

THE HOLDENSHIRE CHRONICLES

PROLOGUE



HOLDENSHIRE PRIMER

INTRODUCTION

The Holdenshire Chronicles takes EN Publishing's classic adventure *To Slay a Dragon* and revamps it for a new generation of gamers. Using fifth edition rules, we hearken back to the 1980s and embark on an adventure which is sure to remind you of RPG modules and boxed sets long past!

This trilogy of adventures leads an adventuring party from the town of Hengistbury on a journey across the land to challenge a red dragon who dwells in a volcano lair known as Skull Mountain.

This location supplement details the county of Holdenshire, which contains locations such as the towns of Hengistbury and Thornbury. Subsequent installments will comprise the three acts of the original *To Slay a Dragon* adventure. The first act is a location-based sandbox containing twelve small quests that familiarize PCs with the lands and people of Holdenshire, and raise them to 3rd level so that the dragonslaying quest may begin in earnest. The second act is a wilderness hexcrawl in pursuit of the **red dragon Cirothe** and its minions. The final act is a classic dungeon crawl, culminating in a desperate battle between dragon and dragonslayers.

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

1. The PCs begin in a town called Hengistbury. They engage in a number of optional quests in a sandbox fashion (such as Jack of the Weirwood, The Hound of Fogmoor, and Memories of Brockendale). Eventually, Ariadne, the niece of Brand the local ranger, is kidnapped by kobold cultist minions of Cirothe, the red dragon, and whisked away to Skull Mountain.
2. The PCs trek across the land, seeking the various artifacts needed to defeat Cirothe while evading her kobold minions. After dealing with giant spiders, a mad Fey Queen, orc warbands, a dwarven fortress, and much more, they finally reach Skull Mountain with the artifacts they need to slay the dragon.
3. Dragon. Lava. Mountain. Lair. Treasure.

ADAPTED FROM EN PUBLISHING'S *TO SLAY A DRAGON*

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HENGISTBURY AND ENVIRONS

Hengistbury is a small village (population approximately 150) on the banks of a winding river located in the rustic and rural county of Holdenshire.

Normally a sleepy little village with a few essential services and not much excitement, Hengistbury has recently become the focus of an increasing amount of activity. Kobold tribes, normally located far to the east, have begun encroaching in the nearby plains and hills. Moreover, someone or something is haunting the old castle, strange creatures move across the countryside, and a myriad of other oddly disturbing events have been noticed.

The citizens of Hengistbury and the nearby community of Thornbury are on edge. Children have gone missing, lizardfolk are moving in, some even say that sinister rituals are being performed out on the Weirhenge. How much of this is true nobody really knows for sure, but everyone seems to agree that things aren't right.

The county is governed by **Lord Pemberton** and his wife, **Lady Sybill Pemberton**. Lord and Lady Pemberton reside in Hengistbury Keep, on a small hill overlooking the village. They are benevolent rulers, but even they are beginning to worry about what might be happening around them.

The county is patrolled by a ranger, **Brand Torek**, a large, easygoing bear of a man, proficient in staff and bow. He reports directly to Lord Pemberton. He has several part-time assistants located throughout the area and calls on them if things get out of hand.

Thornbury is smaller even than Hengistbury, boasting a mere 100 souls. The friendly rivalry between the villages manifests every year in a popular local cheese-rolling competition which highlights a week long harvest festival in the fall. Located a few miles upriver from Hengistbury, travel between the two is not uncommon. For a silver coin, a local fisherman can be persuaded to ferry passengers in either direction. The journey takes a couple of hours.

With all the strangeness lately, if something isn't done soon, both Hengistbury and Thornbury may not make it to the fall festival. With rumors flying and tensions rising, it is up to the PCs to sort things out and ensure a long and prosperous life for the residents of Holdenshire.

OTHER PEOPLE OF NOTE

Three-Fingered Jake, an itinerant bard, wanders through every few weeks performing in exchange for food. Most news of the wider world comes from his visits to town. He may know the local stories and rumors and be able to point people to those that might be true as opposed to those that are merely whimsical fancy.

Ugg is a small **hill giant** who was befriended by villagers some years ago. Ugg's real name is virtually unpronounceable to those who do not speak Giant, but he responds affably to the name the locals have affectionately given him as he clumsily, yet cheerfully, assists with manual labor around town.



There is, of course, a wizard, **Kalle Sirkesalo**, who lives in a tower located on an island in the river about 5 miles downstream. The **mage** is rarely seen, but his servant, **Hunch-backed Roland** (who is neither hunch-backed, nor is he named Roland), is seen in Hengistbury most weeks purchasing supplies.

Lady Sybill Pemberton is a **priest** of a healing god, and volunteers in the only temple in Hengistbury. She can often be found with her assistants, **Prirkka** and **Ariel**, tending to the needs of the community.

Ariadne, Brand Torek's niece, will play a pivotal role in the course of this adventure.

The Mortimer Brothers fancy themselves a "thieves' guild," but in reality the three young orphans, **Gord**, **Beej** and **Poke**, operate more as paid gossips and mischief makers. Gord Mortimer is soon coming of age and sweet on Ariadne. He may have a larger role to play if he thinks the PCs are worthy of his services.

Tillian Brickbottom is a male halfling scribe, writer, translator and wine purveyor who has settled down in Thornbury. His services may be needed.

An Unlikely Follower

If the PCs manage to rescue the Mortimer brothers in *Pandora's Box*, successfully retrieve and return Elise's ring in *Lizard's Lament*, and cure the sick troll child without killing its mother in *Troll Under the Bridge* (all quests in Act I), they may find themselves with an unlikely follower. Gord Mortimer will join them, based on his perception of the PCs as being tolerant of those in unfortunate circumstances, willing to comfort and aid the needy, and understanding of those who are different. When they go after Ariadne at the end of the module, he insists on coming along if he has not already joined them. Gord will perform the function of a henchman for the rest of the adventure; take care to ensure he remains an interesting and interactive member of the party.

THE DRAGON

The dragon **Cirothe** resides in Skull Mountain, a dormant volcano, some 30 days travel from Hengistbury. An adult red dragon, she maintains a network of kobold servants, minions, and spies. As such, she will likely be aware of the PCs' mission and will attempt to interrupt it en route.

Using her network of kobold minions, **Cirothe** is gathering treasure and kidnapping young virgins (of either gender—she's not particular), as dragons are wont to do. She will soon seize Brand Torek's niece, **Ariadne**, in the latest of the kidnappings occasioned by her young wyrmlings' demand for the very best in tender mortal flesh.

HENGISTBURY LOCATIONS

In addition to a variety of small shops, houses, and other essential buildings, several locations in Hengistbury are involved in the following adventures.

THE BLEEDING HEART TAVERN

Formerly known as the Beaming Hearth, the tavern forms the social hub of Hengistbury. At any given moment during its open hours, at least a half dozen local residents can be found enjoying the fine offerings as served by **Merideth Jones**.

The Bleeding Heart Tavern has a somewhat unusual arrangement with the local populace. Lord and Lady Pemberton own the tavern, but they regularly appoint individual members of the community to run the bar on a weekly, rotating basis. Typically this responsibility is passed to more established members of the community like **Steffen the Baker** and **Rorus Klain**, the blacksmith. Those who run the tavern are allowed to keep a percentage of that week's profits to offset their losses from their regular business during the week. Occasionally, the duty of running the tavern falls upon less fortunate county residents when they find themselves in financial need, though Lord and Lady Pemberton are not so foolish as to offer this opportunity to untrustworthy members of the community.

This arrangement means that more or less everyone in Hengistbury is invested in the Bleeding Heart's success as well as being far more appreciative of the labor involved in making it run when they are merely patrons. Fights rarely break out here, and the locals are quick to shuffle anyone who has enjoyed too much cheer safely home before trouble starts.

If there is a rumor or bit of news to be had in Holdenshire, the Bleeding Heart is the place to find it. The traveling bard **Three-Fingered Jake** spends most of his time here when he is in the area as the patrons are very happy to have him perform and tip him generously.

BRAND TOREK'S CABIN

Brand Torek is the local sheriff, appointed by Lord Pemberton. His cabin also serves as his office, though he is not often found within. Brand is serious about his job and spends most of his day patrolling the county on foot. The cabin is not particularly fancy and sits near the northern edge of the village, but residents of the area know to come here if trouble is at hand.

If Brand himself is not there, it is possible that one of his part-time deputies is nearby. Both **Yara Bloodclaw** and **Jayel** make occasional stops at the cabin to check in and see if help is needed. Brand's niece **Ariadne** is generally close at hand and can take messages for Brand if needed.

SAMUEL AND SONS TRADING COMPANY

Samuel and Sons is the chief supplier of foreign-produced goods in Holdenshire; the company is also the chief marketer of locally produced goods to the wider world. Samuel and Sons runs a brisk business purchasing furs and fish, as well as surplus crops and a few other locally produced items. In exchange, the company brings in manufactured goods such as glass items and worked leather. Samuel and Sons uses the river to ship trade goods and so the building is located on its banks.

Prominent NPCs

There are many NPCs in and around the county of Holdenshire. Several of them have roles to play in the adventures and some do not. Feel free to use any and all of them as desired to set up scenes, to provide color, or to encourage the PCs to take some particular course of action. Refer to the "People of Holdenshire" section and make use of the NPC descriptions to fill in details of personality, occupations, and favorite hangouts.

Residents of Hengistbury

- ▶ Lord and Lady Pemberton
- ▶ Ugg the Hill Giant
- ▶ Gord, Beej, and Poke Mortimer
- ▶ Ariadne
- ▶ Merideth Jones
- ▶ Gavin Morrigan
- ▶ Willem Von Nederveen
- ▶ Aus
- ▶ Penner
- ▶ Yara Bloodclaw
- ▶ Kitster "Kit" Bartleby
- ▶ Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah
- ▶ Freya Aeval
- ▶ Temrus Clothbinder
- ▶ Rorus and Yulana Klain
- ▶ Prirkka Strongfist
- ▶ Heinrich Krebs
- ▶ Tamas Agrens
- ▶ Mallory Jackdaw
- ▶ Stedd Grimwold
- ▶ Steffen the Baker

Travelers and Outliers

- ▶ Ariel
- ▶ Brand Torek
- ▶ Three-Fingered Jake
- ▶ Kalle Sirkesalo
- ▶ Hunch-backed Roland
- ▶ Stefan Oakfell
- ▶ Andrew Nemeth
- ▶ Logan Brokenbarrel
- ▶ Karatilana "Tila" Torin
- ▶ Mossad
- ▶ Juide "Black-Hand" Averauh
- ▶ Old Jovan

Recently, there has been some sort of trouble at Samuel and Sons and this has attracted the notice of their parent company. **Willem von Nederveen**, an agent of the parent company, has arrived in the county to investigate the problem and determine what to do.

BLEEDING HEART TAVERN MENU

Food Menu

- ▶ Marinated vegetables and lizard broth (4 sp)
- ▶ Peppery satyr and pork pie (12 sp)
- ▶ Saucy fungus and warthog pie (10 sp)
- ▶ Delicious half roasted eagle doused in a melon, and lamb puree (10 sp)
- ▶ Local deep-fried fox (5 sp)
- ▶ Seared griffin and pork broth (6 sp)
- ▶ Our world-famous boiled elk (5 sp)
- ▶ Mouth-watering miniature hyena pastries and tarts (6 sp)

Today's Specials

- ▶ Smoked mutton sausages and mashed hog cooked in Golden Beard Gin (12 sp)
- ▶ Bitter boiled camel cooked in Humble Hawk Mead (18 sp)
- ▶ Cold manticore cuts with lamb and oyster cooked in Moody Claw Gin (17 sp)

Drinks Menu

- ▶ Lonely Dragon Beer (5 sp)
[ivory, opaque, smells like bacon]
- ▶ Elven Ininyë Wine (1 sp)
[crimson, cloudy, smells like pears]
- ▶ Dwarven Slatshield Stout (1 sp)
[white, opaque, smells like smoke]
- ▶ Lazy Prior Grog (4 sp)
[orange, bubbly, smells like wine]
- ▶ Bachelor's Snake Grog (10 sp)
[ivory, fizzing, smells like spices]
- ▶ Black Rock Lager (5 sp)
[turquoise, sticky, smells like sewage]
- ▶ Yellow Dog Cider (3 sp)
[charcoal, fizzing, smells like honey]
- ▶ Honest John Cognac (10 sp)
[turquoise, translucent, smells like sulfur]

THE TEMPLE

The Temple is managed by Lady Sybill Pemberton. Initially dedicated to Ceres and Minerva, goddesses of agriculture and the hunt, it is fair to say that the town of Hengistbury grew up around the Temple rather than the Temple being built where the locals lived. The Temple is a wooden affair and sometimes serves as the town meeting hall when large gatherings are called for and as the local infirmary and hospital when needed. Its walls and roof are built of stout oak harvested from Queenswood, and bear many intricate carvings of wild animals of the hunt, field grains and other symbolism related to the goddesses.

Lady Sybill ministers to the sick and infirm in Minerva's name. She does not preach to the townspeople, instead believing that by her good works she can influence them sufficiently to ensure a welcome in the hereafter. She is practical, though and understands that the Temple may not meet everyone's needs. For example, those of the Forge fall outside of the goddess's domain and, as such, require different beliefs. During her tenure she has seen fit to allow the placement of various symbols of other good aligned deities in and around the temple. If the goddesses object to this, they have remained silent on the matter.

GOODS & SERVICES

Hengistbury also offers the following goods and services:

Penner's Pig Farm is located to the West of Hengistbury. **Penner** has an interest in pirate history and memorabilia and may know the odd thing or two about the river and its environs.

Clothbinder's Cheese Shop features many fine cheeses. **Temrus Clothbinder** makes the cheeses for the annual harvest festival cheese roll. The cheeses wrapped in black are not to be touched.

The Forge in Hengistbury is run by **Rorus Klain**. Rorus is a smith of no small skill and supplies tools and weapons to both locals and soldiers for miles around. He has a large order that needs to go west soon.

The Krebs Apothecary, run by **Heinrich Krebs**, makes many fine potions, philters, and salves. He's been known to make the occasional "aid to romance" as well as curatives, digestive aids, and special cleaning supplies. Should someone have need of smoke sticks, alchemist's fire or other such adventuring goods, Krebs maintains a ready supply. He prefers to be known as Krebs the Apothecary.

Stedd's Shoppe is the home and business of **Stedd Grimwald**, an unfortunate dwarf with no beard and a sad story to tell. He also sells a variety of potions from his shop front. He is not the first choice for potions and the like since both the Apothecary and Kalle Sirkesalo can provide potions of better quality. He does, however, tend to have a wider variety on sale.

The Bakery, as run by **Steffen the Baker**, is very popular early in the morning with the smell of fresh breads wafting in the air. Most of the people in town stop by here before going on with their day. If the PCs need to find someone before the Bleeding Heart opens, this might be a good place to look.

THORNBURY LOCATIONS

The Spice of Life is a small shop that offers various spices sourced from around the world, according to **Nazid**, its proprietor. In reality, Nazid offers whatever spices he can acquire from the Samuel and Sons Trading Company, combined with some locally sourced spices and a rare few he parcels out sparingly from a collection he brought when he first came to town. His prices are relatively high compared to the local economy, but, since his chief customers are the Lord and Lady Pemberton who buy them for their personal use and the use of a few special dishes at the Bleeding Heart, he manages to make a living. About once a year someone comes to town from afar and supplements his supply—likely it is someone from his homeland and nothing to be concerned about.

The Autumn Festival

Every autumn, in celebration of a good harvest and successful business dealings and the general good health of the two communities, Lady Pemberton—just as her predecessors have always done—organizes a Harvest Festival for both Hengistbury and Thornbury. Farmers bring their final harvests and livestock, the various businessmen and gatherers bring their wares and anyone passing through is welcomed to the celebration. An informal judging is held and the winners in several categories for "Best Of" goods each year are given a small carved trophy: Minerva's bow and arrow done in oak. In addition, Lord Pemberton grants such winners six months of tax amnesty specifically so that the locals can enjoy the fruits of the winner's labor at a reduced cost for part of the year. Lord Pemberton believes that this encourages the competition as well as allowing the less fortunate access to the same high quality goods as those who are better off.

The highlight of the Autumn Festival is the cheese roll. On the last day of the week-long festival, contestants gather on a steep hill located roughly halfway between Hengistbury and Thornbury. Specially-created Black Cheeses are brought out and, on starters orders, the cheeses are released while participants give chase, hoping to catch one of the cheeses as it speeds down the hill. Secreted in one of the cheeses is a single platinum piece supplied by Lord and Lady Pemberton. Any contestant catching a cheese might be lucky enough to open it and find the prize. Competition is quite fierce, made only more so by the free pints of hard cider made available to the contestants before the roll. Most years the platinum piece goes unclaimed, but if this persists for more than five years, Lord Pemberton orders a second platinum piece placed in a cheese. Those cheeses that are not caught are taken back to Clothbinder's Cheese Shop unopened and stored for future use. Some of them are becoming quite old indeed.

Reg Bakerman runs the **Thornbury Bakery**. It is smaller and has less variety than the Hengistbury bakery, but if fresh bread is wanted in Thornbury, this is where you go. Reg is a friendly fellow and gets on well with most people, but he does have a tendency to drink and this sometimes makes him late in getting the bread made the next day.

Denhew's Pub 'n' Grub is the local tavern and inn in Thornbury. During the week, **Horatio Denhew**, the proprietor, does a reasonably brisk business. Things tend to slow down at the weekend though as folks prefer to go to the Bleeding Heart for the entertainment and camaraderie if they can make the trip. This doesn't prevent Denhew from dreaming of opening a second Pub 'n' Grub in Hengistbury. He dislikes trouble in his tavern, but it happens anyway. When it does, he relies on Brand Torek or his deputies to help settle things down.

Emery Shier is Thornbury's local alchemist. He sometimes works with Heinrich Krebs to replenish supplies, but by and large makes himself available to the Thornbury locals to meet their more pressing needs. He runs his shop from the kitchen of his home. His alchemical supplies are more limited in variety, but of equal quality to Heinrich's.

Albert Wright is a good enough veterinarian to minister to the needs of the animals in both Hengistbury and Thornbury. He keeps his **Veterinary Clinic** in Thornbury because it keeps him near the Queenwood, Ayle's Loch, and Brockendale Castle, where he likes to search for animals to study in his leisure time. He is not a cruel man and merely makes notes of their habits and lifestyles. He hopes to someday find a rare and exotic creature to study so that he can make a name for himself by writing the definitive text on such an animal. His wish may come true sooner than he thinks.

Morrison's Forge, run by **Donald Morrison**, takes care of Thornbury's metalworking needs. Morrison does well enough, but he never seems to get the larger orders Rorus does. Still, Rorus

knows that Morrison does good, if uninspired, work and occasionally helps him out by bringing him in to fulfill general orders at times when Rorus has a particularly large and urgent request to complete. On these occasions Rorus pays him well for the help.

Tillian Bricklebottom has a small shop in Thornbury in which he performs scribe and translation services for everyone in the area. Old deeds and wills, the occasional newly acquired manuscript from distant lands, and the writing of official documents for Lord and Lady Pemberton tend to keep him reasonably busy. He is fluent in many arcane and strange languages and may be able to help translate a document that comes into the PCs' hands. He supplements his business by selling writing supplies (pens, inks, parchments, and papers) to locals who have the ability to write and need to send letters. To those who cannot, he charges a reasonable fee to write such letters as they need.

OTHER LOCATIONS OF NOTE

This section will detail locations not already described in the quests below. GMs should feel free to use these locations for additional adventures or to expand existing adventures if they wish.

Logan Brokenbarrel runs the **Quarry** to the north of Thornbury. The quarry is a typical stone quarry and Logan is a fairly typical dwarf. Unless someone notices the tattoo, then they might realize that Logan used to be something quite different and has a secret past he would rather leave behind him.

Jayel's Cabin is located roughly half way between the Quarry and Brockendale Castle. **Jahmus "Jayel" Laekin** lives here. He prefers the quiet and solitude of this location, but is occasionally called on by Brand as a tracker if someone proves difficult to find or has become lost in the wilderness.

Ayel's Falls and **Ayel's Loch** are located to the south of Thornbury. Ayel's Falls is a wonderfully scenic location featuring a 100-foot drop into a

small valley that leads to Ayel's Loch. Generally a peaceful scene of beauty and repose, it does have a secret history ripe for discovery.

The **Queenswood** is less menacing and dangerous than the Weirwood, but this doesn't mean it is any less interesting. Woodcutters tend to harvest wood from here rather than elsewhere due to its proximity to the river. Occasionally, reports of strange events or odd creatures emerge.

A clan of performers and fortune-tellers known as the Vistani is known to sometimes make their home within the Queenswood. On any given day there is a 60% chance that they can be found somewhere within. Among the travelers are those who can read magic, identify items, and cast an *augury* for adventurers who would like to see what the future holds. Late at night, their campfires can be seen burning off in the distance through the trees. It is possible they have some connection to **Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah**.

Hidden among the Vistani—a secret they take great care to protect—is a young female half-elf bard by the name of **Pixy Mistynote**. Why she is there, no one but the nomads knows.

The Vistani

The people of the Queenswood refer to themselves as the Vistani, meaning “people of the forest.” Like most humans, the Vistani people can be found in cities and villages across the world. Many Vistani are drawn to adventure for the same reasons as most—wealth, excitement, and glory—but they take to the adventurous lifestyle more readily than most, as their culture is already nomadic and self-sufficient. Relations between the Vistani of the Queenswood and the people of Holdenshire are generally cordial, but there are those who look down upon their lifestyle and traditions. These prejudiced few unjustly label their neighbors in the Queenswood as thieves, murderers, and swindlers. Lord and Lady Pemberton know of this injustice, but don't know how to solve this tension.

THE PEOPLE OF HOLDENSHIRE

This section is designed to help you keep track of all the NPCs in Holdenshire (both Hengistbury and Thornbury). Not all of the NPCs detailed herein are plot-critical, but the area is designed to work as a “sandbox”-style setting; for this reason plot hooks and suggestions have been liberally sprinkled throughout the following descriptions in addition to the ones in the main adventure.

Lord and Lady Pemberton

The County of Holdenshire is governed by Lord Pemberton and his lady-wife, Lady Sybill Pemberton, and contains the village of Hengistbury and the hamlet of Thornbury. The **nobles** reside in Hengistbury Keep, on a small hill overlooking Hengistbury. Lady Sybill Pemberton is a cleric of Minerva, and volunteers in the only temple in Hengistbury, with the aid of Ariel and Prirkka. Each year, Lady Sybill organizes the Autumn Harvest Fair. Lord and Lady Pemberton also own Hengistbury's Bleeding Heart Tavern and have an unusual arrangement for running it. Between the Tavern, the Harvest Fair and several other local programs, they do much to ensure the communities in their care remain healthy, happy and prosperous. News of local problems and impending danger have made the Lord and Lady anxious about the fate of Holdenshire and they are most anxious to receive help in getting things back to normal. It may be that they will reward a group of adventurers well for helping out.





Brand Torek

The county is patrolled by a ranger (**scout**), Brand Torek, a large, easygoing bear of a man, proficient in hammer and bow. He reports directly to Lord Pemberton. Brand is a tall man with broad shoulders, a neatly trimmed beard which doesn't hide his square jaw. A retired adventurer, he still keeps his old armor and massive warhammer hanging on the wall of his cabin-cum-office in Hengistbury. Brand is serious about his job and is rarely found in his office as he spends much of his time patrolling the villages and roads. He dotes on his niece, Ariadne, and would hate to see any harm befall her. His official title is "sheriff" and he is occasionally assisted by Yara Bloodclaw and Jayel.



Three-Fingered Jake

Three-Fingered Jake is an itinerant bard (**spy**) who wanders through every few weeks performing in exchange for food or coin. Most news of the wider world comes from his visits to town. He can usually be found performing in the Bleeding Heart Tavern (originally called the Beaming Hearth until the Mortimer Brothers vandalized the pub's sign). Jake knows many rumors, particularly regarding a certain sword and scabbard.



Ugg

Ugg is a small **hill giant** who was befriended by the village children some years ago. Ugg is not his real name, but he is affectionately called such as he clumsily yet cheerfully assists with manual labor around town. Ugg is a kindhearted soul and dislikes seeing others mistreated, particularly if the reason for doing so stems from prejudice against those who are "different." Ugg speaks both Common and Giant, but relies mostly on Common while working in the village. Occasionally, when working alone, he can be heard to sing some quite interesting songs in Giant. His best friends in Hengistbury are the Mortimer Brothers.

Kalle Sirkesalo

The **mage** Kalle Sirkesalo lives in a tower located on an island in the river about five miles downstream. He is rarely seen, but his henchman, Hunch-backed Roland (who is neither hunchbacked, nor is he named Roland), is seen in Hengistbury most weeks purchasing supplies. Kalle is a black mage who is often in need of rare ingredients. Roland can sometimes be found in the company of Freya Aeval, the **pixie**, as they head into the Weirwood. Kalle often supplies the veterinarian, Albert Wright, with certain potions and medicines he needs for his job. No one is really quite sure what else might be going on at the tower.



Penner

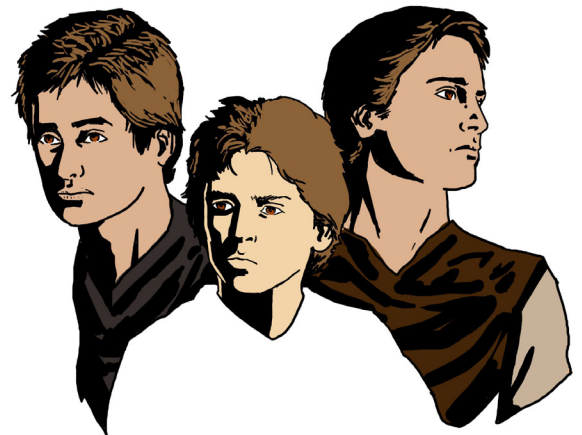
Penner is a halfling pig farmer (**commoner**) with an affinity for pirate history and memorabilia. He likes to spend some evenings at the Bleeding Heart Tavern in the company of other locals. His interest in pirates may give him a unique perspective on some of the local goings on. His farm's proximity to the Weirwood may give him insight there as well.



The Mortimer Brothers

The Mortimer Brothers fancy themselves a "thieves' guild," but in reality the three young orphans, Gord, Beej, and Poke, operate more as paid gossips. They spend a lot of time with Ugg, who is very protective of them. They often find themselves in minor trouble, but may overreach their grasp in the near future. Gord is in love with Ariadne and will soon come of age; he may find himself making a decision that is at once noble and a little foolish, but in the long run may see him become the apple of someone's eye.

Beej and Poke are **commoners**, but their more experienced brother, Gord, uses **spy** statistics.





Ariadne

Ariadne is Brand Torek's niece (**commoner**). Gord, the oldest of the Mortimer Brothers, is in love with Ariadne, though she is not aware of this. She can often be located in and around Brand's house, but does make the occasional foray to the riverbanks to pick flowers. Messages for Brand can be reliably left with her should the need arise. Ariadne is probably the most important NPC in this adventure, for it is she who will be captured by the kobolds in Thornbury and taken off to the dragon's lair, and it is she whom the PCs will be charged with rescuing.



Meredith Jones

Meredith Jones is a young, serious girl in her early 20s. She is stern looking and doesn't quite know what to do with her life. Right now, she's working in the Bleeding Heart Tavern as a barmaid (**commoner**), but she knows for sure that she is meant for greater things. She is the only permanent employee of the tavern and therefore knows how things work better than most. It may be that she secretly admires someone in the town, but if so, she has kept it a well-guarded secret.



Gavin Morrigan

Gavin Morrigan, a writer (**veteran**), is a dark-haired man with a dusting of silver at his temples which seems almost to contrast the spark of youthful determination in his eyes. Though Gavin is often engrossed in his writing, he is clearly in good shape. No one seems to know why he spends so much of his free time at the Bleeding Heart, nor what it is he is writing exactly. Surely something, or someone, must attract him here on a regular basis. What could it be?

Willem von Nederveen

Willem von Nederveen is a traveling merchant (**commoner**) from the trading company Samuel and Sons in distant Northminster. He is helpful to those who are friendly to him. Willem was sent to Hengistbury to figure out why the company is losing money there, which may lead him to ask the PCs for help if he thinks they are trustworthy enough. The company does a brisk business buying up local materials and goods while selling finished products back to the residents. There really isn't any reason for them to be losing so much money. Or is there?



Aus

Aus is a young kid (**commoner**), annoying and always trying to scurry around and get the latest rumors in an effort to impress the older Mortimer Brothers. In particular, he is interested in rumors of the dragon in the east, and carries a stuffed dragon toy. He cheers for the dragon and pranks those who show interest in slaying it. He has collected a lot of dragon trivia in his 8 short years.

Some of it is even accurate, though no one is really sure about which bits have just been made up or confused with the real ones. Still, he constantly tries to find more and this may prove beneficial for the player characters.



Stefan Oakfell

Stefan Oakfell is a woodsman and hunter (**scout**). Soft-spoken, rugged, and lean, he is approaching his late 40s. Stefan has a haunted look in his eyes, a look which suggests he may have seen—or indeed, done—terrible things. Stefan is a solitary character who does not seek the company of others. He may, if he can be convinced to share it, have news of strange goings on in the Queenswood. He certainly seems to spend the majority of his time in and around its environs.





Nazid

Nazid of the Adashim family from the Ben-Yumo clan (**commoner**). He has a little spice shop called The Spice of Life from which he sells spices to the locals and particularly Lord and Lady Pemberton. About once a year or so a foreign gentlemen shows up to conduct business with Nazid. He's probably just bringing in fresh spices, right? It's probably just one of Nazid's relatives. There couldn't possibly be anything illegal going on here, could there?



Reg Bakerson

Reg Bakerson is Thornbury's baker (**commoner**), and a friendly sort to all. He has a habit of saying awkward things, but he's well-meaning and is never out to do anyone harm. Reg likes to drink when he's not working, and becomes rather boisterous after a few drinks. Generally Reg is looked on affectionately by the townsfolk, although thought of as a bit odd. He tends to think of the Pub 'n' Grub as his home away from home, and gets worried if trouble starts there. A night of too much drinking means the fresh bread in Thornbury will be delayed the next morning.



Horatio Denhew

Horatio Denhew, a brewmaster (**commoner**), owns Thornbury's tavern, Denhew's Pub 'n' Grub. He hopes to one day open a second branch in Hengistbury, although the Bleeding Heart's popularity keeps him from doing this. When not in the kitchen, he likes to mingle with his patrons, loving to hear their tales. If asked why he doesn't adventure himself, he replies, "I nearly kill meself in me own kitchen e'ery day; I wouldn't last more'n a week crawlin' through dungeons. Lemme refill yer ale."

Yara Bloodclaw

Yara Bloodclaw is a tall, tattooed woman, around 35 years old. She has lived in Hengistbury for about 6 years, now working as a beemaster. A capable fighter (**tribal warrior**), she reinforces the guards of Hengistbury and is never seen without her two warhammers. If asked about her past she mentions only that she was raised in a cold mountain range in a land far away. She says little and never drinks alcohol. This makes her especially reliable if trouble should crop up late at night.



Kitster “Kit” Bartleby

Kitster “Kit” Bartleby is a charismatic **thug**. He is a fence, dealing with stolen property. It is Kit who persuaded John Tulworth to steal from Samuel and Sons. Kit must have some reason for targeting Samuel and Sons beyond just money—he has, after all, taken a very big risk in such a small community. Who does he sell to and why? And what are they doing with the goods?



Mylani Azalathellon

Mylani Azalathellon is a teenaged half-elf with a fascination with the law (**commoner**). She always carries two small books with her: a book of common laws, and a notebook that she uses to record any transgressions of the law that she witnesses. Enthusiastic, Brand finds her tiresome—but maybe she’s on to something. Perhaps she’s unwittingly seen something important and written it down in her little book. Or maybe she’s just a nosy busybody with a score to settle.





Andrew Nemeth

Andrew Nemeth is a wandering rogue looking for a successful adventurer named “Bluestone.” Why? Probably because the adventurer owes him some money. He is part of the troublesome adventuring group which also includes Mossad and Old Jovan. They’ve been wandering around the area causing trouble for the residents with their questions and prying. Andrew is the de facto leader of the group.

Andrew is a **spy** with 36 hit points and an AC of 14, and he deals 3d6 additional damage on a successful sneak attack.



Karatilana “Tila” Torin

Karatilana “Tila” Torin is a “rogue economist,” believing that redistribution of wealth is the key to economic success. She takes this belief very personally, handling much of this “redistribution” herself. The rest of the community simply regards her as a thief. This probably has everything to do with why she now finds herself in Brand’s jail. How long she’ll stay there is anyone’s guess. If she does leave without permission, someone will probably have to fetch her back.

Tila is a **scout** with 34 hit points and an AC of 15, and she deals 2d6 additional damage on a successful sneak attack.



Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah

Saraz bint Farad bint Aquilah is a psion from a faraway land. Her dress is that of someone of nobility or great wealth, wearing bright colored silks. She is inquisitive and curious and makes extensive notes about everything in Hengistbury and the surrounding countryside. She is naive about local customs. She suspects that something odd is going on at one of the stores in Hengistbury. She could be right, but really needs to learn more. She may be connected to the Vistani of the Queenswood in some way, but who can tell for sure?

As a psion, Saraz uses **priest** statistics, with the following exceptions. She has an AC of 10 (unarmored), an Intelligence score of 16 (+3), is proficient in the Arcana skill instead of Religion, and has spells prepared from the wizard list. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13). Her Divine Eminence feature deals psychic damage instead of radiant damage.

Freya Aeval

Freya Aeval is tiny and adorable **pixie** girl with long braided red hair and blue eyes, with pink and black butterfly-like wings. She spends much of her time in the vicinity of the Bleeding Heart Tavern, although she can be a source of information about the Weirwood. She seems to be sweet on Hunch-backed Roland, though it isn't entirely certain that he returns the affection. They are often seen going into the Weirwood together, though.



Robert MacBain

Robert MacBain is dark of hair and large of stature (**commoner**, with 8 hp and a Strength score of 15). Tall and well-muscled from years working with his hands, Robert is generally thought of as kind and strong. He works stone mined from the quarry for various uses around the county. Most of the homes in Hengistbury are starting to put in stone foundations and some of the larger buildings in the area are already converted. Probably no great secrets will be unearthed. Probably.



Temrus Clothbinder

Temrus Clothbinder is a cheese maker (the surname "Clothbinder" comes from the cloth used to bind up cheese, as he loves to inform people). Not only does he make cheeses for general use, he is also responsible for providing the cheeses used in the annual Autumn Harvest Festival cheese roll competition. Each cheese for the festival is wrapped in black and all the residents know not to touch those cheeses. This prevents tampering and might also have something to do with the platinum piece hidden in at least one cheese as a prize. At least, they are supposed to be hidden in the cheeses. As far as everyone else knows, anyway.





Rorus Klain

Rorus Klain is a large man in his early 40s, wide of girth and grizzled in appearance (**commoner**, with 10 hp and a Constitution score of 14). He is a smith of great skill, and takes his work very seriously, with no time for foolish questions or irritating visitors. Rorus is quick to anger, but equally quick to forgive, and once he becomes a friend, he is fiercely loyal. His strong-willed wife, Yulana, is probably the only person in Hengistbury that Rorus fears. He often takes on large orders and has made arrangements with Thornbury's smith, Donald Morrison, to cover his day-to-day work at these times.



Mossad

Mossad is a tall, dark-haired **thug** who uses a two-handed sword. He, along with Old Jovan and Andrew Nemeth, is part of a troublesome company of adventurers staying temporarily in Hengistbury. Because of their shared experience with Bluestone, Mossad is loyal to Nemeth and Old Jovan, but he is rapidly losing enthusiasm for the pursuit and grows more convinced each day that they should just move on.



Emery Shier

Emery Shier is an alchemist (**acolyte**) based in Thornbury. He sometimes works with Heinrich Krebs to replenish supplies, but by and large makes himself available to the Thornbury locals to meet their more pressing needs. He runs his shop from the kitchen of his home. His alchemical supplies are more limited in variety, but of equal quality to Heinrich's. This makes some people suspicious and they wonder who the real talent is.

Albert Wright

Albert Wright is the 12th of thirteen kids of from the hills near Brockendale who grew up to be a veterinarian (**commoner**). He dreams of taking care of baby owlbears, sick hippogriffs, and other exotic creatures. He keeps his Veterinary Clinic in Thornbury because it keeps him near the Queenwood, Ayle's Loch, and Brockendale Castle, where he likes to search for animals to study in his leisure time. He is not a cruel man and merely makes notes of their habits and lifestyles. He can be a valuable guide to the area around Brockendale Castle.



Ariel

Ariel is a midwife and herb supplier. She spends much of her time in the local wilderness collecting supplies. She once adventured and is a somewhat accomplished **druid**. She helps Lady Sybill minister to the needs of the community and generally does so willingly, but she has been known to have a sharp word for anyone who has injured themselves doing something foolish or dangerous.



Prirkka Strongfist

Prirkka Strongfist is a half-orc midwife (**commoner**) new in town. Prirkka is tall, with long black hair with a few hints of gray, about 50 years of age. One of her eyes is brown while the other is green. She is allergic to cats. She has been drafted into service helping Lady Sybill care for the county's residents. No one is quite sure where she came from or why she ended up here. Some folks still mistrust her, but she may be slowly winning them over, provided nothing untoward happens.





Donald Morrison

Donald Morrison is a giant of a man (**commoner**, with 20 hp and Strength and Constitution scores of 14). He wears a kilt and works the forge in Thornbury. He's not as skilled as Rorus Klain is, but still produces serviceable items of decent quality. Rorus employs him when there is a large order that needs filling to handle the more work-a-day needs of the community. Both men are on genial terms with each other, but, is that just a hint of jealousy in Morrison's eyes?



Heinrich Krebs

Heinrich Krebs, a self-proclaimed apothecary (**commoner**), wears his chosen profession like a title. Almost all villagers use products of this shop, be it to help with diseases, to enrich the love-life, or to get the town's best stain remover. For the occasional adventurer, classics like Alchemist's fire or Smoke Sticks are always in stock. Whenever Heinrich needs to re-supply, Thornbury's Alchemist, Emery Shier comes along to help out. Some locals are starting to wonder who the real alchemist is.



Juide "Black-Hand" Averauh

Juide "Black-Hand" Averauh is a rarely-seen woodsman (**scout**) who keeps the village well-supplied with good meat. Most people assume he hunts in Queenswood for the most part and Juide does nothing to disabuse them of this notion. Perhaps it is true. Although, if the rumors are to be believed, some folks might be quite displeased to discover his real source. He may know something about Ayle's Loch that someone else wishes he didn't.

Old Jovan

Old Jovan is a dwarf **thug** who was turned into a shambling mound in his younger years of adventuring. He traveled the swamps a long time until a Vistani mystic was able to help turn him back. Unfortunately, a hint of the smell remained. People are often understandably uncomfortable in his presence. He is part of the adventuring party staying in Thornbury: the others are Andrew Nemeth and Mossad. Jovan is loyal to Nemeth, but he, too is beginning to weary of chasing Bluestone.



Tamas Agrens

Tamas Agrens is the local sage (**priest**) of the area. He's fairly aloof and unfriendly, and clearly considers himself more clever than most of the locals. For this reason, the Mortimer Brothers enjoy taunting him with stupid questions and pranks; trouble ensues when they steal a certain box from him, though. Maybe he does know something the rest of them don't. Whatever it is, it is unlikely to be good for anyone.



John Tulworth

John Tulworth is an untrustworthy little sneak (**commoner**). He is known to the other kids as "the toad." It is John who is stealing from Samuel & Sons at the behest of Kit. What hold does Kit have over him that made this possible? And has "the toad" learned anything that would make Kit hopping mad? Maybe Tulworth is a good kid at heart who has just been lead down a bad path.



Mallory Jackdaw

Mallory Jackdaw is a seven-year-old boy (**commoner**), with unkempt brown hair and blue eyes, who never stops talking. He knows a little about everything and is willing to make the rest up. He's been feeding Aus various stories and, in some cases, outright lies about the dragon far to the East. It's fairly likely that any information he might give to interested adventurers is no better. He is the second of three children to disappear into the Weirwood.





Stedd Grimwold

Stedd Grimwold is a dwarf sorcerer. He manifested his powers working the quarry: He needed a light to read a note and his body erupted into flames. All of his hair was burnt off and the fire caused a conflagration which killed his family and many other miners. In time he learned control over his powers, and opened a small shop in Hengistbury where he provides potions. Morose and taciturn, Stedd mopes about, a sad forlorn shell of a dwarf. Perhaps something can be done for him?

Stedd uses **mage** statistics, except has 25 hp, cannot cast spells above 3rd level, and has only two 3rd-level spell slots.



Steffen the Baker

Steffen is the Hengistbury town baker (**commoner**). With brown-grey hair, he's a little plump from too much bread. All that means is he has a finer understanding of the bread-making arts than does his counterpart in Thornbury. People line up daily to collect fresh bread from Steffen and his bakery serves as a secondary community hub before the Bleeding Heart opens for the day. What you don't hear there, you might hear here.



John-Francis Rainweaver

John-Francis Rainweaver is hearty woodsman (**scout**) of indeterminate age. He was once a court scholar in Northminster. He was charged with teaching the young prince of Northminster, but some unspecified catastrophe occurred and he was dismissed. Unable to find more work as a scholar, he came to Holdenshire to seek what fortune he could. There is enough need for wood, meat and skins to keep several woodsmen busy. Perhaps Rainweaver wished he could redeem himself in some way, though?

Logan Brokenbarrel

Logan Brokenbarrel is the black-bearded dwarf quarry-master (**guard**). Characters with the soldier background may recognize Logan's regimental tattoos, which link him to a notorious massacre committed by the last king's troops at Ayle's Loch. He keeps his past a closely-guarded secret, and if anyone were to find out the exact nature of his deeds he would surely be displeased. He might even take drastic action to silence the person.



Jahmus "Jayel" Laekin

Widely known as Jayel, Jahmus Laekin is the name of a onetime **scout**, now hunter of men at the behest of Brand. Though amicable, the dark-haired man holds little sympathy for the malicious. He prefers to live peaceably, but has no qualms about doing bad things to bad folk. Or folks he believes to be bad at any rate. It would be a terrible thing if he got carried away one day and did something unforgivable to someone innocent. Fortunately, Brand has been able to use Jayel's emotions for good.



Tillian Bricklebottom

Tillian Bricklebottom is a male halfling scribe, writer, translator and wine purveyor (**commoner**) who has settled down in Thornbury. Old deeds and wills, the occasional newly acquired manuscript from distant lands, and the writing of official documents for Lord and Lady Pemberton tend to keep him reasonably busy. He is fluent in many arcane and strange languages and may be able to help translate a document that comes into the PCs' hands.

