentricity, but they are careful to chuckle behind their hands, wary of the Master's temper.

### WELL

The barracks well provides fresh water from an underground spring independent of the river. The gasping



sounds that sometimes emanate from the depths are the result of a draining gap between the well and the spring that feeds it—but the effect has inspired several tales, usually told from parents to naughty children, about a ghost in the well.

While there is no supernatural cause for the unexpected sounds, the well does hide a secret, one that might have inspired at least one of the ghost stories about it. About ten feet below the waterline, deeper than any mason has climbed in recent decades, a narrow gap in the stones exposes a drowned passage leading to a network of long-forgotten smuggler's tunnels beneath the castle.

### RUMORS ABOUT THE WELL

Every resident of the castle believes a different story about the spooky sounds emanating from the well in the outer

#### WELL RUMORS

1d6 or choose	Rumor
1	"Oh, 'round about thirty years ago, the captain was a fine young man with a wife who tended the library. One day the soldiers brought back the captain's body after he was slain by an orc war chieftain. His wife wept all day, wailing so loud no one could bear to listen. When at last she fell silent, everyone in the castle heard a splash. They fished her out of the well the next day, but on every dark moon her ghost remembers her grief and wails again. If you listen closely to the well at midnight, you can hear her still."
2	"I hear it was the old sergeant himself who found a raw recruit about to empty his bladder into the well. Outraged, the sergeant gave him a good shove, and that was the end of him. If you listen closely on a quiet night, you can still hear the sound of piss splashing into the well."
3	"It's the voice of the elf queen reverberating through the living earth, mourning the death of her people during the Age of Darkness."
4	"There's no ghost, but the well itself is a spirit. If you whisper a prayer to Phensral and state your fondest wish, it'll come true. Well, maybe not right away, but one day..."
5	"That's no ghost. Master Foley's farts carry all the way down through the dungeons and up into every open hole in the castle. Pray you're never in the latrine tower when he lets one loose!" (This whimsical story holds more truth than its deviser ever imagined, since there is a network of passages beneath the castle.)
6	"That well was specially trained by Sergeant Hodge to gobble up naughty children who peer into it after dark. Anyway, that's what we tell the naughty children. Nobody wants another drowning."

bailey. Many of the soldiers consider it a mark of honor to make up a new one and hear it repeated back by an unwitting person to whom they did not personally relay it. Often, the last few soldiers still awake after a night of drinking try to outdo each other with their version of a shaggy dog story about the well. Although there is no supernatural cause to the noises, should the gamemaster desire, one of the stories may even be true.

New recruits and visitors who join in the fun can win the admiration of the soldiers. A good story well-roleplayed or a successful DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check wins laughter and approbation. A Charisma (Performance) check result of 20 or above creates a rumor that stays in circulation for years to come, even after everyone has forgotten its origin.

### C10A MESS HALL

*The mess hall provides insight into the lives of the soldiers and a place where well-liked characters who fall during battle may find themselves commemorated.*

Quality Modest Condition Average

#### INTERIOR

“Surrounded by stools and chairs, a dozen small tables fill this spacious hall. A few comfortable-looking benches line the walls, flanked here and there by little side tables. Two long tables, much scarred by graffiti dating back decades, dominate one side of this large hall. The graffiti—mostly names and dates—extends up the timbers and to the ceiling. Nail holes in some of the support beams suggest walls once divided the space into two separate rooms.

Once a much smaller area, the mess hall has been expanded by removing bunks and moving them to the Haunted Tower (C31). In their place stands more furniture to supplement the original mess tables and benches. The soldiers have constructed smaller, more comfortable furniture and now treat the area as something of a lounge. As long as gambling, drinking, and fighting are kept to a minimum, the officers permit these comforts as a boost to morale. On one wall hang four dart boards, each accompanied by a slate board with a hunk of chalk hanging from a string. Beneath them hang small shelves of darts with different colored fletching.

Any examination of the room automatically reveals half a dozen decks of playing cards, a similar number of board games, and enough dice to trip a galloping horse. While



Sergeant Hodge and others joke that the hall is a mess, the soldiers generally keep it tidy. The exceptions are festival days and nights after a triumph against bandits or marauders, when the soldiers pool their money to buy a rundlet of ale, wine, or mead, or on extra special occasions, a bottle or two of Forgewater.

#### GRAFFITI

The soldiers have a self-enforced, unwritten rule that the new tables are not to be marred by graffiti because they are not “the original planks,” where soldiers write their names and year of recruitment. One of the other soldiers adds the year of death for fallen comrades. Although to date only soldiers’ names appear on the tables, the soldiers may honor a well-liked character who falls in battle by adding their name and year of death to the rolls. Once, other graffiti was permitted, ranging from the sweet to the crude, but as the table surface filled with names, the beams, ceiling, and walls became home to non-roster carvings.

### C10B KITCHEN

*A small kitchen used by soldiers that miss meals in the mess.*

Quality Modest Condition Average

#### INTERIOR

*A pot-bellied stove squats under a crooked tin chimney that slants over to join the stone hearth in one corner. A single counter stands against the wall, on which hang a modest set of cooking implements: spatulas, knives, pots, and pans. To one side of the counter, two small water casks rest on a lower table. On the other side stands a narrow barrel with a lid and handle on top. A nearby cabinet holds sets of bowls, plates, and other dishes—enough to serve a family, but surely not enough to feed the entire barracks. Two round tables ringed with stools fill out the room. The ceiling and upper walls have been darkened by years of smoke.*

While the kitchen staff prepare most meals and deliver them to the mess hall, this modest kitchen allows soldiers to re-heat missed meals or warm beverages during late watches. Occasionally a soldier cooks a special meal, although doing so usually involves fending off moochers.

### C10c OFFICERS’ QUARTERS

*Home to Dunbury’s officers and an opportunity to add personality to these individuals.*

Quality Modest Condition Average

#### INTERIOR

*This small bedchamber features the typical bunk-and-trunk of private soldiers. In addition, a wash basin and pitcher rest on a bedside table. A wooden chair sits before a tidy desk on which rests a fat candle in a simple brass holder. Beside it lie writing materials and a few personal knick-knacks. Tacked to the wall are a few inexpensive decorations. A narrow, shuttered window allows the residents access to fresh air.*

Reserved for corporals, ensigns, and sergeants who do not already have separate accommodations in the castle or village, these rooms include a few personal touches—usually an illustration pinned to the wall or a souvenir weapon hung on pegs.

### BRINGING DUNBURY TO LIFE

#### PERSONALIZING EFFECTS

No plan survives contact with the enemy. Likewise, no NPC remains standard after interacting with the characters.

Should any soldier fight side-by-side with the characters, jot down a note about the interaction. Was there a rivalry? Did the NPC score a critical hit? Did a character save the NPC from certain doom? Expanding on that interaction through dialogue and action is a natural way to develop the NPC’s personality, but you can also express personality through an NPC’s belongings.

For example, if a young corporal shows signs of courage on the field, perhaps a character searching her desk might find an unfinished letter to her father expressing fear of facing the enemy—a fear she clearly overcame. Alternatively, if a soldier has been ineffective in combat, maybe searching his trunk turns up an old medal granted to his uncle by the late duke. The soldier can only hope to live up to his uncle’s glory.

It takes only one detail, preferably an object the characters can see and feel, to make “male human guard, age 24” become a living, breathing character.



Characters searching under the bed find a chamber pot, usually unsoiled. The officers have no servants and have learned it's more bother to keep the pot emptied and cleaned than it is to make the trip to the latrines.

The trunk in Corporal Higgs's quarters includes a false bottom—discovered on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check—containing a leather bag holding 315 sp. He claims this is simply his savings, but in truth it is the remaining sum of his bribes.

## C10D BUNKHOUSE

*A bunkhouse for the soldiers adorned with personal effects that allow you to highlight the soldiers' individual personalities.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR

“

*The high ceiling in this room once made space for triple bunks, a few of which form walls between three sections of single bunks. A handful of the bunks are pushed together to form longer beds with double blankets and sheets sewn together. At the foot of each bed lies a footlocker, uniform in shape and materials, but each labeled with a name and often several other decorations.*

At night, a pair of boots rests atop the locker of each sleeper, and outer clothes hang from a peg in the bedpost. A designated sentinel sits watch in two-hour shifts in the center “room,” usually on the eastern side.

Although the barracks can house as many as 300 troops in triple bunks, the current 100-soldier contingent has consolidated the beds upstairs, which is warmer in winter and better ventilated in summer. The long ones are for drothmal soldiers. The soldiers of smaller lineages use medium-sized beds but have lots of leg room. The remaining triple bunks are hung with blankets to create walls muffling the sound of snoring. Most of the snorers are assigned bunks in the western third of the bunkhouse, which many of the soldiers refer to as “the clamor.”

On the walls between the bunks hang a few personal items like musical instruments which are too large or delicate to leave in a footlocker. The unspoken code of honor among soldiers prevents anyone from borrowing such things without permission. New recruits who disobey this rule find themselves summarily surrounded and reminded of the code with a little rough justice never exceeding 2 hit points of damage.

## MIDDLE BAILEY

The Middle Bailey is the largest of the castle's three baileys and is home to the castle's domestic and industrial buildings. The stables and kennels are found here, as well as spaces to house cattle, pigs, chickens, and other farm animals needed to keep the soldiers fed. The large open space in the center of the bailey includes a miniature village of cottages complete with small farm plots where the families of officers and other important castle residents reside. One also finds the kitchen, smithy, bakehouse, and stockpiles here.

## C11 DRAWBRIDGE

*A secondary and undermaintained defensive structure with the potential to create a difficult challenge for players trying to defend against an attack.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Rundown

Unlike the outer drawbridge, this one sees little regular maintenance. Lieutenant Vance orders it raised and inspected each spring and again in the autumn, but no one has yet detected or addressed the literal weak links in the chains that could cause it to fail at a critical moment. Until a skilled smith (or a wizard with *mending* cantrips) repairs the four deficient links, there is a 10% chance each time the bridge is raised that one chain snaps and the resulting imbalance brings the entire bridge down into the moat separating the Outer and Middle Baileys.

## C12 MIDDLE GATE

*More of Dunbury's long unused and undermaintained defensive infrastructure.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

Since the recent financial shortfalls from New Erinor, this gate is commonly left unguarded. Monthly drills include exercises in retreats through this gate—omitting the raising of the bridge—but unless the castle is on high alert (perhaps because of an escaped prisoner or a disturbance in the keep), passage through this gate goes unnoticed.



## C13 CASTLE GARDENS

The castle garden provides a source of food for the castle inhabitants and helps reinforce for players that the castle is more than just a fortress.

Adjust the following description based on the time of year when the characters first see the castle farms. In winter, the ground lies fallow, while shortly after the final autumn harvest, pumpkins carved to resemble monsters leer up from the furrows before they are claimed for pies, stews, and soups.

### EXTERIOR

“Five plots of tilled earth dominate the Middle Bailey, their borders designated by stakes and coarse string. Near their center, a small raised-bed herb garden surrounds a sundial with the hours designated by playful symbols, from a crowing rooster in the morning to a flying eagle at noon to a crescent moon rising over the horizon in the evening.

**NPCs** 5 laborers, 8 children, 1 soldier

**Creatures** Ratcatcher (hunting dog)

The castle depends on outside farms for its grain and most produce, but the residents maintain several plots for fresh herbs and vegetables, including onions, carrots, radishes, cabbage, beets, and potatoes. Spouses and children of soldiers are primarily responsible for tending these plots, but Sergeant Hodge assigns one soldier per day to aid the effort. The task is seen as easy duty and a minor reward, although it is sometimes the cause of friction, as a few of the soldiers are flirtatious with the spouses.

One of Warrant Officer Kerrig's retired bloodhounds (hunting dog) prowls the gardens, sniffing out vegetable-eating vermin with such success that her previous name has been forgotten. She is now known as “Ratcatcher.” Voles, rats, and gophers seldom survive long once they've made their way into the castle.

## C14 PIGSTY

The characters meet Steven, one of the castle's most notorious residents.

**Quality** Poor **Condition** Average **Levels** 1

Read the following when characters first visit the pigsty.

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“An enormous sow lies in the mud, a wriggling pile of piglets nursing while half a dozen adult pigs root around for vegetable peels and other spillage from their morning slop. A black rooster with flamboyant red tailfeathers struts along the upper rails of the encircling fence.

**Creatures** Lady Grace (pig), Steven (rooster)

While dogs are permitted in all outdoor areas of Dunbury Castle, none venture close to the pigsty. The big sow named Lady Grace is a prodigious producer of young, but ever since an incident in her youth she fears dogs and begins squealing in dismay if any bark nearby.

Fortunately for the good lady, she has a noble protector in the form of Steven, a rooster who has appointed himself her personal protector and scourge of all canines who dare upset her. Should the player characters bring a dog (or perhaps transform into one) within 30 feet of the sty, Steven stands erect and watches the intruder. At the first sound of barking or if the trespasser comes too close for his liking, Steven charges the offender in a territorial display but stops short of attacking. Subsequent barking or aggression toward any of the pigs causes Steven to attack. Use the Fifth Edition stats for a raven to represent Steven, omitting the Mimicry ability.

Anyone harming Steven earns the ire of all the castle residents, especially those who work in the Middle Bailey. Anyone who kills the rooster is soon considered bad luck by the rank-and-file soldiers, perhaps even cursed.



ABOVE | Lady Grace and Steven, by Russell Marks



## C15 CHICKEN COOPS

The castle's chicken coops, an important source of food for the residents.

Quality Poor Condition Average Levels 1

### EXTERIOR

“From a two-story shack comes the unmistakable odor of chickens. Feathers, talon-tracks, and bird droppings confirm the clue, as does the constant clucking.

**Creatures** 53 chickens, 5 roosters

The multi-level chicken coops are home to over fifty chickens whose eggs provide a staple of the castle's diet. Five roosters lord over their flock, although Steven spends much of the day acting as Lady Grace's bodyguard.

Cleaning the chicken coops is one of the least desirable chores in the Middle Bailey, and it is usually assigned to a teenager or a misbehaving soldier as punishment.

## C16 COW SHED

The castle's cow shed and an important source of food for the residents.

Quality Poor Condition Average Levels 1

### EXTERIOR

“Six cows stare out from their narrow shelter, mournfully gazing upon the freedom enjoyed by those outside the shed. A pair of milking stools and several tin pails hang from pegs on the building's interior wall.

**Creatures** 6 cows, Hobbes (dog)

The residents keep a small barn for six milk cows. A portion of their yield is reserved for the children in the officers' cottages, but the rest goes to the cook. A floppy-eared dog named Hobbes claims the cow shed as his home and watches over the residents, though he is no match for Steven the rooster. Fortunately for Hobbes, they seldom have territorial disputes.



## C17 OFFICERS' COTTAGES

The officers' cottages provide another reminder for the characters that the castle is home to more than just soldiers.

### EXTERIOR

“Six small, cozy-looking cottages stand between the gardens. If not for the surrounding walls of the bastion, they look as though they might have been plucked out of any small village in Agthor. A tiny wagon here, a colorful ball there, and the chalk lines of a skipping game on the stone pathways reveal the presence of children.

The homes in the Middle Bailey offer little more room than the barracks, but the families assigned to them enjoy a modicum of privacy. A handful of children work and play among the castle gardens when they haven't been corralled for lessons from Mistress Tickle or Master Foley. In mild weather, the families dine outdoors, and on holidays, they string colorful lanterns along the borders of the gardens.

Each cottage has its own chimney and hearth, but a communal wash tub, woodshed, outdoor oven, and other shared amenities suggest there is little more than a bed or two inside each house.

## C17A STOKES COTTAGE

This cottage is the source of one of Dunbury's best known exports, a drink called Castle Whiskey.

Quality Modest Condition Average Levels 1.5

### EXTERIOR

“Several sealed kegs sitting outside this home smell strongly of malt ale, and a little farther away stands a well-maintained copper apparatus for the distilling of spirits. Several crates are stacked nearby, firmly nailed shut and marked with a sign scribed in distinctly feminine writing that reads: “No tasting—This includes you, Danton!”

**NPCs** Ensign Maddy Stokes (female **human officer**, age 32), Rob Stokes (male **human craftsman**, age 35), Otrred (male **human child**, age 12), Elspeth (female **human child**, age 6), Oak (male **human child**, age 4)

While his wife Maddy commands patrol units, Rob Stokes minds their children, Elspeth (6) and Oak (4), with the help of Maddy's son from a previous union, Otrred (12).



In addition to childcare, tending the garden, and cooking famously delicious meals, Rob also brews fairly good beer and distills some of it into a whisky. He has moved the still to within sight range of his bedroom window to discourage theft. Since Maddy caught, thrashed, and shamed a thirsty private last winter, there have been no recent attempts. Maddy reserves a few bottles to give as gifts to her superiors and those under her command who volunteer for particularly difficult assignments or who distinguish themselves on duty. Rob sells the rest to traveling merchants, who fetch a pretty penny for it in New Erinor, where the “Castle Whisky” is developing a good reputation. Players who find themselves in possession of a bottle may be able to sell it for upwards of 15 sp in the city.

The “Danton” in the scrawled warning refers to Sergeant Hodge by his first name, although so few of the castle residents know it that the name’s origin here is a mystery to most. For those who know the name, mainly Hodge, this is a not-so-subtle warning from Maddy Stokes that she is willing to complain to the lieutenant if there is another “incident.”

### C17B HODGE FAMILY

*This cottage is home to a versatile craftsperson that can fix almost anything.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate **Levels** 1.5

#### EXTERIOR

“An oddly colorful chimney makes this cottage stand out from its fellows. Virtually every stone in its construction appears to come from a different source, and a few seem to have been dyed or otherwise colored to create a distinctive motley effect.

**NPCs** Sergeant Danton Hodge (male **human soldier**, age 43), Ellen Hodge (female **human craftsperson**, age 44), Barkley (male **human child**, age 6)

The Hodge cottage is the best-maintained house in the Middle Bailey, and its chimney—built out of colorful stones scavenged from many locations throughout the duchy—is a focal point. While outsiders might credit this condition to Sergeant Hodge, it is the work of his tall and muscular wife, Ellen. Her prized treasure is a box of wealthy quality tools which she refuses to lend. Despite their warm friendship, this includes Rudmilla, the blacksmith (C18), who now knows better than to ask. When

unknowing castle residents ask to borrow them, Ellen instead shows up with the tools and does the job herself, talking nonstop about the good and bad ways to approach the task. While she is exceptionally strong (Strength 16), Ellen has no skill at combat. One glance at her physique, however, persuades most not to cross her—although her neighbor, Maddy Stokes (C17a), goes nose-to-nose with her when they argue about where the border between their yards lies.

Ellen and Danton have three grown children. One lives on a farm to the southwest, and the other two live in New Erinor. They once had another son who perished along with his spouse, leaving an orphan child, Barkley. Ellen and Danton have adopted their grandson, and he now lives with them. Whenever Danton hears of bandit or endrori activity near his daughter’s farm, he insists on accompanying the patrol that responds.

#### TREASURE

Ellen’s tool collection functions as Blacksmith’s Tools, Carpenter’s Tools, and Mason’s Tools. The exceptional quality of the tools provides advantage on appropriate ability checks. They might fetch as much as 200 sp from the right buyer, although any local purchaser would immediately recognize them as Ellen’s and refuse to purchase them.

### C17C WEAVER FAMILY

*The weavers are a decent local source for woven goods.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

If first seen during a sunny day, read the following description of the Weaver cottage:

#### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“On a paved porch before this humble cottage stands a small loom. The woman operating it frowns as if concentrating on the task but remaining dissatisfied with the result. Anyone can see her work is not of the highest quality, but she is trying her best.

**NPCs** Corporal Branton Weaver (male **human officer**, age 29), Marissa Weaver (female **human laborer**, age 28), Cynthia (female **human child**, age 4), Ethel (female **human child**, age 2)

Marissa Weaver is known for her craft, for which she employs an enormous loom that she must fold away each day before retiring with her husband, Corporal Branton



Weaver, who inherited the loom from his father. In the mornings, Marissa minds her two young children, Ethel and Cynthia; in the afternoons, the Widow Kirby (C17f) minds the children while Marissa weaves. Much of her work is of ordinary or even poor quality, but the officers make a point of buying blankets from her both out of affection for the family and as a mark of pride that the work was done “in house.” Marissa is happy to sell blankets, ponchos, and other simple works of weaving for fair prices. Should any characters prove instrumental in saving or helping Branton Weaver, she insists on offering a blanket as a gift.

### C17D TICKLE FAMILY

*A cottage scaled for halflings and home to the woman who provides an education for most of the castle’s children.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

#### EXTERIOR

“While no smaller than the other cottages, the low windows on this home suggest a family of shorter people, as does the small rocking chair beside the front doorstep.

**NPCs** Corporal Rufus Tickle (male **halfling soldier**, age 51), Emily Tickle (female **halfling laborer**, age 57), Amos (male **halfling child**, 10), Alison (female **halfling child**, 10), Sheelagh (female **halfling child**, age 6)

Corporal Rufus Tickle and his wife Emily share this cottage with their twins, Amos and Alison, and their younger child Sheelagh. Rufus commands the regular patrol to Thornwall, but Emily frets when he is assigned farther afield, occasionally scolding Lieutenant Vance about the assignments, to the chagrin of her husband and the amusement of any other soldiers who hear.

When not quarreling with the lieutenant, Emily teaches the castle children reading, writing, and basic homemaking skills—which in practice means she enforces the chores. Those who disappoint her find themselves mucking out the milk barn or cleaning the chicken coops (children age 10 or older) or weeding the gardens (the younger ones).

### C17E REED FAMILY

*Home to a married pair of soldiers, one of whom is notorious for his gambling problem.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

#### EXTERIOR

“An unassuming cottage stands among the vegetable plots. Its one notable feature is a cluster of nails—and additional nail holes—in the center of the front door.

**NPCs** Thaddeus Reed (male **human soldier**, age 29), Origillia Reed (female **human soldier**, age 29), Tibbalt (male **human child**, age 9), Luwa (female **human child**, age 7)

Originally from a clan of thatchers across the river, Thaddeus and Origillia Reed now take turns serving as castle soldiers. On alternate months, each joins a patrol while the other tends the gardens and looks after their children, Tibbalt and Luwa. Origillia has a reputation for a short temper and vicious treatment of bandits, while Thaddeus has a weakness for gambling that the other soldiers often exploit. When one of his debts goes unpaid for more than a few days, someone nails a curt reminder on the front door. Should the characters spend much time in the castle, have them notice at least one such posting.

### C17F THE WIDOW KIRBY AND ORPHANS

*The orphan home, giving the characters an opportunity to do some good for the castle that doesn’t require combat.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 2.5

#### EXTERIOR

“Obviously expanded since its original construction, this house is taller than the others with a crooked second story built up past the original stone frame to create several more rooms.

**NPCs** Maggie Kirby (female **human laborer**, age 62), Daena Eversong (female **halfling child**, age 12), Fillion Eversong (male **halfling child**, age 10), Jeremy Urso (male **human child**, age 8), Zanna (female **elf child**, age 8)

Maggie Kirby has adopted the orphans of soldiers who gave their lives in service to the duchy. Her late husband died at the hands of goblins, endrori for whom she holds an especial hatred. The children in her care include Daena Eversong and Fillion Eversong, whose parents perished during a flood of the Kouros River; Jeremy Urso, whose mother never returned from a scouting mission to the Spiderwood; and Zanna, who was found beside her dying mother after an endrori attack on an eastern farmstead.



## C18 SMITHY

The castle smithy, where characters can purchase high-quality metal goods and possibly learn the legend of dragon scale mail and dragon slayer weapons.

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1

### EXTERIOR

“

A squat forge stands at the center of this open-walled smithy. On the far side, a stone shed shelters a pile of coal. Three anvil stations surround the forge, each with a nearby table covered with tools, pails, trays, and works in progress. Every anvil is a different shape with a different style of horn. Quenching barrels stand by the anvils.

Horseshoes hang from stout hooks on several of the pillars that support the tin roof. Various hammers and tongs hang from others. Rarely can one spot more than a few inches of vertical space that aren't dedicated to hanging a tool or finished ironwork.

The first time the characters visit the smithy in the daytime, except on Restday, they find Rudmilla and Seamus hard at work.

### ENCOUNTER

“

A sweaty dwarf woman beats a length of iron into a wagon spring at the largest of the three anvils. She grimaces at every blow of the hammer, revealing a gap between her upper incisors. Strands of russet brown hair stick to her cheeks, remaining fixed when she tries to blow them away while continuing her work.

At another anvil, a shirtless young human man strikes out nails in an endless series of two rhythmic blows followed by a pronounced hiss as the glowing nail falls into a pail of water. His youthful face contrasts with a muscular torso, blackened here and there with coal dust. As he works, you notice the dwarf woman sneaking a glance at his glistening body.

**NPCs** Rudmilla Sturrenkett (female **dwarf craftsperson**, age 42), Seamus Coalman (male **human craftsperson**, age 22)

#### RUDMILLA “THREE HANDS” STURRENKETT

The chief of the smithy is Rudmilla Sturrenkett, the last in a long line of famous dwarven smiths who have since perished in defense of their enclaves. She still has living kin, but all are distant cousins residing in far off lands, and none has shown

any interest or proficiency in the noble work of smithing. Rudmilla considers it her sacred duty to master as many of the lost secrets of the Sturrenkett clan as possible and pass them down to an heir.

Unfortunately for the latter goal, she's more attracted to young human men than she is to her fellow dwarves. The taller they are, the more she fancies them, but she isn't serious about a lasting relationship. She tells herself she is young enough to dally as she pleases, leaving the “business” of extending the family line for later. An interesting conflict could arise if both a human and a dwarf suitor profess their affections for the smith. She would surely be more excited about the former, but the latter could make a successful proposal if he demonstrated a passion for smithing.

Apart from her flirtations and the prospect of a future partnership, Rudmilla dreams only of rediscovering her clan's lost secrets to manufacturing dragon scale mail and dragon slayer weapons. Those who bring her scales, hides, skulls, teeth, and other artifacts of a slain dragon will earn her friendship and benefit from her skills.

Rudmilla's shame is that she's never managed to smith the parts needed to repair the inoperable mangonels. She blames Master Foley's designs, while he grumbles that her smithing must be to blame. The truth is that they don't work well together, but Foley's designs are generally sound; he simply doesn't explain them well, and Rudmilla's specialty is armor, not mechanisms.

#### SEAMUS COALMAN

Rudmilla's current object of desire is her strapping young assistant, Seamus Coalman. A former coal miner, Seamus is an eager and apt student of smithing. After a few too many commands to take off his shirt and shovel coal into the forge when the weather was cold and the forge was hot enough, he has begun to catch on to Rudmilla's ulterior motive. He does not return her affections but doesn't want to risk alienating her, either. He wants to learn smithing and recognizes she is a true master of the art. He'll also gladly aid any character who seems romantically interested in Rudmilla, as long as he can do so without offending her.

Seamus has mastered the basics of blacksmithing, and he is responsible for most of the simple work like cutting nails and forming basic horseshoes. He's even become good at adjusting those shoes to fit the horses, although Rudmilla still occasionally corrects his work. While Seamus is the one to whom locals go for plow blades and other relatively simple equipment, he longs to become a master weapon-smith. He's no coward and will fight in defense of the castle, but he has no desire to become an adventurer.



## GOODS AND SERVICES

To outsiders, Rudmilla offers any metal-based armor or weapons for 10% above the prices listed in the *World of Aetaltis: Player's Guide*. Enlisted soldiers and freelancers can make the same purchases for 10% below those prices, although she manufactures and repairs soldiers' assigned weapons at no charge.

Rudmilla knows the trick of silvering weapons and is happy to do so at the standard price of 100 sp for a single weapon or ten pieces of ammunition.

In addition to weapons and armor, Rudmilla can manufacture the following equipment items at 10% above (outsiders) or below (enlisted soldiers and freelancers) the listed prices.

### SMITHY GOODS

Item	Cost	Weight
Ball bearings		
Bell, small	8 sp	—
Caltrops (bag of 20)	3 sp	2 lb.
Chain (10 feet)	5 sp	10 lb.
Crowbar	7 sp	3 lb.
Grappling hook	20 sp	4 lb.
Hammer, small	3 sp	2 lb.
Hammer, sledge	5 sp	12 lb.
Hunting trap	8 sp	25 lb.
Manacles	1 sp	6 lb.
Pick, miner's	4 sp	10 lb.
Piton	6 sp	1/4 lb.
Pot, iron	2 sp	5 lb.
Ram, portable	4 sp	35 lb.
Shovel, metal	3 sp	4 lb.

## C19 STABLES

*The stables for the castle's horses, mules, and other mounts, as well as a place where characters can purchase mounts and supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

*The unmistakable smell of horses reaches you before you can make out the occupants. A few horses, donkeys, and mules occupy stalls to either side of a corridor strewn with fresh straw. A lone soldier organizes a row of reins and harnesses along one wall. At the far end of the stables, a pair of closed doors suggest storage rooms.*

NPCs Corporal Erin Blake (female **human officer**, 25)

**Creatures** Abomonae (**warhorse**), Gale (**warhorse**), Zebulon (**warhorse**), 12 **riding horses**, 4 **ponies**, 4 **mules**, 2 **donkeys**

Home to the horses used on long-range patrols, as well as to donkeys and mules used as pack animals, the stables are one of the most scrupulously tended buildings in the Middle Bailey. A rotating roster of soldiers tend to the animals under the supervision of Corporal Erin Blake, who bunks in a tiny shack adjacent to the building so that she can be alert to any disturbance. When she ventures away on other duties, she makes sure to assign someone to take charge—but there are few she trusts with what she considers a sacred responsibility.

If needed, the stables can comfortably house up to 36 animals, although doubling stall occupancy can raise that number to 66. With 32 person-hours of labor, another 18 stalls currently used for vehicle, feed, and harness storage could be reclaimed. Currently, 12 riding horses, four ponies, two frequently pregnant donkeys, and four mules take shelter in the stables. The dozen horses and all four ponies see daily duty on long-range patrols.

### WARHORSES

Three warhorses abide here. One, nicknamed Abomonae by the soldiers, is a feisty and unfriendly beast found running free north of the castle by a group of soldiers on patrol. There is a standing offer from Corporal Blake to sell the horse for 500 sp to anyone who can tame it. It can be tamed with three consecutive successful DC 20 Charisma (Animal Handling) checks made within the same seven-day period. Failed checks result in 2d6 hit points of damage to the trainer.

The other two warhorses are the personal steeds of Captain Brazewhite and Lieutenant Vance and are not for sale at any price.

Lieutenant Vance's 8-year-old warhorse, Zebulon, is the tallest stallion in the duchy. His distinctive red coat with black mane and legs makes him one of the most recognizable, as well. While Zeb fights as well as any warhorse, his height offers his rider a high vantage from which to view a battle. Vance often allows her soldiers to attack first, readying an action to fire her crossbow at any opponents who try to flank one of her soldiers before charging into combat. In situations where Zebulon is not an asset, she dismounts and unleashes hell with her greatsword.

Captain Brazewhite's 14-year-old warhorse, Gale, is an exceptional specimen; dark grey with markings that suggest lightning bolts along his forehead and through his other-



wise black mane. For the past twelve years, Gale has been under the effects of an awoken spell cast by an archdruid. Because the spell was cast as part of a high ritual on a midsummer night among the standing stones of Dunbury Hill, the spell is permanent. Everyone at the castle knows that Gale is unusually intelligent, but few have heard him speak. A bit whimsical and vengeful, Gale speaks only when alone with Brazewhite or when in the company of a solitary soldier he deems to be shirking duties or whom Gale has witnessed behaving poorly to others, especially the other animals in the Middle Bailey.

Blake assigns a trusted rider to give Gale daily exercise, but he goes out on patrol only when the captain does. A character who makes a favorable impression on Blake or the captain may receive the honor of “putting him through his paces.” One who demonstrates less admirable behavior may hear an admonishing voice when passing through the stables, even when there are no other speaking creatures nearby.

## GOODS AND SERVICES

Corporal Blake is willing to sell up to four of the ordinary riding horses, two of the mules, and the troublesome warhorse; she could use the money, as she has her sights on a couple of studs she hopes will invest a new generation of riding horses with speed and stamina. She’s also more than willing to sell the surplus saddles, bridles, and other equipment currently going to no good use in the storage stalls. Until the castle’s budget returns to the levels it enjoyed during Duke Creesis’s life, Blake realizes she must make do with what remains, even if that means resecuring necessary gear once there are more horses available.

Blake’s asking price for mounts begins high but can be reduced by 10% for each of up to three successful opposed Charisma (Persuasion) rolls. The first failed roll indicates that Blake will accept no lower price for the next ten days, when she might change her mind.

### STABLE GOODS

Item	Cost
Riding horse	175 sp
Warhorse	Special
Mule	140 sp

Unless Captain Brazewhite forbids it (perhaps because of bad behavior by the adventurers), Blake is also willing to sell any of the items listed under Saddles and Supplies in *Chapter 8: Equipment* of the *World of Aetaltis: Player’s Guide* at the prices listed there. There are also two wagons that only need 5 sp worth of repairs (perhaps from Rud-



## DISCOVER DUNBURY

### GALE’S AWAKENING

It is up to the gamemaster to decide why the archdruid awakened Gale.

One possibility is that during a midsummer ritual, the druid foresaw great change coming to the region and understood that Captain Brazewhite was a key factor in ensuring that change was good for the land and animals. The archdruid wished to provide her with an exceptional steed who was also a friend to the fey court, the forest, and the beasts.

Another option is that the archdruid foresaw Captain Brazewhite would be custodian of Gale for only a short time before passing him along to another, who was truly the chosen one.

Still another option is the archdruid sent Gale to spy on Captain Brazewhite, and the horse is periodically visited by a sparrow summoned by the druid’s animal messenger spell to report on events in the castle.

milla or Ellen) before becoming roadworthy. The rest of the equipment is in good supply, but assume Blake runs out of any one item after selling ten of them.

## C20 LATRINE TOWER

*A necessary room in any castle and a potential vulnerability in the castle defenses.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

### INTERIOR



*A pair of graying tables, each with a wash basin, stand outside the swinging doors of this noisome tower. There’s no mistaking it for anything but a latrine.*

Inside the latrine, divided by a simple wall, are two rows of open seats over buckets. While there is no official division by sex, typically the male soldiers go to the left, where there is also a urinal trough that spills down the outside the castle and into the moat, the female soldiers to the right.

The arrow slits and open entrance provide a fair amount of ventilation, but the accumulated stink remains. The task of emptying the buckets is yet another of the castle’s undesirable duties, often delegated to one of the non-soldier teenagers as a punishment for bad behavior.

The drains from the urinal trough have proved trouble-



some in past. When birds were found nesting in the drains years ago, the commander ordered grates installed outside the aperture. A vulnerability persists, however, as a fairy or similarly tiny creature, perhaps under the effects of a *reduce* spell could enter the castle this way. A cruel or crass GM might insist that such an intruder roll 1d20 and declare on a result of 1 that someone is using the trough during the attempted infiltration. Note that a fairy or similarly sized creature could simply fly over the wall, but a sentry might spot such bold intruders.

## C21 KITCHEN TOWER

*The tower where the meals for the rank-and-file troops are prepared each day.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3 (2)

### INTERIOR

“Two large hearths flank this airy kitchen that still smells deliciously of woodsmoke and several recently prepared meals. Two separate banks of basins stand between a scarred wooden table, apparently dedicated to chopping and slicing, as the long row of various cooking knives hanging from the wall behind them suggests. Two long, sturdy tables hold the center, with copper pots and pans suspended above them by iron hooks. Shelves of mixing bowls and platters line the walls, with cabinets full of drawers beneath them.

Two short stairways lead five feet down to closed doors.

**NPCs** Sergeant Tranahk Frostfang, retired (female **drothmal soldier**, age 41), Gorman Tumbler (male **dwarf crafts-person**, age 112), Heather Vane (female **human crafts-person**, age 33), Clorwyn (female **elf crafts-person**, age 58)

Retired Sergeant Tranahk Frostfang rules the kitchens, although she performs less of the cooking since the injury that took three fingers off of her sword hand and ended her field career. Her advanced age is also a factor, but it's wise to never mention this to her.

She monitors stores and wastage with military precision and enforces kitchen discipline in a fashion difficult to distinguish from military drills. The one task she reserves for herself is preparing sauces for those in the keep, feeling that none of her staff has yet mastered the art. She watches carefully even as her subordinates attempt to duplicate her efforts for sauces destined for the barracks.

Her staff include Gorman Tumbler, who excels at meat,

fowl, and fish; Heather Vane, who often irritates “Sarge” by experimenting with her own vegetable recipes—but who is also almost always forgiven when they prove delicious; and Clorwyn, who excels at decorative pie crusts. Despite their specialties, each cook contributes to all the kitchen chores by turns. On special occasions, or when the castle hosts more than a few visitors, members of the officers' families and a few soldiers help with food preparation.

Each of these cooks holds a key to the pantry, but only Tranahk carries the key to the wine cellar. Lieutenant Vance has a copy of the wine cellar key in case Tranahk should lose hers.

## C22 BAKEHOUSE TOWER

*The castle bakery and a source of willing accomplices for money-making schemes the characters come up with.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

### INTERIOR

“Significantly warmer than the other castle chambers, this high-ceilinged tower smells of many varieties of bread. To one side, a stairway spirals to an upper floor.

Across the ground-floor, a bank of iron doors covers the face of a great oven. A wheeled stairway resides at one end, its tracks on the flour-dusted floor suggesting it sees frequent use. Along the other walls stand low, sturdy tables, some white with flour, others littered with forms, pans, and baker's peels. Another section of the wall houses shelves full of ingredients ranging from sacks of rye, oats, and wheat flour to labeled jars of salt, various seeds, dried fruits, and other delectable additions to bread. Beside the cabinet leans a stepladder, ready for shorter folk to reach the top shelves.

**NPCs** Willem Twiller (male **halfling crafts-person**, age 88), 6 female **halfling laborers**, 2 male **halfling laborers**, Zarno (male **cheebat scoundrel**, age 41), Naffigan (male **cheebat scoundrel**, age 34)

Largely independent of the kitchen staff, the castle bakers provide the bulk of the residents' daily food as well as hard tack and other long-lasting cakes for field rations.

The bakers' workday begins a few hours before dawn, mixing and preparing dough that they bake into several varieties of loaves and buns before breakfast. They continue to work throughout the morning and early afternoon, ensuring fresh goods for every meal.



### TWILLER FAMILY

The bakehouse staff are predominantly halflings, most of them members of the Twiller family, including a widower, his six daughters, and two sons-in-law. The patriarch is Willem Twiller, a rotund and energetic taskmaster who wastes little time on praise or chastisement but who finds a way to check on every baker's work before it is delivered to the keep, barracks, or the cottages. He is prone to "dad jokes" about his married daughters putting a bun in the oven so they'll have more helping hands before he grows too old to lift the heavier mixing bowls. His eldest two daughters are off to a good start, and their brood live in Dunbury Village (2g), minded by two of their parents or aunts on a rotating schedule.

### ZARNO AND NAFFIGAN

The outsiders among the staff are a pair of inept scoundrels called Zarno and Naffigan (both with a Wisdom score of 8). Their shorter names are for the convenience of their co-bakers, for their full names are Zarnopiskillis and Naffigantry. Only their ex-wife, Grissaldiminyi, married first to Zarno and later to Naffigan, uses their unabbreviated appellations and only when they are in trouble. Grissa, as they call her, now lives in New Erinor with her successful and obedient third husband. Zarno and Naffigan often talk wistfully of their separate romances with Grissa, yet there is nothing either of them fears more than the sound of her voice, or someone else's mention of her name. The surest way to incite a panic in either of these rascals is to suggest Grissa is coming to Dunbury Castle with a list of the chores they never completed.

Zarno and Naffigan's efforts to persuade Twiller to produce excess goods and sell at a profit to the Three Hounds Inn (2a) have met with limited success. Twiller likes the idea of extra money but fears Lieutenant Vance will claim the profits for the castle, since all the flour and other ingredients are purchased with castle funds. A clever character might persuade him with a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) roll that proposing a joint profit agreement with the lieutenant is the best way to proceed. The other obstacle is that the cheebats expect a piece of the action for suggesting the idea, and Twiller is disinclined to acquiesce to their demand.

Zarno and Naffigan are opportunists, not cutthroats. Their schemes simply exceed their competence. While they will never hesitate to betray Twiller or another castle resident to earn a little wealth, they have no interest in becoming traitors or accessories to murder. Play them as comic relief if your characters need a few laughs. Alternatively,



let them try to persuade the characters to become involved with smugglers or other outlaws in the interest of making a profit. The more outlandish the scheme, the more they are certain of its success.

Notably, both Zarno and Naffigan are competent bakers. They simply aren't satisfied with the standard of living it brings.

### BAKERY SCHEDULE

The bakers all live in Dunbury Village (2), although one always stays on night duty to keep the ovens hot and to be present in case of fire. Their workday begins at 3:00 am, with a shift rotation keeping the bakery occupied until shortly before sundown. Seldom are all the halflings present at once, as Twiller sends one or two home at mealtimes to help with the children, unless Tranahk requests help in the kitchen during festivals or when more than a few visitors stay at the castle.



## C23 GRANARY TOWER

A castle storehouse, but also an out-of-the-way location perfect for clandestine meetings.

Quality Modest Condition Average Levels 3

### INTERIOR

“Inside this great tower, vast storage bins hold months’ worth of grain. Sealed crates and barrels nestle between the bins. Tacked to their tops are labels like “sugar,” “barley,” “sesame seeds,” and other dry goods. A slate bolted to the wall shows a tally of goods entered or removed from inventory. The accounts cover only the past few weeks, suggesting that someone must copy the tally into a permanent record.

Someone from the bakery or kitchen visits this storage area every morning and again around mid-day. In the evening, it is known as a trysting spot for amorous residents of the castle.

The chalk tally is kept by the bakers, cooks, and soldiers delivering goods to storage. Every week, one of the ensigns copies the current figures into a log for Lieutenant Vance. At the end of each month, she personally checks the slate against her log before erasing the chalk marks to begin again.

## C24 STOCK HOUSE TOWER

Where soldiers and characters go to collect requisitioned equipment and supplies when on the Castle’s business.

Quality Modest Condition Average Levels 3

### INTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“Just inside the entrance, a pock-faced man with limp blond hair sits with his feet up on a desk. A large, worn ledger sits open beside his boots. The briefest glance at its pages tells you it is an inventory of goods received and released, each line signed by the requisitioning soldier.

Two tall ladders, one longer than the other, allow access to two tiers of shelves, each with a scaffold allowing one to walk the entire circumference of the tower. On the ground floor lie large crates, full sacks, and casks. The middle level houses boxes and barrels between ranks of shelves. The highest level is reserved for shelves of jars, tins, waxed-paper parcels, and burlap-wrapped bolts of

fabric. Apart from arms and armor, virtually anything a small community might need resides here.

A stone stairway spirals up along the outer wall, ending in a trap door to the roof. Near the base of the stairs, a large rectangular slate offers a diagram of the shelves with a key written in tiny script, often erased and updated, at the bottom.

NPCs Corporal Leslie Higgs (male **human officer**, age 35)

During fair weather days, the door to the stock house stands open. Corporal Higgs is usually the one on duty, but twice a day a private takes charge while the corporal stretches his legs or visits the latrine.

Sergeant Hodge might send a soldier here to fetch items from a list. A common example might include: “2 horse blankets, 1 hooded lantern, 3 flasks of oil, 6 torches, waterproof boots (bring 3 large pairs to try on), and one of the good wooden buckets, if there are any left.”

### REQUISITIONING GEAR

Allow characters who are enlisted soldiers to requisition up to 20 sp worth of gear without special permission each month. Freelancers can requisition up to 10 sp worth of gear per month in the same fashion. Any value greater than that requires a written requisition signed by Sergeant Hodge or Lieutenant Vance. Fortunately, either officer is likely to sign off on any reasonable request. Characters who have proven themselves in the field on multiple occasions will find the amount they can requisition without permission increases with every triumph. The monthly requisition allowance should never exceed 100 sp.

Keep in mind there is an expectation that the characters will return the gear when they are finished with it. It is also expected that the gear will be returned in as good or better condition than when it left. If the gear is lost, damaged, or otherwise destroyed during use, the character may be expected to replace it depending on the circumstances.

There is no set limit to what Corporal Higgs has available. The point is not to create a bookkeeping mini-game for the gamemaster, but to give the characters access to whatever gear they need to keep the adventure moving. The adventure should never grind to a halt for want of a length of rope, a few pitons, or another mundane item.



### CORPORAL LESLIE HIGGS

Corporal Leslie Higgs serves as quartermaster. He holds the keys to the stock house tower and to the locked desk drawer (AC 5, hp 10, Unlock DC 15) in which he stores the true ledger (and in a false bottom, the record of stolen goods). Both Sergeant Hodge and Lieutenant Vance hold copies of the keys, but Higgs is the one responsible for opening the tower each morning after breakfast and locking it shortly before supper. A private is assigned to stand guard during two half-hour breaks during the day, but only Higgs or his superiors are authorized to sign off on requisitions of greater than 20 sp value.

Higgs is a friendly fellow, hungry for the latest news or gossip. He's also not above a bribe. Characters offering him a cash incentive of 10% of the sp value of items can take up to 100 sp worth of inventory off the books. Higgs is cautious enough never to exceed that amount in a single month because he enjoys his position and the financial benefits it brings. Intimidating or persuasive characters may, on a successful DC 15 Charisma check, encourage him to double that amount, but not two months in a row.

### UNOFFICIAL LEDGER

Beneath a very poor false bottom in the locked desk drawer (requiring only a successful DC 5 Wisdom (Perception) check to discover), Higgs keeps a smaller ledger listing the unofficial requisitions from the stock house, but no names. Most of the entries are struck through with a single line; these indicate the stock he has since restored with falsified requisitions. The past month or so includes items that can be confirmed missing from stock on a new inventory. While disparities remain, comparing this second ledger with a physical inventory supports the accusation that Higgs is stealing.

Because of common errors and Higgs's pilfering, the inventory is not always correct. Any time a character is sent to fetch items from the stock house, there is a 5% chance one of the items is out of stock despite appearing in the ledger. Hodge's reaction is to bawl out the soldier who delivers the news, but he soon cools off, realizing the problem is both ongoing and endemic. Should the same character return a third time with such bad news, however, Hodge is likely to assign the character to cleaning the chicken coop or the stables.

### SHALLOW CELLARS

The shallow cellars are designed for the storage of a variety of food items. They are generally cool, dark, and seldom visited except to add or remove items from the stores.



## SIDEQUEST

### HIGG'S HUSTLE

With funds as tight as they are, Higgs's pilfering of castle equipment is a problem that needs solving. A character who discovers Higgs's unofficial ledger and presents it to Hodge or Vance are quietly commended and ordered to remain silent. If you wish, Hodge may ask the characters to assist him in gathering additional evidence. The goal is to catch Higgs red-handed by having him accept a blatant bribe in return for equipment. If the characters decline, over the following days, Hodge sends a few trusted soldiers to offer Higgs a bribe to catch the corporal in the act.

When the crime is revealed, Higgs is stripped of his rank, publicly punished, and dishonorably discharged from the castle guard. He blames the soldiers who most recently offered him bribes, perhaps including the characters. While he wants revenge, he knows he is no match for more experienced characters. He soon turns to drink and crime, and the characters may encounter him again as they intercept smugglers or bandits during the course of their duties.

### GOAL

Locate Higgs's second ledger and present it to Hodge or Vance, and then keep quiet about it until he is caught. Optionally, also help in the effort to catch Higgs red-handed.

### REWARD

1 Goodwill, 1 additional Goodwill if the characters assist in catching Higgs red-handed

## C25 ROOT CELLAR

*One of the storage spaces for the castle's food supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR



*Though lined with flagstones, this cellar still smells of earth. Crates of carrots, potatoes, turnips, beets, parsnips, and other root vegetables nest in deep shelves built into*



*the walls. Barrels and rundlets are neatly stacked against another wall. Between them, pottery jars of nuts, dried fruit, preserves, pickles, and salted meat or fish fill a graying shelf. Chalk marks on the barrels and crates list upcoming dates.*

The cool, dry cellar beneath the kitchen is the repository for most vegetable, nut, and fruit staples used throughout the winter and well into the following year.

## C26 PANTRY

*One of the storage spaces for the castle's food supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“Four ranks of shelves give this wood-paneled cellar the air of a library, but the shelves are filled with sacks of flour, oats, and rice along with innumerable pottery jars and jugs of everything from honey to salt. Every shelf is spotlessly clean and tidy. A shallow flagstone ramp leads down to a door with a grand lock in its center.

The central passage through the innermost shelves is wide enough to roll a tun of wine. The ramp leads down to the wine cellar, which is secured by a lock (AC 19, hp 10, Unlock DC 15). Tranahk and Vance hold the keys. Beyond the locked door, the ramp continues to curl down to the wine cellar.

## C27 BUTTERY

*One of the storage spaces for the castle's food supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR

“Two barrel-style butter churns stand on the sawdust-covered floor of this cool stone cellar. Milk pails hang from a wall, and a water barrel resides in a corner beneath a hanging lantern. Shelves built into the wall are packed with ice and sawdust surrounding sealed cannisters of milk, cream, and butter. Another set of stairs leads down to a deeper chamber.

One or two castle residents or soldiers are assigned each day to the buttery, where milk becomes cream, butter, and sometimes cheese—the latter made in the kitchen but brought back here to age. The stairs lead down to the beer cellar.

## DEEP CELLARS

A full level beneath the Shallow Cellars is yet another group of cellars. Known as the Deep Cellars, they are smaller than those above and are accessed by dangerously steep stone staircases or ramps. The descent is steep enough that goods stored in the Deep Cellars are typically raised or lowered by winch.

## C28 WINE CELLAR

*One of the storage spaces for the castle's food supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR

“An iron wine rack dominates two walls of this stone cellar. Less than half full of bottled wine, the collection is dominated by local vintages but includes a few rows of imported wines. Along the third wall stand three tuns, one of them tapped. A small pail below the spigot smells of sweet red wine.

The casked wine is a common vintage served daily. The rack holds 10 bottles of fine local wine worth 20 sp each, 60 bottles of Councilor's Gelenwine worth 13 sp each, and 5 rundlets of Merchant's Gelenwine worth 85 sp each. Hidden at the back of one of the shelves is a twelve-year-old bottle of Castlekeep's Reserve, a gift to the captain from Duncan Castlekeep in Thornwall worth 80 sp. Note that Tranahk does not keep a written record of wine, but she has a near-perfect memory for her inventory. Any missing stock will result in a quiet word from the chief cook to Lieutenant Vance, who will order Sergeant Hodge to begin a reticent investigation.

## C29 BEER CELLAR

*One of the storage spaces for the castle's food supplies.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR

“Two walls of this cellar are lined with rundlets, each branded with the sign of the Riverbanks Cooperage and stamped with the name of a local brewer. Many are labeled “ale,” but a few are marked “cider,” and a couple are marked as “barley wine.”

The ale is a perfectly good local brew served daily. The dry mead is a delicacy served on festival and holy days. The bar-



ley wine is surprisingly strong, as an unfortunate celebration the previous year proved when Kerrig and Sergeant Hodge got into a drinking contest that left both men incapacitated for several days. Captain Brazewhite has since ordered the barley wine not to be served outside of particularly special occasions.

Each of the 32 rundlets of ale is worth 42 sp. The 12 rundlets of hard cider are worth 54 sp each. The six remaining rundlets of the rare barley wine, treasured by local connoisseurs of malt, can be sold for 60 sp each.

## INNER BAILEY

This highest and innermost section of the castle is home to three towers, the chapel, an herb garden, and the keep itself. The latter structure serves as a command center, residence for officers and honored guests, prison for common (dungeon) and noble (tower) captives, and last bastion for survivors of an assault. While not officially off limits, the Inner Bailey experiences less traffic than the outer baileys, with most visitors coming to attend services at the chapel or reporting to the commanding officers. Officially, those command officers include Captain Brazewhite, Lieutenant Vance, Master Foley, and Mother Belenne. In practice, only the captain and lieutenant manage the affairs of the castle regularly, consulting the others for specialized knowledge and advice as needed.

Two soldiers stand guard at the gate to the Inner Bailey. They seldom challenge castle residents, although they do keep out unaccompanied children and dogs. The children have figured out how to create a diversion, however, and often sneak in on a dare to touch the door of the Haunted Tower (C31) or to bother Mother Belenne, who sometimes spoils them with a treat, or Master Foley, who threatens to turn them into salamanders, which he says is his favorite delicacy. For more information about who is allowed access to the Inner Bailey, see *Chapter 2: Military Life*.

## C30 ARMORY TOWER

*This is the castle's armory and contains the weapons and armor used to outfit those who are defending the castle.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER



*A lone guard stands beside a reinforced door at the base of this tower. A pair of rampant griffons on ornamental shields face each other across the ornate lintel.*

**NPCs** 1 soldier

One guard entrusted with the armory key is always stationed here, with a change of shifts every four hours. In times of heightened security—say, if there has been a murder inside the castle walls, a spate of thefts, or an escape attempt from the dungeon—Lieutenant Vance orders a doubling of the guard. Any visitor to the armory must present orders from Sergeant Hodge or a superior officer before withdrawing weapons or ammunition. Upon inspection of the orders, the guard opens the door (AC 16, hp 25, Unlock DC 25) with a key on a long neck chain and enters to see what items are withdrawn, confirming the requisition by updating the slate inventory.

## INTERIOR: GROUND FLOOR



*The ground floor of the tower is ringed with weapon racks, including many spears, bows, swords, and a smaller number of less common weapons. Additional racks hold dozens of round shields, unfinished chain shirts (requiring only a half hour's fitting with a smith), and helms. An inventory appears on a slate board mounted on the wall beside the entrance.*

A ramp with a two-foot stone barrier on the interior side spirals up to the second floor. Several flat areas diverge into short, steep inclines built into the outer wall. Arrow slits in the upper floor let in the available light. The steep detours in the ramp are designed to let porters halt “runaway” casks.

## INTERIOR: UPPER FLOOR



*On the upper floor, ranks of shelves contain bundles of arrows, pins of oil, huge ballista bolts, and nets full of irregular stones.*

The bags of stones are meant as scatter-shot for the currently inactive mangonels (C47). Captain Brazewhite holds out hope that Master Foley and Chief Rudmilla Sturrenkett will eventually repair the siege engine.

## C31 HAUNTED TOWER

*A tower with a dark history poses a challenge for the characters as well as an opportunity to cleanse a long-corrupted site.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Rundown **Levels** 3 (1)

## EXTERIOR



*Unlike the other castle towers, which appear in good repair, this one is slumped and weary. Mortar has crumbled*



*away here and there, like a rash on an old beggar's cheek. Guards who patrol the battlements hurry as they cross the roof, visibly relieved when they reach the other side. A board nailed to the ground-floor entrance reads: "STAY OUT." Painted on the door beneath the board is the message, "That includes you, Otréd. —Your Mother." Below that, a faint message in chalk has been mostly erased.*

No officer has ordered soldiers to enter the haunted tower since a former captain of Dunbury Castle hanged himself and his two beloved hunting dogs from the rafters of the uppermost chamber. Since then, the stone structure has aged at an unusual rate, its stones shifting, sometimes even

eroding to leave gaps that successive commanders have yet to order repaired.

Curious characters may wish to discern the erased message on the door. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that it once read: "We devil-dog dare you, Otréd!" If characters question the castle children, they may learn that the darers are Daena and Fillion Eversong (C17f), who along with virtually all the other castle children—and a few of the more immature adults—frequently try to goad their peers into intruding the haunted tower, especially on dark autumn nights when the wind howls through the crenellations. Despite their provocations, no one has dared to enter the tower for decades.



## DISCOVER DUNBURY

### THE TRAGEDY OF CAPTAIN KARNAVON

Rhys Karnavon, second son of an Agthorian noble house, simultaneously pursued his passion for hunting and advanced his military career by the simple expedient of befriending Duke Gryphon Vaun. The charming Rhys made himself indispensable with keen advice on stalking prey and generous gifts of well-bred hounds. Soon the duke would not ride out without Karnavon by his side. In time, he rewarded his friend by granting command over Dunbury Castle.

Once his position and livelihood were assured, Karnavon left the day-to-day affairs of the castle to his adjutant and indulged himself completely in the hunt. His trophies decorate the great hall and the captain's office and personal chambers, as well as the homes of nobles throughout the kingdom. "There's our family's Karnavon," a landowner might say while showing off the head of an exceptional specimen of boar or stag.

Karnavon became notorious even among the fey, although they tolerated his hunts because he left respectful offerings for the wild sprites, elves, and other sentient residents of Grimvold Forest and the Spiderwood. And while he was known for taking trophies, he donated the meat and hides of his kills to less fortunate families along the forest's edge. All agreed he was a kind, if not particularly dutiful, commander of the castle. Yet that all came to an end when he first spied the dryad Faeldwyn.

At first, she taunted the hunting party with use of her druidcraft, laughing as she escaped pursuit with her Tree Stride ability. She charmed pursuing hounds and sent them far away from their prey. She warned the local

wildlife of the presence of hunters, then harried Karnavon and his hounds with *entangle* spells.

Karnavon mistook her mockery as flirtation. His passions inflamed, the hunter swore he would capture her. She responded by sending a great stag to impale Karnavon's servants upon its antlers. Karnavon's lust wrestled with his wrath, and he redoubled his efforts.

The dryad proved elusive until Karnavon ordered hunting traps set throughout her territory. He expected to catch her alive, but he did not reckon with the other dangers of the forest. Wounded by a poisoned arrow and fleeing from a goblin warband, Faeldwyn stepped on a trap concealed in a meadow. Too far from a tree to escape, the dryad uttered a final curse on the hunter who had captured her as the endrori filled her lithe body with arrows. The night hag Hragatha Rattleskull (13) had always desired the charming dryad, and from across the forest she heard the fey's dying curse and made it reality.

After the discovery of Faeldwyn's body, Karnavon lost his taste for the hunt. Retreating to Dunbury Castle, he tried to distract himself with work. The best he could muster was a sullen fatalism as his nights were consumed by the vilest nightmares, courtesy of Hragatha. The hag visited his favorite hunting dogs as well, causing them to wail in terror every night. They snarled at the sight of their former master and snapped at all other dogs and soldiers. The terror continued for 32 nights. On the 33rd, Karnavon dragged his howling dogs from the kennel and into the tower. First one was silenced, then the other. When a junior officer dared to look inside, she found all three hanging from the upper story's rafters.



Adding to the tower's sinister reputation are continued manifestations of the ghosts that reside within. Cobwebs choke the stairways and the ground floor. From the corners of their eyes, intruders spot fat spiders with fey faces mouthing silent screams upon their abdomens running along the webs. When one tries to focus on the spider, it vanishes or turns out to be the husk of a moth trapped in the webs. Mournful howling emanates from the upper floor on the anniversary of Karnavon's death.

Cats never willingly come within 30 feet of the haunted tower, and those who are forced inside become wild, hissing and scratching at any who prevent them from fleeing. Dogs also are reluctant to approach, but sometimes when one of the castle hounds is near death, it drags itself to the tower door to die after one last, long, mournful howl.

## C31A HAUNTED TOWER GROUND FLOOR

*The characters get their first hint that the tower is truly haunted.*

### INTERIOR



The gaps between the four, stout pillars spaced evenly in the center of the room are filled with thick curtains of cobwebs. A stone stairway spirals up along the inside of the tower, disappearing into the darkness above. Several compartments built into the walls house a mix of items, including rusted garden implements, what appear to be the disassembled frames of beds, and a variety of other long-disused furnishings and equipment. The flagstone floor is covered in a thick, undisturbed layer of dust, even where a square trap door in the floor appears to provide access to a cellar.

Characters examining the dusty floor can, on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, barely make out a few sets of tracks. All of them go from the door to one of the storage compartments, then straight back again. The most recent are from a few months ago, when Sergeant Hodge ordered a private to fetch a replacement bedframe for the barracks. None of the tracks leads up the stairs or to the trap door to the cellar. Those searching the cobwebs find a few dry insect husks caught here and there. No spiders are currently resident in the tower, as the eerie place repels even their common prey.

All the rooms of the tower are haunted and make use of the optional Fifth Edition haunting rules described in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.

## HAUNTING: CHILLING AURA

**Sense** DC 20 **Analyze** DC 10 **Suppress** DC 12

**Trigger** Presence **Onset** 2 rounds

**Duration** Continuous **Reset** Immediate

### EFFECT

The haunting triggers as soon as anyone enters this room. Two rounds later, the temperature in the room drops by twenty degrees. This is immediately noticeable by everyone present. Not only will they feel the chill, but when they exhale the characters will be able to see their breath. The chill has no other game effects.

### DESCRIPTION

The presence of Karnavon's ghost in the tower has led to a relatively harmless haunting in this room. The haunting brings to life the cold horror felt by Karnavon in the face of his curse by filling the room with a deep, otherworldly cold. See the encounter description for the second floor (C31c) for ways to end the haunting permanently.

## C31B HAUNTED TOWER CELLAR

*The roots and wreckage in this cellar have responded to Karnavon's guilt, and now reflect elements of the dryad's tragic death in the form of a potentially dangerous haunting.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Ruins

### INTERIOR



Gnarled woody fingers thrust up between the flagstones to leave a jumble of earth and rocks on the once-finished floor. Elsewhere, misshapen roots have hardened into shapes resembling a stag's antlers, and along the glistening walls, tumescent knobs of vegetation have swollen into shapes resembling the organs of fresh-gutted prey. Weird, spiky fungal growths jut like barbed arrows from between the stones in the wall.

On three rows of warped shelves ringing the wall, stacks of bed slats have withered as if eroded by water or wind. What remain are thin, gray, twisted sticks evoking a hag's finger or the branch of a leafless tree, their ends as sharp as stakes. The once paved floor now appears churned, as though trodden after heavy rain and suddenly dried again.

No one has dared to enter the cellar for more than a decade. All signs of its past purpose are gone, wiped out by the haunting's twisting effect on the room. The appearance is so unnatural that any character can recognize that magic is at work here without making a check.



## HAUNTING: DRYAD'S TORMENT

Sense DC 18 Analyze DC 12 Suppress DC 15

Trigger Presence Onset 2 rounds

Duration Continuous Reset 24 hours

### EFFECT

The effect is triggered when anyone enters this room. Unless the room is vacated, the haunting's effects manifest on the third round. These effects occur over the course of three rounds, with one effect taking place each round.

#### First Effect: Ghostly Bear Traps

Make one attack against every character in the room standing on the floor. A successful attack inflicts damage and restrains the target. The target remains restrained until the haunting ends or the character escapes by making a successful DC 15 Strength check.

**Flagstone Bear Traps** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

#### Second Effect: Root Arrows

Make 1d3 attacks against each character in the room. As soon as an arrow hits or misses its target, it reverts to the shape of a normal root.

**Root Arrows** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

#### Third Effect: Charging Stag

A ghostly stag with antlers made from the sharpened slats on the shelves attacks the character nearest to the north wall.

**Ghostly Stag** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### DESCRIPTION

The presence of Karnavon's ghost in the tower has led to a dangerous haunting in this room. Karnavon's guilt forces the victims of the haunting to relive the tragedy of the dryad's death caused by Karnavon's selfish actions.

The haunting begins with the cracked flagstones transforming into jagged jaws that entrap the legs of everyone standing in the room. At the same moment, a ghostly image of the terrified dryad appears in the center of the room, her foot clamped in the vicious teeth of a steel trap.

Next, the dryad screams in agony as ghostly arrows fly through the air and strike her. At the same moment, barbed roots shoot from the walls at every character in the room.

Finally, as the dryad's ghostly form slumps to the floor, the sharpened slats on the shelves rattle and shake, forming a rack of antlers for a ghostly stag that leaps from the wall and attacks the nearest character. The moment after it strikes the stag lets out a bone-chilling scream and disappears, leaving the sharpened slats scattered around the floor.

After the first effect manifests, if all the characters flee the room or after the stag attack, the haunting ends and will not occur again for 24 hours. See the encounter description for the second floor (C31c) for ways to end the haunting permanently.



ABOVE | The Dryad's Revenge, by Russell Marks



## C31c HAUNTED TOWER SECOND FLOOR

*By day, this room is relatively harmless, but by night, trespassers will face the ghosts of Karnavon and his hounds.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Ruins

### INTERIOR



*The wooden floor creaks under the slightest weight. Even the timbers supporting the roof groan without any discernable prompt. The air is stale, but motes of dust swirl in slow spirals. The spiral stone stairway continues up the wall to a landing where a ladder reaches up to a closed trap door.*

*Rolled mattresses and other stored items fill compartments lining the walls. The center of the room has been left bare, but three ropes hang from the center beam. Their cut ends dangle eight feet above the floor.*

Soldiers of the castle found Rhys Karnavon and his favorite hounds hanged from the beam. They were so horrified by the sight that no one thought to remove the ropes after the nooses were cut and the bodies removed. Since then, fear of the place has prevented recent cohorts from even entering.

The fear is well-warranted since every night the ghosts of Karnavon and his dogs return to this room. They are absent during daylight hours, not even appearing on the Essential Plane, but they are present from sundown to sunrise.

### DAYTIME HAUNTING

Entering the room during the day triggers a harmless haunting.

#### HAUNTING: SPECTRAL NOISES

**Sense** DC 20 **Analyze** DC 10 **Suppress** DC 10

**Trigger** Presence **Onset** Immediate

**Duration** Continuous **Reset** Immediate

#### EFFECT

The haunting triggers the moment anyone enters the room. The central beam creaks, and the ropes sway as if supporting the weight of a man and two dogs.

#### DESCRIPTION

During daylight hours, neither Karnavon or his hounds appear, but as soon as someone enters this room, there are hints of their presence. See the encounter description below for ways to permanently end the haunting.

## ENCOUNTER: NIGHT ONLY

Anyone stepping into the room between sunset and dawn causes the ghosts to manifest. Read the following description to the players as soon as one of them enters the room (or at an appropriately dramatic moment) during this time:



*Suddenly, you feel a chill in the air. Three spectral figures materialize in the air in the center of the room, hanging by their necks from nooses attached to the central beam. The two to either side are those of dogs, one an older bloodhound and the other a lithe deerhound. The central figure is that of a man with a long mustache wearing a dress military uniform.*

*As soon as they appear, all three figures begin a macabre dance, swinging and thrashing at the ends of the ropes. The dogs scream out with choked howls and the man scratches helplessly at the rope about his neck. His wild eyes dart back and forth as he gasps for breath. At last, you hear a cracking noise, and all three fall still.*

**NPCs** Rhys Karnavon (**ghost**), Seeker (**hell hound**), Stalker (**hell hound**)

The ghosts are all aggressive, insane, and quite deadly. Karnavon is a ghost and should be played according to the standard rules for ghosts. For the two dogs, use the attributes for hell hounds, except replace the fire a hell hound normally breathes with a greenish vapor that causes necrotic damage instead of fire damage, give them immunity to necrotic damage, and remove their immunity to fire.

When no one is in the room, all three ghosts are visible on the Essential Plane, appearing as if hanging silently from the central beam. The ghosts cannot leave the room, and if all living beings leave, the ghosts disappear back to the Essential Plane.

### COMBAT

The scene described in the read aloud text above is a free attack by the ghost with its Horrifying Visage ability that occurs before combat begins. Once the saving throws against the attack are resolved, roll for initiative and resolve combat as normal. This free attack only occurs the first time the characters enter the room each evening. If they leave and return on the same night, the ghosts merely appear and attack as described below.

Once the opening attack is resolved, the three ghosts “revive” and tear loose from their nooses. They leap to the floor and attack. Karnavon begins by using his Possession ability. If the attempt fails or if he is forced out of his victim, he attempts to use the power again each time it recharges.



When it is unavailable, he uses his Horrifying Visage and Withering Touch alternately.

The spirits of Karnavon's loyal hounds, Seeker and Stalker, manifest in unoccupied spaces within 5 feet of their master. They attack the last person that caused damage to Karnavon, otherwise they jointly attack the nearest target.

During the battle Karnavon will not converse with the characters. Rather, he shouts and raves, spitting out things like "Leave me to my eternal torment!" or "I do not deserve to rest! My crimes are too great!" or "This curse is not enough. Droth, give me greater trials!"

#### DEFEATING THE GHOSTS

Defeating the manifested form of the ghosts in combat is only a temporary solution. On the next Faceless Moon, they return to haunt the tower once more. During the period of their absence, however, the tower hauntings temporarily stop.

#### ENDING THE HAUNTING

The simplest means of ending the haunting permanently is for a good-aligned fey character to stand before Karnavon's ghost and forgive him for his crime against the dryad. Karnavon immediately falls to his knees, looking up at the fey in disbelief. "I don't deserve forgiveness," he says as his spectral image and those of the dogs vanish forever.

Alternatively, if after defeating the ghosts in combat the characters exhume the remains of Karnavon and perform the last rites on them before the next Faceless Moon, the ghost is freed to continue its journey to Numos.

Of course, the gamemaster should allow any fun, creative solution to work. Perhaps the characters hunt down Hragatha Rattleskull and demand she remove the curse. Or maybe only Captain Brazewhite's sword wielded by a fey character can send the ghosts to their ultimate rest. Any solution that rewards creative thinking and builds on events or achievements the characters have already experienced is a great way to resolve the haunting.

Simply tearing down the tower without first employing one of the solutions described above, however, will not end the haunting. On the next Faceless Moon, the ghosts of Karnavon and his hounds simply move to another of the castle's towers.

#### TREASURE

Dropped in a darkened crack where the wooden floor meets the stone wall is Karnavon's magic dagger, *Hidebane*. It was overlooked by the horrified soldiers tasked with removing the body of the captain and his hounds.

#### HIDEBANE

Sense DC 12 Analyze DC 12 Slot Hand Attunement Yes  
Rarity Uncommon Price 2,000 sp Weight 1 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

This bone-handled dagger once belonged to Captain Rhys Karnavon, commander of Dunbury Castle. It was given to him by Duke Cressis Vaun as a birthday gift. The weapon operates as a common +1 dagger, although it has a secondary enchantment.

The blade is exceptional when it comes to cleaning and dressing a kill. It moves as if with a mind of its own, and the magic reduces by half the time it takes to do such work. In addition, any ability checks to harvest valuable parts or reagents from a carcass are made at advantage.

### C31D HAUNTED TOWER ROOF

*The blessedly not-at-all-haunted roof of the castle's haunted tower.*

#### INTERIOR

*"Like most of the other castle towers, this one forms part of the battlements patrolled by sentinels. Unlike those others, this one is covered in chalked and painted sigils that appear intended to ward off evil. There is a trap door in the roof held shut by a heavy length of chain with a solid looking lock.*

#### SIGILS

Any character examining the sigils can make a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check. Success reveals that most of these symbols are meaningless. A few, however, appear similar to signs used in spells like *protection from evil and good*. The sigils here, however, are made without the proper components or expertise and thus have no power.

Similarly, a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms that none of these symbols has any arcane power, though they may have been inspired by a non-practitioner's witnessing of a genuine caster's spell.

#### TRAP DOOR

The metal banded trap door leads down to the tower's second floor (C31c). The lock and chain are a formidable deterrent to entry (AC 18 hp 20 Unlock DC 20).



## C32 CHAPEL OF LENSÆ

*A small chapel where characters can make sacrifices to the Enaros.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average **Levels** 1 (1)

### EXTERIOR



*Beneath a blue-green dome, a near-circular temple features a grand entry with six wide stairs in the front. High upon the walls are twelve stained-glass windows, one of them boarded shut.*

*To the east, a short extension connects the chapel to a modest refectory. To the west stands a smaller but regal entryway featuring an iron gate and a short flight of steps leading downward.*

**NPCs** Mother Belenne, Jerome Wulf (male **human acolyte**, age 23), Herthem Grange (male **human acolyte**, age 37)

The castle chapel features a design common to shrines, temples, and chapels that cater to the worship of all the Enaros rather than one. Circles of benches in the center of the room face outward toward twelve shrines, each dedicated to one of the Enaros—including an unusual shrine to the fallen Endroren. The presiding priest typically moves from shrine to shrine while delivering sermons, sometimes only two or three depending on the topics of the day's service. For certain high rituals, the priest remains in the center of the room, hidden from view to focus the worshipers' attention on the representations of the divine rather than on a mortal figure.

Opposite the chapel entrance stands an inconspicuous door leading to the rectory, where Mother Belenne enjoys her own garderobe, a small bedchamber, a combined office and receiving room, and a storage room where one of her acolytes, Jerome, sleeps on a modest cot. Her other acolyte, Herthem, lives with his family in Dunbury Village (2).

### CEILING

The chapel's domed ceiling features splendid frescoes depicting Numos, Lensæ, and abstract representations of the unfathomable Endros and Aros. Many find that gazing upward and meditating upon the ineffable shapes and whirling flourishes of the chapel ceiling induces a near-hallucinogenic state that ceases the instant the priest brings the service to an end. For this reason, the Dunbury Chapel of Lensæ has become a site of pilgrimage to the more esoteric and ad-

venturous worshipers of the Enaros. Outsiders are welcome to participate in chapel services for a modest donation of 10 cp, but the acolytes encourage those of greater means to donate more generously.

### WINDOWS

Spectacular stained-glass windows are the chapel's key feature. They glorify ten of the twelve Enaros. The shattered window that once honored Modren has been boarded-up for the past three years, its restoration awaiting sufficient funds (nearly 400 sp for glass, painting and installation), which are not forthcoming from New Erinor. Mother Belenne tries to save enough money from offerings, but inevitably she transfers such monies to the general coffers to buoy the under-funded castle. Surprisingly, there is a stained-glass window for Endroren, although the image of punishment and pain hardly glorifies the fallen enaros.

### SHRINE OF ALANTRA

The stone shrine of the great mother features engravings of landscapes from towering mountains to deep river valleys and rolling plains. Wooden planters set into the sides are home to leafy green plants from the castle gardens. Upon the surface of the shrine rest a clay bowl, a wooden cup, and a stone mortar and pestle.

Mother Belenne uses these implements in preparing healing balms and medicines. She also casts her healing magics before this shrine; doing so grants the spells no greater effect, but it demonstrates her reverence to the Enaros.

The top of the shrine is often home to acorns and other nuts, which devoted halflings leave as offerings. Belenne leaves them for a day but gathers them each night as snacks for her acolytes and to keep the shrine tidy.

### SHRINE OF AELOS

Upon a black lacquered table stands a figurine of combined pale and black wood. It depicts a tall elven woman with raven hair and glittering stones for her eyes. Behind her, a silver crescent moon rises above a curved horizon. At her feet lie three distinctive arrows, a bundle of goblin bones, and a crystal orb.

In the stained-glass window, images of distant caves, torchlit dungeons, and other perilous places glimmer with the promise of treasure and lost knowledge.

The Keeper of Mysteries is the patron of archers and spirit guides, representatives of whom have left her offerings. The arrows are from Sergeant Hodge, who retrieved them from three of his best shots: one from the skull of an ogre he slew on patrol, another from the heart of a great stag, and the third from the wrist of a bandit chief who was



about to stab Lieutenant Vance in the back. None of these arrows has magical properties, but every soldier in the castle knows their legends.

No one is certain who left the bones, although rumors suggest Master Foley may be responsible. Others suggest a visiting pilgrim, secretly one of Aelos's avatars in human guise, offered them to Aelos. A successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check by an individual with the Essence Sense ability or a *detect magic* spell reveals a faint aura of magic lingering on the bones, which are in fact an arcane focus. The bundle weighs two pounds and is worth 20 sp.

The crystal orb appeared mysteriously one night around three months ago. It is in fact an offering from a mage of the fey court, who, despite the elves' animosity toward Agthorian expansion in the region, came here to show respect to Aelos. It also facilitates the mage's efforts to spy on the castle residents. The device magically records the sounds inside the chapel. The elf intended to collect the orb later or at least collect its observations, but for reasons unknown he never returned.

#### ORB OF OBSERVATION

**Sense** DC 15 **Analyze** DC 15 **Slot** None **Attunement** Yes  
**Rarity** Common **Price** 350 sp **Weight** 1 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

This smooth, polished orb is 5 inches in diameter and carved from semi-translucent black crystal. Suspended in the crystal are countless flecks of silver that give the impression of a starry night sky.

When the orb's owner touches it and speaks the command word, it will begin capturing any words spoken within 30 feet of it. When the owner touches it a second time, again speaking the command word, the orb stops collecting voices and instead creates illusory voices that repeat everything it captured. There is no limit to how much it can capture, but each capture may only be played back once, and the voices manifest in the order they were captured. When it reaches the end of what it captures or if the device's owner stops the voices, everything it captured is lost.

#### SHRINE OF DROTH

Upon an iron table kneels a bronze figure of the Lord of Trial in the form of a drothmal warrior leaning heavily on the enaros's famous sword, Galodrian, cast of a red-tinged iron alloy. Droth's posture suggests both eternal weariness and endless resolve in the face of the never-ending battles of life.

The stained-glass window above the shrine depicts several scenes of battle, including the fey resistance against the Wolf, battles against endrori hordes, and the Battle of Stormkeep.

The raised knee of Droth's statue is brighter than the rest of the figure. Soldiers tend to say a prayer and touch his knee before leaving for battle.

#### SHRINE OF ELENDR

The shrine of the muse is carved of wood, resembling a tree stump populated by frogs and salamanders that dance while the much larger figure of an uncommonly beautiful short atlan woman—or a tall dwarf woman, perhaps—plucks a lute and sings.

Carved fairies fly and sprites climb through sculpted blossoming boughs above the shrine, accompanied by fireflies and will-o'-wisps.

The shrine of Elendra is the site of local wedding rituals, after which it is covered in flower petals for several days. Purple blossoms are the most propitious offerings; knowing this, the local vendors put a premium on such flowers.

#### SHRINE OF ENDROREN

A deep alcove untouched by the light serves as the shrine to Endroren. Even a glance at this obscure recess causes one to feel a chill. No table stands here, nor do any offerings lie on the floor.

The window above the alcove depicts a scene of the other enaros grappling with Endroren while confining him to a prison in the Deeplands. At their feet, exiled dwarves shake their fists at all the enaros as they leave their ancestral home.

No one prays at the shrine of the Lord of Darkness, and Belenne rarely stops before it during worship. It exists as a reminder of the danger posed by Endroren, even imprisoned as he is in the heart of the world. It is also a reminder of the lure of power offered by darkness, the importance of resisting its temptations, and the cost of failing to do so.

During high rituals, Mother Belenne conducts a sermon at this altar, addressing the dangers of seeking power at the expense of one's moral code.

#### SHRINE OF GRETHKEN

An enormous carving of a tree-man features half a dozen shelf-pools that form a trickling waterfall from a constantly replenished basin among the boughs that form a sort of crown. Trailing vines form the Green Father's hair and beard. Polished river stones in his eyes indicate the season: blue-white in winter, green in spring, yellow for summer, and orange for autumn.

The stained-glass windows above the shrine depict distant forest-covered mountains and a vivid blue sky. Some trick of the glass—or perhaps a magical effect—hints at gentle movement among the clouds.



On the rare occasion that Dunbury Castle receives scythaa visitors, they leave offerings of food and crafted items at this shrine. Mother Belenne leaves them for a day before distributing them to her acolytes and, when they are plentiful, to others in the castle.

Belenne also changes the eyes of Grethken in four annual rituals marking the turn of the seasons. Each pair of semi-precious stones is worth 10 sp, but their religious value is much greater. Any thief caught with them would expect punishment much greater than for any other petty theft.

The cascading basins in the shrine of Grethken are where Belenne creates holy water for use among the ranging patrols. A divine feature of the shrine is that the ritual to create holy water does not require the material component of 25 sp of silver, but this feature functions only for the duly appointed cleric of the chapel, and only once each week. Belenne is happy to create holy water for visitors for a donation of 20 sp per flask.

#### FONT OF THE WILDS

**Sense** DC 15 **Analyze** DC 15 **Slot** None **Attunement** Yes  
**Rarity** Uncommon **Price** 5250 sp **Weight** 655 lb. **Grace** Grethken

#### DESCRIPTION

The *Font of the Wilds* is an exquisitely carved statue of Grethken. Worked into the carving are six small pools set at varying heights. Water magically flows from the statue, and as the water bubbles musically along it cascades from pool to pool. A host of plants and animals are worked into the statue, representing the rich variety of wildlife in the northern reaches of Agthor.

A secondary power of the item is that once each week, a cleric attuned to the statue may fill a flask of holy water without expending the 25 sp worth of powdered silver. It is expected that this power will be used only as necessary. Clerics that abuse the power or use it to line their own pockets will almost certainly lose 1 or more points of Grace with Grethken.



#### SHRINE OF LARAYIL

Suspended from the ceiling, a statue of a winged woman soars above the floor but just beneath the stained-glass window depicting billowing sails among the swollen waves of a restless sea. By some cunning sculptor's trick, the wings resemble those of a butterfly from the left, those of an albatross from the right. Somehow, the air in this nook of the chapel smells of seawater.

Master Foley is a regular visitor to this shrine. He leaves offerings of pigeon feathers and his own drawings of birds, butterflies, and faeries to gain the Enaros's blessing for the safe passage and return of his birds. After a few days, Mother Belenne collects these drawings, which she considers proof that Master Foley's gruff demeanor hides a gentle heart, and keeps them for herself.

#### SHRINE OF MODREN

Beneath a boarded-up window, a stylized anvil and forge hang suspended from the ceiling with six chains. Gold-plated ornamentation suggests fire beneath the forge, while glowing orange crystals "burn" with molten heat. A plain hammer, completely out of style with the rest of the shrine, lies upon the anvil.

The hollow anvil and forge look far heavier than they truly are. The gold plating, if scraped off the bronze sculpture through an effort of 10 person-hours, is worth 30 sp. The crystals are virtually worthless in themselves, but they are enchanted with several *continual flame* spells.

The hammer is the source of some tension in the castle. It is the object that smashed the stained-glass window, and it is from Rudmilla's Smithy (C18). Mother Belenne believes Rudmilla is the vandal responsible for the damage, but rather than confront her directly she placed the hammer on the shrine in hopes that other celebrants at the shrine would notice the connection and speak to the smith. Belenne remains hopeful that a guilty conscience will prompt Rudmilla to confess and apologize, even if the cost of replacing the window is beyond her ability.

The truth is that Kerrig (C7) is responsible, but he has no memory of the stormy night in which he gave in to a drunken rage, snatched the unattended hammer from the smithy, and cursed the enaros as he hurled it through Modren's window. As he staggered his way back to the barracks, the drunken Master of Hounds was struck by lightning—whether by the will of Modren or by some fantastic coincidence, only the





gamemaster can decide. With his hair and beard singed and all memory of his foolish behavior obliterated, he remains ignorant of his crime.

Those seeking Modren's favor occasionally leave offerings of small items they have themselves crafted. Neither Kerrig nor Rudmilla ever step foot inside the chapel, so neither has had occasion to see the hammer. Gossip that the smith or some other dwarf is responsible for the damage persists, although no one has yet summoned the courage to ask the suspects directly about the fateful night.

#### SHRINE OF PHENSRAL

The shrine of the Sea Father appears as an enormous scallop shell carved of sandstone and tinted in colors suggestive of a sunrise or sunset, with deep orange at the edges fading to brilliant cream in the center.

The stained-glass window above the shrine depicts a laughing man clothed in blue-green seaweed, frolicking in the waves among avatars of the other enaros. The posture and expressions of his paramours suggests that they find him more amusing than desirable.

Supplicants to the god of the waves occasionally leave offerings of fresh fish—from the river, of course, not the sea—which all understand go to feed Mother Belenne and her acolytes. Occasionally, some leave polished river stones as offerings.

#### SHRINE OF TOLETREN

This carved wooden shrine resembles an open book, complete with writing in a number of exotic languages. The gilt edges of the pages appear to be paint rather than metal.

In the stained-glass window, a hooded figure clutching an hourglass stands at the nexus of many converging rows of bookshelves, each filled with scrolls, tomes, sheaves of unbound manuscripts, as well as monstrous skulls, jars of eyes, wands, orbs, crystal pyramids, and many other arcane objects.

Those who understand the various languages inscribed in the Lord of Knowledge's book can piece together fragments of the story of the Ritual of Limitation and the passage of Endroren's patronage of wizards to Toletren after the former's imprisonment. Master Foley and visiting wizards occasionally leave offerings of valuable spell components upon this altar.

#### SHRINE OF VALE

This shrine is a strange and beautiful sculpture of bones and antlers from at least a dozen different beasts. Prominent among them are a magnificent set of stag's antlers, as well as the claws and skull of an owlbear. Strips of cured

hide bind the disparate fragments together in a figure that suggests a beast that never was—and one that haunts the nightmares of those who were already afraid of traveling in the wilderness.

Within the stained-glass of the window appears a dark-skinned woman clad in animal hides yet surrounded by wildcats, wolves, grey cats, elk, and many other creatures of northern Agthor. Their postures suggest they are watching the woman, not as potential prey, but as if they are awaiting her command.

Visitors often leave a token of propitiation at the altar before embarking on a hunt. Usually these take the forms of a claw or a patch of fur or hide from a previous kill, but sometimes they are fresh cuts of meat from a recent hunt. When the offering is meat, it is generally expected Mother Belenne and the acolytes will enjoy the offering as their next supper.

#### SHRINE OF ZEVAS

The shrine to the Lord of Webs is a cleverly constructed maze of moveable sections with one gap that allows a supplicant to shift a segment and thus change the path of the maze. The design suggests there is a solution, but whether that is to create a path from one corner to the next or to reveal some hidden message among the avenues is not immediately clear.

In the stained-glass window above the shrine, gold coins fall across a spiderweb that, upon closer inspection, more resembles the branches of moonlit trees or—on closer inspection still—a network of streets in a city designed by a madman. The subtle shifts in color as light passes behind the glass suggest different interpretations from hour to hour.

The illusory effects of the shrine and its window are entirely the result of artistry and craftsmanship rather than magic. Many a frustrated wizard has attempted to sense magic in the construction, certain they just haven't looked close enough.

Mother Belenne confides in those with whom she has a friendly relationship that she believes there is a solution to the puzzle shrine, but she has no idea what may happen once someone finds the correct arrangement. It doesn't matter, she says during sermons, because the message of Zevas is that mortal minds can never comprehend the whole of the universe, and often they imbue incomplete evidence with incorrect meaning. The lesson is to accept the limitations of one's knowledge without giving up the pursuit of further information that might change one's current understanding.



## C32A GARDEROBE

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

The garderobe is a small privy whose waste falls through a small chute to stain the river-side of the castle wall. Unlike the latrine tower, this one is a relatively private and comfortable closet with room for a small table with a washbasin and water pitcher. All is kept tidy by acolyte Jerome Wulf, whose reward for such labors is that he too is allowed to use the chamber.

## C32B BEDCHAMBER

*The personal chamber of Mother Belenne.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“

*This bedchamber features a small hearth, a narrow window with a fortified shutter, a canopied bed, a writing desk, and vibrant tapestries depicting sunset over the Donarzheis Mountains on three walls.*

The room was selected because it is large enough for Belenne to maneuver comfortably with her wheelchair. Usually, she has no need of help, although Jerome is responsible for keeping her supplied with firewood and lighting the hearth on cold nights. When arthritis creeps into her joints, however, she calls upon Jerome for help moving from the chair to bed or back again. Thus, he is especially attentive to her needs just before bedtime and shortly before she typically wakes.

### TREASURE

The three tapestries are true works of art. They weight 30 lb. each, and if sold as a set they might fetch 300 sp.

## C32C OFFICE

*Mother Belenne's personal office, where snooping characters may gain insight into the lives of the castle's residents.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“

*Two desks and a large cabinet fill the walls of this chamber, leaving barely enough room in the center for Mother Belenne's wheelchair to maneuver between them. The*

*entire room is perfectly organized, with everything put away, closed up, and tidy.*

*One of the desks looks to be a writing desk and has a small, perfectly piled stack of blank paper, a stoppered ink well, and a pair of freshly cleaned pens set in a perfect line parallel to the edge of the desk. The other desk has a pigeon-holed shelf atop it for storing and sorting letters and receipts. About half the holes are filled with each piece of paper protruding out from the edge by the exact same amount. The cabinet is only about four feet tall made from polished wood with very little ornamentation. There is a large lock set into the left door.*

Mother Belenne's office includes two desks, one for writing letters and another filled with pigeon-holes containing incoming letters and receipts. A lockable cabinet (AC 15, hp 15, Unlock DC 20) stands between the desks. In the cabinet, Belenne keeps the chapel ledger, a personal diary, two bottles of good red wine, one decanter of exquisite brandy with three crystal goblets, two dozen books, scrolls, and folios containing tales and scriptures of the Enaros, and—in a locked fortified compartment (AC 18, hp 20, Unlock DC 25)—the cash and other valuables collected as offerings to the chapel.

### CHAPEL LEDGER

The chapel ledger is a beautiful leather-bound volume filled with Belenne's tidy handwriting accounting for expenses and incoming donations, as well as a record of money transferred from the chapel fund to the castle's general fund, a sum that has increased by the season these past five years. Belenne tries not to resent the fact that her chapel is supporting the castle at large, but she is becoming increasingly anxious to repair the shattered stained-glass window above Modren's shrine. She keeps the ledger locked in the cabinet.

### DIARY

Belenne's personal diary, also stored in the locked cabinet, is a lively and often hilarious account of the foibles and virtues of other castle residents. Should it survive her, it might one day be published to great popular success in the Dalelands, but she will never allow it to be shared while she lives.

Someone who manages to pick both the cabinet's outer lock and the lock on the book itself (Unlock DC 15, or simply slice open the binding) can learn about the more candid aspects of the castle residents' histories and personalities. Notably, Belenne confides her suspicions that Rudmilla the smith is the perpetrator of the vandalized chapel window,



along with her hope that leaving the hammer on the shrine will encourage others to reproach her and evoke some sense of guilt and contrition. For further insights into the castle residents, the gamemaster may freely extrapolate from *Chapter 5: People of Dunbury*.

## TREASURE

The locked cabinet contains the following valuables:

- ♦ 2 bottles of good red wine (10 sp each)
- ♦ 1 decanter of exquisite brandy (40 sp)
- ♦ 3 small crystal goblets (5 sp each)
- ♦ 24 books, scrolls, and folios of scriptures and tales of the Enaros (2000 sp for the collection)
- ♦ Collected offerings (450 sp)

## C32D STORAGE

The chapel's storage room and Jerome's bedchamber.

Quality Modest Condition Average

## INTERIOR

“

*A row of stacked crates sitting on their sides forms a makeshift shelf against one wall. Despite the obviously ramshackle nature of the shelves, they appear sturdy. Inside the compartments are woven baskets containing neatly folded vestments as well as smaller boxes of candles, incense, and various ritual vessels and implements.*

*In one corner of the crowded little room lies a simple sleeping pallet. Beside it, an inverted crate serves as a nightstand. Upon it rests a tin cup and water flask.*

Jerome uses this room as his bedchamber, although he never lingers long. He is the first to rise each day. After washing his face, he wakes Mother Belenne and helps her wash and dress before lifting her into her wheelchair. For the rest of the day, he is never far from her side, unless she dispatches him with an important message for one of the officers.

## TREASURE

The room contains the following items of value:

- ♦ 3 blocks of incense (1 sp each)
- ♦ Acolyte's vestments (25 sp)
- ♦ 3 wax candles (2 sp each)
- ♦ Censer, incense burner, and other ritual items (15 sp)

## C32E CRYPTS

*The honored dead of Dunbury Castle lie buried below the chapel, along with some of their valuable personal effects.*

Quality Comfortable Condition Average

The entrance to the crypts is just outside the chapel, although the crypts themselves are located just beneath the chapel floor.

## INTERIOR

“

*Twelve steps down from the entrance, a small landing features an alcove to either side and a carved oak door with a great iron lock. In the right alcove stands a font of holy water. In the left stands a small table on which rest two incense burners and a small box of incense blocks. Behind them stand four fat, half-melted candles.*

The door can be opened by one of the keys carried by Mother Belenne or Jerome (AC 18, hp 25, Unlock DC 25). Lieutenant Vance also keeps a spare copy in her desk drawer.

### HOLY WATER FONT

The seldomly used holy water font is typically empty unless Belenne has reason to believe a dignitary is visiting the crypt, in which case she has Jerome fill the basin and light the candles on the table. The original purpose of the incense, apart from ritual, was to mask the odor of decay. So few corpses have been interred in the crypt that the incense is hardly necessary.

### BEYOND THE DOOR

Beyond the door, a second flight of six steps leads to a twelve-sided chamber supported by four rectangular pillars. Crypts stand against three of the walls. Upon another wall is a marble plaque with a long list of engraved names and locations.

Originally created as a resting place for officers slain in the line of duty, the crypts of Dunbury Castle are home to only two former commanders. The names of other former captains, masters, priests, and a few exemplary lieutenants are memorialized on the plaque. Beside their names are inscribed the locations of their graves, usually an ancestral estate, a monastery cemetery, or a home village.

The crypts are all horizontal sarcophagi on plinths. The first two are cemented shut. Prying open their lids requires a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check with the appropriate tools.



### HERRA FARROKETT'S CRYPT

Upon the lid of the first crypt is a carving of a battleaxe with a word in Dwarven inscribed on each of its two blades. Engraved on a stone scroll beside it is the name, "Captain Farrokett."

Those who can read dwarven writing can identify the words on the axe as "Valor" and "Duty."

The first commander of Dunbury Castle was a dwarf veteran of countless battles against the endrori. Herra Farrokett forged a unified company of humans, dwarves, halflings, cheebats, and a few orogs to defend the region. A DC 10 Intelligence (History) check reminds a viewer that she was also the first to forge a tenuous alliance with the fey in the area, who sent a small contingent of scouts and archers to aid them.

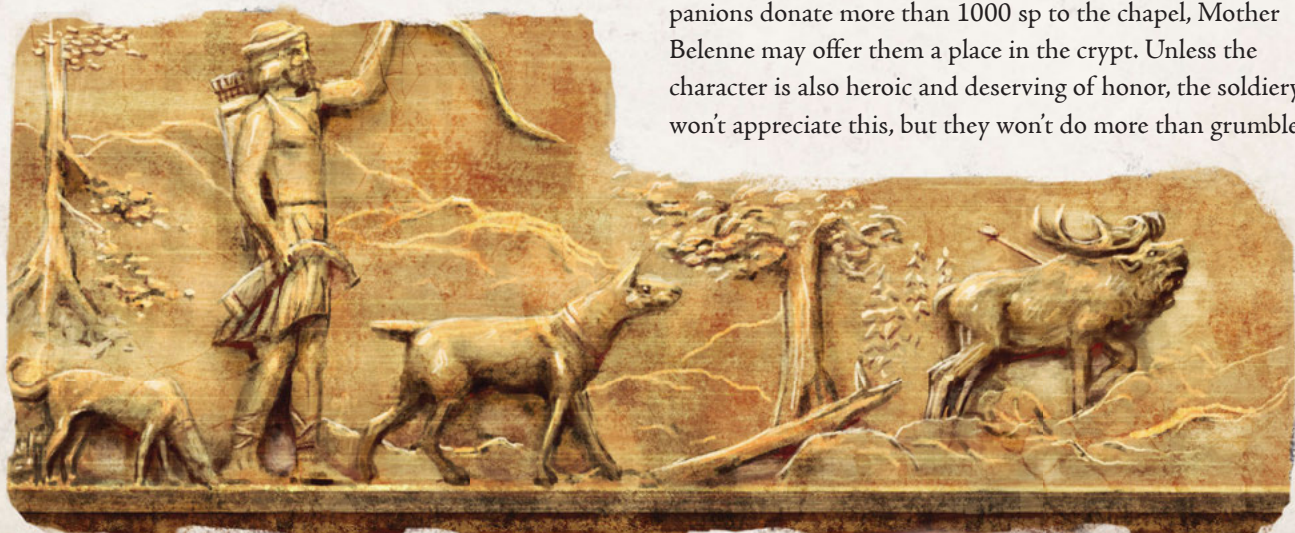
Inside the crypt lie the bones of Herra Farrokett, wearing a suit of blue-tinted scale mail. Her +2 *battleaxe* lies upon her chest, its dull gray blade untouched by rust.

For characters wondering why a dwarf would agree to burial in the crypt of a chapel of the Enaros, the reason is simple. The chapel is a later addition, built atop the crypt years after Farrokett's death.

### RHYS KARNAVON'S CRYPT

Along the side of this crypt is a panoramic carving of a hunter commanding a mismatched pair of hounds to catch the stag he has just shot. Atop the crypt is a life-like carving of a mustached human wearing full armor, his sword upon his breast, and his hands crossed gently over the pommel.

The second crypt houses the mortal remains of Captain Rhys Karnavon and his beloved hounds. Those who violate this crypt find only moldering clothes around the bones of the captain, the bones of his hounds at his feet. Enough of Karnavon's remains survive to successfully repeat the last rites if the characters seek to end the haunting of the tower where he died (C31).



### DUNSEL'S CRYPT

Upon the lid of the third crypt is carved the supine image of a man with an absurdly large nose and cheek whiskers. Clad in plate mail, he lies with folded hands over the haft of a war club. The legend on a carved scroll across his legs identifies him as one "Commander Dunsel."

A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that one of the carved man's eyes are slightly open and peering sideways, as if to check whether someone has noticed his ruse of feigned death. Dunsel's crypt conceals a secret passage with an escape route leading to Dunbury Village. An iron lever hidden in the edge of the lid releases a latch and allows the lid to be raised on its long edge, revealing a rusty iron ladder leading down into a tunnel.

Never used during a siege, this escape passage's existence is known only to Captain Brazewhite, Lieutenant Vance, Mother Belenne, and Sergeant Hodge. There has been discussion of whether to entrust Master Foley with the secret, but Mother Belenne persuaded the captain that he would only use it for mischief. Brazewhite has withheld the knowledge for so long that she now feels embarrassed to tell Foley about the passage, even though she feels he can be trusted with the secret. Should the castle come under siege during her tenure, she will not hesitate to tell him about it.

### EMPTY VAULTS

There is room here for another seven crypts around the walls, plus an eighth in the most honored position at the center of the room. If Captain Brazewhite falls in battle, she will surely be enshrined in one of the remaining spaces around the walls. No one else in the castle today would be given such an honor.

It's also possible for a character to receive this honor. Characters who perform an exceptional act of bravery and heroism on a scale that benefits the entire Duchy or saves the castle may be offered a position in the crypt when they die. Alternatively, if a character or their surviving companions donate more than 1000 sp to the chapel, Mother Belenne may offer them a place in the crypt. Unless the character is also heroic and deserving of honor, the soldiery won't appreciate this, but they won't do more than grumble.



## C33 HERB GARDEN WITH SUNDIAL

The castle's herb garden serves as a corner of solitude in the otherwise bustling castle.

### EXTERIOR

“A copper trellis forms two perimeters around a central sundial cast in copper. Between brightly painted herb planters, life-like statues of cats perch among the many crossbeams of the trellis. Atop the structure, realistic castings of owls stare out with painted yellow eyes.

The hours on this sundial are marked with the symbols of the Enaros rather than numerals. Each spring, Jerome, sometimes with the assistance of a castle soldier, polishes the trellis and sundial to a gleaming finish while Mother Belenne reads to him or shares stories of old times. More than any festival or holiday, it is the annual occasion each of them most treasures, as they have bonded as a sort of family of two.

The cat and owl castings deter many but not all pests from nibbling at the herbs.

Most of the herb planters are low enough for Belenne to take cuttings while seated in her wheelchair; Jerome harvests the rest. In addition to common herbs like anise, basil, caraway, and coriander, these plots also nurture healing herbs like chamomile, echinacea, feverfew, goldenseal, and valerian. At the gamemaster's discretion, Belenne's herb garden may also contain rare, magical herbs useful in future quests.

### KEEP

The keep is the heart of the castle's defenses. If every other wall, tower, gate, and bailey falls, the keep is the final bastion of hope for the castle's defenders. It also serves as the headquarters for the castle's military mission: to ensure the defense of Vaun and serve Agthor as a bulwark against attack from the north.

### EXTERIOR

“At the highest point of the towering promontory overlooking the Kourois River stands the great keep. The mighty stone bastion looms over the rest of the castle and affords unmatched views of the river and surrounding countryside. Roughly triangular in shape, it occupies the farthest corner of the castle, its back third a tower that rises even higher than the front portion of the structure.

Above the crenellations of the high tower flies the

red-and-gold banner of Duke Vaun. Atop each shoulder of the lower portion, you see angular structures standing on the fortified rooftops. One of these bears the unmistakable outline of a catapult covered in tarpaulins. The other is some sort of wire enclosure surrounding what appears to be a miniature row of fairy-sized houses.

A heavy portcullis and a pair of massive, iron-bound doors stand open in the center of the ground floor, flanked by the red-and-gold ducal banner and the blue-and-white royal banner. The upper floor and tower are marked by narrow windows, but the lower is a forbidding solid encasement of blue-gray stone, unbroken by so much as an arrow slit.

## C34 PLACE OF ARMS

An important defensive position in wartime and a large multi-purpose interior space during peacetime.

Quality Comfortable Condition Average

### INTERIOR

“Behind the portcullis stretches a long, wide court of flagstones beneath a massive arched ceiling supported by heavy pillars. The entire chamber is overlooked by a second floor balcony that wraps around three sides of the room. Dozens of shields and ornamental weapons cover the walls, interspersed with impressive hunting trophies. Placed prominently among the decorations, three marble slabs list the names of past officers and soldiers of Dunbury Castle. Judging by their positions, you can surmise the designers left space for many more slabs to be added in centuries to come.

To the rear of the room, movable wooden walls in the corners cordon off two storage spaces. Directly across from the entrance is a short hallway that leads to a pair of double doors. There is also a door on each of the walls to the sides.

The Place of Arms serves multiple purposes. Originally it was intended as the site on which the soldiers mustered for inspection and orders, as well as the principal location for a last defense, should the rest of the castle fall to invaders. It still serves that purpose whenever Captain Brazewhite wishes to address the troops, but it is also where Master Foley instructs the castle children (and more than a few soldiers) in reading, writing, history, geography, and—for special students—basic engineering and mechanical design.



He conducts classes for two hours each morning just before noon every day but Restday.

On festival days during winter or during inclement weather, the castle residents gather here rather than outdoors. During long periods of rain, Sergeant Hodge has been known to relocate the archery targets here, posting a guard on each door to ensure no one walks unwittingly into the field of fire.

#### LIGHTING

The room is lit by three narrow second-story windows evenly spaced above the entryway. In addition, there are metal torch sconces interspersed along the walls, and four large braziers hanging by chains from the ceiling. The sconces and braziers are seldomly used these days. Normally they are only lit for special events or to impress important visitors.

#### STORAGE SPACES

One of the storage spaces contains stacks of chairs, a number of benches, and a pair of long tables. The other contains banners, tents, and decorations for festivals or the arrival of noble visitors. In one chamber is a large chest containing eight bugles, eight trumpets, four drums of various sizes (with sticks and mallets), and a once-splendid gong with three neat holes shot through its surface. Former commanders of the tower were more inclined toward pomp and ceremony, but with so much work to do and so few hands to do it, Captain Brazewhite put an end to the custom.

### C35 GREAT HALL

*A largely unused space that can be transformed into a regal dining room, grand audience chamber, or festive dance hall when the occasion demands it.*

**Quality** Wealthy **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR



*An enormous hearth dominates one side of this spacious chamber. A platform before it supports a long dining table carved with images of hunters and dogs stalking all manner of prey through a dense wood. The seat of honor is obvious by its height and grandeur, a lesser but still impressive chair beside it. Six more flank them, three to either side.*

*Six longer tables run perpendicular to the place of honor, these with benches rather than chairs. Above each table hangs an iron chandelier. Against the walls stand serving tables, some holding leather trunks. In the corners nearest the entry are two small doors.*

*Hanging from iron rods are a number of thick tapestries depicting images of New Erinor, Dunbury Castle*

*and Village, Tristanford, battles with endrori in the Donarzheis mountains, and woodland hunting scenes.*

This room seldom sees service these days and the doors are nearly always shut. When characters first enter, the benches are likely laid top-down on the tables and the chandeliers are devoid of candles. The floor is dusty, and even the tapestries smell a bit musty. The air is thick and still, suggesting little activity occurs here.

Should a royal visit occur, however, the place transforms. Both soldiers and other residents of the castle wash the floors and walls, beat and re-hang the tapestries, fill the chandeliers with fresh candles, and polish the tables, chairs, and benches. Generous stacks of wood are placed to either side of the great hearth, where cauldrons and a spit are hung for soups, stews, and roasts prepared in the kitchen but finished here, so all can enjoy the aromas.

#### TRUNKS

Inside the trunks are serving dishes, plates, bowls, tankards, goblets, and utensils to supply over 100 diners. The regular seating can comfortably accommodate 90, but there is room for more furniture to be brought in should an extraordinary occasion require it.

### C36 MAP ROOM

*The castle's map room is filled with wonders from around the region, books, scrolls, and of course, maps.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR



*The centerpiece of this room is a circular table surrounded by mismatched chairs and stools. One of them is a beautifully carved wheelchair fitted with compartments on either arm. Upon the table lies a large parchment map stitched together from smaller maps, as if the whole had been accumulated over a period of months or years, expanded as the explorers ranged farther. Scattered around the map are various measuring tools and grease pencils, the latter of which must account for the many corrections and annotations on the map.*

*Surrounding the central table are many other sideboards and bookshelves, as well as a soot-stained hearth with an ample supply of firewood. Every horizontal surface is littered with books, scrolls, coffers, cannisters, open boxes, skulls of various creatures, plaster casts of footprints and pawprints, and a dizzying assortment of*



*knick-knacks and curios. Here and there, a dusty stuffed fox or owl perches atop a shelf.*

*Virtually every foot of wall space below six feet hosts a map, drawing, painting, or tapestry. Most of the illustrations depict landscapes of the region, from the majestic Donarzheis mountains to the deepest reaches of the Spiderwood. The largest is a tapestry depicting a map-like panorama of the Kouros River from its headwaters to the north all the way south to New Erinor. The artist had a sense of whimsy, inserting comical illustrations of the various residents of Agthor all along the riverbank. Fishers bat away pesky fairies harrying them from above, while sinister hags reach up from below the water to steal their catch. Raccoonfolk steal apples while orchard tenders fend off a rampaging owlbear. High above them all, an enormous green dragon scatters an aerie of griffons, one of whom passes a scroll, beak to beak, to a messenger pigeon.*

#### NPCs Master Archibald Foley, Apprentice Korella Stalk

This room is Master Foley's personal domain. The comparative untidiness of this room is a result of his refusal to allow anyone to organize or even clean up. The one concession he makes is to clear the central table once a week, lest he draw the ire of Lieutenant Vance, who grows impatient whenever she can't find something on the map they are discussing during a meeting.

The map room is a splendid place for the gamemaster to plant clues directing the characters to areas relevant to their recent interests. For instance, if the characters have decided to investigate the Accursed Mill (17), allow them to discover a scout's sketched map of the area. Likewise, once the characters learn of the local hags, allow them to find their names among reports from local villages who have been plagued by the coven or their lesser sisters.

A wrought-iron spiral staircase in the corner leads up to the Master's Chamber (C43).

#### GEARWORKED CLOCK

Master Foley keeps his treasured gearworked clock in a prominent position on the mantle above the hearth. What he hasn't realized is that heat from the fireplace has expanded the gears and pinions, and thus causes the clock to run slow. While Foley enjoys the ritual of re-setting the clock, any character who considers the problem may make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, with success indicating the realization that the main spring must be replaced, and the clock must be put somewhere with a more consistent and lower temperature. Relaying this knowledge to Master

Foley without offending his pride requires a successful DC 10 Charisma check—or the gamemaster may rule that good roleplaying does the trick automatically. If told discreetly of the solution, Master Foley is grateful for the assistance. If told before witnesses, he accepts the suggestion but grumbles that he rather enjoyed re-setting the clock each day.

#### WHEELCHAIR

The wheelchair is one Master Foley constructed for Mother Belenne, but she swiftly rejected as "excessive and clumsy." For a time, he insisted on constantly using it to prove her wrong, but in time he discovered he liked it quite a bit, and the chair has since become his favorite seat. It seldom leaves this room, except when he is in a whimsical mood and joins Mother Belenne in the herb garden, where he invariably challenges her to a race.

Foley does not require a wheelchair, but he finds this one enormously comfortable and likes the convenience of being able to move about without standing. The compartments in the arms are filled with pieces of his latest project, often a gearworked device but sometimes an arcane or alchemical experiment. The one constant is a handle-less mug of tea, usually cold and long forgotten, permanently stained brown inside.

### C37 COMMAND OFFICE

*An office shared by both the captain and the lieutenant.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR

*This spacious office features a wall of modestly populated bookshelves, another covered with a vivid tapestry featuring a map of Agthor, and a third displaying portraits of the king, the late duke, and a previous commander of Dunbury Castle.*

*Two large desks stand on either side of the room facing each other, and four padded chairs forming an oval around an owlbear carpet sit between them. Behind the larger desk rests a well-worn padded chair. The slightly smaller desk has only a three-legged stool.*

*On one side of the large desk lie stacks of reports and letters divided by color-coded ribbons. In the center is a large writing blot, an inkstone, blotter, lamp, several sticks of sealing wax, and a tray of quills. On the other side lies a tidy box of sealed letters and one or two tiny scrolls doubtless intended for a carrier pigeon.*

*The smaller desk is almost entirely clear except for a thick leather blotter.*



Captain Brazewhite and Lieutenant Vance share this office as well as a tendency toward tidiness. Vance deals with most of the day-to-day business of the castle, passing along only those matters that require the captain's approval or consideration.

#### LARGER DESK

This Captain Brazewhite's desk. The captain spends much of her time reading and composing messages to nobles, military officers, and other political contacts and allies in both Tristanford and New Erinor. Much of her correspondence emphasizes the need for greater funding of Dunbury Castle, the continued threat of endrori marauders, and her growing suspicions that factions within the foresters are actively undermining her efforts to keep the duchy safe and stable. This correspondence she keeps in the locked first lower drawer (AC 15, hp 10, Unlock DC 10), scrupulously organized in leather folders. In the unlocked second lower drawer are the monthly summaries of castle business, including expenses, field reports, casualties, new recruits, disciplinary actions, maintenance issues, and every issue important enough to reach the commander's attention.

In the upper drawers (AC 15, hp 10, Unlock DC 20), Brazewhite keeps her personal and secret correspondence. The personal letters in the upper drawer are from friends and family in New Erinor. The contents are mostly mundane but warm exchanges about daily life in the capital, but a few hint at a desire for Elaris to return to the capital and become involved in politics. One, from a nosy aunt, directly asks whether Elaris remains in Dunbury only because of her "friendship" with Janny Vance. Aunt Alinor suggests they return to New Erinor together and make it official. Janny could teach Elaris a thing or two about fashion and charming the nobility at social affairs, after all. The most interesting item in the top drawer is a copper stylus and a bottle of "invisible ink," which appears perfectly ordinary until about a minute has passed, whereupon it fades away. Warming the page beside a fire causes the writing to reappear permanently. Brazewhite uses this ink to communicate her most pointed concerns about Warden Balewick and his increasingly disruptive foresters. All her messages to this effect are in the hands of loyal allies in New Erinor. Those she has received in return, she burns after reading.

#### LIEUTENANT'S DESK

Lieutenant Vance has the smaller desk, its drawers equally well organized but much more full of the minutia of daily life in the castle. Her lower drawer (AC 15, hp 10, Unlock

DC 20) hides a bottle of dwarven spirits and a small coffer containing the castle's petty cash amounting to 14 gp, 120 sp, and 80 cp, all neatly arranged in rows.

#### TAPESTRY

The tapestry conceals a walk-in vault. If the characters move the tapestry or look behind it, read the following:

### INTERIOR: BEHIND THE TAPESTRY

“

*Behind the tapestry stands an iron door in an iron frame. Beneath a handle polished by use, a sturdy steel lock secures the door.*

Opening the vault door (AC 20, hp 30, Unlock DC 25) requires the use of a key Captain Brazewhite wears around her neck; Lieutenant Vance has a copy, which she also keeps close. Master Foley once also kept a copy, but he lost it years ago. The location of that key and the story of its loss is left to the GM, who may add it to the treasure in a location within the Scir of Dunbury, include it as a scoundrel's quest at the Unicorn (2b), or use it in some other manner tailored to the characters' desires.

### C38 VAULT

*The vault where the castle treasury is secured as well as powerful spell scrolls used in the event of a siege.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR

“

*Two rows of iron shelves line north, east, and west walls of this small chamber. Upon the shelves rest racks of scrolls, rows of uniformly bound books with years and names on their spines, several small coffers, and an assortment of other items. Beneath the shelves rest iron-reinforced oak-sided chests.*

One of the racks contain the "war scrolls," reserved for the use of Master Foley and other defending arcane casters in case of siege. Each scroll contains a single spell, including: *fireball* (×3), *sleet storm*, *stinking cloud* (×2), *confusion* (×2), *hallucinatory terrain*, *ice storm*, *wall of fire*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *passwall*, *wall of stone* (×2).

Only one divine scroll reliquen resides in the vault. Officially reserved for use only by the commander of Dunbury Castle, this *raise dead* scroll is old, brittle, and browning at the edges. It also suffered a slight tear that has made Mother Belenne fear it is no longer functional. Fortunately, its





magic remains intact. In addition to the command officers, Sergeant Hodge is aware of the scroll's presence in the vault. No one will fetch it for use on a character—except perhaps Brazewhite herself. She may make an exception for a character who has risen in the ranks and demonstrated selfless valor in the defense of Dunbury Castle or the people of Dunburyscir. She will also unhesitatingly order it used on any of the command officers or Sergeant Hodge, assuming Mother Belenne or another divine caster is available to use it.

On the lowest shelf lie orderly stacks of past years' inventories, scouting and personnel reports, and all other basic records for the castle. In addition, the journals of all previous captains of the castle line an upper shelf; the gamemaster may wish to use some of these as the background for further adventures in the region. Stacks of scrolls and single sheets of parchment appear to be official reports from throughout the history of Dunbury Castle.

The castle treasury includes three coffers containing neat rows of gold and silver coins amounting to a total of 200 gp and 8000 sp. This may seem like a fair amount of wealth, but salaries alone amount to nearly 4000 sp/month. This doesn't even take into account feeding the soldiers, maintenance, and supplies. At best, this will cover the castle's expenses for two months, but more likely it will last no more than a month to a month and a half.

The gamemaster should also place items in the vault as needed to serve as rewards for exceptional valor, special bounties for important kills and captures, and heroic accomplishments. With so many soldiers, nobles, scholars, and adventurers passing through the castle over the years,

they've acquired a fairly eclectic collection of treasures and magic items. Some were gifts of no practical value to a detachment of soldiers, others are items recovered after taking down gangs of bandits, and still others are oddities soldiers stumbled upon during their patrols.

The following are examples of the types of useful items Brazewhite might have stashed away in the vault:

- ♦ Bag of holding
- ♦ Feather token (Swan boat)
- ♦ Lute (Quality Wealthy)
- ♦ Orb of Aelos
- ♦ Pouch of rare spell components
- ♦ +1 *Sword* (Corruption 1)

### C39 GARDEROBE

*These unassuming garderobes contain secret doors that lead to hidden passages.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

Both garderobes are identical except for the position of their basin.

### INTERIOR

“Behind a latched door lies a small, clean closet containing a commode and a basin with running water. Above a spotless white throne, a barred window stands open, its shutters secured on either side to let in the fresh river air. Across the little room, a porcelain basin stands upon a stout copper pipe and beneath a slender one controlled with a simple valve. Behind the basin, a painted wooden wall depicts a battle in which Malinar Drakewyn fights shoulder-to-shoulder beside Gryphon Vaun against a brutal-looking warlord.

While rudimentary in design, the toilet and basin represent the height of local plumbing design. The basin is fed by a filtered water run on the keep roof, and the toilet shaft descends straight down the outer wall to a filthy outlet just above the usual water level of the Kouros river. Several rusty grates along the way prevent any creature larger than tiny from crawling up the toilet shaft.



## BASIN SECRET DOOR

Characters examining the basin may make a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice that it is possible to lift both the basin and the wall to which it is connecting. Lifting it only a few inches allows a character to open the secret door, hinged on one side. Doing so leaves a trail of moisture and perhaps a few scratches on the floor. Since the floor has been painted black, however, characters notice the marks only on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

## C40 SECRET PASSAGES

*Disused secret passages that allow eavesdropping on conversations in the map room and office.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

## INTERIOR



*Behind the secret door lies a narrow passage supported every eight feet or so by timbers. It splits into two separate paths, one leading north, the other south.*

Secret doors in the garderobes lead to two narrow hallways built inside the thick castle walls. Small characters can navigate the halls freely. Medium characters can traverse them by squeezing; large characters cannot fit.

This network of secret passages fell into obscurity after the sudden death of Captain Overland, whose Master of Lore suffered from dementia and whose lieutenant was so focused on a recent promotion to a position in the capital city that he failed to pass along the knowledge to a successor. Two years ago, however, Captain Brazewhite investigated a peculiar sound during high winds and discovered the passage behind her office walls.

Rather than board up the spying passages, she quietly informed both Master Foley and Lieutenant Vance of their existence. Although they haven't used the passages yet, characters that behave suspiciously might be left alone in one of the rooms to allow the castle defenders to determine whether they can be trusted. Brazewhite also had Foley install a pair of countermeasures in each tunnel to alert her if anyone else finds the passage and to identify the culprit.

## DUST TRAP

**Type** Mechanical **Detect** DC 15 **Disable** Special  
**Trigger** Touch **Disarm** Special **Reset** None

### EFFECTS

The special soot on the floor of this passage sticks to the bottoms of the feet of anyone that steps on it. When the intruder exits the secret passage, they leave a trail of black footprints that remain prominent for 500 feet, fading gradually until the trail vanishes after 1,000 feet of movement. Noticing the trail of black footprints is automatic for those who make a point of looking behind them—as well as for those who come across their trail later. Removing the prints requires more than mere brushing; it takes a wet mop or the use of a prestidigitation cantrip or similar magic.

### DESCRIPTION

A thin, fine layer of specially prepared soot covers the floor of the passage. Although they haven't had cause to use the passage where this trap is set, the captain or other castle residents would simply remove their shoes before entering the passage and then put them back on when they exit. The black painted floor in the garderobes would hide their footprints as they step out of the passage to put their boots on. Disarming the trap requires either aggressive cleaning with water and a mop, repeated applications of spells such as prestidigitation, or the special counter soot Master Foley keeps in his quarters, at which point a broom will sweep it away.

## ALARM TRAP

**Type** Mechanical **Detect** DC 18 **Disable** DC 13  
**Trigger** Trip wire **Disarm** DC 13 **Reset** DC 10

### EFFECTS

Tripping on the wire breaks a ceramic figurine in the room outside the passage.

### DESCRIPTION

A string at ankle-height runs through the wall near the peephole. Triggering it pulls a fragile ceramic figurine off a side table, shattering it. If present at the time, Captain Brazewhite, Lieutenant Vance, and Master Foley all know the significance of the "alarm" and behave as if one of them accidentally dropped the item while signaling for the other to gather guards and intercept spies at the garderobe. Anyone spying through the peephole during this time can make a Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by the Charisma (Deception) check of the room's occupants.



## C41 CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The personal quarters of Dunbury Castle's stoic captain.

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“

*A tidy bunk stands against one wall, a trunk at its foot. A plain desk without drawers stands beneath the window, a simple chair before it. A wooden bathtub has been pushed into the corner, leaving the rest of the room empty and spacious but for a single target dummy with a sword, shield, and helmet. Shallow scars upon its wooden body and scratches on its weapon and armor suggest someone has put it to regular use. There is a small fireplace in the corner of the room.*

Captain Brazewhite practices disarming the dummy with her whisk only here, in the privacy of her room. Secretly she would love to master the move, but she seldom attempts it in combat, considering it flashy and dangerous.

Those listening at the captain's door when she is alone might, on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, hear the snap and slap of the whisk on the dummy as Brazewhite tries to transform her lucky move into a reliable part of her combat routine.

Unless she is sleeping, bathing, or practicing, Brazewhite seldom spends time in her chamber. When she feels the need for company and a glass of wine, she visits Lieutenant Vance in her room. Everything Brazewhite owns, which amounts to her armor, weapons, clothing, and personal hygiene items fit neatly into the trunk.

## C42 LIEUTENANT'S CHAMBERS

The personal chambers of Dunbury Castle's second in command accurately represents the two sides of her character.

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“

*A canopied bed dominates one side of this room, a basin and ewer resting on a table nearby. Beside it stands a table arrayed with jars and phials, brushes and combs laid before them in perfect ranks. Upon a low platform, two stuffed chairs face a window overlooking the river. Between them, a pewter carafe and two goblets rest on a small table.*

*Before a fireplace with a large supply of wood stacked neatly nearby, a claw-foot bathtub big enough to accommodate a squad of soldiers stands across from the bed. Nearby stand two wardrobes, one much larger than the other. Between them on the wall hangs a full-length mirror, its iron frame worked into images of dragons menaced by a pair of women on horseback.*

This is Vance's personal space where she indulges in the less militant side of her personality. Except for the contents of the smaller wardrobe, Vance tries to keep this comfortable chamber separate from her duties. She never brings castle paperwork here, and if someone visits to discuss military matters, she insists they take the conversation to the office.

#### VANITY AND LARGE WARDROBE

The vanity table and larger wardrobe reflect her off-duty preference for fashion and elegance. The larger wardrobe is locked (AC 15 hp 15 Unlock DC 15) and Vance either carries the key with her or hides it beneath the mattress. Inside are her dresses, shoes, and other accessories. Her jewelry is hidden at the bottom back of the wardrobe requiring a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to find.

#### SMALL WARDROBE

The smaller wardrobe provides a home for her armor and uniforms.

### TREASURE

Vance has a number of items of value in her chamber:

- ♦ 4 bottles of fine wine (20 sp each)
- ♦ Pewter pitcher and 2 goblets (8 sp total)
- ♦ Perfumes and makeup (10 sp total)
- ♦ 3 wealthy outfits with complete accessories (70 sp each)
- ♦ Silver necklace (120 sp)
- ♦ Silver earrings (40 sp)
- ♦ Silver bracelet (60 sp)



## C43 MASTER'S CHAMBERS

*The personal chambers of the castle's resident scholar and tinkerer.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### INTERIOR

“Stacks of books fill every available chair, half the bed, and considerable floor space in this cluttered bedchamber. One volume lies open upon the bed, a diagram of clock gears on one page.

A desk and table pushed together form an uninterrupted platform of disorder. Most of the contents appear to be related to gearworking or mechanical devices. Some of them are toys, but others are half-disassembled weapons, like a hand-held crossbow. Among the mess are long-abandoned tea mugs, some of them spotted with mold.

The floor is covered in overlapping carpets, dusty and stained with unidentifiable spills. A long-dead plant slumps in one corner. Only the hearth seems well maintained, its ash can and a stack of firewood the only tidy spots in the shambles.

Heavy curtains hang over a window you can only assume overlooks the river.

Most of the books in Foley's chamber are histories and scientific studies, few of them remarkable. The master has marked many pages with slips of paper, ribbons, or even dried leaves. The open book on his bed is lavishly illustrated with basic gearworked components.

Ironically, Master Foley does have a sense of humor, but he scorns bad puns, crass jokes, and any jibe directed at him, his doves, or his chambers. Should anyone make a particularly elegant pun or a jape directed at someone else in his presence, especially the increasingly exasperated Korella Stalk (C36), he pretends indifference, but anyone watching for his reaction may detect a half-hidden smile of approval (no Insight check required).

Foley's own sense of humor is usually directed disparagingly toward Korella or more playfully toward Mother Belenne. He makes a point of performing maintenance on her wheelchair once a month as well as his own. He has no need of the wheelchair but uses it to test innovations that he later employs to make Belenne's chair roll more smoothly or to fit it with brakes and other safety features. Over time, he has grown to enjoy the test chair, which he uses often in his chamber and in the map room, even “taking it out for a spin” down the path to the village. He occasionally challenges Belenne to a race, but she always declines.

Anyone who bestows the gift of a gearworked device on Master Foley earns his fervent appreciation. He will not charge that character for lessons for at least a year (and longer, if the GM deems it appropriate).

### GOODS AND SERVICES

Using his library, Master Foley can help characters learn new languages or Intelligence-based skill specializations. He charges a modest 5 cp per week for a weekly one-hour lesson, but he is quick to dismiss insolent or obviously stupid students. Much as he likes a little extra pocket money, he can't abide an imbecile or a wisecracker.

### TREASURE

The only items of real value are Master Foley's spellbook and his disorganized library of academic books. The spellbook isn't hidden or locked away, but due to the disorganized state of this room and the sheer number of books stacked around, finding it requires a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. It contains all the spells listed for Master Foley's entry in *Chapter 5: People of Dunbury*.

The mundane titles are of value to the right buyer, but unless the characters are willing to take the books to a city with a large library or college, it's doubtful they could get more than 10% of a book's value when selling them.

- ♦ 2 books on unique subjects (800 sp each)
- ♦ 8 books on rare subjects (400 sp each)
- ♦ 15 books on uncommon subjects (200 sp each)
- ♦ 37 books on common subjects (120 sp each)
- ♦ 130 folios on a variety of subjects (2 sp each)

## C44 DUKE'S CHAMBERS

*The long disused official chambers occupied by the duke during visits to the castle.*

**Quality** Aristocratic **Condition** Immaculate

### INTERIOR

“A large fireplace with a mantle carved with images of griffons dominates the room. Upon the mantle stand a pair of stuffed foxes, one of them red, the other white with startling blue glass eyes. Upon the wall above them hangs the griffon banner of the Duchy of Vaun. On the floor before the hearth lies a bearskin rug.

The bed is stripped to the mattress, but its four tall posts support a canopy frame. To either side stands an empty side table. At the foot of the bed sits a couch covered with a dusty sheet.



*A lead-framed glass window faces west. Beside it stands a dusty desk and chair. A box lies on the desktop.*

This room is seldomly used and thus not maintained regularly. Should the castle learn of a visit from a new duke (or even the High Lord himself), the first orders of business are to fetch the canopy and bedclothes from storage, beat the rug and banner, polish every surface, and appoint the chamber with every comfort, from candles to fresh water for wash basins.

#### BOX

Inside the box on the desk lie an inkpot, a paper parcel containing three quills, a small blotter, and a sheaf of fine paper wrapped in silk.

### C45A GUEST CHAMBERS

*Three guest chambers reserved for important visitors to the keep or the duke's companions.*

**Quality** Wealthy **Condition** Immaculate

#### INTERIOR

*A comfortable-looking bed stands with its head against the wall. At its foot sits a leather chest. A simple side table contains a basin and an empty pitcher. Across from the bed, a tapestry hangs on an iron rod attached to the stone wall. A bronze brazier stands in the corner between the bed and a narrow window. Under the window sits a small table and a single wooden chair.*

These three rooms are essentially identical except for the subject of their tapestries. Under the bed sits a chamber pot. As with the duke's chambers, when an occupant is expected in these rooms, they are cleaned, outfitted, and carefully prepared to meet the demanding standards of noble visitors. Most often they house emissaries from New Erinor.

#### TAPESTRIES

The subject of the tapestry in each room lends the room its name. The rooms are known to occupants of the keep as "the river room," "the ocean room," and "the mountain room."

### C45B SERVANTS' CHAMBERS

*Two chambers intended for the personal aides, ladies in waiting, or other important servants of the castle's noble guests.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR

*The room before you is sparsely furnished. There are three simple wooden beds, the bedding for which is presumably in the large linen trunk that sits in the corner near the door. There is also a table with three chairs stacked neatly on top of it, a fair-sized wardrobe, and a table with an empty pitcher and basin. A small fireplace is located in the far corner of the room.*

These two rooms are identical. In the event of an expectant visitor to the castle, they are cleaned and prepared for the guests. This includes making the beds, bringing up a stock of firewood, filling the water basin, and supplying the room with candles. Although there are no windows, the room does have a clever ventilation system built into the wall that allows fresh air into the room, although most occupants leave the door open, otherwise the windowless room quickly becomes stuffy.

### C46 DOVECOTE/ROOKERY

*These structures house the messenger doves used to send strategic information between military outposts.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

#### EXTERIOR

*Two domed brick structures stand upon the keep roof. Their ridged, concentric design suggests giant beehives, but dozens of tiny holes provide shelter for doves. Many of the birds groom themselves on the little perches before their doorways. Others coo and rustle inside their homes.*

*A wooden bin with a well-fitted lid stands at the base of the dovecote. A carved scoop hangs from a rope on one side. The scattering of seed husks on the roof floor suggests the bin contains birdseed.*

**Creatures** 39 doves (raven)

The second floor roof is home to the messenger doves Master Foley employs in his correspondence with officials in New Erinor as well as contacts throughout Agthor and beyond. He hand-trains these birds with the help of his apprentice, Korella Stalk, who is occasionally responsible for delivering them to their distant posts and returning with a native-born bird. Each dove can find its way unerringly to its home nest, but not in the opposite direction. Thus, every time Master Foley sends a message, either a servant at the



other end must return the dove (which is common in major posts like New Erinor), or Stalk must go to fetch it back again (as with less-populated posts in Agthor and those beyond). Thus, Stalk becomes exasperated when Master Foley sends messages for what she deems personal or trivial reasons. Once in a great while, Master Foley will send a bird with a merchant caravan or adventuring party if they are heading the right direction, but he is extremely hesitant to do so, fearing that the person will fail to care for the bird properly.

## C47 SIEGE EQUIPMENT

*This portion of the roof is given over to housing the castle's two inoperable mangonels.*

### EXTERIOR

*“Dirty tarpaulins weighted with stones cover a pair of large constructions on the sturdy roof of the keep, one to either side of the central tower. Even to an inexperienced eye, it is clear some sort of siege weapons lay beneath the coverings. A door has been stitched into the side of each tarp, like a tent flap. It appears the weapons see little use but someone still examines them from time to time.”*

Two powerful mangonels once allowed soldiers to attack targets as far away as the opposite bank of the Kouros River. Unfortunately, both fell into disrepair years ago, and several key parts have gone missing—no one knows whether by sabotage or poor maintenance. Master Foley believes he has reverse-engineered the missing parts, but Chief Smith Rudmill's attempts to re-create them have met with failure.

Foley's schematics are almost correct, but his work needs refinement. Rudmill's efforts are also close but not entirely successful; she needs a more flexible alloy for the springs, and for that she needs ore from the long-abandoned Red Nails mine.

## C48 THE HIGH CELLS

*Three cells once reserved for important prisoners are used for storage today.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

These three prison cells were once reserved for noble or otherwise important prisoners, often kept in comfort while awaiting a response to news of the arrest from officials in New Erinor or—in the case of certain bandit chiefs—ransom or an exchange of prisoners from their followers. Only

the central room remains available to serve its intended purpose. Master Foley has commandeered the others to store supplies for his doves and materials for his experiments in gearworked devices and siege engines.

### LEFT CELL: INTERIOR

*“Several mismatched shelves line the straight walls of this wedge-shaped room. The air smells decidedly of birdseed and suet. Small crates and cannisters fill one set of shelves, while opposite them are a neat array of wicker birdcages, each with a paper tag indicating a destination like “Tristanford,” “New Erinor,” or “Castle Port.” More boxes and barrels stand against the walls, leaving only a narrow passage to the barred window on the curving outer wall.”*

Everything in this room has something to do with the doves, whether it be food, water, wicker for their dovecote, or cages with which to return the birds to their distant homes—or to the native birds' destinations.

Characters examining the tags may notice familiar locations like the Four Uncles Sawmill or Cider Village. One tag has no words but only a simple sketch of what looks like a treehouse; the cage itself is of unique design, more delicate and decorative than the others. This is the cage for the dove born in a secret elven village, deep in the Spiderwood. An envoy from the village brought it to Master Foley a few years ago, offering it as a means of contacting their people should the need arise. Thus far, the need has not arisen.

### RIGHT CELL: INTERIOR

*“This cell has become a storage room lined with simple, unfinished shelves. Most of the contents are bundled, but they appear to consist of linens, candles, basins, tapestries, trunks, spare furniture, and assorted other items intended for bedchambers, meeting halls, and other rooms in the keep.”*

Nothing of special value resides in this room, but if an incidental quest should send a soldier in search of a “missing” piece of furniture or equipment, there's a good chance it can be found here.

### CENTER CELL: INTERIOR

*“Shaped like a wedge of pie, this room expands from its reinforced entrance toward a far wall with two barred*



windows. A thick layer of whitewash covers the walls and ceiling, mostly yellowed from sun and smoke. On either straight wall, paler rectangles show where pictures and tapestries once hung. A wrought-iron bedframe sits between the two windows, a mattress rolled up at its foot. A simple table with a basin and pitcher stands to one side.

A search of the room turns up nothing more exciting than a clean chamber pot and a nest of harmless spiders in one corner near the ceiling. Captain Brazewhite has yet to arrest a noble, and should the occasion arise, she can have the room furnished from one of the storerooms.

The windows of these cells are reinforced with solid iron bars coated in a rust-inhibiting lacquer, so they have stood the test of time. Even a fairy couldn't wriggle through the openings. All three cells offer a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside, especially breathtaking on clear summer sunsets.

### C49 THE TOWER CELL

*A long disused cell intended for important prisoners.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

#### INTERIOR

*"This room takes up the entire top floor of the tower. A bed lies naked but for a rolled feather mattress. Beside it stands an empty table. A writing desk and chair stand lonely against the wall, which is covered in pale rectangles where paintings once hung.*

As with the cells below, this one has not been used in many years. Its additional furnishings languish in storage.

### C50 EAGLE'S NEST

*The highest vantage point in Dunbury Castle providing a strategically invaluable view of the surrounding countryside.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

#### EXTERIOR

*"The highest point in Dunbury Castle commands a stunning view of the surrounding lands. A wooden chair, weathered to a dull gray, rests near the western crenellations.*

During the day, a lone guard is stationed here in four-hour shifts. It's a desirable duty for all who do not suffer from acrophobia. On days with poor visibility, as during rain, Sergeant Hodge spares the soldiers this post. If there is reason to suspect approaching danger, however, he sends a trusted soldier up periodically.

### C51 DUNGEONS

*Nine dungeon cells, two of which contain secret doors that provide access to a secret escape route.*

#### INTERIOR

*"At the base of a narrow stairway, the corridor turns. Five barred cells line one side, four the other. Torch brackets mounted on the wall beside the stairs above a three-legged stool, a second halfway down the hall, and a third at the far end allow torches to light the area. From the base of the first bracket hangs a big iron ring and a single key. Beneath the far bracket stands a water barrel with a dipper resting on its lid.*

*Stale straw covers the flagstone floor of each cell, and a stained bucket rests in the far corner.*

When the dungeon cells are unoccupied, which is often, no guard is stationed here, nor are the torches lit. The single key fits each of the cell doors (AC 15 hp 25, Unlock DC 20).

When prisoners are in the cells, a lone guard stands watch, often with one of the castle hounds for company. After a regrettable incident in which a guard fell asleep and a captive ranger persuaded the hound to bring him the key ring, only the most disciplined of the dogs is permitted this duty.

Two of the cells contain secret passages in the flagstones. Difficult to detect from this side, they can be discovered on a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. From below, they are immediately obvious, and the smugglers who discovered them even affixed handles on the bottom sides for easier opening. Below the secret passages, a near-vertical passage leads down to a hidden escape route through a secret underground river channel.

No one in the castle is aware of the secret passage. If the passage is ever brought to their attention, it would be quickly bricked up and the floor entrances sealed.





## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE SCIR OF DUNBURY

**I**N THE THREE DAYS SINCE LEAVING THE HAUNTED village, they'd twice sheltered with sympathetic dwarven farmers before moving on. Otherwise, they'd avoided contact, staying off the roads and depending on Ellma to steal a wedge of cheese and some freshly baked bread left out to cool on a windowsill. When she returned with the food, Fenros tore the loaf into four pieces, kept one for himself, and went ahead to scout the path, his enormous axe over one shoulder.

"So now we're thieves," said Griffon. With a sigh, he munched on the oven-warm bread.

"Pirates," said Ellma. "River rats!"

They forged through a lightly wooded region that divided the dwarves' farm from a pear orchard whose fruit wasn't ripe enough for stealing, but whose shaded lanes provided cover from the main road. Fenros led the way, parting the brush with his axe as if it were light as a walking stick.

"I thought all the river rats were halflings," said Griffon.

"Just the famous ones," said Dove. "That cheese heist made their name. Anyway, we don't take more than someone can spare."

"I don't think I want to be a thief," said Griffon. "Or a pirate."



"You miss collecting taxes?" said Ellma.

"I'll miss traveling and meeting people."

"Traveling and meeting people is most of what we do," said Ellma.

"Only some of those people want to kill you," said Griffon.

"Some of them want to kill me. Maybe it'd be better if I just turned myself in—"

"Sorry, kid," said Dove. "Don't matter what you say. The Warden is close to becoming the next duke. He's not taking any chances someone turns up with a claim to be the heir of Duke Creesis."

"But I'm not—"

"Yeah, yeah," said Dove. "We heard you the first eight times. Problem is, we're not the ones that need convincing, and the Warden's men don't care what you say. Their orders are to see you don't talk to someone who does."

"I'm not making any claim. Why did they pick me?"

Ellma and Dove laughed.

"If it makes you feel better," said Ellma, "you aren't the only one they're hunting."

"How many bastard heirs could there be?"

Dove shrugged. "Maybe none. But Balewick won't take that chance. Just one—even a fake one—could ruin his hopes."

"The only choices I see here are to become an outlaw or to let the Warden's men kill me. So I hope you have some other plan for me."

Dove turned to face him. The man was almost fully bearded again after less than a week. "Kid, we got no plans to sell you, if that's what you're thinking. If you want, we'll smuggle you back into Castle Port or New Erinor or wherever you fancy. From there, you can find passage on a boat to anywhere you please, but don't dawdle. It's not just the foresters Balewick has looking for you. There's talk of foreign assassins, too."

"You're trying to frighten me."

"If you're as clever as I thought, you'd have already been scared."

Griffon sighed. The sound of birdsong had subsided, and he could no longer see Fenros leading the way ahead of them. For a moment, Dove, Ellma, and he seemed all alone in the world.

"None of this explains why you're helping me."

"The old duke loved the people," said Dove. "And they loved him back."

"Some more than others," Ellma sniggered.

"Quiet, you." Dove gave her ear a playful pinch. She pretended it hurt. "Anyway, since Creesis died, things haven't been so good for Dunbury. You know it's hard to pay taxes when orc raiders have carried off half your harvest or razed your farm. And nobody dares set foot in the forest alone since the Warden allowed logging camps along—"

A faint thud came from the direction where Fenros was scouting. A deep growl rose and was silenced after two more impacts.

Ellma pulled Griffon to the ground. Dove dropped beside them an instant later.

"Dovey?" whispered Ellma.

"They saw me. Go! Look after the kid. I'll catch up."

Ellma took Griffon's hand and pulled. Half-crouched, they ran away from the orchard, deeper into the woods.

"We can't leave him—" Griffon began to protest.

"He knows what he's doing," said Ellma.

A rush of footsteps followed them. Griffon paused just long enough to look back and spy three hooded figures. One pulled back his cowl and turned to survey the woods. Griffon recognized the man who had nearly caught them on the Trysting Isle.

Ellma pulled at his arm. "Come!"

## USING THE SCIR OF DUNBURY

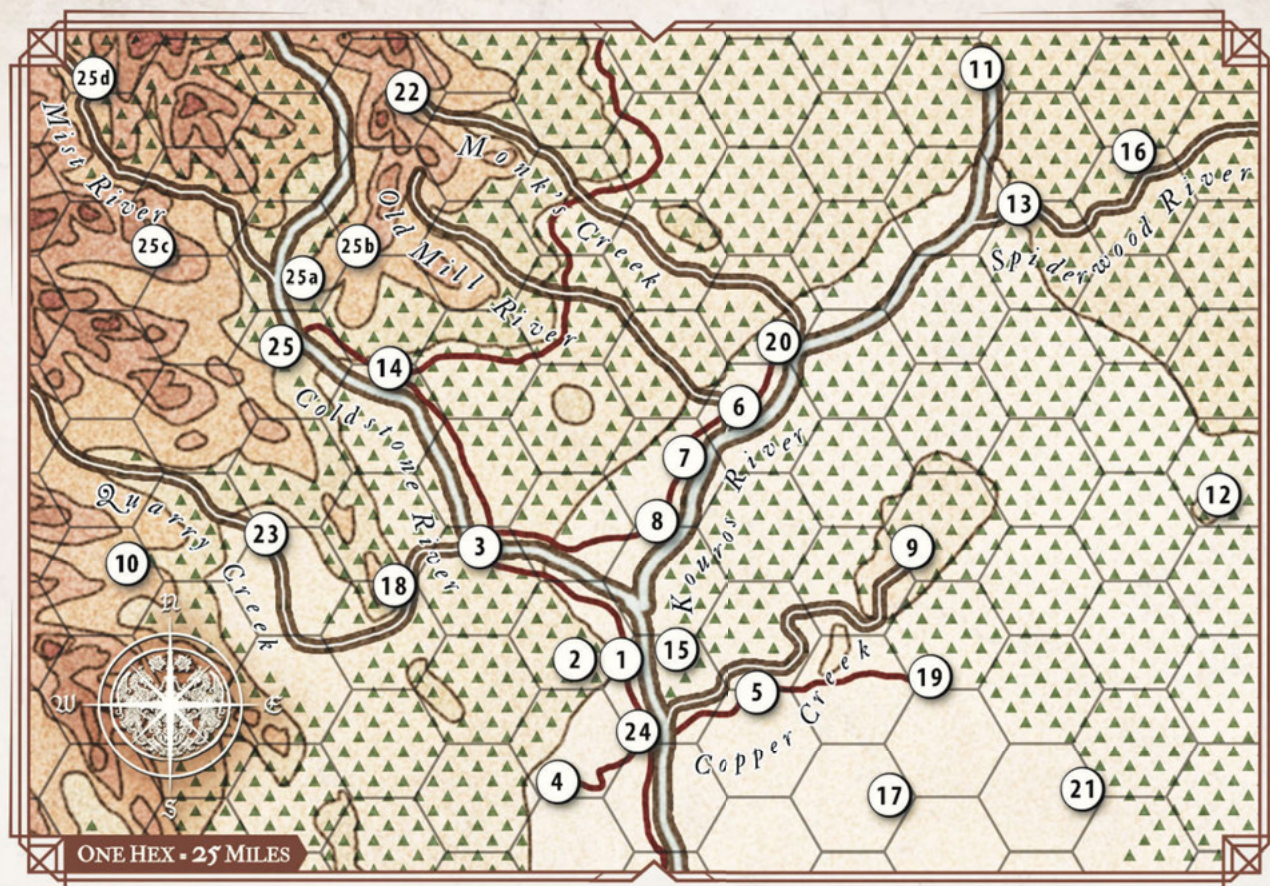
The Scir of Dunbury is the backdrop for a rich, exciting Aetaltis campaign. It offers countless adventure seeds to drive and inspire both the gamemaster and the adventurers, but it also provides a collection of set pieces to serve as the joinery to hold an extended campaign together. The Scir is the foundation for a living breathing world for the characters to inhabit and a platform for the heroic tale forged by the players and the gamemaster.

This chapter contains a variety of sites located in the countryside around Dunbury Castle. These range from towns and villages to ancient ruins to important landmarks. Whether the gamemaster uses these as waypoints along the road to adventure or bases an entire story around a site, they serve to bring the world to life in the minds of the players.

## MAP OF THE REGION

On the following page you'll find a map of the countryside surrounding Dunbury Castle. It is up to the gamemaster to determine how many or few of the sites marked on this map are revealed to the players. Keep in mind that good maps are rare in Aetaltis, so even if the gamemaster decides the characters are aware of a location described here, they likely know little more than "The town lies about a day's march north on the eastern bank of the Kouros River."





## LAY OF THE LAND

The Scir of Dunbury, known colloquially as Dunburyscir, is part of the Duchy of Vaun, a realm located in the far northeast corner of Agthor. It sits in the southern foothills of the Donarzheis mountains, and is a land of towering hills, deep valleys, craggy peaks, and dense forests. The southern portions of the duchy include some open spaces suitable for farming, but even these areas are pockmarked with rocky outcroppings, spans of heavy forest, and more than a few bogs.

The Kourois River valley bisects the duchy, with most farming settlements to the southeast, mining and quarrying operations to the west, and logging to the northwest. Fishing villages line the river, most of them with inns to accommodate the loggers who escort timber from the forests to Tristanford or even all the way to New Erinor.

Visitors to the region admire its beauty, from the gentle serpentine curves of the rivers to the sunsets over the Donarzheis. One of the most memorable aspects of the duchy are the frequent river fogs, common on cool evenings after warm afternoons. Especially in autumn, these fogs join with mists rolling off the western hills to create vistas captured by painters that find the subject irresistible to southern connoisseurs of art.

Those same fogs, however, offer cover for river smugglers and pirates, collectively known as “river rats.” Many ordinary citizens consider these fogs romantic, while a few—especially the eldest and the storytellers—claim the fogs herald a visit from the Faceless Man, an emissary of Endroren. Tales of dark cults, vengeful fey, savage endrori, and infamous monsters abound on the most shrouded of nights.

In this book, we focus on places located in Dunburyscir, the northernmost scir in the Duchy of Vaun. It is also the largest scir in Vaun, although considering the majority of the land is untamed wilderness, the size is more a product of where the cartographers drew the borders on their maps than anything else. The actual amount of explored and civilized land in the scir is a fraction of its overall size.

The heart of Dunburyscir is Dunbury Castle, the venerable fortress that gives the scir its name. Sitting on a rocky promontory at a sharp bend in the Kourois River, the castle is the defender of Agthor’s northeastern border. At its base sits the riverside community of Dunbury Village and scattered around the scir are a handful of other towns, villages, and outposts.

Most commerce in the scir intersects at Dunbury Village, although the modest fishing community has yet to experience substantial growth, despite the presence of the castle. Apart from a small tax station, the village offers travelers



little more than a good inn and a bad tavern. The presence of soldiers, however, is a comfort to those seeking refuge from endrori raiders, highway robbers, and river rats—not to mention the monsters that terrorize travelers and residents alike.

Just north of Dunbury Castle, the Coldstone River merges with the great Kouros, whose headwaters are found far to the north in the Donarzheis range. While outside the scir's borders, a rumored infestation of goblins near those headwaters is the source of the most dire threat facing the region. Castle patrols seldom range so far north, for those that have done so in recent years have not returned.

The people of Dunburyscir are generally friendly to humans, dwarves, halflings, and cheebats. Most are tolerant or welcoming to elves, fairies, sprites, newardin, and scythaa, but few feel comfortable among drothmals or orogs. Still, members of all those peoples find homes in villages or homesteads throughout the region, especially in the relative melting pot of Dunbury Village.

## COMMON LOCATIONS

Although this chapter details a number of important sites, the region near the castle is dotted with a host of small farms, ranches, villages, camps, quarries, and mines.

### FARMS AND RANCHES

Farms are usually home to only one or two families, and they are almost all human, dwarven, and halfling residents. Farmers typically grow two or three different grain crops along with a wide variety of vegetables. They also raise livestock, which may include cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens.

Ranchers usually focus on a single type of livestock, primarily sheep, but a few ranches raise cattle and horses. Even ranchers keep vegetable gardens and often have rabbit hutches and chicken coops. No farm or ranch is complete without a brood of dogs, often shepherds, and most also provide a home to cats to keep the rodent population in check.

Farmhouses to the east are more likely to be constructed of wattle and daub, while those near the Kouros River and farther west are often built from stone or at least have stone foundations. Timber constructions are most common in the deep forests.

The average farmer or rancher is wary of strangers, but they are welcoming of soldiers from Castle Dunbury. The latter can usually depend on locals for a hot meal, first aid, and a night's lodgings in the hayloft. Soldiers may also receive bargain prices on produce or livestock and may expect a 10% reduction in standard prices.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Dabbling in Darkness** The Faceless Man has recruited another follower, having taught a farmer's rebellious teen how to tap into Endroren's power. The teen has already acquired a point of corruption by toying with the unholy powers, but they are still redeemable. It is at this time the adventurers arrive, possibly seeking shelter for the night. Either by sensing the corruption or discovering some hint of dark doings, the characters learn the teen's dark secret and must decide how best to overcome this sensitive problem.

### FORESTERS' CACHES

When the characters reach one of these sites, the character with the highest Wisdom (Perception) score spots something. Typically, about twelve feet off the ground, in the crotch between two tree branches, they'll spot a small platform holding a deerskin bundle tied closed with coarse string.

The ducal foresters leave emergency supply caches throughout the woods, their locations are a close secret among their ranks. Each contains one of the following bundles, which are refreshed or replaced once every two or three months by passing foresters.

#### FORESTER'S CACHE CONTENTS

Roll 1d6	Result
1	Healer's kit, leather flask containing half a gallon of fresh water, rations (6 days)
2	Arrows (20), blanket, signal whistle, carved wooden totem
3	Candles (6), mess kit, tinderbox, rations (3 days)
4	Bedroll, traveler's clothes, healer's kit, jug of mead (half-full)
5	Hemp rope, whetstone, rations (4 days)
6	Potion of healing, two-person tent, rations (2 days)

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Totem Keeper** The carved wooden totem found in the cache depicts a comical orc warrior. Its presence is an in-joke among the foresters, a sort of hot-potato. Whichever forester opens the cache that contains it must carry it until preparing or restoring another cache, whereupon its "curse" can be safely passed along. The totem is nonmagical and not actually cursed; however, any non-forester caught with the totem earns the ire of the real foresters for looting their stores. Lone foresters may try to steal the totem back without a fight, while gangs of foresters might attack those they consider thieves. Clever characters who learn the meaning of the totem might try to pass themselves off as foresters.



## ICE CUTTER CAMPS

From spring to autumn, laborers cut blocks of ice from the glacial caves of the high Donarzheis mountains and convey them on sledges to the river. From there, they are delivered by barge to the castle and villages throughout the region. When occupied, the camps house 4d4 laborers and a boss, along with teams of horses or oxen for hauling sledges.

The ice camps are abandoned in winter, with sledges, ice-cutting tools, and basic supplies (lamps, tents, dried rations, and so on) concealed beneath dusty tarpaulins. Adventurers searching for a good shelter during the winter and autumn months may be pleasantly surprised to find one of these camps awaiting them, especially at those moments when they are stumbling about in a blizzard looking for safety.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Break the Siege** Late one autumn, the heroes arrive at one of the camps to discover it surrounded by a band of orcs. The orcs are trying to gain access to the central building inside of which are two wounded adventurers. The two adventurers, a wizard and a cleric, are the last surviving members of their adventuring party, and they had been fleeing the orcs for days before arriving here and deciding to make their last stand. If the adventurers can defeat the orcs and save the two wounded defenders, they have the chance to gain two useful allies.

**Thing in the Ice** The ice cutters at one of the camps discover something frozen in the ancient glacial ice. It's the body of a creature unlike anything they've seen, and they suspect it's been there at least since the Age of Magic and possibly longer. The cutters send for adventurers, hoping they can solve the mystery of what the thing is so they can get back to their work. Of course, when the heroes arrive, they soon discover the thing isn't as dead as they'd been led to believe.



## LOGGING CAMPS

Dotting the edges of Dunburyscir's forests are numerous logging camps. In the typical camp, a circle of tents and shacks populate a clearing marked with sawn tree stumps. Sad-eyed oxen low in a nearby paddock, and a muddy skid road leads toward the river. These camps vary in size, although most house around 4d6 workers. The workers are a mix of woodcutters, teamsters, and bosses.

Logging camps are temporary sites and they frequently move deeper into the forest over time from a starting position near the river. The more mindful logging bosses make sure not to denude the banks, but many don't care or are ignorant about the effects of erosion on the river and thus on the wildlife.

Fey settled in the area are more concerned and more cognizant of the effect of clear-cutting. Some have warned the loggers to relocate or reduce their cutting, seldom to any response. Thus, the war between the fey and the primarily human loggers has gradually escalated. Most of the skirmishes in this conflict are works of sabotage, but once in a while a logger is found dead in the woods with an elven arrow through their heart.

The need to move as an area is cleared means much of a lumber camp consists of canvas tents. There may be a few structures of more solid construction, but even these are designed to be easily torn down and rebuilt elsewhere.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Protection** A logging camp north of the Coldstone is faced with a difficult problem when two foresters start demanding payment for their protection. After all, the foresters explain, it'd be a shame if they stopped patrolling this area and some endrori found their way into the camp. These are two of Warden Balewick's recent recruits, brought up from Tristanford. Breaking up a protection racket is a relatively easy task for competent adventurers, but the foresters' status as duly appointed representatives of the Warden complicates the situation.

**Sabotage** A pair of sprite brothers, angry at the woodcutters' deforestation of the local timberland, are creeping invisibly into the camp each night and sabotaging the woodcutters' gear. Axe heads are loosened, saw teeth bent, and the oxen are set loose to roam around the camp. It is up to the adventurers to find a non-violent resolution to the quarrel if possible. They'll have to deal with stubborn woodcutters whose livelihood is dependent on the timber and frustrated fey who just want to protect their home.



**PEST REMOVAL**

The adventurers arrive at a logging camp to discover it has suffered a recent tragedy. Within the campsite are two bodies under tarpaulins. Each suffered a single fatal arrow wound to the heart or throat. The camp boss, Jess Hawkins (female human boss, age 39), knows that her guards have no chance of tracking down the killers, whom she believes to be elven scouts.

She offers the characters collectively 25 sp now with the promise of another 50 sp after the next payroll delivery (in 2d12 days) for the killing of those responsible. If faced with characters who insist on capture, she reluctantly agrees to their terms on the condition that the offenders are delivered to Dunbury Castle.

Characters who wish to examine the bodies find that the arrows have already been removed. If asked for the arrows, any of the camp bosses can lead characters to the refuse pit in which they were thrown. On a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character recognizes the arrows are not of elven make; any fey character has advantage on this check. Those who succeed by 10 or more identify the design as endrori. Furthermore, the long arrows were probably fired by a creature much larger than a goblin, perhaps an orc.

Characters searching for tracks within the first 24 hours of arriving at the camp discover a trail on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If they examine the tracks with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, they determine they are those of a large (medium-sized) figure wearing leather boots. A score of 20 or higher on the check identifies the prints as those of a drothmal. In

fact, the killer is Two-Scars, a deathwalker armed with a longbow.

Two-Scars's camp consists of little more than a filthy dire wolf pelt, a sensible stone-ringed fire, and a simple canvas lean-to if there has been precipitation.

Two-Scars takes his name from a pair of prominent facial injuries inflicted by an exceptional but now deceased elven ranger. He delights in killing both at range and up close. One of his favorite tactics is to murder a few loggers soon after assassinating a few elven scouts. During the inevitable violence that erupts between the elves and the Agthorian loggers, Two-Scars loves to observe the conflict, picking off members of the side that seems to be winning. His goal is to cause the deaths of all involved, stepping in at the end to finish off the last survivors personally. He has succeeded in this gambit several times in the past few years, but the elves have begun to suspect his provocations.

Characters who attempt to persuade Two-Scars to surrender face certain disappointment, but those who make a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check gain his promise to leave the loggers in peace. Of course, a deathwalker's promise is worth nothing, and after 2d6 days, his depredations resume.

**GOAL**

Reveal the true killer and stop Two-Scars.

**REWARD**

1 Goodwill, 75 sp

**MINES AND QUARRIES**

There are a handful of mines operating in the region. These are all shallow pit mines, following veins of ore or stone that run near the surface. The threat of cutting into a Deepland hall is enough to deter any miner from digging too deeply or excavating a tunnel mine. The quarries are the same in terms of their organization and operation, except they are constructed on sources of desirable stone.

Mines and quarries consist of a central camp surrounded by pits. The pits range from a few feet across to twenty yards in diameter. The largest pits are no more than twenty feet deep. Over time, dozens of pits are excavated, and older

camp may have 50-100 old pits surrounding them.

The camps are usually permanent or semi-permanent with accommodations for 10-50 laborers. Barracks provide communal sleeping quarters and a mess hall serves meals and doubles as a meeting place. Depending on the size of the camp, one may find a variety of support structures, including blacksmith shops, leatherworks, and even small farm plots.

Most northern mines ship the ore raw for processing in the south, although especially well-funded (and guarded) operations may handle ore processing on site. Quarries ship stone in unfinished, standard-sized slabs—around 3 ft. long by 2 ft. wide by 6 in. thick.



**ADVENTURE SEEDS**

**False Alarm** When the adventurers arrive, the entire population of the camp is gathered at one of the larger pits. The characters soon discover that the diggers broke through into a hollow space and saw bones in the shadows below. There is a profound fear they've struck a Deepland hall, which would mean they'd have to shut down the operation, putting everyone out of work. The camp boss asks the adventurers to explore the cavity to see how bad the situation is. The space turns out to be nothing more than a simple underground shelter with no Deepland connections, and the bones are those of the unfortunate dwarves who hid there during the Age of Darkness. A scroll found amid the debris, however, contains a map to the Deepland hall entrance from which the dwarves fled.

**Landslide** All the disruption of the ground around the camp combined with the heavy rains that are pounding the area have resulted in a deadly landslide. The slide of mud, rocks, and other debris swept through the camp just hours before the adventurers arrive, and the miners are working desperately to free a group of fellow workers trapped beneath the mud. It's a race against time to get the trapped diggers out before they run out of air. To make matters worse, the vibrations of the slide have attracted the attention of a pod of reavers.

**VILLAGES**

Villages are clusters of 4d4 families. Those found on the plains favor farming. Those found on the rivers favor fishing, but also grow gardens and raise livestock. Larger communities may also support a small tavern. Most homesteads are largely independent, but the villagers share wells, meadows for grazing, collective land for growing grain, and often barns for livestock and storage. Virtually every village includes an alarm bell and has a runner or rider designated to alert the nearest neighboring community in case of disaster.

Village residents are about 40% human, 15% dwarven, 15% halfling, 10% cheebat, and the remainder mostly fey. Newardin, drothmal, orog, and scythaa are extremely rare in the region. Most individuals of these lineages are travelers, merchants, or adventurers.

**ADVENTURE SEEDS**

**Thief** A small village on the plains west of the Kourois regrets their tradition of hospitality after a drifter they welcomed into their homes robs them and disappears into the night. Tragically, he stole the cache of silver they'd been saving to build a timber wall, protection they desperately need with the recent sightings of goblins lurking in the for-

ests nearby. Whether they want to help build the wall, track down the thief, or deal with the goblins, the characters have a chance to prove what sort of heroes they are.

**Witch** After getting lost in a cave near the village, a young woman's natural magical talent is revealed during her harrowing ordeal. All she has managed is a simple *light* cantrip, but her fellow villagers are certain she became corrupted by the evil of the Deeplands. When the adventurers arrive, the young woman is tied up in the barn awaiting judgment by her neighbors. They are leaning perilously close to burning her, and it's up to the adventurers to save the young woman—ideally without harming the other, terrified villagers.

**NOTABLE LOCATIONS**

The following are details for notable locations in the region. Each is marked on the map with a number corresponding to the numbered entries below. When appropriate, entries include Building and Location rules attributes. Complete rules for these attributes are found in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.

**1 DUNBURY CASTLE**

*The mighty castle that defends the region and is the focal point of most adventurers in the Scir of Dunbury.*

High atop a rocky bluff at a sharp bend in the Kourois River, Dunbury Castle dominates the landscape and dwarfs the village at its foot. A single, unpaved road curls up a steep hill before ending at the barbican. The thirteen castle towers are a famous landmark celebrated in tapestries, paintings, and frescoes throughout the northern realms. The highest tower, upon the keep itself, commands the most celebrated view in the north.

See **Chapter 3: Dunbury Castle** for a full description of the castle and its inhabitants.

**2 VILLAGE OF DUNBURY**

*The village sitting below Dunbury Castle serves as a source of information, supplies, and a safe place to rest between adventures.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Population** 500

Initially founded to support the construction of the castle, the village of Dunbury persists primarily to monitor river traffic and collect taxes. It has also spawned a pair of rival public houses and hosts the common market for local farms. Residents net fish to sell to the castle, and one enter-



prising resident rents boats and gear for leisure fishing, one of the more popular pastimes for soldiers on leave.

Notable locations in the village are described below (2a-2k). These are all found within location 2 on the map.

## 2A THE THREE HOUNDS INN

*A modest inn where adventurers can get a room for the night, a home cooked meal, and a mug of ale.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 2

**NPCs** Basil Spicer (male halfling merchant, age 44), Mama (female orog laborer, age 20)

Official or wealthy visitors to Dunbury Castle can expect lodging within the fortress, but others can purchase lodging at the only inn in the village, one with a carved sign depicting a trio of hunting hounds mid-leap. The prices for meals, drinks, and services match those shown in the equipment section of the *World of Aetaltis: Player's Guide*.

The proprietor is Basil Spicer, who tends bar and waits tables. His business partner, who serves as both cook and bouncer, is an orog named Mama who has Strength 20 and wields an enormous club (1d8 + 5 damage) fashioned from an old oar wrapped tight with hardened rope. Ordinarily Mama is shy and sweet, easily embarrassed by flattery or kind gestures. Most of the visitors to the Three Hounds make a point of complimenting the cooking and thanking Mama before leaving, which always causes the big cook to blush. But should Basil call for help, or if violence breaks out, she is quick to wade in and dispense thumps. When possible, she stops short of killing offenders.

Spicer punishes any disruptive behavior with a term of banishment from the establishment ranging from a single night (for minor offenses) to weeks, months, or even years of exile. To many locals, such a punishment is considered the worst possible fate.

Anyone who disparages the food or Mama is banned until she accepts a public apology from the offender. She considers apologies only once per evening, and a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check indicates she melts down into blubbing tears, hugs the offenders for 1 hp of bludgeoning damage, and forgives them.

## 2B THE UNICORN

*A dive tavern that caters to the more unsavory residents of the village as well as disreputable travelers who are passing through the area.*

**Quality** Poor **Condition** Rundown **Levels** 2

## EXTERIOR

*A gray rectangular building squats on the rotting pier. Haphazard patches cover the roof, and several of the windows have been boarded shut. A large unicorn's skull is mounted above what must be the entrance door. The place stinks of stale beer and moldering sawdust.*

From dusk until dawn, this tiny tavern roars with rowdy voices punctuated by bursts of laughter, song, and occasional fury. It's a shabby fire-hazard of a building, but it's a beloved hangout for many of the village's less respectable residents.

Once a shack for fishing equipment and boats, the Unicorn was taken over by a throuple of tough river rats. Locals previously called it "The Rat Hole," "The Sinking Tavern," "The Hag's Tooth," or more vulgar nicknames, but the owners mounted a unicorn's skull above the door in an effort to change the name.

The tavern opens at dusk and closes either when the last customer staggers away or at dawn, whichever comes first.

### UNICORN SKULL

Any examination of the skull reveals it is a horse's skull with a horn crudely attached with a metal screw. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check identifies the horn as the tip of a narwhal's tusk. The skull would be worth 20 sp to the right collector, but it would have to be sold outside of the village or castle. A few months ago, a couple of drunken teens carried it off but were soon caught and beaten by Jarvis and Dalbert.

## INTERIOR

*Inside, the tavern smells much worse than outside, with equal parts body odor and stale vomit dominant. Mismatched stools and half-barrels surround half a dozen scavenged tables. One has what looks like a shark-bite taken out of one side. Graffiti covers almost every surface, except for the bar. It was once a thing of beauty, but its pitted surface and occasional bulge suggests it spent some time submerged in water.*

*Upon the bar rest a kilderkin, a rundlet, and a firkin, all branded with the name of the Riverbanks Cooperage and chalked with the words "dog piss 2c," "lager 4c," and "ale 5c." Nearby stands a jar of pickled eggs marked "1c" and a box of fried pig's ears labeled "3c."*

**NPCs** Dalbert Fisk (male human bandit, age 36), Jarvis Pallister (male human scout, age 32), and Myra Bracken (female human spy, age 34)



The following are a handful of the Unicorn's more interesting regulars and some related story seeds.

#### CORLISS "HAUNTED" MILLER

The Miller's Son is how everyone at the Unicorn refers to Corliss Miller (male human laborer, age 29). Most of them don't know his name, but they take his coins and keep him amply supplied with ale and spirits. He drinks to forget the horrors he escaped at the Accursed Mill (17), but he never willingly divulges his part in the atrocities that befell the place six years ago.

One sure way to get Corliss excited is to suggest a visit to the ruins. He grows loud and frantic, warning others to stay away. "You'll die," he shouts, then lowers his voice to a conspiratorial whisper and adds, "or worse, you'll open the way." If pressed, he refuses to say more and consoles himself with a night of extra-heavy drinking.

If bothered more than once on this subject the same night, he lapses into a nearly catatonic fugue state. A few days later, the characters will learn that his body was pulled from the river several miles downstream—or perhaps they find it themselves if they are in the area.

Characters who can compel a response or detect Corliss's thoughts learn only scattered fragments of the doomed night described in the entry for the Accursed Mill (17), since the past six years of alcohol abuse and escalating madness have scrambled Corliss's memories. The gamemaster is encouraged to describe tantalizing scenes from the mill's fall, offering just enough information to entice adventurers to explore the place without divulging the full background. Let them discover that for themselves.

#### UNCLE FRISKY

Friskingilliwik "Uncle Frisky" Chandler (male cheebat spy, age 37) is the best-known fence in the area. He is so well-known, in fact, that everyone in the castle is aware of his activities and keeps an eye on him in case

he becomes involved in something truly dangerous. Most of his trade is in small-scale stolen items rather than in boatloads of smuggled goods. If a stranger offers to sell him something, he begins negotiations with an offer of 20% of its value, claiming it's his firm price. Good roleplaying or successful Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) checks can bring that price up to 50%.

#### VORNA THE SNITCH

Vorna Vanderkett (female dwarf laborer, age 64) the leatherworker is an honest citizen with a great tolerance for dishonest ones. She enjoys a few pints at the Unicorn most evenings, absorbing the latest gossip but generally keeping it to herself. Should she overhear plans for a heinous crime like murder, she would likely report it to Sergeant Hodge at the castle. Adventurers that talk about acts of violence in Vorna's presence are likely to receive a visit from Hodge the next day.

#### "PROFESSOR" BEL

Belfinmayorgishay (male newardin scholar, age 32), known locally as "Bel" or "the Professor" is an information broker who prefers to trade what he knows for fresh information, but isn't above accepting a cash offer when the situation calls for it. Bel offers translation services and consultations on history, arcana, religion, and nature, charging 1 sp per hour (or fraction thereof) for sharing simple, harmless answers. He charges up to 4 sp per hour for more esoteric, dangerous, or otherwise valuable information (such as the location of a dragon's lair or the name of one of the Warden's agents in Dunbury Castle). What Bel knows or doesn't know is up to the GM's discretion, and Bel never charges for what he does not know.

Inside the tavern stand six mismatched tables with make-shift stools made of barrels, salvaged boats, crates, and other discarded materials. The bar itself was once a beautiful piece of furniture, but after resting at the bottom of the river for the better part of a summer before being salvaged, its once-polished surface has lost any hope of luster. In addition to two casks of ale and one of lager, the tenders keep 1d4 bottles of Mule Kick spirits (2 cp for a shot, 3 sp for a bottle, but the bottle must be returned) behind the bar at any time.

The ale labeled "dog piss" is usually a bad batch from Enid Tanner (2h), but, like the others, it is a rotating cask. If asked the provenance of the beer, the current bartender shrugs unless bribed at least 5 cp or won over by a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Their customers seldomly care about the taste of the beer, and they don't bother doing favors for their suppliers unless there's something in it for them.



## PATRONS

While a few law-abiding villagers and respectable castle residents visit the Unicorn, most of the clientele are sketchy at best. River rats and other outlaws abound, and it's a rare night on which one can't find someone whose face appears on a wanted poster lurking in a dark corner of the place. Others have even more sinister or sorrowful origins.

Not every patron of the Unicorn is a miscreant or a criminal. On any night, a few castle soldiers might visit. So might local fishers and farmers who find the Three Hounds too crowded or expensive. Most teenagers visit at least once, so they can say they've been to the Unicorn. A number of "usual suspects" are almost always at the Unicorn for at least an hour or two each night.

## CREAKING FLOOR

The Unicorn's floor creaks and sags under the weight anyone over 250 lbs. For this reason, drothmal, orogs, and other large characters are shouted out as soon as they appear at the threshold. Several previous holes in the floor have been patched with mismatched lumber scavenged from old fishing boats and torn-down buildings. Any big characters foolish enough to ignore the warnings must make a Dexterity saving throw at the end of each turn spent inside the Unicorn. Success indicates a feeling that the floor is about to give way, and the character may move five feet away to avoid adding another hole. Failure indicates the character puts a foot through the floor, taking no damage but angering the proprietors and regulars. Failure by 5 points or more indicates the character has fallen completely through the floor, taking only 1d4 slashing damage from splinters before landing in the river below. Myra Bracken demands compensation for any such damage, starting with the outrageous claim that repairs will cost 20 sp. In truth, she will have her partners mend the damage with scavenged lumber, but any payment of 5 sp or more soothes her anger. Anything less, and she declares the offender banned from the Unicorn—a rare occasion.

## THE PROPRIETORS

The Unicorn's proprietors include Dalbert Fisk, Jarvis Pallister, and Myra Bracken, all of whom are publicly retired from criminal affairs but secretly eager to take a cut of any shady deal one might propose. Back when they were still "in the business," Dalbert and Jarvis spent their share of time in the castle dungeon, but Myra has never been arrested. Each takes a turn tending bar while the other two drink, gamble, pick the occasional pocket, and act as bouncers when necessary.

Myra continues to operate as a spy, lately for agents of Warden Oswald Balewick—although she only suspects and cannot prove the identity of her benefactor. In exchange for a monthly stipend, she passes along any information overheard from soldiers or other interesting patrons. Any customers who seem likely to know valuable information receive their drinks bolstered by a shot or two of potent Maladoran spirits labeled "The Hag's Tooth," which the trio keep a bottle of behind the bar for just such a purpose. Otherwise, the drinks are weak, low-quality, and 10% less expensive than those at the Three Hounds. Beer, wine, and spirits are all the Unicorn sells.

Characters who are known criminals or who prove their bona fides may persuade Myra to introduce them to smugglers or bandits in the area. She has a weakness for charming men, but both Dalbert and Jarvis are the jealous types. If an interloper seems to become too friendly with Myra, "the boys" might arrange to meet that person alone at night on a road outside the village.

## THE HAG'S TOOTH

**Type** Ingested **Identify** DC 15 **Save** DC 15 Constitution on ingestion

**Onset** 10 minutes **Effect** Special **Duration** 3 hours **Cure** Time

### EFFECT

When a character imbibes a shot of the Hag's Tooth, a potent dwarven spirit reinforced with a secret cocktail of "herbs and medicinals," the character must make a DC 15 Constitution save. On a success, they shrug off the special effects of the beverage, although they still experience the effects of drinking a potent alcoholic drink and cannot be affected by it again for 24 hours.

On a failed save, the powerful drink goes straight to the character's head. For the duration of the effect, the character is predisposed toward telling the truth. If a character is asked a direct question during this period that they wish to refuse to answer or lie about, they must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw to resist answering. On a failed save, they blurt out the truth before they realize what they are doing. Repeat the save for each question asked concerning information they wish to hide.

Additional shots of the Hag's Tooth have no additional effects outside of the normal ones a person experiences drinking too much of a powerful alcoholic beverage.



## 2c DOCKS

The waterfront area of the village where boats traveling the Kouros River moor, and where adventurers are likely to arrive if they travel by boat.

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average

### EXTERIOR



*These tidy piers show signs of regular use and upkeep. Cleats and mooring poles line the edges, and at the end are a pair of substantial bumpers for larger craft. Here and there someone has left a net or buoys carefully set out of the way. Defiant gulls perch on some of the posts.*

**NPCs** 2 soldiers, 5-10 sailors, 5-10 laborers

There are three docks in Dunbury Village. At night, a dozen or so fishing skiffs are moored to the two well-maintained docks. Most are built to accommodate only two passengers, their nets, and catch, but a few larger craft can carry up to eight medium-sized creatures. During the day, most are out on the water.

The third dock is home to four small galleys requiring a crew of 2–8 rowers with room for up to 8 additional passengers. The castle soldiers use the vessels to scout the river as far north as the rapids and as far south as commanded by Captain Brazewhite. On rare occasions, the captain orders soldiers to make deliveries or to escort VIPs all the way to New Erinor.

## 2D TAX STATION AND GUARD POST

*Whether arriving by land or river, this is the place where the adventurers will likely have their first encounter with the local soldiery.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1

### EXTERIOR



*Barely larger than an outhouse, this simple shack has the conspicuous luxury of glass windows on three sides. Visible through the heavy glass is a wall-mounted cabinet beside a desk and chair. Upon the desk rests a lantern and a small pyramid of glass floats wrapped in netting.*

**NPCs** Fawn Greenmantle (female human artist, age 32), 2 soldiers

From dawn to dusk, two soldiers from Castle Dunbury stand guard beside this tiny building, which provides shelter during especially hot or rainy days. Inside are three chairs and one small desk, where the tax assessor works from just after sunrise until an hour before sunset. The current assessor is Fawn Greenmantle. Her dreams of writing plays in New Erinor gave way to reality when she was forced to return home to look after her father, who is disabled with crippling arthritis. She performs her duty as assessor diligently, but is not above a small bribe if the smuggled goods seem harmless and worth less than 100 sp.

Those who sneak up on her unexpectedly may catch her writing a few lines of dialogue in her well-worn journal or on the backs of old wanted posters. Those with proficiency in the Performance skill can tell at a glance that she has a knack for snappy banter. She immediately hides her writings upon realizing she is discovered. It's not wrong to spend her idle time this way, but she's embarrassed to show her unfinished work to anyone who has not won her confidence.

### GLASS FLOATS

The glass floats are dissimilar to the fishing buoys used locally. They belong not to Fawn but to the station itself, as a mark of the tax assessor's authority. Both Fawn and Lieutenant Vance, to whom she reports, would take it amiss if anyone should break or steal the trinket, which is otherwise worth 15 sp to a collector of curios.

### GUARDS

The castle guards (soldiers) enjoy the day shift at the guard station, since it allows them to socialize with the villagers and those carrying cargo of fur, timber, ore, and other goods from upriver. A single guard stands watch on the night shift, which is often assigned as punishment for shirkers. There's a 25% chance on any given night that the guard on duty has paid a villager to take over the watch while the soldier visits the Three Hounds or the Unicorn. If trouble arises, there's an equal chance that the panicked villager runs immediately to the guard or flees for home instead.



ABOVE | Wharf Rat, by Russell Marks



## 2E BAILIFF'S HOUSE

Home of the village's honorable and capable leader.

Quality Comfortable Condition Average Levels 2

### EXTERIOR

“

*Among the village bungalows and cottages, one residence stands above the others: a two-story house of comfortable quality, although not quite grand enough to call a manor. Its first floor is composed of stone from at least three different sources, lending it a colorful aspect. The upper floor features glass windows reinforced by lead striping arranged in abstract geometries. Instead of full balconies, a cat-sized walk encircles the house in a spiral leading from the ground to a peaked roof featuring several small landings.*

NPCs Hazel Yardley (female human fighter 2, age 58), Tulliver (male human skilled laborer, age 33), Keili (female human skilled laborer, age 30), Aileen (female human child, age 9), Alannah (female human child, age 7), Breena (female human laborer, age 24), Melony (female human child, age 3), Erlo (male human child, age 18 months), Enith Berry (female halfling commoner, age 84)

In fair weather, a multitude of cats sun themselves on the landings or the walk, a few contrary specimens preferring to perch on the warm tops of the chimneys or in the narrow windowsills. Even in winter, cat prints dot the literal cat-walk and the roof, the only one in the village not spoiled by bird droppings.

The village's bailiff, Hazel Yardley, resides in this home along with two of her adult children and their families. In a small shrine to one side of the foyer stands a memorial to her late husband, Abbot, once a celebrated lieutenant of Dunbury Castle. His portrait depicts a handsome, stout man of 40 years.

Hazel and her secretary, Enith Berry, deal with the modest legal and financial needs of the village. They oversee the collection of taxes for river traffic, encourage community support for villagers in distress, and settle petty disputes between residents within 10 miles of the village, forwarding serious complaints to Lieutenant Vance at the castle. They also have the authority to assemble a village militia but seldom do so; usually a visit from Constable Walken and a conversation over tea or cider is all it takes to persuade an offender to report to the castle to face justice.



### SIDEQUEST

#### GUTHRIE'S FATE

Characters who frequent the Unicorn or visit the bailiff may learn about the bailiff's missing son and decide to investigate. The easiest way to track down the truth of his fate is to ask around in the tavern. This requires the character to earn the trust of the other patrons.

If a character has visited the tavern at least six times, and if on those visits they've presented themselves as scoundrels, the locals begin to consider them "regulars." At that point, if they ask discreet questions about the disappearance, they eventually hear of a notorious smuggler named Guto "One Eye, Left," who is rumored to have killed the son of the village bailiff.

Guto (male human bandit chief, age 49) is a veteran smuggler with a horribly maimed right eye that he refuses to cover with a patch. He visits the Unicorn at least once a month along with a few of his henchmen (human bandits). Characters may try to frighten or beat a confession out of Guto, but there is an easier way to get to the truth.

After three drinks, Guto grows overly talkative. If treated to more and flattered, he begins to boast of having cut Guthrie's throat. Apparently, the bailiff's son threatened to turn him in to his mother after the smuggler refused to pay him a bribe. If challenged on this assertion, Guto shows off Guthrie's wedding ring—a golden band inscribed "All our days together — Breena."

Hazel considers this ring ample proof of her son's murder. If informed of Guto's boast and told of the ring, she reports the matter to Lieutenant Vance, not trusting herself to catch the villain alive. She would prefer to see him hanged at the crossroads, but more than that, she wishes to know the fate of her son and offer some form of closure to his widow.

#### GOAL

Determine who killed Guthrie and present proof to the bailiff.

#### REWARD

2 Goodwill, Bailiff attitude increases to Friendly, 50 sp



Hazel's elder son, Tulliver, captains a river barge that delivers cargo to and from New Erinor. His wife, Keili, and their daughters, Aileen and Alannah, keep house for Hazel and pay visits to the lonely elderly residents of Dunbury Village, cooking, cleaning, and keeping them company.

Hazel's recently widowed daughter-in-law, Breena also lives in the house, along with her two young children, Melony and Erlo. Her late husband, Guthrie, never returned from a river voyage for reasons as-yet undiscovered; in truth, he was murdered by smugglers whom he tried to intimidate with his mother's station. His death has made Breena bitter and spiteful, and she has been considering leaving her children and running away from the family she has begun to resent. Should an attractive prospect offer to "take her away from all this," she will jump at the chance. Some nights, after putting the children to bed, she visits the Unicorn in the faint hope of meeting such a savior. Considering the tavern's clientele, the likelihood is that things will only get worse for her.

## TREASURE

Inside a strongbox (AC 19, hp 18, Damage Threshold 10, **Unlock DC** 25) in Hazel's office lies the village treasury of 1,200 sp. Upon the shrine to her late husband lies his greatsword, which Hazel wields in combat while wearing his distinctive full plate, which Rudmilla at the castle adjusted to fit her.

## 2F POTTER ORCHARDS

*The home and farm of a happy local family with an old secret that may lead to new adventures for the heroes.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 1.5

## EXTERIOR



*An idyllic cottage rests on a low hill surrounded by well-tended orchards and garden plots bound by wattle fences with rabbit-sized patches dotting the perimeter. An outhouse and two sheds, one with a nearby kiln, stand a short distance away from the home.*

**NPCs** Theobald Potter (male **human farmer**, age 48), Orrin Flowers (male **human farmer**, age 39), Sarie Potter (female human teen, age 14), Labbecca Potter (female human child, age 12), Skellan Potter (male human child, age 9)

With the help of his three children, the widowed Theobald Potter and his new husband Orrin Flowers tend two small orchards, a fruit garden, and a famous plot of flowerbeds. The children—Labbecca, Sarie, and Skellan—sell the fruit and flowers at the castle's little market (C8b).

Orrin perpetually squints and always wears a cap, a habit he adopted in his teens to conceal a prematurely bald pate. He has gained a reputation for a green thumb and a keen head for figures and sums. Theobald is a handsome fellow with a full head of hair, graying on the sides, and a lined face tanned by days spent in the sun. He has a reputation as a poor potter but a doting father and helpful neighbor.

While the couple are well-known for their flowers, since selling flowers for profit is uncommon outside of cities, their real income comes from their pear cider. The cider is popular throughout the scir—so much so, they even send several casks to nobles in New Erinor each season.

Orrin and Theobald met eight years ago at the Three Hound's Inn. Orrin wanted a new start, Theobald had been lonely since his wife died in childbirth, and they both loved horticulture and the simple life. What began as a business partnership became a romance. They married, and Orrin has become a second father to Theobald's children.

All their neighbors speak highly of the couple and their daughters, although Skellan has a reputation as a brat. People smile indulgently if the topic of Theo's (mediocre) pottery arises; everyone has at least one piece he has given as a gift. Everyone praises Orrin's willingness to help with their ledgers. He has a knack for accounts, and some wonder that the captain hasn't enlisted him at the castle. Lieutenant Vance once suggested exactly that, but Orrin demurred.

## OUTHOUSE

Inside the outhouse, the odor of the cesspit is disguised by fresh flowers (in spring and summer), potpourri (autumn), or recently burned incense (winter). A chalked slate on the side wall lists the household names—"Orrin, Theo, Becca, Sarie, Skellan"—followed by a grid marked mostly with checks, except for several frowny-faces along Skellan's row.

## LARGE SHED

The larger shed contains a mash tub, six fermenting rundlets, 12 empty rundlets, and 18 empty pins (all casks from the Riverbanks Cooperage). The shed also contains assorted bungs, a bung mallet, two large cauldrons, a mixing paddle, two wire mesh sieves, and miscellaneous other tools and equipment for brewing and bottling cider. The shed smells pleasantly of pears.

## SMALL SHED

The smaller shed is home to a potter's wheel, a comfortable stool, a shallow box of pottery tools, a rundlet filled with water, 40 pounds of raw clay, nine-quart jars filled with glaze and pigments of various colors, and 28 finished flower pots of average quality. The shed smells strongly of clay.



**ORRIN'S SECRET**

The reason Orrin avoids all government entanglements is that he has a dark secret. Orrin is wanted under his birth name of Reginald Sterling for murder and theft in New Erinor, where he once served as secretary to the late minister of the exchequer. Orrin is guilty of the crimes, but he wishes to leave his criminal past behind. He feels remorse for the murder, which he committed in a moment of panic, but he lacks the courage to face justice. He will not commit

premeditated murder again, but he is prone to rash impulses—including violence—when his freedom or the lives of his family are threatened.

If at any time Orrin has reason to believe his true identity has been uncovered, he persuades Theobald and the children to flee with him. That day, he buys a wagon and two horses from a nearby ranch. That night, he digs up the coffer buried in the orchard, and they flee.

**SIDEQUEST****A KILLER AMONG US**

Orrin Flowers (2f) is secretly a wanted thief and murderer. The adventurers discover this when they see a wanted poster with Orrin's face on it.

One way this can happen is when a bounty hunter, who heard rumors Reginald was hiding out near Dunbury Castle, visits the Unicorn. Whether the adventurers encounter the bounty hunter directly or simply hear the story from the Unicorn's patrons afterward, they discover there is a 2000 sp reward for the apprehension of Reginald Sterling. The bounty hunter has a copy of a wanted poster bearing Reginald's likeness and may be persuaded to show it to the adventurers.

There is also a forgotten copy of the poster still in the village. This copy made its way to Dunbury a few years back, and when it arrived at the guard post (2d), a soldier put it in a drawer where it was swiftly forgotten. Recently, Fawn Greenmantle started using the backs of the old wanted posters to write drafts of her plays. If an adventurer makes friends with Fawn, she asks them to read one of her plays and tell her what they think of it. The play she gives them is written on the back of Reginald's wanted poster.

If the adventurers know Orrin well, they recognize him at once. If they haven't met Orrin or only met him in passing, the next time they encounter him, a successful passive DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the character to make the connection.

If accused of being Reginald, Orrin denies the charge. If confronted with his wanted poster, however, he falters. If denounced in front of Theobald or his children, he begs to speak with his accusers in private. He offers up his buried treasure (2f) if the characters will simply "forget" that they found him. If arrested anyway, he goes peacefully unless presented with a golden opportunity to escape. His priorities are first to safeguard his family and second to escape punishment. If he can accomplish the first

two while concealing his crimes from Theobald and the children, so much the better.

If Orrin is arrested and turned over to Captain Braze-white, his captors can collect the promised bounty of 2,000 sp (although it takes three weeks to arrive from New Erinor).

If the gamemaster wishes to expand the sidequest into a full adventure, when an authority from the capital arrives to collect him, she seems genuinely surprised he has been brought to justice. She explains that within a few days of Orrin's crime, the case was purposefully buried and forgotten. It turns out that Orrin is in possession of documents that provide evidence of a scheme by the late exchequer and a cabal of nobles to pocket a fortune in stolen Agthorian taxes. The nobles buried the crime in the hope that Orrin would just disappear and never return, although they didn't know he had the incriminating documents. It's possible that Orrin can trade the documents for his freedom.

**GOAL**

Discover Orrin's secret and decide whether to turn him in to the authorities or let him walk.

**REWARD**

If the adventurers turn him in: 2000 sp reward, Orrin's attitude toward the adventurers is permanently changed to violent, and the attitude of the rest of Orrin's family is permanently changed to hostile.

If the adventurers decide to keep his secret: 1 Goodwill and the attitude of Orrin and his family toward the adventurers is permanently changed to friendly.

If the adventurers keep his secret but only if he pays them off: No reward beyond the treasure from the orchard.



## TREASURE

Beneath the floorboards of the bedroom Orrin and Theobald share lies a small coffer (AC 15, HP 15, **Unlock DC 12**) containing 800 sp and letters with which he could blackmail several of New Erinor's most prominent law enforcement officials for crimes ranging from bribery to embezzlement. The existence of these letters is one of the reasons Orrin has not faced a more aggressive manhunt.

In the pear orchard, buried ten feet north of a tree on which Orrin carved the face of an owl into the bark, lies a larger coffer (AC 15, HP 23, **Unlock DC 15**) containing 107 gp, 289 sp, and five pieces of jewelry worth 500 sp each. Orrin hasn't touched the chest since burying it four years earlier.

## 2G TWILLER HOUSE

*A bustling household filled with a horde of halflings who are a vibrant and visible presence in the village.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

## EXTERIOR

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*The sunken ground floor of this house features large windows, and the second floor begins a mere two feet above the landing, a third only seven feet above that one. Unlike the neighboring houses and cottages, its roof is gently curved rather than peaked, giving the impression of gentle hills rather than sharp mountains. Flower beds rest beneath every window, and the wooden exterior is not only freshly painted but also decorated with images of vines and blossoms, with the face of a cherubic halfling child appearing instead of a flower here and there.*

**NPCs** Grandpa Willem Twiller (male **halfling laborer**, age 110), Twiller Clan (6 **halfling laborers**, 5 **halfling teens**, 8 **halfling children**)

From dawn until afternoon, the Twiller house is home to the Barleywine and Shandy children, as well as two adults who supervise them, usually their parents with perhaps one of their aunts. The rest of the Twiller clan adults work in the bakery in shifts starting from shortly after midnight until near sundown. When not working in the bakery, the adults can be found at the castle, elsewhere in the village, or occasionally at home helping with chores, such as slaughtering stew rabbits out of sight of the younger children. Dozens of the critters live in relatively comfortable hutches

behind the house. Occasionally a clever one escapes to munch on the cabbages, carrots, peas, and other vegetables in the garden.

## INTERIOR

Inside, the Twiller House is clearly built for the comfort of halflings. Human-sized or larger visitors must stoop to avoid hitting their heads on the archways. Many bedrooms surround a central dining hall, and one corner of the third story is dedicated to a solar with large glass windows. Two bedrooms are reserved for guests or hoped-for additions to the family. Grandpa Twiller makes no attempt to conceal his hope that all his daughters will marry and have children before he dies. While his eldest two have made a good start of fulfilling his wish, he won't be satisfied until he must build another house for the rest of the family. To that end, any respectable and/or dashing halfling bachelors who visit town may find themselves invited to supper. Those who manage to charm one of the unmarried Twiller girls may find themselves invited to stay in one of the guest rooms in hopes that a flirtation may bloom into a courtship.

The ground floor is a furnished basement, complete with a large pantry and wine cellar. One side is dedicated to a shrine to Alantra, quite different in character from the altar in the castle chapel. This one depicts the enaros as a woman with blended elven and halfling features who sits among many rabbits in a burgeoning vegetable garden.

The rest of the lower floor is a comfortable “tumbling room,” thick with carpets and devoid of sharp edges. Here is where the family most often resides, letting the children play with their favorite rabbits or teaching them lessons from the family's treasured illustrated books, printed by a cousin in Gelendor.

The Twiller children have been raised to show affection, and the villagers universally adore the tiny darlings, whose big eyes alone have proven a perfect defense against complaints of noise or running in the streets. Any characters who show one of the Twiller grandchildren the slightest kindness is a likely target for what their grandfather has termed a “hug swarm.” The children especially love to climb over tall, friendly characters—and incidentally search their pockets for gifts with a +5 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. The kids are genuinely expecting candy or trinkets as gifts most of the time, and they'll tearfully apologize and surrender other items when caught.

The youngest, Burnaby and Sallee, believe that the rabbits behind the house are all pets. Orson, a little older, is on the precipice of understanding the reality but hasn't quite accepted the truth yet. When a rabbit goes missing before



the night's supper, their parents explain that the absent hare has run off to visit family. Any Twiller House resident or neighbor who overhears a character talking about slaughtering and eating rabbits is quickly shushed. One who purposefully harms a rabbit in front of these children is thereafter considered a monster by all who learn of the event.

## 2H TANNER PLACE

*Barely in sight of the village, Alfred Tanner performs his noisome work downstream from his neighbors.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 2

### EXTERIOR

*You can smell the stench of urine long before you reach the tannery. Simple frames hold skins and furs left out to cure beside a workhouse. A good thirty yards away stands a large cottage with no windows facing the tanning area. A cluster of barrels abuts both the cottage and the tanning shop.*

**NPCs** Alfred Tanner (male human craftsperson, age 38), Enid Tanner (female human craftsperson, age 41), Burke (male human craftsperson, age 18), Presley (male human teen, age 15), Morton (male human teen, age 13)

Alfred Tanner performs his noisome work downstream from his neighbors, barely in sight of the village. To his astonishment and everlasting joy, he courted and married Enid, a woman who had lost her sense of smell after a childhood illness. She found his affable personality and steady income enticing enough to live apart from her neighbors, who still complain of the smell when the wind turns toward the village. While the Tanners themselves are pleasant people and good neighbors, the villagers treat them as slightly less-than-equal.

Enid is a talented brewer who sells her beer and mead to Myra Bracken (2b). Unfortunately, every fifth or sixth batch is contaminated by the stench of the tannery because of an inopportune change in the wind. While the customers grumble about the bad batches, Myra Bracken doesn't care. It amuses her that the customers are too afraid to complain to her, saving their ire for the Tanner family.

The casks near the house are for beer, and all are branded with the letter "T." Those near the workshop are either filled with animal urine, which Alfred buys from local farmers for the purpose of tanning, or else they are empty

but still suffused with the stench. These are all branded with the letter "P."

At any time, Alfred has a dozen hides and a similar number of pelts in process. He sells the resulting leather and fur to merchants at the docks, but he's always willing to sell directly to locals and friendly visitors. He's also always in the market for freshly skinned pelts and hides, even the more exotic sort, like griffon or owlbear hides, although he offers only 20% of the price of finished work.

Enid and Alfred's three boys, Morton, Presley, and Burke, help their parents tan and tool hides and furs. Burke lingers a little longer than he should when delivering beer to the tavern. It is only a matter of time before Myra turns him toward petty crime and begins grooming him as a spy. Alternatively, characters who visit the Tanners and witness Burke's excellent skills at carving and tooling leather might encourage him to enlist as a soldier or apprentice himself in Tristanford.

## 2I BRACKEN'S HOUSE

*Ramshackle home belonging to the throuple of seedy individuals that own and operate the Unicorn.*

**Quality** Poor **Condition** Rundown **Levels** 2

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

*This house is clearly the worst property in the village. Its roof is missing several wooden shingles, the rest displaying various degrees of rot. Patches of mold stain the outer walls, and the odor emanating from inside suggests the interior is worse.*

*In the center of a grassless circle that overlaps the path, an enormous mastiff sits chained to an iron post. It growls, stands, and barks at any approach. Hundreds of dog turds dot his miserable territory.*

**Creatures** 1 guard dog

Myra, Dalbert, and Jarvis share this cottage with a vicious, nameless guard dog, the latter of whom spends his days chained to a post by the front door, with slack enough to terrorize passers-by who do not step off the path. While the mastiff is hostile to everyone except his masters, whom he fears, he is a ripe prospect for rescue and rehabilitation.

Spells like *animal friendship* provide an easy start, but roleplaying can also win over the dog. Characters who treat the dog with kindness can, over a course of weeks, change his attitude to indifferent. Initial interactions should be cau-



tious, like a friendly greeting from a distance or tossing food within the dog's reach. Characters who show themselves to the dog on a regular basis allow the frightened beast to become accustomed to them.

The Bracken family will, of course, object to anyone's claiming of their guardian. They are, at heart, cowards, so if presented with an obviously superior force, they back down in the short term. In the long term, they seek revenge.

## INTERIOR

The interior of the house is, improbably, more squalid than the yard. The residents spend little time here and have become accustomed to the filth and stench, at least for long enough to sleep and return to the Unicorn for business.

## 2J TRYSTING ISLE

*A small island just north of the castle, popular for clandestine meetings but also home to a trio of dangerous will-o'-wisps and a mysterious pit.*

### Creatures 3 will-o'-wisps

The far side of this island, away from the eyes of castle sentinels, is where lovers often go for the encounters that gave this tiny island its name. The nearer side is popular for less clandestine meetings, including those who come to pick blackberries from the bountiful bushes throughout the island.

## THE SHADOW WELL

In addition to rumors that smugglers and other criminals make camp on the island, locals are wary of visiting at night for fear of falling into a deep, stone-lined shaft cut into the center of the island. Soldiers have posted warning signs around the danger zone, but someone—or something—continues to tear them down and throw them into the seemingly bottomless pit.

Now and then, adventurers with more courage than sense have launched spelunking expeditions to determine the depth and contents of the abyss. Some climbed back out after descending only a few hundred feet, unwilling to go deeper after hearing strange sounds from below. Others never returned, leaving their ropes and spikes to rot and rust.

The common folk claim the shaft is the remains of an ancient dwarven mine, although the location makes that theory implausible to the learned. Others fear the hole leads directly into the lower levels of the Deeplands and that one day a horde of endrori will emerge to ravage the scir. The truth, including who built the shaft and why water doesn't seep in through the walls, remains a mystery.

## WILL-O'-WISPS

A trio of **will-o'-wisps** haunt the island. They appear on the darkest and most mist-shrouded of nights, emerging from the fog to lure unwary visitors to their doom. More often than not they achieve this by having their victims stumble into the Shadow Well.



ABOVE | Will-o'-Wisps, by Russell Marks



## 2K RESIDENCES

The typical Dunbury Village residence is a thatched roof cottage (**Quality** Modest, **Condition** Average), although a few of the wealthier residents have wood-framed, two-story houses with peaked roofs and wood or even tile shingles (**Quality** Comfortable, **Condition** Average). Only a few feature glass windows, but all include at least one chimney, some two. Dogs are common pets and guardians, but only a few are kept chained. Cats roam freely but tend to prefer the castle, where a loose affiliation of felines has formed in solidarity against the castle's hounds—or, if you believe the tales, in response to a ghostly summons from the haunted tower.

The gamemaster should feel free to locate any unaccounted-for residents of the area in a house here in the village. Likewise, if the adventurers are looking for a home outside the castle, one might become available after an old, childless widower dies. One might make a mini-adventure out of an estate auction conducted by Hazel Yardley. Allowing the characters a chance to out-bid a snobby Tristanford merchant looking for a summer home can create wonderful roleplaying opportunities. Furthermore, sifting through the deceased's belongings might turn up a clue to further adventures within the scir.

Most of the village residences fall into one of two categories, farming cottages or fishing cottages.

### COTTAGE, FARMING

Most of these wood-frame houses have a stone base rising two or three feet from the foundation. Nearby lies a vegetable garden, a little farther off a field for grain. Many include a chicken coop, one or two working mules or oxen, and 2–8 livestock such as goats or sheep, and occasionally a cow. About half are home to dogs, who noisily guard their territory, and cats, who roam freely and keep the mouse population down.

Most of these houses are home to one or two families, usually one or two adult couples, their children, and their parents and sometimes a grandparent or two. All the adults and children older than toddlers work together in planting, tending, and harvesting the crops, as well as in maintaining the buildings, sewing their own clothing, cooking their own meals, and generally being self-sufficient. They depend on their neighbors for mutual protection, trade, and companionship.

Farmers are generally friendly to non-threatening outsiders but have little to offer except perhaps a meal and permission to sleep in the animal shed. They have little

coin to offer as reward. They can, of course, be a source of information pertaining to local threats. Their knowledge of other rumors tends to focus on the business of their nearest neighbors.

### COTTAGE, FISHING

These small cottages are home to single families or loners. A skiff or dinghy typically rests on its side against the house, and nets and bobbers hang from exterior walls. Most smell faintly of fish. Some of these houses have a guard dog to scare off the stray cats who present a constant threat to the daily catch. Fishers are notorious tale tellers, but they are also an excellent source for local rumors. They are especially well-informed about recent smuggling and pirate activity.

## 3 WOODBEND

*A fair-sized village fallen on hard times that can serve as a place for adventurers to rest while also offering a site the gamemaster can expand and grow as the heroes bring greater security to the scir.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Rundown **Population** 210

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

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*A fair-sized village sits on a slight rise beside the Coldstone River. Docks and warehouses line both banks of the river, and a magnificent stone and timber bridge, out of place this far north, connects the two sides. At the southern end of town is a sprawling complex of fine buildings. A sign in front of the central building identifies it as the Goodfellows Inn.*

*As you near the town, you notice all is not well in this little community. Most of the buildings are rundown and in need of repairs and more than a few appear deserted.*

Woodbend is a relatively large village located on the banks of the Coldstone River, about a day's journey northwest of Dunbury Castle. It began life as a small lumber camp, but when the Drogenkett's broke ground on their quarry to supply stone to the builders of Dunbury Castle, the town took on a second role as a small riverport. Later still, when Duke Creesis Vaun made Thornwall his favored summer retreat, Woodbend became an important stopover point for nobles, merchants, and other visitors going to and from the mountain town.

The village is still a decently-sized community, but it's a shadow of its former self. Lumbering continues, and the



people send a good amount of lumber downriver, but as more lumber camps sprung up in the area, the competition reduced Woodbend's importance as a supplier. The quarry continues to produce fine stone, but the demand is a fraction of what it was during the period of the castle's construction.

Today, villagers make a living as best as they can, farming, hunting, and picking up a variety of odd jobs to make ends meet.

#### GOODFELLOWS INN

This sprawling two-story inn is completely unnecessary for a town the size of Woodbend. The original proprietor thought he'd make his fortune serving the nobles traveling to Thornwall. Unfortunately, his timing was off. He built his inn just two years before the Duke made his final trip. When the nobles stopped coming, the gold stopped flowing, and he found himself destitute within a couple of years.

Today, only the inn's main building is still used as an inn and tavern. Although the building is clearly older and in need of repairs, its past opulence is evident. Elaborate woodcarvings, imported tile floors, and a bar topped with Calliosan marble are still enough to impress most visitors. Only four of the original private rooms are still rented. Of the suites, only two remain in use. One is converted into a common room, while the other serves as the current proprietor's home.

The other buildings, including the barracks where travelers' servants and guards were housed, the large stable, and the banquet hall, were all sold off over the years. Today the banquet hall is Woodbend's town hall, the stable is owned by a caravan company, and the barracks are spottily occupied apartments.

#### THE DOCKS

Woodbend's riverfront is lined with docks and a handful of small warehouses. Most of these are, or at least they were in better times, used by merchants and travelers. The docks near the mills also handle the shipments of milled lumber heading downriver to Dunbury Castle, Tristanford, or even New Erinor.

A second set of docks, the western docks, lay on the opposite side of the river. These are used almost exclusively for shipping stone from the quarry. The majority of these have fallen out of use since the completion of the castle years ago, but two remain in operation. There are suspicions, however, that a few of the docks and warehouses to the south are used by river rats for their illegal activities.

#### MASON'S WALK

The Mason's Walk is an impressive stone and timber bridge that connects the docks on the western bank of the Coldstone to those on the east. It's notable in that it is high enough for all but the largest boats to sail beneath. It was raised through a joint effort of the Drogenkett stonemasons and the carpenters of Woodbend.

Although the bridge was not strictly necessary, since the Coldwater isn't especially wide here and it's easy enough to take a boat across, the effort served to create a sense of community between the people of Woodbend and their neighbors working the quarry. It also had the practical benefit of making it that much easier for the masons to travel to town on their off hours to spend their hard-earned coin.

It's a beautiful bridge with graceful lines, a stunning example of the wonders one can achieve when properly pairing artistry and engineering. Sadly, it is starting to show its age and could use some repairs. There are worries the runoff from a hard winter in the mountains or a large spring storm that raises the water levels could knock out one of the primary supports.

### 4 CIDER VILLAGE

*Surrounded by apple orchards, this tiny village draws visitors twice each year for its spring and autumn festivals. It's also an important source of vinegar, which is used as a preservative by people throughout the scir.*

**Quality Modest Condition Average Population 40**

#### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“Three dirt roads converge among a cluster of cottages, barns, gardens, and outbuildings. Apple orchards surround the little community, where young halfling children play while their elder siblings and parents tend to the trees and other chores. A pair of unusual-looking dogs watch over a group of wayward children. Their oddly long ears rise as they catch sight or scent of you, and one yips a warning, but they don't appear aggressive. The lingering smell of cider and vinegar emanates from a couple of the larger buildings.

**NPCs** Magpie (female sprite craftsperson, age 180), Blossom and Bough (hunting dogs)

The aptly named Cider Village sits around 20 miles southwest of Dunbury Castle. Most of its residents are halflings, but a few human families have joined them, as have a pair



of elven brothers and an ancient sprite who serves as the village's leader.

When describing the village, make sure to adjust the description of the surrounding orchards based on the season. The trees are bare in winter, full of white-pink blossoms in spring, fruiting boughs in summer, and ripe red fruit in autumn—until harvest lays the branches bare once more.

#### MAGPIE

The village elder is a sprite known simply as Magpie, who loves to emphasize her name with occasional visits to The Three Wizards (C8a) at Castle Dunbury. During the visit she buys “the treatment” from the trio of barbers, who dye and style her hair to resemble the black-and-white plumage of the bird for which she was named. Upon her return, Magpie always gives the trinket she receives from the barbers to one of the local children, making her “castle days” something of an occasion to them. Magpie adjudicates the occasional dispute between villagers and oversees the negotiations and sale of the village bounty.

#### BLOSSOM AND BOUGH

Officially, Blossom and Bough belong to Magpie, but it's difficult to claim anyone owns these oddly intelligent creatures (Intelligence 12). It is clear, however, that Magpie loves them dearly. Their fur is sleek and has a greenish tinge to it, and their alert, pointed ears are just a bit longer than normal. They spend their days galloping about with the village's younger children while simultaneously keeping them out of trouble. They are cautious of any non-fey visitors and fiercely protective of the village's residents, especially the children and Magpie.

#### FESTIVALS

In spring, the locals mount a three-day apple blossom festival featuring games, crafts, songs, dancing, and all manner of preserved foods—notably the apple cider brewed the previous year. The festival begins on the 28th day of Zevass and wraps up on the 2nd day of Modren.

In autumn, the village holds a harvest festival, a five-day event that culminates with the Feast of Grethken on the 27th and 28th of Grethken. During this celebration, wagonloads of apples are sent out to other communities, including Dunbury Castle and Tristanford. The harvest festival also marks the start of cider brewing, the aromas of which cause some visitors to linger.

#### APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Cider Village is the source of most of the region's vinegar, an ingredient essential in preserving fruits and vegetables throughout the winter. The nobles of Tristanford and a

few other discriminating families of wealth insist on using wine-based vinegar imported from southern regions, but apple vinegar is a distinctive element in much of northeastern Agthor's cuisine.

#### THE FORESTFOLK

The residents of Cider Village observe a ritual in the late autumn in which Magpie and several other adults make a wide circuit of the village, leaving jugs of vinegar—not cider—as offerings for “the forestfolk.” Most assume they are referring to wild fey, but in truth the vinegar is a gift to a tribe of raccoon-kin beastfolk that live in the nearby forest. The vinegar offering is part of an agreement Magpie secretly made with the tribe that keeps their presence a secret but ensures they don't steal apples from the orchard.

### RACCOON-KIN BEASTFOLK

*Small humanoid (beastfolk), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 3 (1d6)

**Speed** 25 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

**Languages** Beast Tongue

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** Raccoon-kin may make one attack with its bite or two attacks with its claws. If attacking with claws, the second attack is made at disadvantage.

**Bite** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

**Claws** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Second claw attack has disadvantage. *Hit:* 3 (1d2+2) slashing damage.

Like all beastfolk, raccoon-kin beastfolk are products of the cataclysm. The first of their kind were a hybrid of raccoons and individuals of Alliance and Aetaltan lineages. They are small (less than 3 feet tall), agile, and clever. They appear as anthropomorphic raccoons, and they are more mischievous than dangerous.



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Endrori on the March** Magpie's long-running efforts to appease the forestfolk pays off when the raccoon-kin bring advance warning of an endrori warband on the march. The villagers and adventurers have time to prepare a defense against the approaching enemy.

**Lifting the Curse** The reason that Blossom and Bough are so intelligent is that they aren't dogs. They're actually two of Magpie's children who were cursed after foolishly threatening an elder druid. Rumor has it the druid is in the area again, and Magpie enlists the heroes to negotiate with the druid to lift the curse and return her children to their original sprite forms.

## 5 MERRY WIDOWS MILL

*An entertaining group of local millers, one of whom is secretly a serial killer.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Levels** 3

## EXTERIOR

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*A cheerful splashing combines with the rhythmic creak of a waterwheel powering a riverside mill. The air is heavy with the scent of freshly ground grains. Nearby stands a large thatched roof cottage. Between them, a sheltered platform supports sacks of grain and flour. The flour sacks are all stamped with the image of four smiling women: a human, a halfling, a dwarf, and an elf.*

**NPCs** Ulrika Miller (female human craftsperson, age 38), Vesta Freeda Entwhistle of Netherdale (female halfling craftsperson, age 44), Sturga Roundstone Bisselkett (female dwarf fighter 1, age 51), Gwyneth Siona (female elf rogue 5, age 87), 2-4 strapping young male human or dwarven laborers (harvest season only)

The Merry Widows Mill lies around 20 miles east of Dunbury Village along the banks of Copper Creek. The mill got its start when a pair of widowed sisters invited two other widows to work and live with them. Two are “castle widows,” that is widows of soldiers, and the other two are “forest widows,” widows of foresters. While they joke about competition between the two factions, the rivalry is real, if usually below the surface. What they all have in common is a delight in hiring strapping young men to work for one season before replacing them with fresh prospects the next. Thus, they are known locally as “the Merry Widows.”

During harvest season, 2–4 young men join the widows in their work. All are young, strong, and good-looking. All four women flirt outrageously with the help as well as with any attractive male visitors.

While their hirelings do most of the heavy lifting, the women are not idle owners. They conduct all the financial business, maintain the machinery, and even help with the labor. The operation is a source of pride in the local community.

## ULRIKA MILLER

Ulrika Miller learned the business of milling from her in-laws before moving to Dunbury Village when her husband joined the castle guard. After disaster struck her relatives' mill (17), she saw an opportunity to fill a void in the local economy. She provided the know-how and the bulk of the capital necessary to start a new mill. Ulrika is a tall, muscular woman (Strength 16) with a prominent gap in her front teeth. She wears coveralls during the workday, changing into a blue dress most evenings.

## VESTA FREEDA ENTWHISTLE OF NETHERDALE

Vesta Freeda Entwhistle of Netherdale lost her husband to illness soon after arriving in Dunbury Village. Her mechanical aptitude persuaded her friend, Ulrika, to invest in a water-driven mill rather than the wind- or animal-powered mills with which Ulrika was more familiar. The gambit paid off, leaving more money for hirelings without a need to invest in beasts. Vesta is diminutive, even for a halfling, with a heart-shaped face and golden curls. She often wears a straw hat with ragged edges.

## STURGA ROUNDSTONE BISSELKETT

Sturga Roundstone Bisselkett once roamed the western hills with her forester husband. When he fell to the claws of a rampaging owlbear, she lost her taste for wilderness life. After a chance meeting with Vesta at the Three Hounds Tavern, they formed a friendship that eventually included an invitation to join the other widows at the mill. Along with Gwyneth, Sturga provides the mill's security. Sturga has an enormous smile and exceptionally large white teeth. She usually wears a rough linen shirt, leather trousers, and boots.

## GWYNETH SIONA

Gwyneth Siona is not technically a widow, although her human lover, a forester-turned-bandit, died at the hands of a castle patrol. She blames the soldiers at Dunbury Castle and relishes any chance to lure a lone soldier away from the mill, where she strangles her victim and pushes the



**MURDER INVESTIGATION**

When the body of another soldier washes ashore about seven miles south of the Merry Widows Mill, the adventurers are asked to solve the crime. If they are independent adventurers roaming the scir, a local resident shares the news that a body has been discovered; assuming the characters have already made a name for themselves, the villager asks the heroes to help. Alternatively, characters stationed as freelancers or soldiers at Dunbury Castle receive the news from Sergeant Hodge in their morning briefing, and he orders them to investigate starting with the tiny village where the body was found.

The widows profess to have no knowledge of the murders, but Sturga reacts with discomfort if questioned. If presented with the circumstantial evidence described below, she allows the adventurers to search Gwyneth Siona's room. Even if the characters don't think to search her room, if they share the results of their investigation with Sturga, she may peek inside the trunk herself. Gwyneth may discover her snooping and kill her friend before fleeing into the northern forest.

Interrogating the locals provides the following information:

- ♦ This is the fourth soldier to drown in the past four years. A body has been found along the Kouros River each autumn.
- ♦ All victims have been male soldiers; one elf and three humans. Characters inquiring about their appearance learn that the elf and one of the humans were handsome fellows, but the other two humans were decidedly not.

- ♦ All four were on leave or had strayed from their patrols. Sergeant Hodge points to the latter fact as evidence that poor discipline can result in death.

Adventurers can learn other clues either through role-playing conversations with local residents or with a series of successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) checks.

- ♦ The first victim was an elf. Around his neck was a distinctive blue stain along the ligature line.
- ♦ A former laborer at the mill remembers that one of Siona's earrings was torn out last season.
- ♦ An appropriate background, character backstory, or successful Intelligence (Investigation) check suggests the killer strangled the victim from behind.
- ♦ For five days after the latest murder, Siona had a bruise on her cheek.

Should adventurers directly accuse her of the murders, Gwyneth denies them. If shown the souvenirs kept in her trunk, however, Gwyneth attempts to flee. Sturga may try to stop her escape if she is present.

**GOAL**

Find the killer and bring them to justice.

**REWARD**

Goodwill, an official commendation from Captain Braze-white in the form of a small oak leaf shaped medal

body into the river. She has done this three times already, the bodies washing up far from the mill with no evidence pointing toward Gwyneth. The other widows have not yet discovered her vendetta, but Vesta has begun to suspect something is amiss with the elf.

Gwyneth has long, pale blond hair and three piercings in each ear, each with a dangling silver earring. She always wears a sheer blue neck scarf made of spider silk; she has six more just like it, which she uses as garottes. Wrapped in four of them are the badges of Dunbury Castle soldiers,

which she has kept as souvenirs. These specialized scarves have the following attributes when wielded by Gwyneth:

**Siona's Garrote** *Melee Weapon* Attack +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or Small creature against which Siona has advantage on the attack roll. *Hit* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target can't breathe, and Siona has advantage on checks to maintain the grapple.



## 6 “FOUR UNCLES” SAWMILL

A dwarven clan runs this well-known sawmill where the heroes have an opportunity to play peacekeeper to end a long-running feud.

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average **Population** 55

### EXTERIOR



*A cacophony of creaking wood and rushing water greets your ears. The source of the sound becomes evident as you weave around a dozen or so cozy stone-crafted homes and come to a large stone sawmill at the edge of the Kouros River. Two waterwheels squeak and groan as they work under the power of the river's steady current.*

**NPCs** Tothel Ogenkett (male dwarf merchant, age 70), Hogart (male dwarf craftsperson, age 62), Duval (male dwarf craftsperson, age 60), Drell (male dwarf craftsperson, age 58)

The Ogenkett clan runs this waterwheel-operated sawmill beside the River Kouros. Their extended family includes in-laws, nephews, nieces, and cousins, but the operation is managed by four brothers, one of whom is missing.

### OGENKETT BROTHERS

As the eldest of the four brothers, Tothel Ogenkett is the clan patriarch who oversees the operation and negotiates terms with buyers throughout the scir. The second brother, Hogart, is the most mechanically minded, and he supervises all machinery operations. Duval, the third brother, manages the work schedule, disciplines any shirkers, and often personally delivers orders by river barge or wagon. The fourth brother, Drell, is the black sheep of the family, more interested in crafting trinkets and playing music than in performing labor.

Duval and Drell are also expert woodcarvers responsible for the images of their ancestors on the mill walls and whose work is in demand throughout the scir by those who can afford it. Unfortunately, Drell ducks out on his work so often that Duval cannot keep up with the demand, and they no longer take orders until Duval himself can catch up on the late work.

While they are known as “the four uncles” because of their many nieces and nephews, all but Drell are married, and Tothel and Hogart have children of their own. The nickname originated from the brothers’ reputation for doting on all younger members of their extended family.



## SIDEQUEST

### PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

The tensions between the wild fey and the dwarves continue to rise. If the adventurers find themselves in a position to negotiate a peace between the fey and the uncles, the gamemaster should consider the following needs and desires of each side:

- ♦ The uncles want their people and machinery left in peace.
- ♦ The uncles want compensation for their worker's injuries. They will be satisfied with 200 sp or an equivalent trade in goods or services.
- ♦ The fey consider their raids to be harmless pranks, but they acknowledge responsibility for the sabotage that injured the worker.
- ♦ If pressed, the fey cannot legitimately claim the Ogenketts have despoiled the forest. In fact, the Ogenketts have been fairly responsible residents, planting trees, clearing deadwood around their community, and hunting for purpose rather than sport. The reality is the fey just enjoy the challenge and excitement of the conflict.
- ♦ The one concession the fey demand is a cessation of the noise of the waterwheels and saws. This is a face-saving claim more than anything else, but it is one the dwarves can address. Hogart, excited by the technical challenge, sets to work finding a way to decrease the sound. Within six months, he is successful—sooner, if a talented adventurer can assist by any means the gamemaster deems appropriate.

### GOAL

Get the two sides to agree to cease hostilities.

### REWARD

1 Goodwill

Exasperated mothers and fathers often end arguments with their children by saying, “Go ask your uncles!”

While everyone in the dwarven community respects and likes the uncles (even the occasionally authoritarian Tothel), Drell is the universal favorite because of his charming personality (Charisma 17), his musical talent, and his habit of distributing gifts of silver trinkets for no special reason.



## THE SAWMILL

The sawmill itself is an important contributor to the scir's economy. In addition to providing lumber for construction throughout the scir, the sawmill sends large quantities of sawdust to the castle and other settlements where ice houses and ice cellars are maintained. They hire extra guards for such deliveries since a tribe of goblins recently discovered the potentially explosive nature of barrels of sawdust and makes a special point of "hunting" them each season, attacking with flaming arrows.

In previous years, Captain Brazewhite assigned castle soldiers to guard these deliveries, but with resources stretched too thin, the uncles must now hire their own guards. Adventurers looking for work can hire on to such a mission. The pay is meager (3 sp/delivery day), but it offers a chance to interact with Duval and sawmill employees—and perhaps to increase their fame by driving off a goblin attack with plenty of grateful witnesses to spread the word.

## FEY TENSIONS

The dwarven lumbering operations have not endeared them to the wild fey. On moonless nights, young and daring elves, sprites, and fairies conduct raids on the mill. Never directly attacking a person, they limit their assaults to theft and vandalism in a form of counting coup against the despoilers of the forest. Last year, one bold fey sabotaged a circular saw, resulting in the loss of several fingers when a laborer failed to notice the damage before engaging the gears. The dwarves are especially unfriendly to elves, sprites, and fairies now, and the traps and watches they set during moonless nights have deterred, but not eliminated, raids. Now the fey raid the lumber mill only once every few months, and never on the new moon.

The wild fey in question are a loose tribe of 15-20 Feylariyans who live roughly in the surrounding woods. They are not affiliated with any fey court.

## 7 LONELY OUTHOUSE

*An old outhouse and the ruins of an unfinished halfling settlement hide a dark power lurking just beneath the surface.*

## EXTERIOR

While overgrown with weeds and spotted with lichen, two stone foundations lie in what was probably once a clearing before new growth reclaimed it for the young forest. Between them stands a four-foot diameter ring of stones, likewise overgrown, but with a circular stone plug

*lying atop them. A lone outhouse stands to the edge of woods, its faded blue paint peeling. A small, circular window appears high on each of the four walls, one of them stopped shut by a wren's nest.*

The halflings from Cider Village (4) originally intended to base their business here, but after establishing only a couple of foundations and a few temporary buildings, the noise from the nearby sawmill (6) persuaded them to relocate farther downriver. All that is left are a couple of well-constructed foundations, a half-dug well (which will strike fresh water with another 4d6 hours of excavation), and an outhouse that still occasionally sees use when someone from the sawmill or cooperage (8) goes for a long walk. Note that finishing the well may carry its own risks, as suggested in the Wraethdari Reborn adventure seed.

## THE OUTHOUSE

Carved on the interior walls of the outhouse are a series of aphorisms ranging from the crude to the poetic. The gamemaster is encouraged to invent examples that fit the tone of the campaign. Otherwise, the outhouse is in surprisingly good order, as visitors tend to sweep it clean of leaves and cobwebs with an old but serviceable broom that stands in one corner.

## STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

On the rear exterior of the outhouse are a series of messages from a pair of lovers, the dwarf Garren Ogenkett from the sawmill (6), and the halfling Lera Leona Riverbanks from the cooperage (8). The two, knowing their families disapproved of their union, ran away together over ten years ago. The sawyers are still offended by mention of the scandal, but most of the halflings consider the affair romantic and don't understand why the dwarves are so grumpy about it. While the matter soured relations between the two settlements for a few years afterward, all is cordial between them now. Still, the dwarves keep an eye on each other when socializing with the halflings, whom they consider lascivious seducers.

The lovers' messages range from a heart containing the initials "G.O. + L.L.R." to fragments of doggerel like, "No more the saw's rasp, only hands clasp / Begone the iron bands, only those upon our hands," and much worse. If you have a poetaster among the adventurers, encourage the fiend to invent the rest.



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Missing in Action** Lera's father is ill and isn't expected to recover. The family asks the adventurers to seek out the couple so Lera can return to say goodbye. The last person to have seen them was Dalbert Fisk at The Unicorn (2b) who ran into them a couple of years back. He tells the heroes that Garren finally became a bard, and Lera's nimble fingers made her an expert rogue. The two joined an adventuring company, but they disappeared into a Deepland hall a few months ago and haven't been heard from since.

**Wraethdari Reborn** During the Age of Darkness the wraethdari commander of a Dark Horde fell in battle on this site. Its minions buried it here in a stone sarcophagus and sealed it with dark magic. What they didn't realize was that the wraethdari was not quite dead, and it has been waiting for someone to release it back into the world. The sarcophagus lies just ten feet lower than where the halflings stopped digging their well, and when a pair of ambitious dwarves decide to build a lumber camp here, they accidentally crack the stone prison open while trying to complete the well.

## 8 RIVERBANKS COOPERAGE

*One of many local settlements that serve to support the scir and contribute to its economy.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Population** 29

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

Half a dozen cottages ring a pair of large buildings, one of them much taller than the other. Several sturdy tables stand around the shorter building, each surrounded by industrious halflings taking turns with wood-forms, clamps, and pots of glue. Mallets, awls, saws, planes, hammers, brushes, and other woodworking tools hang from a wheeled "wall" between two of the tables. A pair of strapping human youths carry stacks of white oak planks and iron hoops to the coopers. Near a sheltered fire pit, cauldrons, smelling of tar, line a low stone shelf, and three different-sized anvils stand ready.

Fields of barley, wheat, oats, and Gelenleaf sprawl nearby, with teeming vegetable gardens nearer the houses. A family of ponies frisk about in a paddock, watched by a pair of placid draft horses. Dogs chase laughing halfling children between the houses while cats gaze down from the thatched roofs, biding their time.

**NPCs** Rosco Padrig Bellamy Riverbanks (male halfling wizard 4, age 59), Harold (male human laborer, age 22), Hubert (male human laborer, age 25)

A little over 20 miles northeast of Dunbury Castle, near the banks of the Kouros River, is the small settlement known as the Riverbanks Cooperage. It is a pleasant little compound where the majority of the barrels, boxes, and similar containers used throughout the scir are manufactured.

During the day, the worktables are busy with crafters constructing barrels of all sizes and, occasionally, other items. At night, a pair of guards patrols the village, smoking pipes and chatting with any insomniacs who join them. A trio of playful mutts follow them, hoping for the occasional snack, which apparently, they receive more often than they should; all three appear quite well fed and pose little physical threat to intruders.

A large family of halflings form the core of this small but bustling village, which is dedicated primarily to manufacturing barrels but is also known for its excellent cartwheels and halfling-sized wagons. Everyone in the community is a vegetarian, so they keep no livestock but tend several nearby fields of grain and vegetables. As mentioned, they keep several small dogs—effective barkers, but more adorable than fierce—and the settlement is also home to a family of cats who keep the buildings mouse-free.

The leader of the cooperage is Rosco Padrig Bellamy Riverbanks, a hedge-trained wizard with a *wand of lightning bolts*, which he typically uses only as a flourish to heat the iron brand used to mark the heads of the barrels. His white-blond hair often stands straight up, a common result of his inexpert use of magic and a tendency to get too close to the target of his lightning bolt spells.

The rest of the coopers are halfling laborers along with two brawny young human laborers, Harold and Hubert, who take care of most of the heavy lifting. Beyond the fields and paddocks, screened by a stand of trees, lies a small apiary built into the uprooted base of a fallen tree. The halflings harvest the honey to brew some of the finest mead in the scir, which they reserve for trade with brewers of beer and vintners of wine.

When adventurers first visit the cooperage, all is well. The residents pause work and invite the characters to join them in a delicious vegetarian repast. Everyone is genuinely friendly, interested in the adventurers' stories, and hopeful that by making friends with the heroes they'll earn a little extra protection in a scir that has become more dangerous in recent years. At some point, the young human men, Hubert and Harold, pull a small cart of food scraps to a



**ATTACK OF THE BOG BEAST**

What the people of Riverbanks Cooperage can't possibly know is that during powerful thunderstorms, a Lesser Ley Line (2) energizes near the village. The line runs close to the ground, and coincidentally, the compost heap is right in the line's path.

On the night of a particularly powerful storm, a massive bolt of lightning streaks down from the sky and strikes the heap. This combination of arcane energy and mundane electricity gives pseudo life to the heap, giving birth to a shambling mound. The barely sentient creature, whose essence form was deeply influenced by the destructive power of lightning, rises and sets out on a deadly rampage.

When the characters arrive at the Cooperage, likely the next morning, they are greeted by a terrible scene. Wounded and even a few dead halflings litter the lanes, and cottage doors are ripped off their hinges. Rosco lies in a battered heap, a wisp of smoke rising from the tip of his wand of lightning bolts, and a scent of ozone lingers in a blue cloud over his body. He meant only to defend his people, but ignorant of the effect of lighting on a shambling mound, he only healed it of the meager damage the other coopers had caused. Now the beast shambles on hunting the survivors, blackened spears and scorched pitchforks protruding from its moist body.

If the characters grew fond of Rosco on an earlier visit and you wish to reward their prompt magical or medical assistance, he is dying but has not yet failed his third death

saving throw. If the tragedy of his death would be more poignant, he dies begging the adventurers to avenge him.

A trail of stinking slime littered with bits of potato and carrot leads through the barley field. It is a trail anyone can follow. Before reaching the monster, all the heroes can hear the screams of the survivors who flee from it. Harold and Hubert are guiding two halfling mothers and their four children away from the carnage, hoping to hide them near the apiary. Unless the adventurers intervene immediately, they won't make it.

**GOAL**

Destroy the shambling mound and save as many of the people as possible.

**REWARD**

The characters earn the people's undying gratitude, permanently shifting the attitude of the people in Riverbanks Cooperage to friendly. The heroes will always have a warm welcome, all the food and mead they can consume, and a comfortable place to sleep.

Whether he survives or not, the heroes are also offered Rosco's *wand of lightning bolts* as thanks for their courageous actions.

compost heap at the far end of one of the local fields.

On a second or future visit, consider creating a very different encounter with the Attack of the Bog Beast sidequest.

**9 RED NAILS COPPER MINE**

A long abandoned underground mine that is now home to a young common copper dragon.

**EXTERIOR**

Graying timbers that support the entrance to an old mine sag under the weight of a rocky hill. A pair of iron rails, disintegrating into rust, loll out of the cavern mouth like

*the tongue of a dead dog. Nearby, the skeletal remains of mining carts stand rusted in place since their last use several hundred years ago. One of them is filled with windblown soil and now serves as an accidental bed for wildflowers.*

**NPCs Brightburn (young common copper dragon)**

This dwarven mine was abandoned long before the Atlan Alliance lay claim to this territory. It is one of the few attempts made at digging a traditional underground mine in the region since the end of the Age of Darkness. Partially hidden by the shrubs and trees that have reclaimed the region, the entrance still remains, as do the upper chambers that now serve as the lair of a young copper dragon.



Characters examining the area detect large tracks leading into the abandoned mine on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies the tracks as those of a **young common copper dragon** with a wounded gait.

### BRIGHTBURN

Brightburn is a cowardly young copper dragon that lairs in the upper levels of the mine. She recently lost a forelimb (reducing her claw damage to 1d6+4) in a battle with a **young common green dragon** named Viridia that lairs in the area of the Goblin Grotto, escaping only after she used her slowing breath ability to outfly the green. In years past, Brightburn hunted endrori in the surrounding hills and gathered their treasures for her hoard. Since the clash with Viridia, however, she limits her hunting to the hills and mountains near home.

If encountered in the wild and targeted with a spell or struck for 10 hit points or more damage, Brightburn retreats. If pursuers can fly as fast as she, she uses her slowing breath to delay them but does not otherwise counterattack unless prevented from escaping.

Should adventurers enter her lair, the dragon responds peacefully unless they threaten her life or behave as though they intend to steal her meager treasure hoard. Although Brightburn is not her true name, she introduces herself as such. She keeps her true name a closely guarded secret. If the adventurers engage her in conversation, she inquires as to their names and any “legends” told of their deeds.

Those who treat her with respect gain a potential ally with the benefit that she may come to their aid in a time of need. At the gamemaster’s discretion, if the adventurers find themselves operating in Brightburn’s territory and in a situation where they are in over their heads, Brightburn swoops in to aid the heroes. As long as these rescues are not overused, they are an excellent way to reward players for their good deeds and reinforce future heroic behavior. The better the adventurers’ relationship with Brightburn, the more likely she is to intervene on their behalf.

Like all dragons, Brightburn loves coins and jewels, but the most effective way to win Brightburn’s continued friendship is with songs, riddles, and stories. Bards in particular have advantage on all Performance and Persuasion checks made to win her friendship. Any character who makes more than two visits to Brightburn’s lair bringing fascinating tales and new songs may, with successful Charisma checks or the gamemaster’s approval of roleplaying success, win the gift of Brightburn’s most treasured instrument, *Llynfellyn’s Lute*.

Whatever friendship develops between the adventurers and the dragon, the GM should keep in mind that Brightburn is loath to face enemy dragons again. It will take a super-heroic effort to convince Brightburn to aid or intervene if other dragons are involved.

### TREASURE

In a cool dry cavern on one of the higher levels of the mine, Brightburn keeps a mound of coins and chests of other treasures. They include:

- ♦ 2,400 sp in old dwarven coins (all stamped with the profile of a long forgotten dwarven king)
- ♦ 40 gp in old dwarven coins
- ♦ 22 pp in old dwarven coins
- ♦ A well-preserved painted wooden throne worth 200 sp
- ♦ A framed portrait of a dwarf noble worth 150 sp
- ♦ *Llynfellyn’s Lute*

### LLYNFELLYN’S LUTE

**Sense** DC 15 **Analyze** DC 20 **Attunement** Yes

**Rarity** Rare **Price** 2000 sp **Weight** 2 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

According to the legend of its creation, this wondrous instrument was owned by a great dragon called Llynfellyn. Llynfellyn adored the music of the lute, and she had this instrument specially made by the finest elven luthier in all the land. Llynfellyn would take on elven form for the sole purpose of playing this glorious instrument. Over the centuries, Llynfellyn’s own magic seeped into the instrument, transforming it into the enchanted item it is today.

Only characters with the essence sense ability who are attuned to the instrument are able to play it properly, regardless of their skill. Any person without essence sense can’t get the tuning quite right and automatically fail any Performance check made while using this instrument. Those with the essence sense ability and who are attuned to the instrument have advantage on Performance checks made while playing the lute.

The instrument also allows the attuned performer to activate a magical effect once per day as part of a successful DC 15 Performance check. The instrument can create one of the following spell effects each time this power is invoked: charm person, heroism, hideous laughter, sleep, or enthrall. The saving throw DC to resist these powers is the result of the Performance check. After use, the power returns 24 hours after the last invocation.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Moving Day** If Viridia still lives, she sends warbands of endrori out to find and kill Brightburn. Brightburn, knowing she would not survive another direct confrontation with the green, decides she must find a new lair. She turns to the



adventurers to help her locate a suitable location and help her safely transport her hoard to her new home.

**Safe Passage** An elderly bard arrives in Dunbury Village seeking Brightburn in the hopes of exchanging tales with the dragon. Unfortunately, the increasing number of endrori and other monsters in the hills make such a journey impossible for the lone aging storyteller. The bard turns to the heroes seeking their guardianship on their visit to meet with the dragon.

## 10 THE FORGOTTEN GATE

*Corruption from the Deeplands threatens to spread to the surrounding countryside unless adventurers reseal a nearly forgotten Deepland gate.*

This is the location of the ruined Hunters' Tower that serves as the backdrop for the World of Aetaltis adventure The Forgotten Gate.

## 11 GOBLIN GROTTA

*An endrori infested cave network that poses the greatest threat northern Agthor has faced in more than a century.*

Dunbury Castle veterans pass down stories of the goblin grotto, a network of caves said to lie at the head of the Kouros River. None still live who have actually visited those fabled caverns, but Captain Brazewhite has started sending scouts upriver—cautious not to venture too far from the water—to determine whether new tribes of endrori have emerged from its shadowy depth. It seems unlikely, since the endrori fortress that stood there was razed and the tunnels sealed nearly a century ago. In recent years, however, several scouts have vanished near the ruins without a trace. Brazewhite is concerned about the implications, but officials in Tristanford, worried more about the disruption of commerce than fanciful worries about endrori, insist she devote her dwindling resources to patrolling the southern roads and waterways.

The truth is that the goblins have returned. They view the grotto as their ancestral home and dream of restoring its dark glory, but they as yet fear the deadly human forces eager to eradicate their kind. Until their shamans decree the time propitious, they leave the "Great Mouth" sealed while using smaller hidden passages for hunting and scouting expeditions. Otherwise, they lie low, grow their numbers, and limit their predation to subterranean wildlife, wild fey who encroach on their territory, and the fauna of the northern wilds.

Within the grotto, adventurers can find flooded caves, mushroom groves, a weird shrine, and pens for captives. The uttermost depth includes a collapsed passage the goblins have been excavating for decades. Once they restore the direct path to the Deeplands (there are many indirect routes into the grotto), their numbers will swell, and the possibility of an endrori horde sweeping south from this watery lair becomes all too possible.

The grotto and its denizens will be explored fully in a future Dunbury Castle adventure book.

## 12 FEYLARIYAN GROVE

*An enchanted grove where the wild elves meet that may serve as a temporary refuge for adventurers pursued by their enemies.*

### EXTERIOR

*The trees in this corner of the forest look uncommonly beautiful, their branches arching like the limbs of dancers. Yet they do not seem groomed by mortal arborists; their grace appears utterly natural. Precious little undergrowth impedes your path between the trunks.*

NPCs 1d4 fairy scouts, 1d4 sprite scouts

This glade is a meeting place for the wild Feylariyans that live in the region. On the night of a full moon, adventurers may stumble across the wild fey holding court here to discuss local matters or simply to sing and cavort. The local Feylariyans, especially fairies and other diminutive fey, also use it as a hiding place in times of danger.

### HIDING MAGIC

The glade is enchanted to remain hidden from non-fey. Any non-fey passing through the region must succeed at a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or else they are unable to find or see the glade. They simply turn aside and miss it each time they pass through. The magic is quite powerful, and a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check (passive or active) by a character with essence sense will detect the power of the illusion, even if they are unable to overcome it.

Fey characters are not affected in this way, and if they willingly take a non-fey by the hand, they can lead them to the glade. As long as the guest remains in the glade, the character is unaffected by the hiding magic. As soon as they leave the glade, however, the magic takes hold once again unless they remain in contact with a fey.



Characters who have treated the forest with respect—picking deadfall rather than cutting branches for firewood, committing no unnecessary harm against local animals, and acting in similarly benevolent ways—may rest for up to a day in the glade. While there, they are safe from outside attack or detection by enemies.

#### DEFENDERS OF THE GLADE

If a character remains in the glade for more than 24 hours, a Feylariyan fairy arrives and asks the characters to leave. If the characters refuse, a warband of Feylariyans (1d4 elf foresters, 1d4 fairy hedge wizards, and 1d4 sprite sneaks) arrives to drive the characters out by force.

If a character enters the glade who is not an enemy of the forest but who has treated it with indifference—hunting and trapping animals, chopping down trees, or otherwise harming the forest and its denizens—a fairy appears immediately and demands the party leave. If they refuse, a warband arrives to drive them away.

Anyone that has acted as an enemy of the forest—setting fires indiscriminately, killing for sport, or otherwise behaving in a hostile manner—who enters the glade is attacked by a Feylariyan warband the moment they set foot inside its boundaries. The warband tries to kill the intruders, but if outnumbered or overpowered, the warband is satisfied with simply driving the enemy away.

### 13 THE SISTERS' TREE

*Unknown to the outside world, a coven of hags lurks in this region of the scir, preying on unsuspecting victims and working to further Endroren's dark plans.*

#### EXTERIOR

*“The forest floor is soft under foot here, the air fetid and humid. Clouds of stinging insects hover over lumps on the wet ground. A gurgling stream snakes its way through the mire.*

*The husk of a great oak straddles the waterway. From the tree's dead branches hang twig dolls among the skulls and scalps of various humanoids. An irregular fence encircles the tree, large mildew covered bones supporting its haphazard reed walls. Thick vines run through the fence with thorns the length of daggers jutting through the eye sockets of several small humanoid skulls that adorn its length.*

*A dull orange glow flickers in a pair of rough oval windows above a crooked doorway set in the trunk of the old tree.*

**Creatures** **Mona Mucklebones** (sea hag), **Eudora Doll-Ripper** (green hag), **Hragatha Rattleskull** (night hag), **23 twig blights**, **13 needle blights**, **6 vine blights**

The unlocked door and windows were stolen from houses terrorized by the hags and their minions. Anyone who examines the stream notices what appear to be oddly round pale stones beneath the tree, whereas the rest of the stream has a muddy bottom. These are not stones, but the accumulated skulls of the hags' victims, stored here as trophies. The oldest are many decades old, and there are several hundred in total.

The small skulls in the fence are the remains of other victims, many of them children stolen from their cradles. Anyone examining the skulls can also identify a number of goblin, orc, and other endrori skulls in both the fence and the stream. Despite drawing their power from Endroren, the hags are equal opportunity murderers.

The surrounding trees, shrubs, and vines conceal the presence of the coven's servants and guardians: **23 twig blights**, **13 needle blights**, and **6 vine blights**. The former are scattered in a ring around the tree, none farther than 40 feet away. They avoid characters carrying open flame. The needle and vine blights lie hidden within the tangled fence, waiting to attack unwary characters between the fence and tree by surprise. They focus their attacks on those wielding fire first in an effort to douse the flames. Once all sources of flame are extinguished, or at least dropped, the twig blights join the fray.

Once a mighty magical oak tended by the fey, this corrupted husk of a dead tree now serves as the meeting place for a coven of hags. In the daytime, the hags are absent, and the blights attack any intruders who attempt to gain entrance.

On any given night, 0–3 hags might be in residence, brewing potions, pickling the faces of their victims, or tormenting the people or animals they have captured to sacrifice to Endroren. Unless one of the hags has been slain elsewhere, all are present on the nights of the Faceless Moon (the night of the new moon which occurs on the 1st of each month) to carry out the traditions of their coven. It is then that they perform their darkest rituals.

Mona Mucklebones (sea hag), Eudora Doll-Ripper (green hag), and Hragatha Rattleskull (night hag) have come together in this place to form a coven. Should one or two of them be slain, a surviving “sister hag” will put out a call for new sisters on the night of the next Faceless Moon. Within a year and a day, new hags will come to replace those that fell. The surviving hag or hags, having received a



vision of the individual or individuals who struck the killing blow on their predecessors, swear revenge and hunt down the perpetrators.

### INSIDE THE TREE

The hollowed-out interior of the tree is one large room, roughly triangular. Each hag has claimed one corner for her personal space. They work together in the middle, where three cauldrons surround a space beneath the open tree trunk. Chains dangle from crossbeams in the tree's interior to three sets of manacles. Beside them hang three filthy nooses.

In Mona's corner hang two suspended cages over a pair of unlit braziers. Bunches of drying herbs hang from the wall, and beneath them a clutter of disgusting ingredients—including a jar of eyes from giant spiders—covers a moldy wooden table. In one of the cages languishes a once-beautiful woman (female elf scout, age 80), her face ripped to shreds by Mona's jealous claws. The Feylariyan wild elf, Eysyllwayn, has been unconscious for days and has suffered 5 levels of exhaustion. If healed and delivered to safety, she shares the story of her rescuers among her people. If Mona is caught alone in the tree when adventurers arrive, she polymorphs herself into a black cat and observes their behavior. If they appear foolish or weak, she may attack them. If they seem dangerous, she looks for an opportunity to escape, returning for revenge with her sisters.

In Eudora's corner is a pair of thorny wicker cages. The one to the left is the "wicked embrace," a torture device lined with spikes that inflicts 1 hit point of damage each hour, one level of exhaustion each 8-hour period, and prevents rest or natural healing for those confined within. The cage to the right is the "merciful embrace," in which the hag keeps captives whose ears and eyes have not yet been harvested. If caught alone inside the tree when adventurers arrive, she uses her Illusory Appearance ability to look like an attractive youth and steps into the merciful embrace.

Hragatha's corner includes a compartmentalized tray holding preserved giant spider eyes, a short cage holding Portman, an earless, eyeless captive (male human commoner, age 25), and a stack of three cages, each containing an angry giant spider.

The preserved spider eyes are the catalyst for Hragatha's scrying cauldron. The tray has 32 compartments, 18 of which currently hold groups of 1d6 spider eyes. Hragatha harvests them from giant spiders captured in the Spiderwood (16a), magically transplants a pair of human eyes and ears onto the arachnids, and releases them into the scir to act as her spies. To view and hear what a particular spider

experiences, the hag casts one of its original eyes into the cauldron. Doing so consumes the eye, but causes the mists to clear and an image of what the spider sees appears in the magical liquid for ten minutes.

Despite the loss of his ears, Portman can still hear, albeit poorly, but if rescued or questioned he responds in a very loud voice. He has 4 levels of exhaustion and suffers from extreme paranoia. If made aware of the presence of fellow captives, he demands the adventurers slay them because they are not captives but hags in disguise. Of course, despite his paranoia, Portman is at least partially correct about this situation if Eudora was caught alone. If Hragatha alone is present when the adventurers arrive, she fights them to the death, fearless and proud.

If more than one sister is present when the adventurers arrive, they present a far more formidable threat with their shared coven spells. Rather than roll randomly to determine how many hags are in the tree, the gamemaster should choose a number based on the characters' relative power level and what option makes the most interesting story. If the adventurers find the location while they are still relatively inexperienced, having them rescue a captive or two is a good way to earn the ire of the coven for a later encounter. On the other hand, a moderately powerful group might take out one or two hags while leaving a third to reconstitute the coven before pursuing revenge.



ABOVE | The Green Hag, by Russell Marks



### HRAGATHA'S CAULDRON

Mona's and Eudora's cauldrons are left empty when the hags are absent, but Hragatha's always bubbles, giving off an eerie purple-gray mist. Characters who toss spider eyes into the pot and watch the vapors resolve may see one of the following images:

Roll 2d6	Vision
2	Through the narrow castle window, Captain Braze-white practices striking a sword out of the "hand" of a practice dummy.
3	Through the shuttered window of a cottage, a mother puts her infant child into a cradle.
4	On a lonely road, three figures lead a pack mule.
5	In the forest, an unsuspecting doe nibbles on a fern as the perspective approaches from above.
6	In a web between dark boughs, a pair of giant spiders sink their fangs into a wriggling cocoon.
7	A party of goblins bears a slaughtered boar through the forest toward a thorny labyrinth (the entrance to the Goblin Grotto).
8	A pair of lumberjacks saw a tree.
9	A human, halfling, and cheebat pole a barge down the Kouros River with a cargo of barrels and crates secured under canvas.
10	A griffon rises from her nest, revealing three eggs inside. She sees the viewer and flies toward it. The image vanishes in a bloody blur.
11	Viewed from above, a pair of elves holding longbows at the ready scout the forest. The image slowly withdraws, as if the viewer is hiding from them.
12	Three human men dressed as foresters sit beside a campfire and discuss plans to rob travelers while disguised as smugglers.

Characters who make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check may notice a key landmark in any of these visions for later investigation or griffon egg-stealing. The gamemaster may of course add different images to the cauldron. Logically, most of the scrying should reveal boring scenes of spiders hunting or nesting, but for dramatic purposes it's more fun if the characters always experience a vision that might lead to adventure or else create a sense of mystery.

Unfortunately, these cauldrons operate using dark magic. Any character that makes use of them, knowingly or not, risks corruption. Each time a character throws an eye or eyes into the cauldron, they must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a success they sense that they've narrowly avoided becoming a victim of the dark magic. On a failure, they gain one point of corruption.

## 14 THE CROSSROADS

*A symbol of local authority and a reminder to would-be criminals of the penalty for their crimes.*

### EXTERIOR

“

*To the side of the road stands a scaffold of graying wood. Four severed ropes dangle from the gibbet, the nooses apparently buried with their victims. Nearby stands a weed-choked graveyard of decaying wooden markers. Each is carved not with a name but a crime: "Murderer," "Dark Sorcerer," and "Traitor," among others.*

About midway along the road that runs between Thornwall and Dunbury Castle stands the infamous crossroads gallows, where those sentenced to die are hanged and left as an example. Upon completion of the hanging, the executing authority (the Mayor of Thornwall or Captain Brazewhite) assigns a pair of guards to stand watch over the gallows for three days and nights. Afterward, the guards cut down the corpse and bury it in the small but growing graveyard nearby.

"Deathwatch," as the duty is known, is considered unpleasant work, but a small minority of the soldiers relish it. The reason can be found by any character making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the area. Hidden in the hollow bole of a nearby tree is a stash of three bottles of dwarven Forgewater worth a total of 27 sp. Whenever the stock becomes precariously low, the soldiers of Dunbury Castle take up a collection for the "gallows fund" to restore it to an even half dozen.

## 15 DUNBURY HILL

*A nearby hill swirling with stories of ghosts, forbidden druidic rites, and even the remains of a firstborn giant.*

### EXTERIOR

“

*West of the Kouros River, one round hill rises higher than the rest. Woods cover the sides of the prominence, but its top remains clear except for a ring of lichen-covered stones.*

The most prominent landmark visible from the castle, Dunbury Hill is a site of folklore, rumor, and visits by forces both sinister and blessed. Popular legend claims that the nearly round hill is the top of a firstborn giant's head, although those who have actually seen giants point out even the largest one's skull would be no larger than one of the standing stones. Many believe the tales of buried chieftains



## WHO'S ON DUNBURY HILL?

Daylight visits to Dunbury Hill seldom meet with unusual encounters, although wildlife is common enough. Adventurers might encounter a family of rabbits with newborn bunnies in the spring. Perhaps a pair of griffons and their offspring land to rest before continuing their flight. On very rare occasions, one might meet youth from surrounding communities visiting on a dare, but they are invariably gone before dusk.

Should the adventurers visit Dunbury Hill at night, the gamemaster may decide to roll for or select one of the following suggestions or devise a new encounter to frighten or awe the characters.

### NIGHTS OF THE FULL MOON

1. A clutch of 2d4 **will-o'-wisps** lurk among the stones.
2. A lone youth (any lineage) lies unconscious on the hill, having fainted after hearing an owl hoot.
3. A lone **unicorn** basks in the moonlight; the creature may bestow its healing touch on good characters or attack evil ones.
4. A group of 3d4 sprites and fairies dance and leave offerings of gathered food.
5. The lady Dreswyn appears, gazing across the river at the castle as if watching for someone.
6. A disreputable local, high on spice, stumbles about the hill under the delusion that they are in the fey lands.

### NIGHTS OF THE NEW MOON

1. One or more of the **hags** (13) of Dunbury Scir arrive to perform a blood sacrifice.
2. A group of 4d4 **cultists** led by a cult fanatic perform an abominable ritual.
3. A group of endrori (**goblins** or **orcs**) leave offerings of their victims' heads to please Endroren.
4. Korella Stalk (see *Chapter 5: People of Dunbury*) performs an animal sacrifice to Endroren before sneaking back to the castle before dawn.
5. The Faceless Man (17) appears, apparently awaiting the arrival of a potential convert.
6. A low musical humming emanates from somewhere deep inside the hill.

and their treasures, but few dare to search for them, because everyone also believes the tales of visiting ghosts, hags, and the Faceless Man himself. Among those who brave the site after dark are druids and their followers, who sing and dance among the fireflies at midsummer.

Patrols from Dunbury Castle usually ride around the hill rather than climb to the top. When they do go to the top, it's only when ordered and generally only in broad daylight. Most of the soldiers have adopted the habit of saluting the hill both upon arrival and departure, a sign of respect they hope will prevent retribution from whatever dire entities may be in residence.

A few local braggarts claim to have visited the hill on nights of the full or new moon, their stories either fanciful or terrifying. Some claim to have fallen asleep and awoken in the fey lands, where they spent years of idle pleasure before waking in the same spot, with no time having passed. Others claim to have witnessed other marvelous and terrible sights, including a unicorn, a beauteous elven lady, and revenants of the ancient dead.

## 16 GRIMVOLD FOREST

*A dark and foreboding forest filled with truly ancient trees, strange creatures, and violently territorial wild fey.*

The Grimvold Forest consists of all the wooded land east of the Kouros River and north of the point where the Coldwater River feeds into the Kouros. During his lifetime, Duke Creesis forbade logging and settlement in the Grimvold for the purely practical reason that the forest held too many dangers. As a result, for decades only the wild fey dared travel the dark paths under the dense canopies in this region, where the oaks and maples gradually give way to enormous trees for which the other inhabitants of Agthor have no names.

Since Duke Creesis's death, Warden Oswald Balewick has, with the help of his political allies, gradually reduced such restrictions. In the past two years, several logging camps have appeared on the east side of the Kouros River, as have a few "forward camps" administered by the Warden's most loyal and corrupt henchmen among the foresters.

### WILD FEY

Feylariyan elves, sprites, fairies, and a host of other fey are known to make their homes high in the boughs of the Grimvold's trees. These wild fey are violently territorial. Unless accompanied by an elf or other fey companion, characters who enter the forest are likely to be attacked by one of the forest's fey inhabitants. That chance becomes a certainty if one trespasses, even by accident, beneath the treehouse homes of the wood's eponymous residents.



## 16A THE SPIDERWOOD

One portion of the forest remains too daunting for even the greediest loggers: the prosaically named Spiderwood.

### EXTERIOR

“After traveling through this region for a time, you notice something strange about the trees. The branches grow in thick groups. After a time, you begin to realize those clusters consist of eight branches all projecting from a swollen “abdomen” that protrudes from the trunk. This bizarre formation is repeated everywhere, regardless of the species of the tree. Willows are the most obvious, their long branches draping down like legs. Even the firs seem divided into eight segments, their needles coarse and dark as arachnid hairs. On deciduous trunks, knots appear in eights. A blanched wispy moss hangs like spiderwebs from the boughs.

You sense movement from the corner of your eye, but by the time you look directly at the source, it has vanished behind the swollen bole of an oak.

During the Age of Darkness, corrupted magic twisted the trees in this region into the unnatural shapes seen today. The entirety of the Spiderwood suffers from a Minor Corruption (1). The dark nature of the place now attracts spiders of all types. Blankets of thick webs add to the forest canopy here, leaving the entire forest in an uncanny green-tinged gloom.

Here and there, discarded web husks the size of mastiffs and even ponies hang suspended among the branches or fallen behind tree trunks or partially buried beneath autumn leaves and other detritus. Adventurers are likely to encounter **spider swarms**, **giant wolf spiders**, and **giant spiders**, all of which are unnaturally aggressive. Rumors persist, however, that even worse arachnids await those careless enough to become lost in this dire wildwood.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Architect of the Great Web** Something has risen from the thick, loamy floor of the Spiderwood. According to witnesses, the thing is a gruesome spider as large as a house, and it is hunting near the edges of the woods. Wild fey that venture too close are dragged into the gloom, never to be seen again. What the adventurers can’t know is that this vile creature is the very abomonae that created the Spiderwood, risen from a centuries long sleep beneath the twisted roots. It is still weak from its slumber, but given time, this terrifying minion of Endroren will regain its ancient power.

## 17 THE ACCURSED MILL

A dark and dangerous presence lurks in the old mill at the heart of this abandoned settlement.

### EXTERIOR

“Alone among the blackened ruins stands an aged smock windmill surrounded by a rickety stage. The wind has torn out its sails, leaving only skeletal frames and shreds of mildewed canvas behind. A few spots of curling paint remain near the joints and borders, the rest of its surface faded to a ghastly gray.

### Creatures 11 ghouls, 1 ghast

A once vibrant farming community lies abandoned, and at its center stands the decaying ruins of a large windmill. In the community’s heyday, the mill processed much of the region’s grain and a dozen farms surrounded the place. No longer. Abandoned after a horrific summer night six years ago, today most of this village has fallen to fire and decay.

The old mill, scarred by fire and partially collapsed, is the centerpiece of this ruined village. On stormy nights, the vanes creak and drafts moan when the wind cuts through the many holes in the wreck. The ghostly sound is just one of the reasons none of the area’s farmers dares pass by the abandoned place near sundown. Traveling peddlers also give the ruins a wide berth, and not even a tax collector has ridden out to see whether new homesteads have appeared nearby. All agree the land is cursed.

In this case, their suspicions are correct. The land is in fact cursed and suffers from Lesser Corruption (2). The windmill itself has become a mausoleum for 11 **ghouls**, and their **ghast** leader.

### VILE BEASTS

Cattle and goats still graze the fields around the mill, yet no one dares claim them. Their horns have grown long and gnarled, unlike those of any natural animal, and their patchy hides have taken on a grayish cast. Those born since the destruction of the farms have disturbingly human faces, and when they low or bleat, they seem to speak words in an inhuman language. Those who understand endrori hear familiar words and on a successful DC 18 Intelligence check may discern a few words and phrases among the gibberish. Successful listeners can just make out fragments like “gathering strength,” “all shall be transfigured,” and “once more mount the Obsidian Throne.”



The animals are docile and tolerate physical examination, and their attributes are the same as a normal animal of the same type. If milked, they produce an oily, gray discharge that no sensible creature would dare drink. Those who insist on a taste must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a success, drinkers suffer nausea and involuntarily expel the ghastly milk. On a failure, drinkers gain the poisoned condition for 2d4 hours.

The accursed beasts never wander farther than a few miles from their former home. They continue to reproduce, but something culls their numbers regularly, so there are never more than a few dozen. Any efforts to lead them away from the windmill cause them to lower their heads and balk. If dragged more than a mile from the mill, the animals make torturous screams for a few moments before falling over dead.

### A DARK HISTORY

The previous residents, their families, and all their hirelings were slain in a single night six years ago. Rumors of the cause range from endrori raiders to freak lightning strikes setting the buildings ablaze, sparing only the mill. The truth is far more sinister.

On a moonless night twenty years ago, Leticia Miller, a woman who had far too often suffered the blessings of Droth, met the Faceless Man. He offered her the power to take hold of her fate, and she accepted, becoming his willing disciple and gaining the powers of a dark cleric of Endroren. Aware that many would not appreciate her newfound patron, she cultivated allies with seductive questions beginning with the words, "What if...?"

"What if you need not work so hard to eke out a meager living?" she would say. "What if you did not grovel when a noble from Tristanford rode past? What if the crops were always plentiful, the beasts always fertile, the market always generous?"

In the years that followed, she won over most of her family and friends. Her nephew Corliss was a prominent holdout, panicking the night she first revealed her powers during an animal sacrifice to Endroren. What was intended to be the young man's indoctrination became a disaster, as he broke the ritual circle, unwittingly freeing a corrupted spirit Leticia had bound for the ceremony. It turned on the villagers with the vengeance of the damned, and so it was that the village's end was written.

Corliss fled, too horrified to go to the authorities. These days he lives in Dunbury Village, a drunkard who does odd jobs for a few coins and permission to sleep in someone's shed.

### INSIDE THE MILL

Those who investigate the ruined mill will discover the fate of Leticia and her followers. They may also discover Leticia's ceremonial book and knife (treat it as a **dagger of venom**) beneath an obvious compartment in the mill's floor. The book details a ritual for calling the Harbinger, one of Endroren's abomonae that resembles a huge, diseased amalgamation of beasts and humans. In the book's illuminations, the Harbinger's body is like that of a flayed moose, but the twisted torsos of six humans emerge like branches from its thick neck, their fleshless arms forming two separate antler-like structures. Between them is a long, vertical maw with teeth like dead branches.

In the cellar below the mill lie eleven **ghouls**, the remains of the cultists who died the night their ritual went awry. Among them is Leticia Miller, a **ghast**, who still commands the others as their high priestess. She bids them to fast lest they eradicate the remaining livestock, whom the ghouls suckle at night. During the day, the monsters twitch in restless sleep in their shelter from the sun. They delight in discovering the occasional tramp or other fool who camps too close to the mill. The sight of several such intruders would cause them to salivate in long pink ribbons, gibbering in anticipation of the carnage.

### THE FACELESS MAN

The ominous figure known as the Faceless Man is spoken of only in whispers. He appears as a cloaked and hooded traveler and is only ever encountered alone and at night. He takes his name from the fact that if one pulls back his hood, he has no face, simply a smooth surface of gray flesh, as if someone had wiped his features away with the palm of their hand.

It is believed he is a servant of Endroren, perhaps one of his fallen avatars, who appears and tempts the weak and vulnerable with promises of power. He shows them the paths to becoming a cleric of Endroren, and unlocks the connection between the Dark Lord and the chosen individual. Those who accept the gift gain the power to cast dark divine spells. They also begin the slow, destructive spiral down the path of the Fallen.



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Retrieve the Book** Gamemasters may reveal the story of this evil place through Corliss during one of his drunken rants. He reveals that Leticia Miller owned a book of magic that still lies somewhere in the ruins. Adventurers will know that such a book must be destroyed. To create a race-against-time adventure, allow Korella Stalk to learn of Corliss's tale at the same time and seek to retrieve the ritual book and knife herself. Should she successfully retrieve the book she will attempt to call the Harbinger atop Dunbury Hill on the next New Moon. The initial effort will fail, but she may gain several levels as a cleric of Endroren and find herself in command of a small army of ghouls.

## 18 DROGENKETT QUARRY

*After years of good luck, a team of dwarves grow complacent, digging their quarry ever deeper without a thought to what might lie below.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Population** 21

## EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER

“

*Beneath a cool gray cliff lies a deep pit. A spiral path leads down to the edge of a small pool whose dark waters suggest great depth. Creaks and chugs like someone working a large handpump come from a cube-shaped shack near the shore.*

*On the ridge surrounding the pit, several smaller buildings stand around a long barracks. Among these, some outhouses, an ox paddock, and what looks to be a mess hall are the easiest to identify. The others appear to be storage or work sheds. A path dividing the living and work quarters curves down the hillside and toward the main road.*

**NPCs** Vida Drogenkett (female dwarven fighter 4, age 56), Buckingham (**giant boar**)

This quarry is the origin point for much of the blue-gray granite used in Dunbury Castle and its village, as well as exports down the Kouros River to large projects in Tristanford. It is one of the only large single pit quarries in the region. The dwarven proprietors are also skilled hydraulic engineers, and their machinery keeps all but the lowest levels dry in the constant war against rain, seepage, and spring runoff.

## MACHINERY

The dwarves, led by Vida Drogenkett, rely on simple hand- or oxen-driven heavy machinery to do much of their work. This includes rock crushers to produce gravel as well as a noisy and frequently inoperative battery of stone-cutting rotary saws. All of the machinery is powered by a sullen troop of oxen and one fantastically strong and friendly **giant boar** known as Buckingham.

During the day, up to eight oxen drive turnstiles that power a stone crusher, water pumps, and an array of stone saws, although no one machine operates for more than an hour or two at a time. The camp has enough oxen to operate two machines at once, but the dwarves typically do not take advantage of this. When these machines are in action, the noise is terrific. The stone crusher can be heard up to a mile away, the screeching stone saws even farther.

## BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham, the giant boar, becomes anxious if he sees one of the turnstiles working and he is not part of the team driving it. For that reason, he is always included unless Vida has need of him elsewhere. Despite his gentle nature, Buckingham allows only Vida to ride him into battle, which she does if the quarry comes under attack. Anyone else attempting to climb aboard the boar, with or without his special saddle, must succeed at a DC 20 Dexterity check each round to remain mounted as Buckingham begins bucking wildly. After six rounds of bucking, a rider who remains seated can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to tame Buckingham enough that he permits the newcomer to ride him. This effect lasts only a day. Only Vida finds the boar's name hilarious, and she watches newcomers closely to see who gets the joke. She tends to like those who get the jest better than those who don't.

## WORKERS

The workers are predominantly dwarves, including Vida's siblings, nieces, and nephews. In addition to the 15 dwarves working at the site, there are three halflings, and two cheebats who assist with maneuvering into tight crevices to cut starting lines on large blocks.

## GOODS AND SERVICES

The Drogenketts and their staff are mostly good natured, although noticeably distrustful of humans thanks to some business dealings that went sour a few years back. They are unsurprisingly hostile toward bandits, bullies, and the like. Because they are accustomed to dealing only with their usual customers or their factors, they may require a



building of goodwill before agreeing to sell stone to new customers. In addition, the quarry is famous for producing geodes, and they're always will to sell these to travelers who come this far out of their way for the crystals. On any particular visit they have 4d4 good specimens available at any time, each at a price of 2d6 sp depending on quality. Vida makes a good deal for anyone who has brought beer or spirits to trade. Occasionally a geode emerges that is of high enough quality that it could be used to create an essence stone.

#### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Down the Drain** Vida and her workers have grown complacent. They've never hit a Deepland Hall in all the years of the quarry's operation, and they're convinced they never will. As such, they've dug far deeper than anyone normally would this high in the Donarzheis Mountains. One day, a huge block of stone tumbles down the side of the quarry, falls into the water, and strikes the bottom with tremendous force. The water in the pit begins to swirl, and two days later it is drained completely. An exploration of the pit at that time reveals that the dwarves' luck has run out. There is a tremendous crack where the stone struck, and peering into the darkness the laborers spot a worked tunnel. Without question, they've inadvertently opened a new entrance to the Deeplands.

### 19 BARLEYWINE RAMBLE

*A peaceful village where adventurers get a taste of the beauty and peace that attracted Creesis Vaun which is threatened today by the rising numbers of endrori.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Immaculate  
**Population** 47

#### EXTERIOR

“Three poplar-crowned hilltops are capped with clusters of halfling-sized houses and a huge central barn. A paved lane leads from a large round double door at the base of that central hill. Walking paths wind around the surrounding hills and down toward the river, where willows steep their tresses in the current. Nearby farmsteads stand amid grain fields, and a few paddocks and barns make homes for livestock.

**NPCs** Osgood Wilford Grindelwell of the Ramble (male halfling craftsperson, age 112), Stormshield (male drothmal barbarian 3, age 22)

The low flatlands in the south of Dunburyscir provide barley and wheat for a dizzying variety of beers. Virtually every household has its own brew, but even the best of these is produced in such small batches that their fame seldom travels beyond their homestead or village. There are exceptions, and a few villages in the area make a business of brewing. Among the most famous of these is the village of Barleywine Ramble.

The Ramble a modest hillside estate surrounded by barley, oat, and wheat fields, consists of a large family of halflings supported by several farmsteads of human families. A lone drothmal called Stormshield acts as night watcher and heavy lifter, not to mention a powerful defender of his “little friends,” as he refers to anyone under seven feet tall. The largest of the human lads finds this especially funny and treats the protective drothmal as an elder brother.

The Ramble is known throughout the scir for its beautiful walkways that curve over and past hills, around ponds, and beside streams leading to the Kouros River. The path connecting to the nearest road is well-maintained and paved in gravel. It leads to the large cellar under the brewery, where casks of every size are kept until ready for shipment. A nearby carriage house provides shelter and security for four large wagons, and the nearest farm includes a stable for two dozen strong and well-trained draft horses.

The young farm hands also maintain the “dreamwalk” path. They tend the numerous patches of flowers, care for the handful of birdbaths, and paint and repair the benches placed in locations with particularly fine views or a river breeze. It is a romantic place often visited by poets, painters, and young lovers who have heard tales of its beauty. It is only a matter of time before the residents build an inn to accommodate the many visitors who currently impose on the hospitality of the brewers.

The halflings, most of them members of the Grindelwell family, are led by the venerable patriarch Osgood Wilford Grindelwell of the Ramble, who adopted the “cask name” “Barleywine” decades ago. Indeed, their most famous product is a potent barley wine sold in fancy bottles. They also produce several varieties of wheat and barley ales, as well as an oatmeal stout, all of them popular throughout the scir. They sell the ale and stout by the cask, in sizes as small as a pin to as large as a hogshead—the latter for shipment to Tristanford taverns.

Captain Brazewhite has an unofficial agreement with the Grindelwell family where a castle patrol passes by the estate every few days to warn off raiders tempted to steal their beer. In return, the brewers offer a substantial discount to the castle quartermaster.



## GOODS AND SERVICES

The Barleywine brewery constantly produces their five core varieties of beer, but gamemasters—especially those fond of beer or perhaps who brew their own—should feel free to add rotating seasonal beers with names reflected in their local or homemade beers.

### BARLEYWINE BREWS

Label	Price per Pint <sup>1</sup>
Highsummer Wheat Ale	4 cp
Riverside Dark Ale	5 cp
Ramble Bitter	6 cp
Oatcake Stout	6 cp
Dreamwalker Barleywine	13 sp/bottle

1. Unless otherwise noted, pricing is for a draw off the keg and does not include the cost of bottles, barrels, or other containers.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Raising the Wall** After a series of shocking attacks by goblins, the Grindelwells agree to something previously unthinkable; building a wall around the village. To ensure the wall meets their needs both in terms of strength and aesthetics, they seek the services of a famed halfling engineer from Tristanford. Unfortunately, she will only come north if the Grindelwells send a compliment of skilled warriors to guard her on the journey. To this end, they turn to the adventurers to bring the engineer safely north.

## 20 COFFIN VILLAGE

*A seemingly abandoned village with rumors of hauntings that is in fact the cover for a burgeoning resistance movement against Warden Balewick's power grab.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Ruins (Average) **Population** 38

### EXTERIOR

*A weed-strewn lane leads through a small collection of thatched roof cottages. Shutters hang loose like drooping eyelids, while doors stand open or lie broken on the ground. The place looks abandoned, but the more unusual aspect of the village is the surprising number of weather-beaten coffins. A few lay on a wagon, but others stand up against walls or lie on their sides in neglected gardens.*

*One coffin rests prominently in the middle of the buildings. Upon it sits a gray human skull, a red candle melted on its crown. Painted on the coffin lid beside it are the words, "Damned be ye who move my bones."*

Everyone in the region has heard of the Coffin Village, and all know it as a haunted place. Rumor says that the villagers were stricken by a sudden plague. So many lost their lives in the first weeks alone, that every able-bodied person helped build coffins for the dead and dying. Yet something drove away the remaining villagers, causing them to abandon their homes.



ABOVE | Welcome to Coffin Village, by Russell Marks



Some say it was the spirits of those who had died yet had not been buried promptly. Others say it was an endrori warband who slaughtered the survivors and carried off their bodies for meat. Still others, usually after a fourth pint of ale or slug of spirits, whisper that the culprits were wild fey assassins sent to gain revenge for the depredations of The Wolf so long ago.

#### THE SECRET OF COFFIN VILLAGE

The truth about Coffin Village is an open secret among many collaborators in the region, a truth never shared with authority figures or strangers. Around the time many younger villagers left to seek their fortunes in Tristanford or at Dunbury Castle, several of the remaining residents did succumb to illness. The survivors, loyal to the old duke, joined forces with the region's smugglers and bandits in an effort to resist the efforts of Warden Balewick to take control. They left the coffins, skull, warning rhyme, and other trappings of a haunting to frighten off the curious. In truth, they have turned their cellars into a safe house for fugitives from the Warden and stolen goods. To the outside world, the town appears a ruin, but the parts actually in use are completely livable (Condition Average).

Four of the houses conceal trap doors leading to cellars. All are trapped with strings that ring a bell in each of the other cellars to warn of intruders (**Detect** DC 15, **Disable** DC 10). Timber-supported tunnels connect the cellars to each other, and four individual escape routes lead to concealed doors (**Detect** DC 17). One is hidden beneath a nearby tree stump, a second under "stone" made of plastered canvas, and the last two doors are simple trap doors covered in leaves and grass.

On any particular visit, there's a 25% chance the hide-outs contain goods stolen from river barges or merchant wagons, usually food, drink, wool, or other items useful to the poor. When the stolen property is present, so are 2d3 outlaws (chaotic good bandits) who act as guards. If there are no stolen goods to guard, there's only a 25% chance 1d4 bandits are present, meeting to exchange information or to lie low after a theft or prison break. If faced with strong intruders, the bandits scatter and flee.

If arrested and returned to Dunbury Castle, any of these steal-from-the-rich outlaws is likely to have escaped within three days. If treated well by their captors, the outlaws might return the favor, should the tables be turned later.

#### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Meet the Resistance** While searching for a missing child, the adventurers follow the trail to Coffin Village. After some investigation, they discover the secret network of tun-

nels (as well as the happy and healthy lost child being cared for by the villagers). Now they must decide whether to keep Coffin Village's secret or to turn the rebels over to the authorities at Dunbury Castle. Adventurers who prove they are worthy of trust will receive the friendship of the rebels and may even find themselves recruited into this burgeoning resistance movement.

## 21 HAUNTED VILLAGE

*A burned village that is home to a haunted doll that may plague curious adventurers who foolishly take it with them.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Ruins **Population** 0

### EXTERIOR

*"Blackened foundations and a few ashy timbers are all that remain of what was once a modest hamlet. A few bones jut out of the rain-blended ashes: the ribcage of a dog, the hip bone of a human or elf, and a few scattered finger or toe bones."*

The orcs who razed this community took everything of value and left no trace of the residents' identities, at least none that the next thunderstorm didn't eradicate. The evil committed here has left the ruins with Ambient Corruption (1). Those with essence sense may detect this as soon as they arrive, and the evil aura may have a negative impact on spells and magic items as described in the *World of Aetaltis: Gamemaster's Guide*.

Adventurers who search the place find only an oddly unburned rag doll sitting in the outline of what might once have been a bed. No tracks lead to or from the doll, yet it appears to have been left there only recently. It is a simple toy with button eyes, yarn hair, and a flowered dress. Stitched across its backside is the word Daisy.

#### DOSHANA AND DAISY

Anyone disturbing the doll between dusk and dawn invokes the **ghost** of Doshana, an eight-year-old human girl who perished during the raid. The ghost immediately attempts to possess a character within ten feet of the doll, preferably a female human. If successful, she scolds the others present for failing to protect the villagers. "You call yourselves heroes?!" the possessed person screams along with other childish admonitions before releasing the victim.

Anyone carrying the doll away from the village suffers the ghost's curse as described in the doll's description below.



**DAISY (CURSED)**

Sense DC 17 Analyze DC 15 Slot NA Attunement No  
Rarity Unique Price NA Weight 1 lb. Corruption 1

**DESCRIPTION**

Daisy is a cursed item bound to the **ghost** of an eight-year-old human girl named Doshana who burned alive hiding under her bed when orcs destroyed her home village. Anyone that carries Daisy beyond the boundaries of the ruined village where it is found becomes the focus of the item's curse.

The first night after removing the doll, when the character finds themselves alone and preparing for sleep, Doshana's ghost appears to the character. The ghost materializes and says, "Tell me a story." Only the cursed character can see or hear Doshana. Those with essence sense may sense her presence (DC 15) and those with essence sight may actually see the ghost's essence form, but only the cursed character can hear her.

If the character does anything other than tell her a story, she remains there, staring woefully at the character, and repeating the phrase, "Tell me a story," until sunrise. If the character fails to tell her a story, they are unable to gain the benefits of a long rest that night or at any time during daylight hours the following day.

If the character tells her a story, the type of story they tell determines the outcome. Those who tell a story in which someone is rescued or overcomes adversity by themselves may make a DC 10 Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, Doshana says, "That's just what I needed to hear. I can sleep now." She vanishes, never to be seen again and Daisy becomes a normal doll with no corruption.

On a failure, or if the character tells any other type of story, Doshana attacks once with her *withering touch* action, then with her Horrifying Visage. "I hope you have nightmares!" she screams before vanishing from both the Physical and Essential Planes. Indeed, the character suffers horrible nightmares and cannot gain the benefit of a long rest for 24 hours. Doshana returns the next night, once more asking for a story.

Passive or active examination of the doll using essence sense may detect that it is magical (DC 17) but even with the use of spells, the precise nature of the magic is impossible to discern. Successful checks to dispel the magic (DC 17) only block the haunting effects for 24 hours after which time they resume.

Destroying the ghost ends the curse and turns the doll back into a normal doll, but the characters will need to destroy the ghost quickly since it disappears after taking its first action as described above. Each night when the ghost reappears, it returns at full hit points. Also, destroying the soul of the child is an inherently evil act, and whoever strikes the killing blow must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw vs Corruption or suffer one point of corruption. If the ghost is destroyed, the doll loses its magical properties, but unlike resolving the curse, the doll remains a corrupted item.

Discarding or destroying the doll (even while dispelled) has no lasting effect. The doll reappears the next time the character begins a long rest, either nestled in a backpack or suddenly appearing as a pillow when the adventurer lies down. The only way to be rid of the doll without destroying it or appeasing the ghost is to return it to the place in the village where it was found.

**22 MONASTERY OF ADVERSITY**

*In a difficult to reach mountain location sits a small monastery dedicated to Droth, the Enaros of Adversity, where adventurers may find both training and shelter.*

Quality Modest Condition Average Population 20

**EXTERIOR**

“

*From a great distance, one might mistake this stone structure for part of the rocky cliffs of the Donarzheis Mountains. Indeed, the foundation is built upon solid bedrock, and the walls are of the same material as the surrounding stone. The construction seems intentionally designed for camouflage, until one sees the ornate carvings on the great entrance doors. Reinforced with iron bands, the carved wood displays an image of Droth in combat with Endroren. Behind these central images, hundreds of tiny figures represent a battle between the forces of the enari and the endrori.*

During the day, the main gates stand open. Acolytes and monks go out to gather wood and water. In spring and summer, they also tend crops in terraced gardens nearby. Weekly, a pair of hunters will also head out into the hills and return with a deer or other wild game. Occasionally, a group of six go out to hunt boar. Unless the monks are threatened, they respond politely to those who approach them. Those who express a wish to visit the monastery are cautioned that the abbot is not permitting new acolytes, but anyone traveling so far from the river is permitted to remain for one night, sharing the monks' food.

**INTERIOR**

“

*The interior of the monastery is arrayed in two concentric squares with a central courtyard. Wooden practice dummies mutely guard the training grounds. A kitchen and dining hall stand to the west, small sleeping cells to the east. To the north is a reception room flanked by the abbot's quarters on one side and a guarded armory on the other.*

NPCs Abbot Omnok (male drothmal monk 10, age 42)



The monks are led by Abbot Omnok, a clanless drothmal who now sees the brothers and sisters of the monastery as his clan. His history and relationship with his former clan are left to the gamemaster to develop or ignore. His role in the region is to provide a home and training for those who do not shy from adversity. The teaching he offers is a version of the Drothmalen Code. It is a course of learning not for the faint of heart, meant to strengthen the mind and body through repeated adversity.

The current residents of the monastery include six drothmal and another halfdozen humans, along with two dwarves, two cheebat, two halflings, one elf, and one sprite. Most are 1st level monks, but two of the drothmal are 5th level monks, and one of the humans is a 4th level monk; these three elder monks take charge of the training and distribution of chores. A few recent recruits still have the statistics of laborers, but Omnok will soon harden them.

The armory contains two dozen spears and bows, along with 200 arrows. It also includes up to six weapons of any type the gamemaster deems appropriate—the favored weapon of any adventurer monk must surely be among them. Only the elder students are permitted to open the armory. It is not locked, but a junior acolyte stands on guard at all times.

While the ethos of the Monastery of Adversity is lawful neutral, about half of the monks tend toward good. There may be one or two bad apples as roleplaying opportunities, and the gamemaster may reveal these upon repeat visits. Should the adventurers aid the monks, perhaps in a nearby random encounter or by visiting soon after defeating one of the endrori warbands in the area, they may earn the abbot's favor.

#### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Blessings of Droth** When one or more of the characters needs to atone for past deeds, perhaps due to acquired corruption or a dark transgression, they are sent to Omnok to guide them in their meditations. He leads the characters through a series of increasingly difficult trials meant to cleanse their spirit, strengthen their body, and clear their mind.

**Omnok's Last Stand** Omnok recognizes that the end of his life is near. He wishes to die gloriously in battle against the endrori, not lying in his bed. Having chosen his successor, perhaps one of the heroes if appropriate, he asks the adventurers to join him in a difficult assault on a known endrori stronghold so that he might engage the endrori leader in single battle.

## 23 LEEGEN'S HOLD

*A poor farming community on the edge of disaster but about to see their fortunes change for the better—if they can survive the challenges that come with their newfound wealth.*

**Quality** Poor **Condition** Average **Population** 30

### EXTERIOR



*A handful of rundown cottages and faded farm buildings cluster together like scared rabbits beside a rocky creek in the shadows of the Donarzheis Mountains. The relatively open land surrounding the buildings is covered by plowed fields and pastures, but none of these seem particularly productive.*

The tiny village of Leegen's Hold is just scraping by. The farmers produce barely enough to feed the people, the sheep keep falling victim to predators, and a number of the younger residents abandoned the village to go live in Thornwall. The remaining residents are poor, exhausted, and, thanks to their trials, generally ornery.

#### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Dwarf King's Gold** While washing their clothes in the nearby creek, the people of Leegen's Hold make a startling discovery. Gold! The villagers start panning the river and discover they can extract a decent amount of gold from the icy mountain waters. For the first time since the village's founding, it looks like Leegen's Hold has a chance to survive. When a group of local bandits hear about the village's newfound wealth, however, they decide to help themselves to a share of the profit. Even worse, the source of the gold is a vein that runs through a forgotten dwarven mine high in the mountains to the northwest, a mine that connects directly to an unwarded Deepland hall.

## 24 BOTTLEMAN'S FERRY

*An important river crossing the adventurers are likely to frequent during their travels, and an opportunity to befriend the ferry's owner.*

**Quality** Comfortable **Condition** Average **Population** 3-5

### EXTERIOR AND ENCOUNTER



*The road curves down to the river's edge where solidly built docks extend into the river from each bank. There is a boat moored at each dock and a third is in the pro-*



*cess of crossing the river. A small stone building, large enough for a few people to sit inside, stands beside each dock. Signs on their walls read Bottleman's Ferry and provide a list of prices. On a scenic bluff overlooking the river on the west bank is a large one-story house built from fieldstone. Flower beds and gardens surround it, and rocking chairs on the wide porch provide a perfect view of the ferry crossing below.*

NPCs Alvin Bottleman of Winterdown (male halfling craftsman, age 57)

About 25 years back, a young halfling bottlemaker named Alvin Bottleman came north from Tristanford to prove he didn't need his wealthy family to make his name in the world. Having learned the family craft of glassblowing, he planned to travel to Dunbury Village, set up a bottlemaking shop, and establish himself as the premier bottlemaker of the far north. He imagined himself selling bottles to every brewer and vintner in the northlands and building a bottlemaking empire of his very own.

Sadly, that is not what fate had in store for him. It turned out the northlands weren't nearly as civilized as he'd been led to believe, and no one really needed many bottles. At best, he could sell enough to keep his belly full, but his dreams of a bottlemaking empire were shattered.

Fed up and miserable, he sold all his equipment to a glassmaker in Thornwall and used the money to buy a small boat. He might have to return to Tristanford a failure, but he didn't have to walk the whole way. On his way south, he stopped for lunch at an old dock he found extending from the eastern bank into the Kouros. While he was docked there, a man with a wagonload of flour approached and asked if he was the new ferryman. Alvin said no. As it turned out, the old ferryman had died in an accident a week earlier. The man with the wagon offered Alvin a silver if he'd take his load of flour to meet another wagon on the far side of the river.

Alvin accepted, and in that moment Bottleman's Ferry was born. Seeing his opportunity not to return home worse off than he'd left, Alvin set up shop in the old ferryman's hut and went into business. He only planned to stay until he'd recovered his losses, but he managed that within a year, and 25 years on he's a wealthy man.

Alvin lives happily alone in a fine stone cottage on a hill overlooking the river. He runs three ferryboats and his service is the primary means of crossing for anyone

traveling to or from the farmlands on the east side of the Kouros. His prices are fair, just 2 cp per foot or hoof, and 5 cp per wagon wheel, and his boats are always safe. Each one has an assigned guard in addition to a skilled pilot. All the ferries run during the day, but only a single ferry runs after sunset.

#### ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Kidnapped!** A band of river rats hear a rumor that Alvin has thousands in silver and gold hidden somewhere in the hills overlooking the river. Late one night, they sneak up to his home and kidnap him, hauling him back to their lair. There they interrogate him, demanding he reveal the location of his treasure if he wants to live. The next morning, when Alvin's staff arrive for work, they discover his ransacked home. They send word to Dunbury Castle for help, but it could be a day or more before anyone responds. If Alvin is going to survive, he needs help now!

## 25 THORNWALL

*A good-sized town in the mountains northwest of Dunbury castle, where the late Duke Creesis Vaun's summer hunting lodge is located.*

**Quality** Modest **Condition** Average **Population** 3500

Thornwall is an unusually large town for its remote location, thanks to serving for years as the place where Duke Creesis Vaun spent his summer. It features a fine tavern, a large temple, and numerous merchants. Its role in the setting is to serve as an initial base of operations for adventurers just starting their campaign. We touch on a few minor features here, but a detailed description of Thornwall and its surroundings are found in *The Heroes of Thornwall*, a companion book to this one.

## 25A DRELL'S COTTAGE

The isolated home of Drell (male human hunter, age 37) a hunter well-known to the residents of Thornwall and those living in the surrounding countryside. His personality is rough, but he's extremely skillful at his trade. He also knows the wild hills and forests around Thornwall better than almost anyone else.





### 25B TEMPLE OF MODREN

This once forgotten Deepland complex was an important temple to Modren, Enaros of the Forge, before the fall of the Deeplands to Endroren's Dark Hordes. It is completely unknown to the people of the region, but it is rediscovered when an orc spellcaster named An'Gras uses dark magic to violently break the seal that protects it.

### 25C THIMBLE PEAK

In life, Duke Cressis Vaun forbade hunting, trapping, or logging in any of the forests west and north of Thornwall on a north-south line running through this peak. He never explained his reasons, but the secret purpose was to protect the hidden fey court located in the high mountain valley to the west.

### 25D THE HIDDEN ELLORIYAN COURT

In a heavily wooded, high mountain valley is a secret Ellor-riyan court ruled by an elven woman named Elloridan Dreswyn. Unknown to either the people of Vaun or Dreswyn's court, for years Elloridan Dreswyn and Duke Cressis Vaun carried on a secret love affair, arranging illicit rendezvous in the forests outside of Thornwall under the guise of the duke's annual hunting trips. The duke carried the secret of Dreswyn and her court with him to the grave, and to this day Dreswyn and her subjects are unknown to the people of the scir.





## CHAPTER FIVE

# PEOPLE OF DUNBURY

**E**VERY TIME GRIFFON FELL BEHIND, ELLMA tugged at his arm. Griffon could move as quickly as she, but he couldn't shake the feeling there was something more dangerous than foresters nearby. Something stalking.

Far above them, a bird cried. It might have been the hunting keen of a hawk, but for the note of almost human panic in the sound.

All the hairs on Griffon's arms and the nape of his neck stood up, straight and sharp as sewing pins.

Ellma came back and took his arm again, but this time he was the one to pull her. Without a word, he put his hand on her shoulder and knelt on the ground. She knelt beside him. Her little round teeth looked like pearls in the moonlight as she grimaced a wordless question.

Griffon searched the sky until he spotted it. An enormous bird flew high above them. Not a bird, he realized. It was far larger than the greatest eagle he had ever seen. Rather than the distinctive feathered tail of a bird of prey, feline haunches and a twitching tail trailed the wings.



"Good omen," whispered Ellma. Her grimace became a winsome smile as she pointed at Griffon's chest as if to say, "It's you."

He shook his head and pointed again.

Two other flyers swooped toward the griffon. These were no birds. A glance was all it took to identify their draconic traits. Judging by their size, Griffon could tell they were children, not even proper dragons. Wyrmlings.

The griffon veered away to avoid a collision with its attacker, but the dive was a ploy to force retreat. From the other side, the second wyrmling swept in. From its open mouth poured a miasma darker than the clouds.

The griffon banked, avoiding all but the edge of the vapor. Drawing its wings close to its body, it rolled to one side. Opening its wings with a snap audible even to those on the ground, it changed course, surprising the poison-spewing dragon.

Leonine claws raked the little dragon's flank, sending a visible trail of blood across the clouds. The wyrmling's agonized bugling sounded even more pitiable than the griffon's cry for help.

The griffon banked again, diving with terrific speed. Within seconds it had put its two would-be killers far behind.

Ellma squeezed Griffon's arm. "See? Very good omen."

Griffon tried smiling back at her, but something still troubled him. He couldn't shake the feeling of a greater danger, something much worse than a pair of wyrmlings.

The griffon's shriek sent a thrill of terror through his veins. It continued for a second or two before Griffon could find its position. There, almost white in the moonlight, a far larger dragon clutched the griffon in its massive rear talons and tore away its wings with its foreclaws. Feathers and blood rained down as the wyrmlings trumpeted the arrival of their parent. Before they could reach their prey, the older dragon bit through the griffon's neck, ending its cries, its struggle, and its life.

Griffon crouched paralyzed with terror. Gradually the numbness gave way to the realization that Ellma's grip had cut off the circulation in his arm. He stroked her hand. When that failed to loosen her grip, he gently pulled at her fingers until she snapped out of her own rictus of fear and horror.

They remained low to the ground, holding each other and gradually remembering how to breathe. As the feeling returned to Griffon's bloodless hand, he patted Ellma on the shoulder to signal it was time to go.

He didn't need to voice his thought.

That was not a good omen.

## A REASON TO FIGHT

Most players come to the game table to tell a story about heroes. Overcoming adversity to defeat the forces of evil makes for exciting encounters, but if there is nothing at stake, it's just bloodsport. To tell a story of heroism, the hero needs something more.

This "something more" often takes the form of the NPCs with which the characters interact. The richer and more fully realized your NPCs, the more meaningful they become to the characters. It's hard to get too worked up if Town Guard #32 dies at the hands of goblins. It's another thing entirely when Reinald, the guard the characters shared a drink with at the tavern two nights earlier, dies trying to save his beloved dog from a pair of slaving goblins.

For most of the NPCs in this book, we provide a little information in the area descriptions, but not much more. It'll be up to the gamemaster, and in large part the players, to decide which of the supporting cast should get a more detailed story in characters' encounters.

There are, however, a number of NPCs that loom large throughout the book. In this chapter, we provide additional background, details, and personality traits for these more important NPCs from Dunbury Castle and the surrounding countryside. We also provide Fifth Edition compatible stat blocks to help the gamemaster to make use of them within the context of the rules.

## COMMON FOLK

The NPCs are presented here in the way one might expect to encounter them on a typical night at the tavern or outfitted as they might be while engaged in their primary occupation. They aren't carrying every piece of equipment they own, and they definitely aren't carrying more than a bit of spending money. Some own martial weapons and armor, but unless soldiering is their primary occupation, it is a rare occasion that calls for their hauling gear out of storage.

None of these characters are adventurers. Even the characters who are members of the military are just normal folks. Many are extremely capable and most are quite brave, but only a few are equipped psychologically to face the things an adventurer faces. They will fight for their home, but they won't go looking to battle the forces of darkness.



## WARDEN OSWALD BALEWICK

*Of course, I don't want you to do anything illegal. I simply want you to apply a modicum of pressure to ensure that he properly understands our expectations.*

Oswald Balewick, a 58-year-old human of noble birth, is the Warden of Vaun. Wardens are charged with managing the duchy's forests and woodlands. They ensure proper use of the land and see that the duke's laws are enforced. Their will is carried out by the foresters. Normally, a warden visits each forester once or twice per year. Since the death of the duke, however, Warden Balewick has been in New Erinor, vying for the ducal seat. While not usually present at Dunbury Castle, Warden Oswald Balewick has a powerful and oppressive effect on the fortress and its inhabitants.

Since the death of Duke Creesis, Balewick has devoted his unlikely charm, low cunning, and criminal leverage to gain support among the nobles of New Erinor. His goal is not only to be named the next Duke of Vaun, but to use the dukedom as his springboard to even greater power, eventually transforming Agthor into a more traditional kingdom with himself as the absolute monarch.

Of course, this goal must remain secret until he has seduced, blackmailed, and otherwise extracted the support of the fractious nobles of New Erinor. In the meantime, Balewick neglects his duties as Warden and employs his most loyal and unscrupulous foresters in tasks ranging from masquerading as bandits to murdering those rumored to be heirs to the late duke.

Balewick exaggerates the threat posed by the Free Kingdoms and the Kingdoms of the Eastern Marches, and he plays upon the xenophobic fears of Agthor's least admirable human population. Barely tolerant of dwarves, Balewick blames the fey and other non-human races for everything from poor crops to robberies, murders, and raids on farmsteads. The actual perpetrators are his most corrupt foresters.

Father to three sons and two daughters, each more corrupt and incompetent to the last, Balewick has maneuvered his offspring into military, church, and government positions from which they can aid his ambitions. He will not hesitate to sacrifice any one of them should their own corruption come to light.

Balewick stands six-feet, two-inches tall. He conceals his balding pate under an embroidered skull cap, allowing the curly sides and back of his hair to suggest he still boasts a full head of golden hair. He keeps his face clean-shaven since his beard turned gray. He has put on weight since the duke's death, since fear that someone will reveal his machinations causes him to overeat. He adjusts his speech to suit

his audience and has a knack for "speaking the language" of whomever he addresses. He truly believes he can make Agthor a great kingdom from which he can launch a unifying invasion of the Free Kingdoms, overcome the Eastern Marches, and unite the entire region into a single dynasty.

Balewick never engages in combat or physical labor. He has servants for that.

## WARDEN OSWALD BALEWICK

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 9 (2d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L),  
Common (Warrener) (L)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, the Warden will have a single crime overlooked, no matter how heinous, as long as the crime benefited the Warden.

### ACTIONS

**Rapier Melee Weapon Attack:**

+3 to hit, reach 5 ft.,  
one target. **Hit:** 5  
(1d8 + 1) piercing  
damage.





# CAPTAIN ELARIS BRAZEWHITE

*I don't care if you have to arm the stableboys.  
Find a squad and get over to that village.  
Those people need help now.*

Elaris Brazewhite, a 42-year-old human military veteran, has commanded Dunbury Castle for the past nine years. At first, her diligence and head for military tactics made a noticeable improvement on the lives of the surrounding farmsteads and villages. Since the duke's death, however, dwindling support from Tristanford and increasing bandit and endrori raids have made her efforts a losing battle. It pains her each time she must refuse a call for assistance from Thornwall or another town. She simply doesn't have enough soldiers to patrol the entire region as she would like.

Money is not the only problem. Since Warden Oswald Balewick has risen to power, Brazewhite finds many of her reasonable requests refused by an increasingly incompetent and corrupt bureaucracy. In truth, Balewick and his allies intentionally confound her efforts so that the people of Vaun will find themselves increasingly desperate for a unifying savior—himself, of course.

Brazewhite stands five-feet ten-inches tall. She is lean with muscle and wears her dark hair in a rakish bob. She does nothing to hide her many visible scars and boasts that none of them are on her back. She never wears jewelry or other ornament, and when she is not in formal uniform, she dresses as plainly as any private in the castle. On rare occasion, she drinks with the soldiers. If persuaded to have more than one pint, she becomes bawdy and prone to telling old stories about the border wars.

Captain Brazewhite wields an ancient dwarven blade called the *Light of Vengeance* that she claimed from a fallen bandit leader. Where the bandit acquired such a weapon is a mystery.

Brazewhite also carries a white-gold-colored hair whisk, which she normally uses as a fly-whisk. She calls it *Glory* and says the whisk is made of the tail of a beautiful palomino horse and that the handle is bone covered in leather. She has looked beneath the leather grip, however, and knows it is formed of a unicorn's horn. She suspects the same creature's tail forms the whisk itself but does not advertise that suspicion for fear that someone will try to steal it.

Brazewhite never uses the whisk for discipline, but seeing it reminds the veterans of her forces of an occasion on which she disarmed an orc war chief with it before forcing him to sound a retreat at sword's point. She seldom attempts such an action for fear of failing before witnesses, but what she has never realized is that the magic weapon significantly increases her chances of success when used to disarm. If asked about the weapon, she explains that it was a gift from an old friend. Ordinarily she says no more, but should a character eventually become close friends with the captain, she explains that her "old friend" was an elf with whom she shared adventures in the Spiderwood when they were both young.

## CAPTAIN ELARIS BRAZEWHITE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common (L), Agthorian (L), Feyen

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, Brazewhite may authorize a one-time 400 sp equipment requisition.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** Brazewhite makes two longsword attacks. If she has her fly whisk *Brazewhite's Glory* drawn, she may also make an attack with the whisk.

**Light of Vengeance** *Melee Weapon*  
Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: 7 (1d8+5) radiant damage.

**Brazewhite's Glory** *Melee Weapon*  
Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
Hit: Special (See item below).





**LIGHT OF VENGEANCE**

**Sense** DC 11 **Analyze** DC 16 **Slot** Hand **Attunement** Yes  
**Rarity** Rare **Price** 12,000 sp **Weight** 1 lb.

**DESCRIPTION**

This item appears to be an ornate (aristocratic quality) longsword hilt of dwarven make that is missing its blade. While grasping the hilt, Brazewhite can use a bonus action to cause a blade of pure radiance to spring into existence, or make the blade disappear. While the blade exists, this magic longsword has the finesse property.

Brazewhite gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, which deals radiant damage instead of slashing damage. When she hits an undead or endrori with it, that target takes an extra 1d8 radiant damage.

The sword's luminous blade emits bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. The light is sunlight, and it affects endrori accordingly. While the blade persists, she may use an action to expand or reduce its radius of bright and dim light by 5 feet each, to a maximum of 30 feet each or a minimum of 10 feet each.

**BRAZEWHITE'S GLORY**

**Sense** DC 17 **Analyze** DC 13 **Slot** Hand **Attunement** Yes  
**Rarity** Uncommon **Price** 5000 sp **Weight** 1 lb.

**DESCRIPTION**

This item appears as a finely made (wealthy quality) fly whisk. The hair appears at first glance to be white-gold horsehair, but in fact it is unicorn tail. The handle of the whisk is a unicorn horn wrapped in a strip of white dragon hide.

When used in combat, it is treated as a martial weapon. On a successful hit, it does not cause damage but rather the hairs twist uncannily around the enemy's weapon, and the enemy must make a DC 15 Wisdom save against the magic of the whisk. On a success, the hairs slide free, there is no effect, and the whisk may not be used against that enemy again for 24 hours.

On a failed save, the weapon is pulled from the enemy's hand and sent flying 5 feet to the left or right.

**LIEUTENANT JANNY VANCE**

*For the glory of Agthor!*

The third child of a noble human family whose influence in Tristanford has waned since the duke's death, 36-year-old Janny Vance requested a post at Dunbury after a chance encounter allowed her to witness Captain Brazewhite's victory over a notorious bandit chief. Ever since, Janny has been hopelessly devoted to Elaris, and there is widespread speculation that their relationship is more than professional. The truth of that relationship is left to the gamemaster, who may wish to complicate matters if a player character becomes enamored of either the captain or the lieutenant.

Note that no one other than Captain Brazewhite and, much less often, Sergeant Hodge, call Vance by her given name. If asked, she says her first name is "Lieutenant."

Lieutenant Vance stands six-feet, two-inches tall and has exceptionally broad shoulders and prominent biceps. She is seldom seen outside of her ancestral armor and military tunic, but on occasion she dons a blue or green gown and dazzles the troops at a ball or festival. The bravest among them joke that Vance must have a twin sister she keeps in her closet with the dresses. She keeps one side of her head shaved short and sculpted with shapes suggesting flames, but the rest of her hair is so long that she can hide the flourish when she chooses (as when she dons her gowns). She visits the barbers (C8a) for "the treatment" twice a month, and she will be devastated should she ever learn that Moraine is a spy, for she has confided many of her personal feelings in her barber.

Lieutenant Vance commands great respect among the soldiers, who obey her orders without question. She often leads sorties personally, directing combat from the vantage of her warhorse, Zebulon, who tends to nip at anyone other than soldiers in uniform. While Vance tends to direct the fight from horseback, firing her heavy crossbow at attackers who threaten to surround her troops, she does not hesitate to dismount and cut a swathe through the foe with her vicious greatsword, which she has named Evelyn after an unrequited love.



## LIEUTENANT VANCE

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common (L), Agthorian (L)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, Lieutenant Vance will arrange for the characters to receive their choice of assignment, patrol, or mission one time when duties are handed out.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** Vance makes two melee attacks.

**Greatsword** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest)** For 1 minute, Vance can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that she can see within 30 feet of her makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Vance. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Vance is incapacitated.

### REACTIONS

**Parry** Vance adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.



## MOTHER BELENNE

*No need to fuss so. Lie still, let me do my work,  
and you'll be fine. How about a story to take  
your mind off things?*

Presiding over the castle's chapel is a 43-year-old former military veteran who turned to religious studies after a battle injury cost the human woman the use of her legs. Mother Belenne conducts religious ceremonies every morning and evening, with grander rituals on holy days. Assisted by her young acolytes, the teen orphan Jerome Wulf and

12-year-old Otred Stokes, she also cures wounds and otherwise fortifies the residents of Dunbury Castle with divine magic.

Before invoking the power of the Enaros, however, Belenne usually administers natural healing with her medicine skill. To that end, she tends an herb garden that provides both cures and flavorful additions to the culinary dishes of her good friend Tranahk, whom she visits each day for tea and gossip.



Belenne's wheelchair allows her to visit any ground-floor area in the castle, and on occasion she asks a couple of soldiers to conduct her to the village on a wagon, where she suns herself and fishes on the village docks. She is a poor fisher but a champion storyteller, always returning with a slightly different tale of the one that got away.

While not officially an officer, Belenne is treated with great respect by all non-dwarf castle residents. She, along with Master Foley, is always invited to advise Captain Brazewhite on castle affairs. She often playfully corrects Foley, whom she alone addresses as "my dear Archibald," on minor points of history and geography. A few years earlier, at the suggestion of Captain

Brazewhite, she ceased her teasing. After Foley fell into an obvious sulk, however, she resumed her jibes and his mood rose considerably.

While she is not pitiless, Belenne reserves her divine magic for residents of the castle and village. Visitors who wish to benefit from her spellcasting are expected to donate to the "window fund," which she hopes will one day allow her to replace the very expensive broken stained-glass image of Modren. In practice, those funds almost always go instead to the castle's general coffers, since the stronghold suffers more budget tightening with every passing season.

While Belenne is an effective combatant with her spells, when facing non-monstrous opponents, she always employs her wand of paralysis.



## MOTHER BELENNE

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful good*

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 25 ft. (wheelchair)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L), Enooric (L)

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Special Equipment** Steel holy symbol of Lensae, wand of paralysis

**Divine Eminence** As a bonus action, Mother Belenne can expend a spell slot to cause her melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting** Mother Belenne is a 5th-level spellcaster.

Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

**Goodwill** As a boon, Mother Belenne is willing to administer healing of standard injuries to the entire party at no cost or give them shelter in the temple living chambers for one night.

### ACTIONS

**Mace** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.



## CHIEF SMITH RUDMILLA “THREE-HANDS” STURRENKETT

*Can you hear it? The steel sings when you strike it right.  
Yes, this will be a fine blade indeed.*

While officially a sergeant, 62-year-old Rudmilla disdains military ranks and insists on being addressed as “Chief.” The dwarven woman maintains a gruff demeanor with soldiers and others who come to her for work, but she has a soft spot for charismatic younger men who stand much taller than her own height of four-foot three-inches. The current object of her affections is her apprentice, Seamus Coalman, who sees her as more of a motherly figure, much to her annoyance.

Rudmilla appreciates sensible haggling (accepting counter offers of no more than 20% lower than her asking price), but she grows angry if potential buyers of her arms and armor suggest there is something wrong with her wares. If Seamus is nearby, he offers offenders non-verbal warnings (typically the finger-swipe across the throat) that they’re annoying the Chief, but he obeys any instructions to “get them out of my forge!”

The smith wears her thick red hair short and often indulges in flame, lightning, or abstract iconography if she’s in the mood to tolerate the elf and her fairies’ eccentric stylings now and then. She is somewhat vain about her appearance, pausing frequently throughout the day to wash smut from the forge off her freckled face.

Rudmilla’s “Three-Hands” nickname came from praise she received from her own master smith, who felt she accomplished so much at the anvil because she must have had an invisible third hand to hold tools. The swiftness with which she smacks those she suspects of insulting her or her work is another reason the name persists. Her hands are already back to work so swiftly that victims wonder where that “third hand” came from!

As the last smith of the Sturrenkett line, Rudmilla considers it her right and duty to reclaim any lost smithing knowledge the adventurers can recover. While she has precious little of her own wealth, having saved a meager 300 sp over the years, she is willing to sweeten any deal by offering to craft weapons and armor.

### RUDMILLA STURRENKETT

*Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L),

Dwarven (Maladoran)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, Rudmilla will take 20% off the price of a single special-order item that she can make herself.

#### ACTIONS

**Light Hammer Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.





## SEAMUS COALMAN

*I'm happy to help, I mean, assuming it's  
all right with the Chief.*

With a baby face that makes him appear five or six years younger, Seamus Coalman has been an apprentice smith since the age of 10. Unfortunately, his first master was an inept drunkard who exploited his labor without teaching him the finer points of the craft. When the old sot finally succumbed to the drink, Seamus sought work as a journeyman, but no one would accept him. At last, Rudmilla "Three-Hands" took a fancy to him and accepted him as an apprentice four years ago. In that time, he has had to relearn much of what he'd previously been taught incorrectly. He has also come to recognize that Rudmilla's interest in him is not purely professional, but so far he has maintained a friendly relationship while reciprocating her feelings only as a grateful apprentice.

Seamus dedicates himself to learning his craft, but a flirtatious character might catch his eye, possibly creating tension between the player character and Rudmilla. Anyone to whom Seamus shows more than casual friendship may find Rudmilla's prices at the smithy rise 20–50% overnight.

### SEAMUS COALMAN

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Persuasion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Agthorian

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, Seamus will make a single mundane metal worked item for the character at no cost.

#### ACTIONS

**Light Hammer** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

## SERGEANT DANTON HODGE

*That's your best shot? We might as well  
throw you at the enemy.*

Sergeant Hodge is principally responsible for supplying the castle soldiers with quarters, rations, clothing, and other essential supplies. The 44-year-old human veteran is best known, however, for his insistence on daily archery practice and his eternal disapproval of any who shirk the duty or who fail to demonstrate consistent facility with this essential skill of defense.

Outside of archery drills, Hodge is a personable fellow, happy to swap stories and a pint, especially with foresters and others who roam the northern woods. While he shares the captain's misgivings about the Warden's recent approval of incursions into wild fey territory, Hodge is also endlessly fascinated by all things fey. Those who give him a gift of any fey-made clothing, ornament, or weaponry are sure to have a friend for years to come, as long as they don't shirk their archery practice.

Sergeant Hodge lives in a cottage in the inner bailey with his wife, Ellen, and their grandson, Barkley. Their son, Quinn, perished with his own wife during an orc raid on their farm east of the river. Only Barkley survived the attack.

### SERGEANT DANTON HODGE

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful good*

**Armor Class** 17 (splint)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +3, Persuasion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L), Feyen

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

**Goodwill** As a boon, Hodge will overlook the one-time loss or destruction of a requisition of gear valued at 100 sp or less.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiaction** Hodge makes two ranged attacks.

**Longbow** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



## MASTER ARCHIBALD FOLEY

*Rot and bother! Where did I put that cog?  
I swear it was right here.*

Notable for wearing three or four unmatched and bird dropping-stained robes at once, as well as for his voluminous white muttonchop whiskers, the master of doves also serves as the castle librarian, map-keeper, and counselor to the captain. The 54-year-old human mage's reputation for comical flatulence is largely unearned except for one regrettable yet indelible incident in which he bowed too low to a visiting noblewoman and released a resounding fart. For long seconds, it seemed as though everyone in attendance would ignore the sound, but then the pigeon resting on Master Foley's shoulder keeled over, dead—probably from causes unrelated to the gas, but a legend was born. Only the foolish or very drunk refer to him openly by the nickname the event earned him: "Master Farty."

The quickest way to earn his ire, is to disparage his doves, and the best way to befriend him is with gifts of or conversations involving gearworking. His secret passion is casting destructive spells on those foolish enough to attack Castle Dunbury, a pleasure he has not enjoyed in years. Despite his considerable powers as a mage, Master Foley seldom casts spells if other means will serve. Once the violence begins, however, Master Foley becomes all but incapable of speech for the spasms of giggles that overtake him as he unleashes fire and lightning.

Foley loves his doves collectively, not individually. He refuses to name them, assigning them numbers instead. Each is trained to fly between Castle Dunbury and one of several other locations, notably Tristanford and New Erinor. Other birds have been trained to return to the castle's dovecote from any location, and these are the ones certain patrols take with them while on long or important scouting missions. When a bird becomes too old to be trusted with a communication route, Foley clips its wings and pampers it, carrying up to two on his shoulders throughout the day and feeding them seed and corn by hand. As a result, Foley's robes are typically streaked with bird droppings by mid-day, and his apprentice is beyond weary of the daily wash.

Foley's other great love, beside his birds, is mechanical devices ranging from toys to siege engines. His constant efforts to redesign the malfunctioning ballistae and mangonels has met with limited success. In his free time, he loves to disassemble and reassemble an old dwarven mechanical clock he acquired.

The master never uses vulgar language except the curse, "Rot!" or "rotting," which he often combines in peculiar descriptive phrases to criticize malfunctioning equipment—"It's nothing but a heap of rot and wobble!"—or himself—"I've become a shambling mass of rot and waddle."



### ARCHIBALD FOLEY

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful good*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Essence Points** 57 (7/hour)

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L), Feyen (L), Endrori (L)

**Challenge** 6 (2300 XP)

**Spellcasting** Foley is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spellcasting checks +7, spell save DC 15). He has learned the following wizard spells.

**Cantrips** (0 EP): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*

**1st level** (2 EP): *burning hands, detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

**2nd level** (4 EP): *flaming sphere, gust of wind, scorching ray, web*

**3rd level** (5 EP): *fireball, lightning bolt, sleet storm*

**4th level** (6 EP): *ice storm, wall of fire*

**5th level** (7 EP): *cloudkill, cone of cold*

**Goodwill** As a boon, Foley may be willing to teach a character one of his spells.

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



## APPRENTICE KORELLA STALK

*I dutifully serve my master.  
What more do you need to know?*

The sixth child of a family of itinerant farmers, the 29-year-old human Korella Stalk takes after her mean-spirited parents who found themselves dismissed from work after nearly every season. Deviously clever and decidedly ambitious, she left her family after stealing what she presumed was a valuable book from their last employer. Upon her arrival in Tristanford, she was fortunate enough to encounter a kindly wizard who agreed to train her as an apprentice.

Soon it became clear that Korella, despite a natural intelligence, was basically unteachable. Contrary by nature, she questioned her teacher and alienated the other apprentices so often that the wizard eventually sent her to help her old friend Archibald Foley. In truth, the wizard's intention was primarily to enact petty revenge on her old colleague, with whom she had an acrimonious romantic split in their youth.

When Korella discovered her main duties as Master Foley's apprentice were to tidy his chambers, wash his frequently filthy clothes, and tend to his doves, Korella became even more irascible. She grew bored reading books, constantly interrupted the mage when he instructed her verbally, and loudly complained whenever he gave her chores she considered beneath her—which became more frequent as she and Foley grew to detest each other.

On a night of the Faceless Moon in the autumn of last year, Korella reached her breaking point. She left the castle, intending to join the crew of a river boat to Tristanford. Unfortunately, all the sailors had taken shelter from an approaching storm. Now angry, wet, and without transportation, Korella stamped through Dunbury Village as the first peals of thunder shook the valley.

In a lightning strike, she saw a dark figure standing atop Dunbury Hill. It beckoned to her.

Stealing a fishing skiff, Korella rowed across the Kouros, heedless of the storm-tossed waters. Something about the invitation she saw tempted her in a way no other offer of reward ever had. As the driving rain chilled her bones, she considered whether it was even possible to have seen a human-sized figure from such a great distance.

But something drove her forward. Her ambition, her anger, her refusal to bow to the dominance of elders, kept her going. She slogged through the rain and mud to climb the top of Dunbury Hill.

And there she met the Faceless Man.

He promised her power without demanding menial labor in return. All she had to do was pledge herself to Endroren and make regular sacrifices to him on Dunbury Hill, and the magic would be hers. He would place no other demands on how she used her power. She'd be free to do as she saw fit. Thus did Korella Stalk become a dark cleric of Endroren.

She returned to Dunbury Castle with the powers of a fledgling cleric of the darkness domain. In the time since, she has offered multiple sacrifices to Endroren atop Dunbury Hill, and her abilities have grown. Thus far she has offered only slain animals and stolen items, but it is only a matter of time before she kills a person.

One cost to Korella is that since she was fated to make regular sacrifices on Dunbury Hill, she remains bound to the castle or at least the scir. That is fine, she has decided, since in time her growing abilities will allow her to avenge herself on Master Foley and others who had slighted her.

In the meantime, Korella is biding her time, continuing to act the part of a failed apprentice unable to cast even the simplest arcane spell. Foley puts up with her and makes a half-hearted attempt at the façade of training her because he does appreciate the help with chores, despite Korella's unpleasant demeanor.

Korella's Charisma score represents her force of personality rather than a charming demeanor. If she ever met someone who treated her with respect, she might act differently. Her usual method of interacting with people is intimidation. Failing that, she makes snide remarks and does as she must to maintain her position in the castle.

She might take a special interest in characters who suffer from corruption or have access to dark secrets. Those who flatter and defer to her will gain her affections, but she becomes wrathful when defied or criticized, or when it becomes apparent that she is being manipulated. Her displeasure may take the form of sarcasm for a time, but eventually it will erupt in violence.



## KORELLA STALK

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Wis +6

**Skills** Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Corruption** 4

**Languages** Common (L), Agthorian (L), Endrori (L)

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Special Equipment** Obsidian holy symbol of Endroren

**Divine Eminence** As a bonus action, Korella can expend a spell slot to cause her melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Spellcasting** Korella is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *destroy water*, *detect good*, *protection from good*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *enhance ability*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*

**Goodwill** As a boon, Korella is willing to steal a spell component from Foley for the player worth up to 100 sp.

### ACTIONS

**Faceless Man's Blade** *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4) slashing damage.



### FACELESS MAN'S BLADE

**Sense** DC 15 **Analyze** DC 17 **Slot** Hand **Attunement** Yes  
**Rarity** Very Rare **Price** 10000 sp **Weight** 1 lb. **Corruption** 1

### DESCRIPTION

This blade is made from a steel so completely black it appears to absorb light. The hilt is a piece of pale bone.

A hit with this weapon causes 1d4 slashing damage plus an additional 1d4 necrotic damage. On a roll of 20, instead Korella causes an additional 4d4 necrotic damage and regains that amount as temporary hit points. Korella must, however, visit the crest of Dunbury Hill and offer the same number of hit points as a sacrifice to the Faceless Man before the following midnight—hers or someone else's. If the hit occurs after sundown, she has until the following midnight. Failure to do so causes her the loss of twice as many hit points as were gained.

While attuned to the weapon, she always knows the direction and approximate distance (within 20 feet) of the blade's location.



## KORELLA'S DARK JOURNEY

### KORELLA IN THE CAMPAIGN

Over the past 13 months, Korella has shifted from chaotic neutral to chaotic evil. She has not yet taken a sentient life, but that may soon change.

Adventurers may interact with Korella in many ways. Some similarly twisted souls may even think of her as a suitable friend, but the cleric is paranoid. Flattery and gifts, especially gifts of service, may appear to win her over in the short term. Fearful of the sort of betrayal she intends to offer Master Foley, Korella inevitably turns on any potential friend, even a sincere one.

Perhaps the "safest" interaction with Korella is one of respectful rival. If a person presents themselves as a relative equal rather than a superior or a lackey, Korella might begin to think that person has something to offer. She enjoys a certain amount of competition, if she is the one to prevail. If she believes a person has dark secrets to share with her, greed may overcome caution.

Gamemasters may customize the following adventure seeds for their campaign:

- ♦ Several castle residents have complained of missing personal items. Should the characters investigate, they find a stolen item in Korella's chamber. She hotly denies having stolen it, insisting that someone—perhaps Master Foley—is trying to make her look like a thief.
- ♦ One of the castle children cries over a missing cat. Another resident noticed Korella feeding the animal milk and morsels of fish over the past few weeks. Korella denies any knowledge of the cat's whereabouts, but those searching Dunbury Hill find its corpse—with wounds consistent with a small, sharp blade.
- ♦ A castle resident has vanished. Witnesses last saw the missing person walking alone out of Dunbury Village in the evening (to rendezvous with Korella). Korella has captured and bound the victim somewhere across the river, intending to make her first human (or dwarf, elf, or other sentient species) sacrifice on the upcoming Faceless Moon.
- ♦ If somehow the characters have not investigated and stopped Korella after she takes a sentient life, a month after that first murder she captures another victim—this time a named character more important to the adventurers.
- ♦ If a non-wizard persuades or charms Korella into sharing secret knowledge, she lets slip that her powers come from "the Faceless One." A brave or foolish character

might ask to meet this sinister figure, resulting in a harrowing encounter on Dunbury Hill.

### THE REDEMPTION OF KORELLA STALK

Truly heroic characters might believe there is a chance to save Korella Stalk from herself. If you as the gamemaster feel that would make for a satisfying quest, go for it! But don't make it easy.

Agthorian justice does not always demand death for crimes such as murder, but multiple murders and worship of Endroren are unquestionably capital offenses. Designing a series of opportunities for an adventurer to turn Korella away from committing these most egregious crimes can make for exciting roleplaying opportunities, especially for lawful good characters. Helping her purify her corrupt soul is an even bigger challenge.

Rather than having the characters discover Korella with a victim she has already slain, consider having them find her with a drugged or enchanted victim. Good use of Charisma (Persuasion) checks—or simply granting success for good arguments, moral or self-serving—can make for an exciting scene.

Any argument that appeals to Korella's pride is more likely to succeed. If a character suggests Korella has an opportunity to prove herself as being better than anyone realized, or if she can make Master Foley eat his words, she is more receptive. Grant characters using such arguments advantage on ability checks, or if you prefer, decide they succeed automatically.

Korella cares little for romantic overtures, but she responds well to sincere offers of friendship. Those who take her side against her oppressors or who fight at her side against monsters are more likely to sway her from a self-destructive course.

In any event, guiding Korella away from evil should remain entirely a roleplaying challenge, even if you use ability checks to determine incremental success or magic to help cleanse her corruption. Are the characters willing to conceal Korella's crimes if she renounces the Faceless Man? Do they demand she accept responsibility for her actions? Modify the situations based on the characters' personalities and alignments, and gauge whether success or failure is more emotionally satisfying for the group.



# MAK

*You need sumpin' smashed?*

Rescued by a castle patrol after a near-fatal encounter with an endrori warband, Mak has bonded with the soldiers and other residents. Unfortunately, a serious head wound further reduced the 26-year-old orog's already limited intelligence, but he more than makes up for this with strength. Mak's preferred weapon is a length of heavy chain attached to the misshapen remains of a once ball-shaped riverboat anchor. Partially obscured by dents and scars, the anchor still bears the characters "... entid ...". More than a few of Mak's foes have gone to their graves with that fragment imprinted on their flesh, and one or two survivors of an encounter with the great Mak have the letters indented into their armor as a sort of bitter boast: "I survived Mak the Chain."

Mak seldom ventures beyond the castle, where he is considered one of the "secret weapons" of the stronghold's defense. When he does, however, it is always with a foot patrol—because he is frightened of horses and can't ride one anyway—and it is usually when the soldiers expect to find endrori raiders, whom Mak hates with a fury. Because of his low intelligence and his hesitation to commit violence without clear cause, the soldiers have taken to calling out, "Mak, the chain!" when his assistance is required. Those words might strike fear into any endrori, if any who heard them had survived to share the tale.

A well-meaning but foolish adventurer once attempted to arrange a "date" between Mak and Mama from the Three Hounds Inn. Both orogs were too shy to speak with each other, and when the self-appointed matchmaker pushed the issue too far, Mama dislocated his jaw with a "playful" slap. He has not been seen at Dunbury Castle or Village since.

## OUTLAWS AND ENDRORI

Unfortunately for the defenders of Dunbury Castle, a wide variety of gangs, warbands, and other troublemakers stalk the hills, roads, and rivers of Dunburyscir. They range in threat from annoying to deadly, and each has its own set of goals and agendas. We've sorted these collections of miscreants into two groups: outlaws and endrori.

### OUTLAWS

Smugglers, bandits, and robbers are notoriously common along the length of the Kouros River and the backroads of Dunburyscir. Some are bloodthirsty, others are greedy,

# MAK

*Large humanoid (orog), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	5 (-2)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Deception +4, Insight +3, Perception +4, Persuasion +6

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Reckless** At the start of his turn, Mak can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

**Goodwill** As a boon, Mak will smash something of the character's choosing.

### ACTIONS

**The Chain** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage (heavy, two-handed).

although a precious few are altruistic souls who steal from the Warden's agents and share the wealth with common folk. Any of them could provide the seed to a much-expanded scenario of investigation, confrontation, and aftermath.

### THE CHEESE PIRATES

This band of halfling and cheebat **bandits** target river cargo, avoiding well-guarded or difficult-to-fence goods like cash or lumber. Their method marries infiltrating river crews by having two or three members sign on as guards or sailors, then sending a stealthy skiff out to carry away the stolen goods along with the shipboard accomplices.

They prefer to think of themselves as "River Pirates," and they hate the "Cheese Pirates" moniker that has stuck—although they prefer it to "River Rats," which they consider insulting because of their relatively small stature. The pirates' most infamous success was in absconding with over half a load of cheese destined for New Erinor without the sailors noticing the theft. They sold the goods for weeks



by posing as traveling peddlers, but the amusing nature of their theft made them obvious targets for the guards. They do their best to avoid stealing food these days.

### THE COMPETITION

To complicate matters for player characters seeking rewards for killing endrori, a rival bounty hunter has come to Dunbury Village.

Dyarget (female **drothmal veteran**) is the last survivor of her war clan, which fell in battle with orcs. Left for dead, Dyarget gradually recovered her strength and searched for the orcs that had slain her people. Over the years, she picked them off one and two at a time, each kill making her bolder in her ambushes. At times, Dyarget has joined forces with adventurers to wipe out entire endrori warbands, although she holds a special hatred for orcs and favors their bounties over others.

While it is possible, even likely, that Dyarget has already gained her revenge by exterminating the orcs who killed her war clan, she continues to hunt endrori as a sort of penance to assuage her survivor's guilt. Even occasional alliances in pursuit of bounties have done little to soothe her loneliness, so adventurers who share her values and treat her with respect may, with patience and consistent effort, win enough of her respect and affection that she begins to consider them her new war clan. If so, Dyarget is prepared to conduct a day-long ceremony that involves burning her wolf-pelt cloak, reciting the accomplishments of her dead clan members, adopting a new clan name (from suggestions made by her new friends), and then drinking and feasting under the open sky while taking turns recounting personal triumphs with her new clan.

### THE MASKED HEROES

Sylvera Honor (female **human bandit captain**) and Ratcher Finagle (male **halfling priest**) are the pseudonyms of a pair of thrill-seeking do-gooders. For the past few years they have targeted bandits, burglars, traveling charlatans, river rats, and the corrupt foresters. Sometimes, they even leave purses of recovered coin for the villagers persecuted by these villains. Unfortunately, the foresters have begun imitating their garb and behaviors to tarnish their reputations. Worse, the Masked Heroes themselves targeted a former ensign of Dunbury Castle who was acting undercover to lure them into a trap. They left the ensign terrified, bound and suspended from a tree near Dunbury Hill, and now most residents of Dunburyscir see them as criminals.

Sylvera wears a green leaf-shaped mask and a pair of false ears intended to make witnesses misidentify her as an elf.

Ratcher wears a sprite-style mask, complete with antlers, to suggest he is a sprite. So far, the ruse has succeeded, but any character with a passive Perception score of 15 or better recognizes the trick at once if they meet the two.

### RIVER RATS

The term "river rats" has two connotations. The first and most common use is to describe the bands of river pirates that stalk the Kouros River. Most are temporary alliances of predominantly human bandits, often led by a bandit chieftain. They target homes, barns, and places of business within a mile or two of the river, and then escape on their boats. They are also known to waylay travelers on nearby roads. The most skillful intercept boats and barges on the river at night, cutting cargo free and paddling away before defenders can mount a counterattack. Most are neutral or chaotic neutral, but a few evil bands have earned a reputation as cutthroats, leaving few witnesses to their crimes.

The term is also more broadly used to refer to any low-class or impoverished itinerants living on the river in rundown houseboats, whether or not they are actually criminals.

### THE SCARLET MASKS

Known for their intricate red masks tooled out of the finest leather, these highway robbers target wealthy merchants and nobles. During the act, they speak in an almost comical parody of lower-class patois. In truth, these criminals are dilettantes, young men and women of noble houses who target rivals and others who have earned their scorn.

Apart from their feigned accents, the clues to their true identities include the fact that their activities always take place while the nobles are visiting country friends in their manor homes as well as the identities of their victims. To expand the adventure to an urban investigation, leave a few clues referencing unavenged insults, lost social status, and romantic rivalries that pitted the masks against their prey.

The Masks themselves are six human **nobles** equipped with crossbows in addition to their rapiers. They have enlisted a human **knight** (wearing a breastplate for AC 15) in case things get out of hand, but they should prove no match for the adventurers. The danger in apprehending these criminals is that their deaths or imprisonment are certain cause for vendetta from their families and friends in Tristanford or even New Erinor.



## ENDRORI

While many endrori and endrori warbands threaten the scir of Dunbury, and more arrive from the Deeplands every year, a few have made names for themselves. Most of the locals can share one or two “facts” about each group, although the power of rumor has warped some of that information. Usually, the information on wanted posters is more accurate than rumors, but sometimes a survivor who had a close scrape with one of these groups can provide a detail useful in tracking or defeating the marauders.

### BURNING CLAW GOBLINS

While much of the goblin population remains near their grotto lair (11) as ordered by their leader, one defiant war chief prowls the Grimvold Forest (16) and ranges miles beyond to strike unsuspecting targets. An enormous goblin called **Festruwon** leads a band of 23 **goblins** kept in line by five goblin bosses, all five of which are especially vicious goblins loyal to Festruwon. A bodyguard of six armed and armored goblins (a common goblin boss but with AC 15 from chain shirts and armed with crude scimitars) never strays far from their chief, until she unleashes them the moment an enemy begins to gain the upper hand on her lesser minions.

When they have plenty of food, Festruwon’s band wanders the Grimvold in defiance of the wild fey there, but avoiding the Spiderwood (16a) whenever possible. Unlike the grotto goblins, the Burning Claw will emerge from the woods to attack logging camps, river craft, and even the nearest farms. Their morale is high thanks to the freedom they’re given to succumb to their baser desires, and they lack discipline beyond fear of the lash. After suffering ten casualties, they are sure to flee from combat.

## FESTRUWON

*Small humanoid (goblin), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6 + 27)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Stealth +6

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Endrori

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Safety in Numbers** Aetaltan goblins benefit greatly from the proximity of their allies. If the goblin has a number of conscious allies

greater than half the number of adventurers, it has advantage on saving throws to resist fear and intimidation.

**Sunlight Sensitivity** Goblins have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks when they or their targets are in sunlight.

**Nimble Escape** The goblin may take the Disengage action or Hide action as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack** Goblins may make one attack with their bite or two attacks with their claws. If attacking with claws, the second attack is made at disadvantage.

**Bite** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Second claw attack has disadvantage. *Hit:* 3 (1d2 + 2) slashing damage.

**Scimitar** *+1 Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

### THE CLUBBERS

Clubber Jugach (male **ogre berserker**, age 36) has gathered a motley band of 18 **orog brawlers** (armed with greatclubs) who keep a family of six **giant boars** as guardians, playmates, and eventually supper. Most are survivors of clans scattered by rival endrori or Agthorian soldiers, or in one case by the (now-cautious) young common copper dragon Brightburn (9). The clan is notorious for their habit of eating their victims.

“Clubber” earned his nickname for the method by which he slaughters both foes and the boars no longer considered useful as anything but food. He uses the same method to dispense the ultimate discipline to those who question his authority. To honor their leader, the other orogs have universally adopted greatclubs as their weapons of choice. Most of Jugach’s followers are survivors of the weaker clans he has defeated. The mighty berserker wears the skull of a dire bear he falsely claims to have strangled to death with his bare hands.

If observed from hiding, the orogs may seem playful, almost peaceful if not actively raiding. They compete in crude sporting activities involving hurling boulders and tree trunks—the latter reminiscent of caber tossing. They even play with their enormous pigs as if they were pets, until the orogs have a hankering for roast pork.

Unknown to his minions, as of nine years ago Jugach surrendered to darkness and is now one of the Fallen. During an Agthorian assault on the lair of a dark cult, Jugach faced off against their guardian ogre. The two roared



curses, each accusing the other of being a traitor to their kin. As the ogre gained the upper hand, Jugach felt the cold thrill of darkness course through his veins. The whispers of Endroren penetrated his psyche. Moments after beating down the ogre, he realized he had become what he once hated—and he embraced the change. Jugach turned on his former allies and slaughtered them all with the help of his former foe. If his orog followers ever learn his dark secret, they would likely turn on him in an instant.

Before his transformation, Jugach left a simple-minded daughter behind in Dunbury Village. “Mama” (2a), as she is known for her maternal behavior, remembers her father only as he was before succumbing to the dark call. Should she ever face him again, her reaction will be one of horror followed by a desire to slay the monster he has become to put his once noble soul to rest.

### THE CRIMSON CLOUD

A cruel dark dwarven cleric leading an **ixit swarm** haunts the caves and canyons of the high mountains north of the Crossroads (14). How this strange dwarf, known as Chokrin Barbed-Chin (male dwarf priest, age 127) achieved the unusual feat of effectively taming an ixit swam is a mystery. The corrupted dwarf is distinguished not only by his magic but also by his pointed black beard, which Chokrin claims is a sign of Endroren’s favor. Often mistaken for a swarm of bats in the distance, the swarm’s terrible chorus strikes terror into their victims, who usually flee for their lives, leaving their animals behind.

Chokrin and the swarm typically remain hidden in the highlands, but on moonless nights he may lead the Crimson Cloud on raids of local farms, despoiling crops, maiming or slaying animals, and killing people too slow to escape. In opposition to the swarm’s desires, Chokrin likes to allow a few survivors to escape and spread word of his atrocities. Unfortunately, his minions usually succumb to bloodlust and slaughter those who flee before he can stop them. When he can restrain them, he sends a trusted scout to follow the survivors and targets their destination a few days later, once the residents have had a few days to dread the arrival of the ixit cloud.

Adventurers questioning survivors of a Crimson Cloud attack may learn of this pattern of allowing a lone survivor to flee to the next community, which is then the next one targeted by the ixit.

## CHOKRIN BARBED-CHIN

*Medium humanoid (dwarf), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Dwarven (Deep), Endrori

**Corruption** 5

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dark Eminence** As a bonus action, Chokrin can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

**Command the Swarm** As a bonus action, Chokrin can give his ixit swarm a command, and unless the command directly contradicts the swarm’s nature, it will obey. If a command does go against the nature of the swarm, Chokrin must make an opposed Wisdom check against the swarm to overcome its resistance.

**Spellcasting** Chokrin is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *inflict wounds*, *protection from good*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness*, *hold person*

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*

### ACTIONS

**Mace** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

### RED BADGER CLAN

A sadistic family of **peck** prey on small groups and lone travelers in the woods west of the Kouros and north of the Coldstone River. They’re careful, however, to avoid large groups of armed opponents. Their leader is called Red Badger (female **peck herbalist**), whose once beautiful horns were sawed off by a logger who briefly captured her. Once her 8 brethren rescued her, they took their time returning the favor, and the logger’s screams lasted from dusk till dawn. Unsatisfied, Badger swore revenge on all who dared to enter her forest. She demanded a demonstration of loyalty from her followers, who sawed off their own horns



as well. Ever since, Badger and family have been an unholy terror throughout the forest.

Red Badger's band targets groups of 10 or fewer, always relying on stealth, surprise, and superior numbers to ensure not only victory but the ability to capture and torture victims. They hate and fear fey especially, and their preferred targets are non-fey hunters and logging scouts. They are loath to venture more than an hour's distance from the forest edge, but to that limit they will pursue fleeing prey if the odds seem to be in their favor.

### THE SKY TERRORS

Mother Heskree (female **skaah** priestess) leads a band of 13 skaah zealots (2 female **skaah** acolytes and 11 male and female **skaah**) in targeted strikes against the dwarves and humans who depend on the mountains for supplies of stone, ore, and ice. The entire cult wears ragged vestments that include cowls and mesh masks concealing their reptilian faces.

Heskree's followers have surrendered their names to the Faceless One and are now known only as Brother One, Brother Two, Sister Three, and so on. Heskree is wise enough to avoid attacking the fortified quarries and mines, but she lays ambushes for those traveling to and from those locations. Having established a pattern of harassment against these targets, she now ranges farther from her several "safe caves" to attack merchants as far away as the river, supply and pay caravans, and even castle patrols.

Mother Heskree's winged troops wait in high positions, usually hills or high bluffs, before swooping down from behind their foes. She commands her followers to capture rather than slay as many as possible, especially those wearing religious vestments or holy symbols. She wishes to sacrifice the captives to her Dark Lord.





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## Evil Threatens the Borderlands!

Dunbury Castle is threatened by a rising tide of darkness. Bandits stalk the roads, pirates raid boats along the riverways, and the power-hungry Warden Balewick seeks to seize control of the duchy in his mad lust for power. But an even greater threat looms: endrori and other dark creatures are creeping out of the Deeplands, and the sightings grow more frequent every day.

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