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GLOAMHOLD

CAMPAIGN GUIDE





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GLOAMHOLD CAMPAIGN GUIDE

Glowing amid dark rumours and terrible stories of desperate adventure, death, betrayal and glimmering treasures squat the unutterably ancient halls of Gloamhold. This crumbling, benighted, haunted dungeon complex of unknown, but undeniably vast, extent is buried deep within the grim and brooding spray-drenched headland of the Mottled Spire. It is a place of legends, madness and death. Within this towering, wave-lashed shard of limestone lies the labyrinthine passageways and chambers of Gloamhold's outer reaches and, beyond them, the benighted precincts and canals of the legend-shrouded Twilight City.

Gloamhold is designed for use with any edition of the world's most popular role-playing game.

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Development: Creighton Broadhurst

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Thank you for purchasing the *Gloamhold Campaign Guide*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

Dedicated to the Wednesday Night Anorakers.

Special thanks to Tom McCarthy.

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Welcome to Gloamhold! I hope this book is the foundation of many happy, memorable years of gaming.

So what's Gloamhold? Simply put, Gloamhold is an old-school sandbox style megadungeon. Since the first years of my love affair with role-playing games I've yearned to design and run a "proper" megadungeon. Gloamhold is my attempt to do just that—a "proper" megadungeon laced with a strong dash of cosmic terror and doom (because—after all—everything is better with tentacles).

While Gloamhold is my (sinister, warped) baby I've not done all the work myself. Chief amongst my co-conspirators is Tommi Salama who has drawn the achingly beautiful maps for the place. I wish I could draw like Tommi, but given I can't I'm delighted he's on-board.

This book is merely the first of many Gloamhold releases Raging Swan Press will be hurling into the world. This is a scene-setter, a primer. From this book, all other material will flow. As such, I've indulged myself and included several essays laying out a lot of my "behind the curtain" style thoughts on megadungeon design and play.

WHAT'S IN THE CAMPAIGN GUIDE

I've broken the *Gloamhold Campaign Guide* down into three distinct sections.

1. **Design Notes:** In the first short section, I discuss some of my design decisions that drove and shaped Gloamhold's design. While the concept of old-school gaming has grown increasingly popular in recent times, I think it's important to state what I mean when I say "old-school." After all, my "old-school" could be your "ancient-school" or "new-school" depending on when your gaming career began.
2. **The Duchy of Ashlar:** Part two presents a brief overview of the nearest civilised state to the Gloamhold's doom-shrouded halls. Ashlar provides a general setting for the campaign and provides opportunities for other adventures, if a change of pace is desired.
3. **Gloamhold:** The final section of the Campaign Guide comprises an overview of Gloamhold itself. Each major section of the dungeon gets a two-page spread. These bare-bones should be enough to get any GM's creative juices flowing (or gushing like a raging torrent!)

WHY SYSTEM NEUTRAL?

Why is this book system neutral? How can you have a dungeon without any stats?!

When I was live designing Gloamhold on my blog (creightonbroadhurst.com), I did so with the assumption I'd be using the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game (after all that's what I use in my own campaign). However, during the design process it became increasingly obvious that a sizeable chunk of the people reading and commenting on Gloamhold used other game systems. It seemed madness, therefore, to clutter up this book with stats and game mechanics that many readers wouldn't use. It also occurred to me that if I stripped out the bulk of the "rules stuff", I could include lots more lovely flavour; the individual GM can deal with the crunch.

This book, therefore, is designed to be compatible with most fantasy roleplaying games. Of course, it's impossible to create a truly system neutral book, and some generic game terms—wizard, fighter, human, elf and so on—lurk within. These generic terms—almost all found in the core books of the first edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game—are easily modified to the GM's system of choice. After all, I think everyone should be able to work out "rogue" means "thief" and vice versa...

WHY OLD-SCHOOL?

The short answer is, "because I like old-school-style play."

The long answer is somewhat more complex. Over the last few years I've become increasingly frustrated with modern dungeon design—you know the dungeons I mean: small maps, every room occupied by a monster that needs killing, no wandering monsters, all the challenges level appropriate and so on. I want to play in the gloriously vast, rambling dungeons of yore. I want to face tremendously easy and (avoid) tremendously hard encounters. I want to be able to poke about in empty parts of the dungeon. I want to encounter wandering monsters. I want to enjoy skilful play—instead of simply whacking things until they fall over and die or achieving victory through (magic item) shopping. But most of all, I want to play in a sandbox dungeon in which the players decide their goals and objectives. I want them to drive the story and to tread their own path, not follow a narrow railroad to a pre-determined ending.

I think this is a good place to point out that if you don't like the old-school style of play, Gloamhold—at least in the incarnation presented here—might not be for you. But I hope it is and I hope you have an epic time exploring Gloamhold. Let me know how it goes!





Gloamhold has been designed very much with an old-school megadungeon feel. When you are designing your own adventures in Gloamhold, it might help to keep the following basic design principles in mind. They are what shaped Gloamhold and keeping true to them will help you craft adventures that fit in and make sense with the overall theme and feel of the dungeon. (But, of course, feel free to do what you want.)

LAYOUT & DESIGN

- **Multiple Entrances:** There are multiple ways of getting into Gloamhold. While all might not be obvious (secret entrances are cool) most should be relatively easy to find by all but the most blinkered explorer.
- **The Deeper You Go, the More Dangerous it is and the Greater the Rewards.** This is a tradition of dungeon design. However, it is better restated as the further from the main entrance you go, the greater the danger and greater the rewards. Thus, the challenges lurking in the lower levels of Rivengate are generally easier than those to be found in the Twilight City.
- **Each Level (or Sub-Level) has a Distinctive Flavour.** This flavour shouldn't be unnecessarily odd just for the sake of flavour. For example, a sub-level of twisted natural passageways home to degenerate and feral derro is an example of good flavour. A level dominated by a mad alchemist who has no connection or relevance to the greater dungeon is bad flavour.
- **Sub-Levels:** Smaller, self-contained areas, sub-levels enable the GM to inject different kinds of flavour or monsters into the campaign. Sub-levels may only be accessible from one normal dungeon level. Some may be secret while others may provide a relative haven for explorers.
- **There should be Multiple Connections Between Levels and Sub-Levels.** The PCs should have freedom of choice to decide which parts of Gloamhold they explore. Access points between levels often serve as choke points. The more access points there are, the easier it is for dungeon denizens to move about and the more choices the players have. Some connections should be hidden or secret. Not all should proceed only to the next level; some may provide access to multiple levels or may miss one or two levels.
- **Secret and Remarkable Connections:** Not all connections between levels and sub-levels should be a standard staircase. A dried up well shaft, flooded passage or chasm are all good examples of other connections.
- **Players Should have Meaningful Choices:** This doesn't mean the party get to choose which door to use to get to the villain's throne room. Rather, Gloamhold's layout enables the PCs to pursue multiple paths through the dungeon, exploring

different areas, sub-levels and levels as they choose. Wherever possible, the PCs should enjoy freedom of movement through the dungeon and not be forced down a set path.

- **Links to the Deepest Dungeon of All.** Gloamhold has several links to the Ebon Realm. This link provides tremendous design freedom to include strange, ancient monsters crawling up from the lightless depths in search of prey. It essentially answers loads of tricky questions about how and why certain monsters came to be in the dungeon, and provides limitless adventure possibilities.
- **It Should All Make Sense (to a Certain Extent).** Realism is good to a certain extent, but realism for realism's sake is pointless. Worrying about the minutia of dungeon design is time spent not crafting exciting encounters and flavoursome dungeon levels and encounters. Enough information should be present for a GM to answer most basic questions about Gloamhold, and no more. For example, deciding where its denizens get their drinking water is important. Worrying about the minutia of the dungeon food chain is not.
- **Minor Elevation Shifts:** Dungeon levels are rarely flat. Minor shifts in elevation can confuse inattentive explorers.
- **Extra-Dimensional Spaces:** Used sparingly, extra-dimensional spaces provide an interesting change of pace to exploration.
- **Level Size:** The dungeon levels are of various sizes. Not all fit on a single piece of graph paper. Some especially large levels may use a larger scale per square.

HISTORY & MINUTIA

- **Details, Details, Details, but not too Many Details.** Empty rooms are boring. Standard corridors are boring. Dungeon dressing is an excellent cure for boring areas. Are the flagstones broken and cracked? Does dried blood splatter the wall in an otherwise empty room? Such details build verisimilitude and give the feeling Gloamhold is a live setting.
- **Gloamhold Exists for a Reason.** Gloamhold exists for a reason. It doesn't exist just to have adventurers adventure in it. Gloamhold's history has left its mark on the dungeon's layout, architecture and style.
- **There are Secrets to Uncover.** Be it secret doors, lost treasures or shocking discoveries about the dungeon itself, Gloamhold has secrets. The PCs should be able to uncover these through good, attentive play.
- **Relevant and Discoverable Back-Story:** The greatest back-story in the world is pointless if the PCs never get to interact with, discover and understand it. Knowledge of Gloamhold's history shouldn't be automatic—the PCs should have to work for it. Having knowledge of some or all the complex's history should provide insights into the dungeon (and in-game advantages).

DENIZENS & CHALLENGE

- **Wheels Within Wheels:** Gloamhold doesn't have an overall boss or super villain, although several fell powers (Dagon and Amon-Pyr) are influential within the dungeon. Each—of course—works through many proxies, lieutenants and minions; inevitably the PCs will encounter some of these folk (and could even play one off against another).
- **Away with the 15-Minute Adventuring Day.** If every room contains a life or death struggle in which one or more PCs end up unconscious or dead, the dungeon turns into an unending grind. The PCs do a room or two and then retreat to rest. That's boring game play. Instead, the dungeon's design should promote long-term delving. Parties should be able to explore at least a dozen rooms before resting. Easier fights, unoccupied rooms and "easy if dealt with properly" battles are all excellent tools to prolong the adventuring day.
- **Wandering Monsters:** Monsters don't just sit in their chambers waiting to be slaughtered. Some move about—either because they are scavengers or because they have things to do. Random encounters add both an extra level of uncertainty to exploration and to the realistic feel of the place.

NEARBY

- **Settlements:** Two well-sized settlements—Dunstone and Languard—lie within relatively easy reach of Gloamhold. Explorers can retreat to these towns between forays to rest, recruit help, buy and sell magic items (if the campaign supports the practise) and so on. Both also offer the possibility of urban adventures and intrigue, as a change of pace to normal dungeon delving sessions.
- **Wilderness:** The bulk of play in a Gloamhold campaign will happen in the dungeon but occasionally a change of pace may be required. The crags and deep, twisted valleys of the Mottled Spire offer a chance for wilderness exploration and adventure. When adventurers gain access to spells and items enabling underwater exploration, they could also elect to explore some of the many shipwrecks languishing beneath Hard Bay's frigid waters. Finally, even low-level adventurers could explore one or more of the many small islands and rocky outcroppings struggling above Hard Bay's turbulent waters.



For me, old-school play is best embodied by the 1st and 2nd editions of the world's most popular roleplaying game. I'm a huge fan of the old-school style of play, but I love the mechanics of 3rd edition and Pathfinder. In designing Gloamhold, my aim was to create a setting in which the principles of old-school play can be married with the mechanics of whatever game you play. To do that, though, I must first show exactly what I mean by "old-school." For me, old-school isn't necessarily tied to one set of rules or another—the play experience's the thing!

So, what do I mean by old-school?

GAME PLAY

- **Show, Don't Tell:** With the advent of more mechanic-heavy games, most things are resolved with a die roll. This in turn inevitably reduces the amount of description players put into their PC's actions. For example, "I search for traps" or "I use Bluff on the ogre". In old-school games, the lack of a skill system forces the players to describe how their PCs search for traps, gather information, hire a henchman and so on. This style of game play is slower, but more immersive.
- **Manage Resources:** Resource management has fallen out of favour recently. Apparently, it's "un-fun." I disagree. Tracking your expenditure of spells, arrows, iron spikes or whatever is an intrinsic part of the game. Clever or inventive resource management can reward the party ten-fold and provide crucial in-game advantages. It's a great feeling to have exactly the right piece of equipment for any given situation and coming up with inventive uses for such items is its own reward.
- **Large Parties:** Old-school play normally features large parties of adventurers. Later editions introduced the CR system designed for four or five PCs (with few if any henchmen or hirelings). Back in the good old days, my parties normally had about eight players; I remember running one game for 14 players! Obviously, larger parties can handle greater challenges than smaller groups. This can translate into longer delves in larger, more rambling dungeons or simply dealing with more enemies in each encounter area.
- **Someone's Mapping, and it's Not the GM:** Exploration was a key part of old-school play, and a good map could mean the difference between success and failure. In later editions of the game, the GM is the one doing the mapping, but in old-school play the GM merely describes what the PCs see and one of the players must draw the map!
- **Use Your Brains, Not a Skill Roll:** This relates to "Show, Don't Tell". When you can't merely roll a skill check to solve a problem, disarm a trap or even search for treasure you are forced to use your brain to come up with inventive solutions to problems. Players get rewarded for clever play, instead of merely rolling high.

- **There Might Not Be a Battle Mat:** Most of my old-school games featured battle mats—but many other GMs I played with simply described the combat and we used our imagination to visualise the scene. Of course, combat in later editions are much more tactical and your figure's exact position matters.

GAME & WORLD DESIGN

- **Game Balance:** Later editions of the game emphasise game balance, in that most if not all encounters are fair and level appropriate for the PCs. This means, if a group of 1st-level PCs opens a door they aren't going to encounter an ancient red dragon on the other side. In old-school play, the same group of PCs very well might encounter that self-same red dragon if they ignore the warning signs and/or do something colossally stupid. (This is an extreme example). In Gloamhold, the PCs will occasionally have to deal with extremely dangerous encounters (or the like), but these will be clearly "signposted."
- **Magic Items:** In the good old days, magic items were truly wondrous objects coveted by all adventurers. Ironically, in later editions of the game they were renamed wondrous items, but became anything but wondrous as PCs were free to buy and sell them pretty much as they chose. This reduced magic items to little more than a commodity and gave rise to the much-reviled magic item shop (which I hate with the burning passion of a thousand fiery suns).
- **Gritty vs. (Super) Heroic:** In newer editions of the game, even 1st-level PCs can accomplish heroic feats well beyond the reach of a normal person. This is not the case in old-school gaming where 1st-level characters are only marginally more effective than a typical man-at-arms. Even at higher levels, old-school PCs are not god-like figures able to bend reality or crush even the most terrifying foes.
- **Fairness, Not Balance:** We've become increasingly obsessed with balance in recent editions of the game. I'm becoming more and more convinced balance isn't all it's cracked up to be. It creates a more predictable—perhaps even sterile— play experience which is fine as far as it goes. However, when things become too predictable, neither the GM or the players are rarely surprised by events. That's a little sad, for me.

AND JUST ONE MORE THING...

The rules in old-school games are often much lighter and play is quicker than later editions. For me, I like the rich depth and complexity of systems such as 3.5 and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. I like the customisability of players' characters (and their enemies) and the tactical options available for combat. I don't necessarily see this as incompatible with an old-school style of play—it's just a challenge to resolve!

THE DUCHY OF ASHLAR

THE DUCHY OF ASHLAR

Ruler: Duke Armas Nenonen

Government: Feudal fief

Population: 63,200

Alignments: N, NG, LN

Important Religions: Conn, Darlen, Serat

Important Organisations: Order of the Watch Eternal (knightly order), Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus (wizard's guild), Shadow Masks (thieves' guild), Worshipful Company of Freetraders (merchant's guild)

Languages: Common, Elven, Halfling

Towns & Cities: Languard (pop. 7,923), Dulwich (pop. 4,734), Dunstone (pop. 3,574)

Villages: Ashford (pop. 75), Coldwater (pop. 176), Hard Bay (pop. 138), Kingsfell (pop. 174), Longbridge (pop. 193), Slaughterford (pop. 168), Underdell (pop. 152), Thornhill (pop. 157), Wellswood (pop. 192), White Moon Cove (pop. 328), Woodridge (pop. 138)

Fortifications: Black Tower, Languard, Tor Abbey

Resources: Fishing, timber, shipbuilding

Coinage: platinum orb, gold crown, electrum noble, silver penny, copper bit

Adventure Sites of Interest: Cavern of Forbidden Dreams, Gloamhold, the Mottled Spire, the Sunken Pyramid, Tower of Woe, Valentin's Folly

Dismissively called "Fenland" by outsiders for the broad swath of fetid, tidal saltmarsh almost cutting the duchy in twain, Ashlar sprawls along the appropriately named Hard Bay. Effectively isolated from the rest of the continent by a high plateau crowned by dark, silent woods clustering hard against a legion of fantastically shaped stone spires, Ashlar is an isolated realm of hard, resilient folk.

For centuries, the folk of Ashlar have dwelt in the shadow of ancient evils. Although it has stood for generations, the Duchy is not the first kingdom to claim the lands sprawling north of the Forest of Gray Spires. From his seat in Languard, Duke Armas Nenonen ever watches over his realm. Brooding upon the ancient shadows seemingly clustering ever closer about his land, he looks to the grim, towering bulk of the Mottled Spire as the source of the evil besetting his people. Within this towering, wave-lashed shard of limestone lies the labyrinthine passageways and chambers of Gloamhold's outer reaches and, beyond them, the benighted precincts and canals of the legend-shrouded Twilight City.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF NOTE

Several geographical features of note lie inside or on Ashlar's borders:

Forest of Gray Spires: While not part of Ashlar, the Forest of Gray Spires forms its southern border. Deemed all but impenetrable, wild rumours cluster thickly about these brooding woodlands and the legion of strange, slender rock spires thrusting upwards from the plateau on which the forest stands.

Hard Bay: A wide and deep bay renowned for stormy weather and savage tides, Hard Bay is aptly named. Its bounds are a tangle of rivers, rocky headlands, vertiginous cliffs, wooded isles and isolated, stony beaches.

Saltmire: This swath of dismal, low-lying saltmarsh sprawls outwards from the broad, muddy banks of the River Ost and its tributaries. It effectively sunders the duchy in twain.

ADVENTURE SITES OF NOTE

Several adventure sites of note lie inside or on Ashlar's borders:

Cavern of Forbidden Dreams: Buried deep in the Shoalstone and only accessible via a precipitous, oft-flooded tunnel the Cavern of Forbidden Dreams is a place of pilgrimage for those seeking ancient forbidden knowledge.

Gloamhold: A vast dungeon complex of unknowable, but undoubtedly ancient, origin and unfathomable extent, dark rumours and terrible tales of adventure, death and betrayal hang over this forsaken site. It is a place of madness and death.

Tower of Woe: Standing deep in the Forest of Gray Spires, the Maddening Spire (as it sometime called) appears as if it has been twisted and melted. Those daring its interior are often driven mad by their experiences.

The Mottled Spire: This huge chunk of granite glowers over Hard Bay's treacherous waters like an angry giant. Difficult to reach by land or sea, the Mottled Spire shelters Gloamhold deep within its bowels.

The Sunken Pyramid: Lying barely 30 ft. below the water, the Sunken Pyramid looms large in sailors' lore. The surrounding water is cold and dark. Sharks are reported here in great numbers. Sea spirits, gigantic sharks and the ghosts of those drowned nearby are all said to haunt the surrounding waters.

Valentin's Folly: This ruined keep stands upon a wooded bluff overlooking a steep-sided valley. Also known as Ironwolf Keep, or the Shadowed Keep on the Borderlands, the fortress was built by Valentin Ironwolf. The fortress fell into disrepair shortly after Valentin—along with his family—were slain by his orc and goblin enemies.



HISTORY

Ashlar has a long and storied history.

Founded by the half-elven adventurer Arndul Nenonen and his followers, what would become Ashlar was at first nothing more than a small coastal enclave on the spit of land upon which now stands Languard. Arndul was a skilled adventurer who had grown obsessed with Gloamhold and its many dark secrets. From his temporary base, he led expedition after expedition into its gloomy halls. However—eventually—he delved too deeply into its mysteries and came to a certain terrible realisation which led him to abruptly cease his explorations.

Instead, he turned from exploration to conquest and moved to bring the lands that would become known as Ashlar under his banner. Arndul's might, influence and personal wealth were considerable and he completed his conquest quickly—if not bloodlessly. His rule—and that of his descendants—has brought peace, stability and civilisation to the land.

For 500 years, the duchy has—if not prospered—endured. Hacked from the wilderness, Ashlar quickly expanded to its geographical maximum. Hemmed in by the ocean's trackless expanse to the north and the forbidding depths of the Forest of Gray Spires to the south, Ashlar is a well-established outpost on the edge of the civilised world

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Most Ashlarians dwell in the countryside and engage in traditional industries such as farming, hunting, woodcutting and charcoal making. Ashlar's towns, Dunstone and Dulwich, and capital, Languard, are the centres of more "civilised" industries. These three settlements, and particularly Languard, account for the bulk of Ashlar's wealth and prosperity.

Rural Life: Most Ashlarians live in or within a few hours walk of a village. Their lives are tied to the land and the seasons or, in the case of White Moon Cove and the other coastal settlements, the sea. Each village is administered by a lord who in turn swears fealty to the Nenonen family.

Urban Life: Urban life in Ashlar revolves around trade and industry. While only Languard can call itself a city, both Dulwich and Dunstone are virtual hives of commerce when compared against nearby villages. Here cluster an abundance of merchants and skilled craftsmen.

LAW & ORDER

Ashlar is a well-governed, ordered society. The Nenonens have ruled the land since Arndul planted his banner 500 years ago. The nobles of the land are mostly descended from his favoured companions and henchmen and a powerful tradition of service yet runs through the nobility.

Individual lords oversee their own lands as they see fit as long as they refrain from oppressing their folk or waging open warfare against their rivals. A lord's power is measured by two

things: the favour he holds with Armas Nenonen and his family's wealth. Thus, the lords who rule Dulwich and Dunstone are generally viewed as more powerful than their fellows. However, there are a few exceptions. The dismal village of Coldwater is virtually ungoverned as its lady—Elina Vuolle—hates the place. Conversely the lady paladin Mira Lankinen of Kingsfell is particularly well-regarded by the Nenonens for her stalwart support and defence of the duchy.

NOTABLE ORGANISATIONS

Many organisations and groups can be found among Ashlar's populace. Four of the most powerful comprise:

Order of the Watch Eternal: Devoted to Darlen, this order of holy warriors stands between Ashlar and the darkness pressing in on all sides. Its members are heroes and protectors of the common folk often seen riding the borders. A few of their number also delve into the sinister, benighted mysteries of Gloamhold—convinced that some ancient terror lurks deep within. The Order comprises paladins, lawful good fighters and priests of Darlen. It maintains two main fortifications—Tor Abbey in the west and the Watcher's Spire in Languard.

ASHLAR'S ANCIENT PAST

The history of the land that would become Ashlar is even deeper and more ancient than all but the most puissant sages would believe. Untold millennia ago, before even the gods had turned their eyes to the Material Plane, the alien aboleth held sway over the region. Their skum minions were the first to carve homes deep into the Mottled Spire's living rock and the first to discover the Sunless Lake. Here in ages past dwelt the aboleth far from the light of day. But change is a constant and eventually, the aboleths' hold over their empire faltered and they retreated into the deep, hidden places of the world.

The skum lingered on for long ages and fell under the sinister otherworldly influence of Dagon, the Shadow Under the Sea. Eventually they too were driven from their gloomy home by a great host of troglodytes fleeing the civil wars, ruination and destruction wracking their ancient subterranean empire.

The troglodytes claimed the area and built their steep-sided ziggurats over the many small islands dotting the Sunless Lake. They modified the skums' ancient works for their own designs and used them as a base from which to raid the surface world for loot and slaves. However, the troglodytes' hegemony did not endure for long. Hunted by their rivals from the ruin of their ancient empire and assailed by a loose coalition of surface dwellers weary of being preyed upon eventually their civilisation fell. The survivors splintered into dozens of tribes that yet war amongst one another in the ruins of their once-mighty home.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Whispers and rumour swirl through Ashlar's marketplaces and taprooms. Adventurers spending a few coins to loosen drinkers' tongues or who overhear gossip in the marketplace can hear one or more of the following rumours:

D12 RUMOUR

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | The first duke discovered something so horrible deep inside Gloamhold none of his family have ever set foot in the place ever again. |
| 2* | Strange folk have been seen hanging around Languard's docks at night, of late. They wear voluminous cloaks and flee if approached. They could be smugglers or they could be something else entirely. |
| 3 | The storms this winter will be even harsher than normal. Some say, low-lying parts of Languard could even be flooded. The sea will be unusually rough and Gloamhold will probably be cut off until the spring. Woe betide anyone trapped in its halls! |
| 4 | Bandit activity is on the rise around Dulwich. The bandits are probably hiding somewhere in the woods in one of the many ruins said to lie therein. Someone needs to do something about them. |
| 5 | The lizard men of the Salt Mire are getting increasingly aggressive toward travellers. No-one knows what's got them riled up. |
| 6 | The dismal coastal village of Coldwater is a hive of smuggling activity. Most of the villagers are hideously ugly, and rumours of an evil cult based in the village are commonly thought to be true. |
| 7 | A small clan of dwarves live in a secret subterranean hold on the shore of a shadow-wreathed lake beneath the village of Wellswood. |
| 8 | A strange crimson-sailed ship has been seen anchored off the Shoalstone. No doubt someone seeks to unlock the maddening secrets of the Cave of Forbidden Dreams. But for what purpose? |
| 9 | Gloamhold is a dangerous place. Beyond its many foul denizens and cunning traps, the place itself is said to warp those who spend too long in its depths. Such folk are said to have the Gloamhold Look. |
| 10 | Plague has ravaged Ashford. Almost everyone is dead. Could a plague so virulent be natural or is some foul necromancer or other dark power behind the outbreak? |
| 11* | Dark clouds have been seen hanging over Black Tower, no matter how strong the wind. What are those wizards up to? |
| 12 | The Sunken Pyramid lies in the deep waters near White Moon Cove. The sinister structure features in many mariners' tales. Sharks gather in the area in surprising numbers. |

*False rumour

Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus: The pre-eminent wizard's guild extant in Ashlar, the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus have their seat in the Black Tower—a heavily fortified, vitrified tower-complex to the north east of Languard. Common folk rarely visit the Black Tower. Perched on the coast, many strange rumours swirl about the wizards and their mysterious practises. Members of the Nexus also dwell in Dulwich, Dunstone and Languard where they often serve as magical advisers and sages to all who can afford their services. Most wizards and their ilk belong to the guild, or aspire to join, although a few neophyte spellcasters have found instruction with independent wizards.

Shadow Masks: Ashlar's most successful (and feared) thieves' guild, the Shadow Masks control Languard's underworld in a vice-like grip. Active in all types of nefarious doings (except assassination and slavery), the Shadow Masks are said to be wealthy beyond imagination. Their lord—the Shadow Supreme—never appears in public and his—or her—identity is a matter of much debate.

Worshipful Company of Freetraders: Historically, the nobles—led by the duke—and the priests have controlled and guided Ashlar, but this centuries-old order is being challenged by the rising merchant class. Several guilds have established themselves in Ashlar's towns, and the Worshipful Company is the most successful of these new organisations. Open to traders and merchants of any profession, its influence and power grow daily.

NOTABLE FOLK

A few folk are particularly powerful or notable in Ashlarian society. They include:

Duke Armas Nenonen (LN middle-aged male half-elf fighter 4/wizard 8): Lord of Ashlar, Armas Nenonen has watched over his domain for almost a century.

The Shadow Supreme (N male human rogue 9): The Shadow Mask's mysterious, wealthy leader lurks in the shadows. His identity is a matter of much conjecture.

Varma Nikkonen (LG middle-aged female human paladin 5/cleric 3): Although not its most puissant warrior or pious priest, the Mistress of the Watch leads the Order of the Watch Eternal in its vigil. A skilled diplomat, she is beloved by the common folk.

Kaija Vatanen (N old female human wizard 11): Rarely seen in public, Kaija spends much of her time at the Black Tower overseeing the Eldritch Nexus' business both mundane and magical. To the general populace, she is almost a legendary figure, and tales of her magical prowess are greatly exaggerated.

Valto Ojanen (LN middle-aged male human): A skilled merchant and, consequently, fabulously wealthy, Valto is the driving force behind the Freetraders and, consequently, unpopular with Ashlar's noble class who see him as nothing more than a merchant with aspirations far above his status.

NEARBY ADVENTURE SITES

Although Gloamhold is the focus of many adventurers' careers, several other adventure locales of note lie nearby.

CAVERN OF FORBIDDEN DREAMS

Buried deep in the Shoalstone, and only accessible via a precipitous, oft-flooded tunnel, the Cavern of Forbidden Dreams is a place of pilgrimage for those seeking forgotten elder knowledge. Standing miles out to sea, rising from the surrounding waters like the humped back of some great primordial beast, the Shoalstone is a place of dark legend and wild mariners' tales.

A steep-sided and lonely low-lying chunk of rock, the Shoalstone hosts vast flocks of sea birds on its foam-flecked flanks. Without any predators, these birds grow numerous and fat on the fish swarming in the surrounding shallow waters. Some mariners bestowed upon the birds accusations of malign intelligence and more than one black-hearted wizard has taken one to serve as his familiar.

At low tide, in the Shoalstone's southern face, the retreating waters reveal a narrow passageway leading deep into the rock. Crudely hewn, steep steps thick with seaweed and barnacles provide access to the caverns below the Shoalstone. Explorers should be wary, however, for much of this complex floods at high tide, cutting off the inner reaches from the outside world.

Disturbing carvings of foul creatures carrying out unspeakable rites and worshipping nameless elder things decorate many of the passageways and corridors. In a few places, humans are shown—invariably being sacrificed or tortured in horrible, barbaric fashion. The darkness here is oppressive and the narrow, winding passages claustrophobic.

Strange things dwell in the darkness. Those surviving their visit of the caverns report the caverns are haunted by the ghosts of elder beings bound to the place by some unguessably powerful curse. Whatever the truth, these foul creatures slay all those entering their domain, save for those bearing certain sigils or implements which seem to hold them at bay.

Legends tell of brave (or foolhardy) adventurers dwelling within the caverns to commune with the spirits lurking in the cloying darkness. Such folk are often said to suffer terrible dreams of ancient places and events. From these fevered dreamings came the first record of Gloamhold's inner reaches and the Twilight City buried deep in its dusty, benighted depths. Even now, sometimes those planning to dare Gloamhold's terrors come to the Cavern of Forgotten Dreams in the hope of learning fragments of forgotten lore that will prove the difference between a successful delve and disaster.

Lore: Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Shoalstone.

- The Shoalstone is a lonely rock surrounded by shallow waters. At low tide, a vast swath of glistening, seaweed encrusted reef emerges from the water. Many ships have come to grief there over the years.
- The Cavern of Forbidden Dreams lies within the Shoalstone. Its entrance is only accessible at low tide.
- The cavern's inner reaches are decorated with ancient carvings of disturbing design. Those living in the cavern and communing with the spirits haunting the place often suffer disturbing dreams of ancient events and strange creatures.

THE SHUNNED VALLEY

Far from Dulwich, hidden deep in the forest, lies a marshy, boggy valley. Woodsmen and hunters shun the place—kept away by rumours of a terrible beast lairing within and of a ghost haunting the valley's boggy mere. But, as well as great danger, treasures magical and mundane may yet lie unclaimed in the valley for three unexplored tombs, built by ancient hands, stand amid the mud and reeds.

Lore: Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Shunned Valley.

- The valley lies a day's journey into the forest. No proper paths head in that direction, but game trails crisscross the area.
- A pool—Aila's Mere—named for an adventurer who drowned therein long ago fills much of the valley.
- Three tombs are said to lie in the valley itself. They are variously thought to be the resting place of ancient and savage barbarians, forgotten kings or even the burial site of a long forgotten hobgoblin tribe.

THE SUNKEN STAIR

Widely thought of as a haven for smugglers and other miscreants, rumours swirl as thickly about Coldwater as the persistent sea fogs that sometimes blanket the place for days at a time. Set at the head of a muddy cliff top path, Coldwater is an isolated, dismal place. Its folk are sullen, ugly people and even the village's ruler hates the place. For all that, Coldwater can be a place of opportunity and adventure.

Protected by the roiling waters of the ocean, the Fane of the Undying Sleeper lies at the top of a set of stone steps only exposed at the lowest ebb of the lowest spring tides. Protected by impregnable stone doors, the fane has lain undisturbed for centuries. Once the lair of a heretical and degenerate demon-worshipping cult the benighted, profane place has never known the tread of human feet. None have yet penetrated the fane, but nevertheless wild and outlandish rumours speak of terrible dangers and glittering treasures to be found within.

Lore: Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Sunken Stair.

- Coldwater is a dump—the place is a dismal cesspit of the worst sort. The people are sullen and tremendously ugly; there is no reason to go there.
- The folk of Coldwater are of the worst moral fibre. Many are smugglers and rumours of an evil cult lurking in the village refuse to die.
- Devil's Cove has a strange feature buried in its cliffs—a sunken staircase that only becomes visible at particularly low tides.

VALENTIN'S FOLLY

Forty years ago, the famed adventurer Valentin Ironwolf sought a place to make his home. Retirement was not in his heart, but the wanderlust of his youth had long since died and he now sought a corner of the world to call his own. Along with his wife, Kaarina, his small child, Einar, and his faithful retainers he claimed the site upon which now stands the Shadowed Keep.

For the next five years, he slowly built his home—turning it into a powerful fortified position from which to dominate the surrounding woodlands. At the same time, Valentin and his wife sallied forth carrying sword and spell against the warring humanoids that incessantly fought over the forest. Over the course of the following campaign, he exterminated the Kobolds of the Ebon Scales and defeated the Orcs of the Severed Hand and the Goblins of the Blood Moon in battle.

However, looting the corpses of the fallen earned him little coin and Valentin lacked the funds to both finish his home and crush the last humanoids skulking in their subterranean lairs. With work stalled on his fortress, Valentin sunk into a great depression and began to drink heavily. Slowly many of his servants and retainers drifted away until only his most loyal followers remained. By then, Valentin lacked the will or might to continue campaigning against his enemies. His enemies, however, had not forgotten the woes he had visited upon them and slowly they gathered their strength and waited.

Agreeing a short, and ultimately bloody, pact the Goblins of the Blood Moon and the Orcs of the Severed Hand united to destroy Valentin and his followers. On a moonless night, when Valentin sat deep in his cups surrounded by his dwindling band of retainers, goblin scouts scaled the once well-guarded walls and slew the few remaining guards before opening the gates to admit the blood crazed berserkers of the Severed Hand. Slaughter engulfed the castle. Surprised and hopelessly outnumbered the defenders died quickly. A few gathered in the Great Hall about their liege to make their final stand, but once the tide of violence receded all lay stark in their own blood.

With their mutual enemy slain, the orcs and goblins swiftly fell to arguing among themselves; violence inevitably ensued. Where once man had struggled against goblin and orc now

goblin fought orc. When this new fresh wave of violence subsided the Goblins of the Blood Moon stood triumphant over the hacked and bloody corpses of their enemies. But it was a hollow victory for so many of their warriors had fallen the tribe's power was broken. Hounded by other enemies a few months later the tribe's survivors retreated to the now ruined Ironwolf Keep to hide and rebuild their shattered strength.

Abandoned by humanity, Ironwolf Keep has stood abandoned for decades. Now and then adventurers poked about the ruins in search of lost treasures. Most did not return and the keep gained a sinister aspect. Named now variously as the Shadowed Keep or Valentin's Folly only the old and learned still refer to it as Ironwolf Keep.

Lore: Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about Valentin's Folly.

- Originally named Ironwolf Keep, the abandoned fortress is now known as the Shadowed Keep or Valentin's Folly.
- Valentin was a skilled warrior-adventurer who built the place forty years ago. Valentin's enemies—the goblins and orcs of the surrounding woodlands—slew him and his retainers at the culmination of a long and savage conflict.
- Valentin was a famous adventurer and was rumoured to have hidden a great treasure somewhere in the keep.

VONGYTH

Two centuries ago, the green dragons Klauthosk and Yeiarxin annihilated the dwarves of Clan Nurthen, taking the isolated hold of Vongyth as their own. Served by the kobolds of the Blackened Eye their depraved hegemony over the benighted dwarven hold ended in blood and slaughter upon The Crimson Sword's (a band of skilled and daring adventurers) blades. Not all the dragons' progeny perished in the battle, however, and when a rival appeared to challenge the lone survivor's rule over the shattered remnants of the Blackened Eye, bloody and ruinous war swept through the endless, cloying dark of Vongyth. Decades later, the survivors of two degenerate splinter-tribes seek the utter annihilation of the other through sudden ambush and deadly trap in the dusty, forgotten halls of the dwarves' crumbling fortress.

Lore: Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Vongyth.

- Vongyth was once a dwarven hold, but was destroyed two centuries ago by a pair of green dragons.
- The Crimson Swords—skilled adventurers all—slew the dragons but could not eradicate their kobold minions.
- The kobolds are split into two tribes which war incessantly with one another.

FOLK OF ASHLAR

Ashlar is an overwhelmingly human kingdom, even though it is ruled by a half-elven duke and his family. However, all the other common civilised races have representatives among its people.

DWARVES

Dwarves are not common in Ashlar. Two centuries ago, Vongyth—the only known dwarven hold in the area—was attacked and sacked by a pair of mated green dragons. The few survivors of the battle scattered across the duchy. The largest concentration of dwarves remaining in Ashlar dwell under Wellswood in the subterranean lake-side hold of Don Galir.

- **Male Names:** Aldal Garsten, Anvar Erdukr, Elgal Gimsten, Erivar Kilak, Fargrim Harmek, Ovlon Torsten, Reigen Ovlag, Whurel Ovlag, Yurthic Farnoer.
- **Female Names:** Ara Belgak, Barita Dellode, Dalastra Helmalk, Elren Darzak, Elren Kildann, Jarani Kilak, Norren Werlan, Thraren Glorijyr, Vonya Yurnoe.

ELVES

Elves are not native to Ashlar, although persistent rumours place a small redoubt of the folk deep in the Forest of Gray Spires. Nevertheless, the realm's storied past has enticed a few elven folk to settle within its borders. Such folk tend to be exceptional—adventurers, skilled craftsmen and the like.

- **Male Names:** Arndul Baelaroarn, Caellynir Natityrr, Feradul Renriainn, Ilasual Natityrr, Pyvanel Kaniateir, Solalith Myloneir, Vilimzair Koehelvar, Zainnis Wilmatyn.
- **Female Names:** Aellian Cyelrae, Duluali Firisond, Eilliaana Kaniateir, Firatris Uthliavar, Janaela Ridriainn, Lamahs Nuninrae, Naillae Pyvinrae, Tahlys Pyloninn.

GNOMES

There are no gnomish settlements within Ashlar, however several small enclaves of the fey folk exist south of Kingsfell where the River Ost tumbles down from the strange plateau upon which stands the Forest of Gray Spires.

- **Male Names:** Addabar Pogor, Daladin Aduren, Dinejan Ennalle, Ennafaer Beren, Erfael Heddig, Herlefaer Erfanen, Janel Folkor, Pinafen Pallor, Urdevan Segel, Wededal Turen.
- **Female Names:** Arumalenaе Nackle, Caladal Folkor, Erfanna Owaen, Gaeral Raulnor, Leneal Neblor, Rasal Pogor, Uralan Turen, Vanalenaе Rurig, Wedacallada Wellel.

HALF-ELVES

Since its inception, Ashlar has been ruled by a family of half-elves. Half-elves are relatively common in Ashlar; the duchy is widely considered to be friendly to elf/human half-breeds often looked on with disdain in other human or elven nations.

- **Names:** Half-elves use either human or elven names.

HALFLINGS

Most halflings in Ashlar hail from Underdell in the west of the duchy. The village is a hotbed of banditry and petty thievery and consequently many folk look upon halflings with no small measure of distrust.

- **Male Names:** Antal Hilltop, Boram Faststep, Dricolen Goodwater, Fosco Shadowfriend, Illioper Faststep, Miro Sharpeye, Opeelur Silverleaf, Reenor Longhole.
- **Female Names:** Arveelenn Earthcloak, Cora Earthcloak, Ereea Longwanderer, Lineeyon Quickfingers, Merla Underbough, Roylla Trollteaser, Verna Thornhill.

HALF-ORCS

Generally, half-orcs are not common in Ashlar. Orc tribes dwell to the south among the forests and hills bordering the duchy. Thus, it is in the south half-orcs are most common. Often seen as outsiders, or potential spies for their less civilised brethren, half-orcs are drawn to the life of an adventurer; their ability to see in the dark makes them particularly suited to exploring Gloamhold.

Some half-orcs—particularly those brought up among humans—take a human name. Otherwise, they take descriptive names in the orc style.

- **Male Names:** Ausk Axe-Ripper, Feng Splinter-Shield, Gor Strong-Arm, Oggor the Stabber, Yahg the Widow-Maker.
- **Female Names:** Dergoka the Mighty, Kronan the Merciless, Myev the Ripper, Mzon the Shadowed, Uzlen the Terror.

HUMANS

The bulk of Ashlar's population is human. They dwell throughout the duchy and make up the bulk of the population in every settlement.

- **Male Names:** Arvo Eskola, Elmo Purh, Jorma Markku, Mikko Outila, Panu Leino, Raimo Keto, Riku Rintala, Teijo Salonen, Uljas Eronen, Veijo Siano.
- **Female Names:** Aila Varala, Aune Laitnen, Emmi Takala, Kirsti Leino, Marja Rintala, Saini Purho, Sorea Laukkanen, Terhi Vitikka, Viivi Pasanen, Vuokko Keto.

ADVENTURERS IN ASHLAR

The overwhelming majority of Ashlarians are normal folk unable to swing a sword (effectively) or cast magical spells who would never think to choose an adventurer's lifestyle. However, about one in twenty of the population is exceptional in some way. Grizzled warriors, devout clerics, sneaky rogues and lore-obsessed wizards can all be found among the folk dwelling within Ashlar's borders. The notes below provide details of how members of the most common classes fit into society.

BARDS

Bards are welcome throughout the duchy, for their musical talents and (often comprehensive) knowledge of recent events. Most tavern-keepers gladly host a bard for free in return for nightly performances in the taproom. Some particularly skilled bards can count local lords as their patrons and live in relative luxury. Some adventurers hire bards specially to sing of their great deeds.

CLERIC

Clerics can be found in all Ashlar's settlements of note. Worshippers of Conn and Darlen are particularly common; in coastal settlements, worship of Serat is well-established. Conversely, worship of Abarin is mainly confined to Dulwich, Dunstone and Languard. Those venerating the dark power Braal do so quietly and in secret.

DRUID

Druids are uncommon in Ashlarian society; such folk tend to dwell in the wild places on the duchy's borders and in the Salt Mire's fetid depths. Worshippers of the sun and moon, the druids follow the elder traditions of Ashlar's original inhabitants. Their ancient practises occasionally bring them into conflict with Ashlar's more mainstream faiths.

FIGHTER

Those skilled with the blade are in demand throughout Ashlar. Merchants require guards and local lords are always looking to add a skilled warrior to their entourage. From simple militia men to puissant knights, fighters are perhaps the most common character class in Ashlar.

RANGER

Ashlar lies on the edge of wilderness and as such skulking dangers and lurking monsters ever test its borders. Most rangers are found in the south, scouting the southern woods and watching over the Salt Mire and its denizens. A few skilled or daring trackers have even explored the fringes of the Forest of Gray Spires.

MONK

Monks are rare in Ashlar; most worship Darlen and believe they need no weapon or armour to defeat their foes. Others venerate Conn (the Father) and provide protection to his priests. Particularly martial monks join the Order of the Watch Eternal.

PALADIN

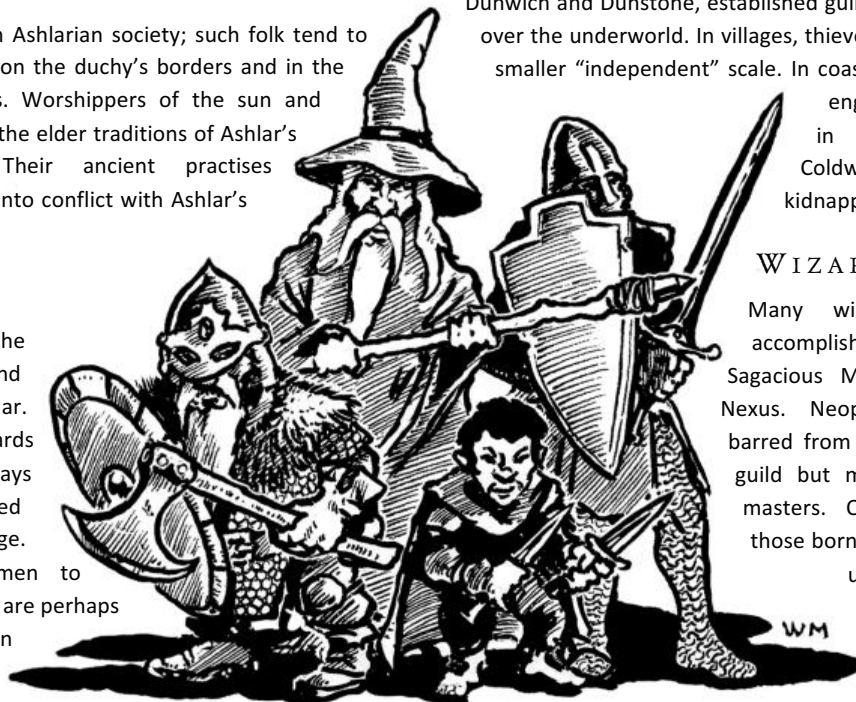
Followers of Darlen, most paladins belong to—or aspire to join—the Order of the Watch Eternal. Dedicated to keeping Ashlar safe from the encroaching darkness, they remain vigilant for external threats to the duchy and to moral decay among the populace. Particularly aggressive paladins take the fight to evil's minions; such stalwart defenders often mount expeditions into the surrounding wilderlands; some join incursions into Gloamhold.

THIEF

Thieves exist in every Ashlarian town and village. In Languard, Dunwich and Dunstone, established guilds wield much influence over the underworld. In villages, thievery transpires on a much smaller "independent" scale. In coastal regions, thieves also engage in smuggling (and in the case of dismal Coldwater—it is whispered—kidnapping and slavery).

WIZARD

Many wizards of note and accomplishment belong to the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus. Neophyte spellcasters are barred from full membership of the guild but may still study with its masters. Other wizards—typically those born into wealth—may study under an independent teacher



DEITIES & DEMIGODS

The Ashlarians worship several gods and goddesses.

ABARIN

N god of Industry and Artifice

Epithets: The Creator, the Great Craftsman

Symbol: A convoluted mass of cogs and gears

Favoured Weapon: Warhammer

Raiment: Full-length leather apron.

Teachings: The Great Creator created everything. To build and invent is to praise him. Strive to better, what already exists.

Holy Text: *Blessed Manual of Creation*

Additional Notes: Abarin's faithful comprise craftsmen, inventors and the like as well as wizards interested in crafting magic items. Abarin's temples contain many complicated devices such as water clocks. Many are protected by mechanical or clockwork guardians.

BRAAL

NE god of Hate, Malice and Revenge

Epithets: The Hated, the Wrecker, Dweller in Shadows

Symbol: A cloven skull

Favoured Weapon: Morningstar

Raiment: Braal's adherents wear cowled black cloaks smeared with their sacrifices' blood and often shave their heads.

Teachings: Strike from the shadows; punish those who have wronged you and show no mercy. Take what you want and destroy that which you cannot take.

Holy Texts: The worship of Braal is not as prescriptive as other religions. No universally agreed upon text exists, but several dark tomes are preferred by various sects.

CONN

LN god of Community, Family and Rulership

Epithets: The Father, Lawgiver

Symbol: Two hands clasped in a handshake

Favoured Weapon: Light mace

Raiment: White robes emblazoned with two clasped hands

Holy Texts: *Law and Duty*—a dense, legalistic text setting out Conn's teachings and the place and duties of each worshipper.

Teachings: Order brings prosperity. Together, believers can achieve safety and contentment. The family is the most important unit of society; its protection is the most sacred duty.

DARLEN

LG god of Law, Order, Justice and the Sun

Epithets: The Justicar, the Shining Light, the Noble One

Symbol: The rising sun

Favoured Weapon: Longsword

Raiment: Voluminous, white cowled habits. Unless expecting battle, clerics do not wear armour.

Teachings: The strong must protect the weak. Those with great abilities or aptitudes must use their gifts for the betterment of their fellows. The faithful must be ever vigilant for evil's rise, but must show mercy in dealing with its tools.

Holy Texts: Darlen's teachings are set down in the *Scripture of Law*—a vast tome containing teaching, stories and lessons by some of his early, prominent followers. *Divine Order* and *On Darkness' Rise* are important early commentaries penned by legendary high priests.

SERAT

CN goddess of the Sea, Storms and Voyages

Epithets: Mistress of Storms, the Uncaring

Symbol: A cresting wave

Favoured Weapon: Trident

Raiment: Green and grey robes

Teachings: The sea and its mistress are eternal. Its waves bring life, but also death. All bounty flows from the sea, and all must return whence it came.

Holy Text: *Book of Tides*

Additional Notes: As wild and unpredictable as the sea, sailors, merchants and pirates alike placate Serat with glittering gifts to guarantee a safe voyage. Some believe Serat is the physical embodiment of the sea. Others believe she dwells in a glittering, crystal city far beneath the waves. During services, offerings are cast into the sea. Her priests are often shipwrights, navigators or sea captains.

THE MOTHER

N goddess of the Seasons, Sun and Moon

Epithets: The Mother

Symbol: A stylised moon or sun with a smiling female face

Favoured Weapon: Quarterstaff

Raiment: Plain robes

Teachings: That which rises must fall and that which is born must die. The Mother gives life to all and in death, all must return to her.

Holy Text: The Mother has laid down no definitive text for her worshippers to follow; instead believe the natural rhythm of the seasons illuminates the goddess' teachings.

Additional Notes: A schism grips the worshippers of the Mother. Some claim the moon is pre-eminent while others worship the sun. The schism is not violent but has led to lengthy, rambling theological discussions between the brethren.

GLOAMHOLD

Gloamhold is an immense subterranean sandbox. As such, it is a different kind of dungeon to those that have recently become popular—you know the ones: small dungeons with a dozen or so rooms (most of them occupied and designed to provide just enough XP and treasure to level the party).

Gloamhold is immense with over 14 main levels and—depending on the GM’s whims—dozens of small sub-levels. As a GM and designer, it’s impossible to design it all. That’s why I haven’t bothered. While Gloamhold is my (horribly deformed) baby, it’s your campaign. Within this book, you’ll find Gloamhold’s bare bones; it is up to you to flesh them out as you see fit. (Although—obviously, Raging Swan Press will release more Gloamhold supplements in the future).

This immense dungeon is ripe with possibilities for glory and exploration (and doom). Many of its levels are inter-connected making the PCs’ path and progress unique. Whether they want to battle smugglers, root out the derro lurking in the Twisted Warrens or explore the Twilight City’s gloomy precincts they can sate their desires for adventure in Gloamhold.

IN YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN WORLD

Gloamhold and the Duchy of Ashlar are designed to fit into virtually any GM’s campaign world. Both are relatively self-contained locations. However, they’ve also been designed to work independently of one another. Thus, with minimal work the GM could use Gloamhold, but ignore the Duchy of Ashlar completely (and vice versa). Take what works for you and ignore the rest.

THEME

Gloamhold is a dark, doom-filled, relatively low-magic megadungeon in which exploration and player-set goals are the order of the day. Of course, a GM can—and should—tweak it to match his own proclivities. If you like more magic, add more magic! Remember, though, the assumed Gloamhold campaign does not feature magic item shops, the reassuring certainty of perfectly balanced (“fair”) encounters, rapid level advancement and other tropes that have become the expected norm. It is important to manage your players’ expectations and adapt the campaign as needed. Do so. Make Gloamhold your own.

HOW TO USE THIS CAMPAIGN GUIDE

Gloamhold is a big place. It can be intimidating to consider setting a campaign in its depths. However, all is not lost. At the beginning the PCs are unlikely to plunge too far inside; they’ll probably poke about Greystone’s ruins, explore the Shard or investigate Rivengate’s lower level. Particularly brave—or foolhardy—adventurers may even dare a trip along the Murkwater.

The best way to get started with Gloamhold is to read this book from cover to cover. While the PCs are spectacularly unlikely to start their adventures in the Twilight City it’s worth knowing at least a little bit about the place—someone’s bound to ask questions about it after all!

I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again. Gloamhold is a sandbox dungeon, and the GM should strive to give the players as much freedom of movement as possible. Let them—within reason—dictate the course of events. This means the GM needs to be prepared. Fear not, though, a GM doesn’t have to design the entire dungeon before play begins! Review “The Illusion of Detail” and proceed accordingly.

Each of Gloamhold’s main levels benefits from an introductory two-page spread, in this book. As well as general information pertaining to the level, each section has two entries in common:

Lore: This short section presents three generally accepted facts of the level. These are facts that circulate among the residents of Languard, Dunstone and the other various nearby villages. If the PCs think to ask—or if they are residents of the locality—they will know these things.

Whispers & Rumours: Things happen all the time in Gloamhold’s depths and rumours of events are likely to reach the party’s ears. Such rumours could reveal new adventure possibilities for the PCs or dash their hopes of achieving their aims. Not all rumours—of course—are true. Each section of the dungeon presents a table of basic rumours, but you should craft more as the campaign develops.

A LIVING, BREATHING PLACE

Gloamhold is huge. Many creatures lurk in its benighted depths and very few of them simply sit around waiting for the PCs to slaughter them. These creatures have their own needs, desires, plots and plans. In most cases, they must protect their own lairs and secure resources. Many have allies and enemies; tribal boundaries and alliances constantly move and shift.

Thus, Gloamhold—ironically—is a living, breathing place.

Restocking: Just because the party clear out an area does not mean it will stay clear. Particularly in the case of well-sited or strategically located areas other monsters will rapidly move to fill the vacuum created by the party’s actions.

Rivals: Other adventuring bands are exploring the dungeons, slaying monsters and looting their lairs. The PCs will likely encounter other such groups (or the aftermath of their actions) either in Gloamhold or perhaps in Languard or Dunstone. These groups may be friendly or might end up as rivals or even enemies. In any event, their activities are bound to affect the party’s expeditions sooner or later (and vice versa).

THE CAMPAIGN

Your campaign's initial setup will depend on your chosen ruleset and the options you allow. No matter the campaign's initial setup, the first session is an important one. Gather the players together and discuss the theme of the campaign and give them an overview of the setting as you envisage it. In many ways, "Session 0" when the players get their first glimpse of the campaign world and make their characters is one of the most important. It's vital for a Gloamhold-based campaign they make characters that will both mechanically thrive in a megadungeon environment and that'll fit in with the theme and style of the campaign. For example, a PC that is focused on mounted combat or one that is claustrophobic are (probably) disastrous choices for a Gloamhold campaign.

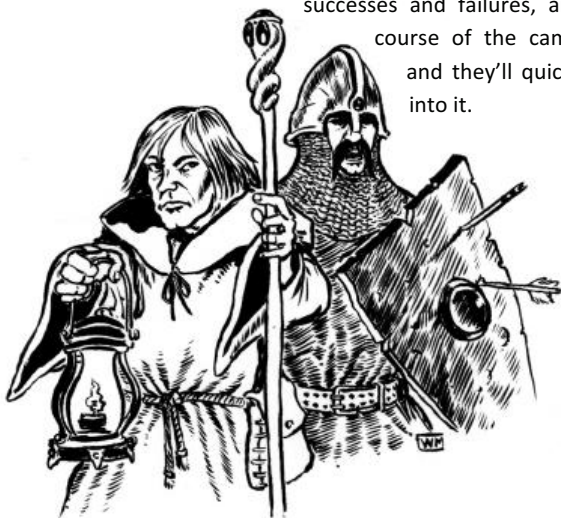
EXPERIENCED PLAYERS

Experienced players will likely have heard of a megadungeon before and will have pre-conceived perceptions of what such a campaign entails. Thus, your job is both harder and easier, all at the same time. The real bonus with experienced players—beyond familiarity with the rules and suchlike—is that they'll likely have already experienced sandbox-style play and be more at home in such an environment. This means the group should be quickly out and about charting their own destiny.

NEW PLAYERS

New players—those that have either never played before, or those who have only recently started playing—may never have heard of a megadungeon or of the sandbox style of play. This is both good and bad; they likely have no pre-conceived ideas of what the campaign will likely entail but will probably be confused by the lack of a GM-imposed goal. The key to getting such players into the sandbox style of game as quickly as possible is to provide them with obviously meaningful choices.

Show them their choices have a measurable impact on their PCs' successes and failures, and the course of the campaign, and they'll quickly get into it.



INITIAL FORAYS

As Gloamhold is designed as a sandbox dungeon, eventually the PCs will work out that they can (try to) go anywhere. They are masters of their own destiny. In practise, though, they are likely to start their adventuring in one of the more accessible parts of the dungeon. (Of course, even though Gloamhold is a dungeon the PCs might not actually start their adventures in the dungeon itself. For neophyte adventurers, just reaching the place can be a daunting challenge!)

Thus, the PCs may need an initial reason to consider exploring Gloamhold (beyond any individual adventurer's personal reasons). Such initial adventures could entail:

- **Against the Smugglers:** Smugglers dwell in Rivengate, and the local authorities are always desirous of curtailing their nefarious activities. The party could be hired to investigate the smugglers' contacts in Languard and to track them back to their lairs hidden within Gloamhold. Alternatively, the PCs could be hired to safeguard a merchant's warehouse or shipment and come into conflict with the smugglers when they attempt to steal several choice items.
- **To the Ruins of Greystone:** The party have gathered in Languard to explore the ruins of Greystone. Initially, they must find a fisherman brave enough to transport them across Hard Bay (or they must secure the funds to purchase their own boat). Once they've explored the ruined village, they might elect to dare the cultist-infested tunnels found therein or they might climb the Mottled Spire to explore the Shard.
- **Exploring the Mottled Spire:** For groups starting in Dunstone, the jagged peaks and valleys of the Mottled Spire pose a serious obstacle to their exploration of Gloamhold. Initial sessions will deal with them setting out from town and painstakingly trying to discover a way to reach the dungeon. Just because the focus of their adventures is a megadungeon, it doesn't mean getting to the megadungeon should be easy.
- **Shadows in the Shard:** Strange, shifting lights have been seen amid the Shard's ruins. Is this simply smugglers signalling their confederates or are the lights the result of some terrible ritual enacted by the denizens of Rivengate who have crept up the Splintered Stair for some unspeakable purpose?
- **Missing Presumed Dead:** Another adventuring party have disappeared after boasting of their intention to explore Greystone. At least one of the lost adventurers has a wealthy relative who will pay handsomely for their rescue.

When designing your own initial adventure hooks, remember neophyte adventurers are not ready to face the terrors of Gloamhold's inner reaches. Sending them on a quest into the Twisted Warrens or to the Twilight City will likely result in a very short campaign.

WHAT'S A PC TO DO IN GLOAMHOLD?

By virtue of their setup and style, megadungeon play tends to be more player driven than a normal campaign in which the GM—to an extent—railroads the PCs through a set sequence of adventures. In a megadungeon, the PCs have freedom of movement to explore as they choose (if the dungeon is designed properly). Particularly, if they discover a means of accessing many different levels—such as the Splintered Stair—they can go literally anywhere.

There are many reasons a PC could choose a life of adventure. However, for a Gloamhold campaign it's a good idea to consider the dungeon as a potential personal hook for individual PCs. Of course, the party will likely decide on tactical, short-term goals such as “find the stairs to the second levels” or “eradicate the troglodytes in the Twisted Warrens.” These goals, though, develop during play and don't address the basic question: why enter Gloamhold in the first place? (And perhaps more crucially—why keep going back?)

Beyond the standard reasons for adventuring, a PC could want to explore Gloamhold for one of these reasons:

- **To Boldly Go:** There's nothing wrong with wanting to explore Gloamhold just because it is there. If the PC grew up with stories of heroic feats deep in Gloamhold's bowels, he might dream of someday visiting the places in the stories.
- **It's a Family Tradition:** Other family members have previously explored Gloamhold and the PC is following the family tradition. He may want to emulate or better his relative's deeds or to overcome a challenge his relative failed to defeat. The family may even be obsessed with a fragment of map purporting to show a section of the dungeon. They still search for the area (and the treasure said to be hidden there).
- **It's a Family Tradition and Something Went Wrong:** Exploring Gloamhold is a family tradition, but something went horribly wrong. Perhaps, a relative died during a delve and their body was not recovered. Alternatively, the relative could have simply disappeared—fate unknown—or lost an heirloom in the dungeon. Discovering the truth and/or recovering what was lost are powerful personal motivators for an adventurer.
- **Revenge:** Someone betrayed the PC's family. Perhaps they murdered family members, stole a priceless heirloom or enacted some other horrible betrayal. Whatever they did, they fled into Gloamhold. The only way to have revenge is to enter the dungeon, track down the malefactor and slay him.

OTHER REASONS TO ADVENTURE

Knowing why a PC adventures is a cracking way of understanding how he might act while exploring Gloamhold. It is a dangerous profession after all and few—if any—individuals take it up for no good reason. Common reasons include:

- **Accused:** The PC is accused of a serious crime (perhaps justly, perhaps unjustly). To escape punishment (or to pay off a hefty fine) he now adventures. If the PC was wrongly accused, he may also seek revenge or the means to prove his innocence.
- **Bloodlust:** The PC loves violence and meting out death to his enemies. The only way to do so legally is to adventure.
- **Glory:** The PC has a burning desire to be famous; slaying monsters, exploring renowned death-traps and protecting the innocents is an excellent way of achieving fame. He may alternatively seek to prove his worth to a specific organisation—perhaps the Order of the Watch Eternal—so that he might be welcomed into its august ranks.
- **Love:** To prove his worth to his beloved, the PC is adventuring. He may be seeking unending wealth, renown or a certain object stipulated by his love.
- **Power:** The PC desires to be powerful for some (hopefully benign) reason.
- **Protect:** The PC adventures to keep Ashlar, his faith or something else safe from monstrous incursions or other threat.
- **Rescue:** The PC is searching for a missing loved one. They may have simply disappeared one day or could have been taken during a raid by slavers, troglodytes or some other group.
- **Searching:** Obsessed with a particular item—perhaps an artifact or holy relic—the PC quests to gain it for himself. Alternatively, the PC could be seeking forbidden knowledge, a lost, legendary locale and so on.
- **Thrill-Seeker:** The PC was bored in his former life; adventuring provides the thrills he seeks.
- **Told to Go:** The PC has been told to adventure by someone else—perhaps a noble, religious leader or family member. He could even have been kicked out of home. The PC might not actually want to be an adventurer and could dream of settling down some day.

HIDDEN MOTIVATIONS

Sometimes an adventurer is exactly what he seems. Others have a dark secret or secret motivation that compels them to a life of adventure. A secret motivation can be a great way of adding depth and role-playing fun to a PC. Such secret motivations not only act as a reason for the PC to adventure but can also form a vital facet of his personality.

When considering a PC's secret motivation, remember they are much more fun if his companions gradually learn about them. Consider ways of bringing them into play on occasion through side quests and encounters specifically tailored for the PC. Some possible secret motivations include:

- **Cursed:** The PC is cursed. Whether this curse has a tangible mechanical benefit or not, the PC has been compelled to leave

home. The curse lingers until he has completed a quest, slain a particularly creature or achieved some other goal.

- **Fractious Family:** Not everyone comes from a loving family. Some are factious while others are abusive, controlling or manipulative. Fleeing such a family is an excellent reason to go adventuring.
- **Love or Marriage:** The PC may be fleeing an arranged, loveless marriage. Alternatively, he may be trying to prove himself worthy of his true love.
- **Mystery:** The PC is investigating a strange mystery requiring him to travel to many locales within the dungeon.
- **On the Run:** Accused (either wrongfully or not) of a crime the PC has fled his home.
- **Revenge:** The PC seeks revenge against a certain person or organisation. They may be hiding—and the PC is searching for them—or he may be adventuring to gain enough power and wealth to crush his enemy.

- **Shame:** The PC is fleeing some terrible, secret shame and has chosen the anonymous life of an adventurer. If the shame is linked to a well-known public event, all the better
- **Tragedy:** Some tragedy has befallen the PC—the death of a loved one, the destruction of his home and so on—and the PC cannot bear to stay at home. Gloamhold is a good place to lose oneself.
- **Wealth:** The PC lusts after the finer things in life and adventures to gain loot. This is quite a common overt motivation for adventuring and so the PC should have a compelling reason to accumulate wealth. Perhaps he seeks to buy a certain property, has massive debts on which he intends to default and so on.



GENERIC DUNGEON FEATURES

Although Gloamhold is a huge, rambling affair several features are generic and occur throughout the dungeon. Such features are listed here.

Climate & Temperature: Generally, the air temperature is cool (14°C/58°F) all year round within Gloamhold's benighted precincts. During the summer months, a gentle breeze blows out of Gloamhold's many entrances while in the winter months this is reversed. Except for some isolated pockets of the Twisted Warrens, the air is clear and fresh.

Water Temperature: Never warmed by the sun's rays, the Murkwater is uniformly cold—and the temperature drops to just above freezing in the Breathless Narrows.

Illumination: Unless noted, there is no natural light in Gloamhold and most of its inhabitants do not require light to see; thus, explorers must likely bring their own.

Ceilings: In corridors and most chambers, the ceilings are generally 10-12 ft. high. In high status chambers—temples, ceremonial entrances and the like—the ceilings can be as much as 40 ft. above the floor.

Doors: Gloamhold is ancient and any original features made of wood, or other organic material, has long since rotted away

(or been burnt for warmth or light). Thus, any remaining doors are of stone—or rarely rusting iron.

Floors: In areas such as Rivengate or the Three Sisters, the floors are of smoothed stone or flagstones. Occasionally, chambers of great importance—temples, audience chambers and the like—still have their decorative inset mosaics portraying disturbing, dark things. However, most such features have long since been destroyed.

Leavings: Most areas in Gloamhold have been lived in and fought over for centuries; thus, the leavings of this strife and life are ever-present throughout the dungeon. Such leavings could include scraps of clothing, bones, broken equipment, graffiti, the remains of old campsites and so on. Most such leavings are worthless to the PCs, but may provide useful clues to recent (or past) events.

Walls: In worked areas, the walls are smooth—either smoothed by long dead miners or faced by a wall of mortared stone. This once fine work is now cracked and crumbling. Walls in the Twisted Warrens are natural—rough rock boasting many small niches, ledges and indentations.

THE GLOAMHOLD LOOK

A subtle and ancient curse of great potency and malignancy lurks within Gloamhold's gloomy, dust-shrouded halls. Curiously, it seems only those who dwell in the world of men—humans, elves, dwarves and the like—fall prey to its malign influence. Those accustomed to living underground in the permanent dark of the ancient fortress's ebon reaches appear immune to its effect.

Thus, few explorers escape Gloamhold unscathed for the dungeon itself infuses its malignity upon all who tarry too long within its doom-drenched halls. Many who delve its depths emerge...changed. In the surrounding area those bearing a certain haggard, prematurely aged appearance or who appear distracted by things no one else can see are often referred to as having the "Gloamhold Look".

Some explorers resist Gloamhold's insidious influence longer than others, keeping it at bay for years while the unlucky ones quickly succumb to its subtle influence. To begin with, the Gloamhold Look is a subtle thing—manifesting itself perhaps as slightly greying hair or deep bags under the afflicted individual's eyes. However, as the curse takes hold, these changes deepen and become more severe.

Most healers are powerless to slow, hinder or reverse the progression of their patient's Gloamhold Look. Only powerful

magic beyond the reach of all but the richest or most powerful folk, or time spent away from Gloamhold's gloomy precincts, can loosen the curse's persistent grasp.

Generally, Gloamhold's curse may fall upon an unfortunate explorer, when one of the following occurs while the character is in Gloamhold:

- When the character is knocked unconscious.
- When the character is slain (but subsequently returned to life).
- When the character is charmed, dominated or otherwise magically compelled to carry out someone else's wishes.
- When the character fails to resist a magical effect that renders them frightened, scared, panicked or the like.

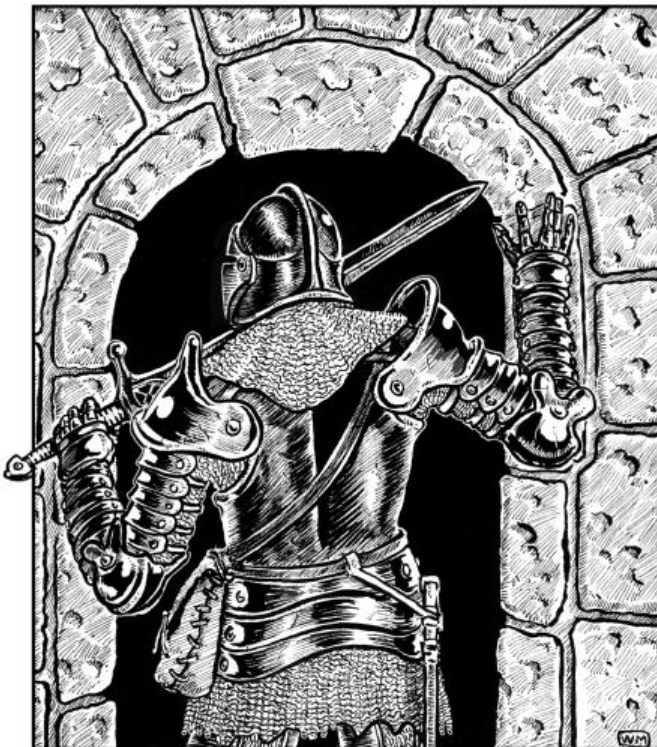
Additionally, certain places are so steeped in ancient evil, that the curse is particularly virulent in such locations. Simply entering such areas could be enough to trigger the onset—or the worsening—of the curse. Such locations—and their effects—are at the GM's discretion, but should include any place dedicated to Dagon's worship.

THE ILLUSION OF DETAIL

In Gloamhold, a GM can never be perfectly prepared. No one has the time—or I suspect the patience—to design hundreds of encounter areas. When the PCs are in danger of wandering out of the area the GM has fleshed out, disaster looms. At this point, an inexperienced, tired or stressed GM can panic and either the session comes to a juddering halt or the quality of GMing plummets dramatically. Neither situation is ideal.

The following tactics work well and enable the GM to provide the illusion of detail without flogging himself to death preparing countless areas and encounters.

- **Blockages:** The actions of burrowing monsters, the side effects of powerful spells or even just earth tremors and earthquakes can temporarily block off access to part of a dungeon. If it's rained recently, flooding can also create an area of all but impassable terrain for low-level characters. Once the GM has prepared the relevant dungeon sections, he can remove the blockage—the flood waters subside, the powerful spell wears off, the dungeon denizens clear the blockage and so on.
- **Cry for Help:** In a similar vein to random encounters, the party might encounter someone who desperately needs their help. Perhaps, they encounter an escaped prisoner or slave who needs to be escorted to the surface or the horribly wounded sole survivor of another adventuring band. If you use this strategy, be sure to reward the PCs for their aid. The NPC might even become a regular fixture in the campaign.



- **Dungeon Dressing:** Dungeon dressing is awesome. Raging Swan Press released a 300+ page book (*GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing*) devoted to the subject. In the context of the illusion of detail, dungeon dressing fulfil two important roles: it both slows down the PCs (as they investigate the mutilated body, strange graffiti daubed in blood or whatever) and helps the GM to add depth and verisimilitude to the dungeon.
- **Powerful Monsters:** As effective as a blockage, placing a monster or pack of monsters the party know they can't defeat is a great way of diverting a rampaging band of adventurers. Use this tactic carefully. If the PCs don't realise how powerful the monsters are, things can go horribly wrong (rapidly).
- **Random Encounters:** The wise GM has a small pool of detailed random encounters to hand. Such encounters enable him to slow down a party's progress, if they are heading in a direction he has not yet detailed. These encounters don't have to be particularly deadly, they should just slow the party down. Dungeon wanderers (gelatinous cubes, packs of roaming undead and so on) or even other bands of adventurers make great add-in encounters. Chance encounters with other adventurers don't even have to end in combat. Padding out a session with pre-designed random encounters gives a GM breathing space to prepare the section of dungeon ahead.
- **Sub-Levels and Side Complexes:** Dropping in a small side complex of rooms, or an access point to a self-contained sub-level can divert the party long enough to give the GM time to prepare the upcoming area. These small "mini-dungeons" don't need to be fully fleshed out. The GM just needs enough details to wing it. The players will likely never know if the monsters and treasure make sense in relation to the sub-level's theme.

When using these tactics, don't use only one or two. A clever GM mixes things up a bit so the PCs don't realise what is going on. Using a mix of the above tactics helps the GM maintain the players' suspension of disbelief and keeps the session running smoothly.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The following seven pages, present tools to aid in creating the illusion of detail. Use these as a starting point, and develop your own as time allows. Remember, also, to modify the presented material to make sense both to the wider campaign and the current situation.

MINOR EVENTS

Use this table, to generate minor events to add atmosphere to the PCs' explorations. Roll 2d20, and modify the result as appropriate.

RESULT	EVENT
2	Ahead, in the dim light at the very extent of your torch's illumination, a vaguely man-shaped shadow seems to detach itself from the wall and slink away into the darkness.
3	Suddenly, the harsh clatter of metal on metal—or perhaps metal on stone—reaches your ears from an unknown direction. The sound fades away almost as quickly as it began.
4	The faint smell of burning wood and smoke reaches your nostrils, carried on a faint breeze.
5	Cold water from the ceiling drips onto your head and shoulders.
6	The faint sounds of combat—the clash of metal on metal and the screams of the dying—reaches your ears. The acoustics of the area you are in make it impossible to determine exactly where the battle is being fought.
7	A faint chanting—from an indeterminable source—reaches your ears.
8	The heavy tang of saltwater fills the air.
9	A faint breeze blows into your faces.
10	A gust of wind swirls down the corridor; it has a 50% chance of extinguishing unprotected light sources such as torches.
11	The faint clank of metal on stone reaches your ears.
12	A bang akin to a door being slammed shut echoes through the gloomy halls.
13	The jingling and rattling of a chain breaks the silence.
14	A piercing scream suddenly breaks the silence; it quickly fades away into pain-filled gurgling. After a moment, that too falls silent.
15	The cloying stench of rotting flesh fills this area, but there is no immediately identifiable source.
16	Faint mist clings to the floor.
17	As you pass through the area, several small pieces of rubble fall from an unstable section of ceiling, narrowly missing you.
18	A distant gong sounds once.
19	The faint drip, drip of water echoes through this area. Just around the next corner dripping water has filled a wide hollow in the floor blocking further progress.
20	A strong wind blows through the area and extinguishes all nonmagical open flames.
21	Cobwebs choke the exit from this area.
22	You enter an area redolent with a dank, earthy smell.
23	You hear the furtive tread of footprints from the darkness; investigation reveals nothing.
24	Soft giggling emerges from the darkness.
25	A loud crash from somewhere above causes dust and tiny flecks of stone to sift down from the ceiling.
26	Tiny motes of sparkling dust dance in the stiff breeze blowing through this area.
27	A large mouth suddenly appears on the wall near the closest exit and says in a loud voice, "Not this way, you fools, for your death awaits beyond."
28	A soundless and spectral cloaked figure emerges from one wall and glides toward you before sinking into the floor.
29	Your light sources suddenly burn blue for a few seconds before returning to their normal hue.
30	The stench of rotten eggs cloy at your throats in this airless section of dungeon.
31	The ceiling creaks and groans as the stones shift. Dust falling from above coats your heads and shoulders.
32	Crackling magical energy fills the air. The smell of ozone reaches your nostrils but there is no other visible effect.
33	Glimmering motes of shimmering light bob in the air at the extent of your lights. If anyone approaches, the lights change to a deep, baleful red before fading away.
34	A distant howling—deeper than that of any dog—echoes through Gloamhold's halls.
35	The stench of sweat and faeces hangs heavily in the air.
36	A sudden flash of light—perhaps from a lantern briefly un-shuttered—betrays the presence of someone up ahead.
37	As you move through the area an audible click sounds from below your feet, but nothing else happens. (Careful investigations reveal a pit trap wedged shut filling much of the floor.)
38	A faint shuffling sound emerges from the darkness behind the party.
39	A spear suddenly clatters into the wall close to your head. The force of the impact twists the spear tip, rendering the weapon all but useless. Of the attacker, there is no sign.
40	A chilling wind issues from the darkness ahead and blows over you and your companions. It tugs at your cloaks and seems to cut through your bodies before it dies away.

DUNGEON DRESSING

Use this table, to add flavour and atmosphere to the areas the PCs explore. Roll 2d20, and modify the result as appropriate.

RESULT	DRESSING
2	Faint tracks in the dust record the passage of a small group of booted humanoids. (A skilled tracker can determine there were five individuals and one was much smaller than the rest—perhaps a gnome or halfling).
3	A smear of charcoal on the wall at about a human's shoulder height shows where someone stubbed out a torch.
4	A great crack splits the wall to the left where it meets the floor. Faint cracks radiate outwards across the floor for a good 10 ft. or so.
5	Cold water drips from the ceiling into small puddles on the floor.
6	The heavy tang of salt hangs in the air.
7	A ripped and sodden sack lies crumpled on the floor.
8	A large faded chalk arrow on the wall points back the way you have come.
9	A smattering of dried blood decorates the floor. Nearby lies the snapped-off head of an arrow, blood covering its wickedly pointed tip.
10	A spider web of tiny cracks crisscross the floor; a faint, but chill breeze emanates from within.
11	A broken spear haft lies on the dusty floor; rust wreathes its dull head.
12	Brown slime covers the ceiling; occasionally small globules of gunk drip down onto the slippery floor.
13	A partial carving of a gigantic staring eye decorates the lintel above a doorway; it appears the carving was never finished as the eye lacks an iris.
14	A clump of fungi and mould grows in the shadows cast by a narrow overhang jutting from one wall.
15	The cloying stench of rotting vegetation fills this area; thick roots of some kind of strange plant hang from the ceiling.
16	An open, shallow ten-foot deep, 15-foot wide pit pierces the floor. Dusty rubble covers the bottom of the pit.
17	Shards of pottery and a few mouldy rags lie scattered in the middle of the floor.
18	A rotting pile of wood fills one corner; it probably once comprised furniture.
19	A smear of dried blood mars the floor.
20	A dagger hilt juts from a crack in the floor; the dagger can be removed from the crack easily but the weapon's blade is dull and pointless.
21	A discarded dust-shrouded torch stub lies on the floor.
22	Dried dung—clearly from a large creature—decorates the floor.
23	The strong smell of urine fills the area and a slightly damp section of floor shows where someone—or something—recently relieved itself.
24	Deep scratches on the wall are indicative of sword or axe blows.
25	A jumble of bones—some kind of large long-dead lizard—lie sprawled upon the floor.
26	A shredded bloodstained cloak—caught on a rocky protuberance—flutters in a light breeze.
27	Three skulls—each missing its jaw—arranged in a line across the floor, perhaps as a warning or boundary marker, grin at you.
28	A sporadic trail of worn silver coins—stamped with a troglodyte's head—runs for about fifty feet before abruptly ceasing.
29	The remains of a cold camp fill a side chamber. Four bedrolls and discarded mouldering foodstuffs along with a suit of rusty chainmail shows were once someone rested.
30	A cairn of jumbled stones—too small to be a grave—stands in the centre of the area. Perhaps it once served as a boundary marker.
31	A handprint of dried, flecked blood mars one wall. The handprint is sized for a human or similar individual, but intriguingly is missing three fingers.
32	"Turn back. Death awaits this way" is daubed on the wall in large chalk letters.
33	A discarded wineskin lies on the floor. The faint smell of red wine is barely detectable.
34	A one-foot wide channel full of slowly flowing muddy water emerges from one wall, cuts across the floor and disappears into the opposite wall.
35	The dust lies thickly here; it appears no one has passed this way for untold years.
36	The floor is curiously free of dust, grit or detritus; it is as if it had been swept clean.
37	A large shattered crossbow bolt lies broken on the floor; a deep gouge in the wall shows where it struck.
38	Graffiti scratched into the wall—perhaps with a dagger—reads, "MH & RF."
39	A silver coin lies invitingly in plain sight in the middle of the floor. Further ahead, another coin glimmers in your lights.
40	A crudely mortared wall of stones blocks access to whatever lies beyond a small alcove piercing one wall.

SAMPLE ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

To maintain the illusion of detail, utilise the descriptions below to describe chambers the party reach which you have not yet designed. Remember to modify the descriptions below to suit PCs' explorations. These areas can be nothing more than an empty chamber to explore or rest in or the scene of a random—or planned—encounter. The descriptions below are designed to be read aloud to the players.

1. A large arched niche pierces one wall of this chamber. Filled with rotting wood and rubble, the niche appears to be a dumping ground of sorts. Elsewhere in the room, several sections of floor are cracked and pitted.
2. This irregularly-shaped room has an uneven floor. Several small puddles fill in the deeper depressions. Elsewhere, small pieces of rubble litter the floor.
3. This chamber's arched ceiling rises to a height of 20 ft. in the centre of the room, but is barely man-high where it meets the walls. The arches holding the ceiling aloft are carved to represent writhing tentacles; a few have been defaced but their upper portions remain untouched.
4. A jagged, one-foot crack runs across this chamber's floor. Beyond, two archways lead into narrow corridors.
5. A pile of rotting wood, rubbish and other detritus partially obscures one wall of this chamber. The stench of decay and rot hangs heavily in the air.
6. A low mortared wall of dressed stone surrounds a shaft piercing this room's floor. Two broken buckets, one still attached to a short length of rope, lie discarded nearby. The ceiling is of natural unworked stone—as if the chamber had not been finished. Four archways—one in each wall—lead elsewhere.
7. This large chamber was the scene of an ancient battle. Skeletal remains of at least a dozen humanoids lie scattered about the room where they fell. Several broken rusting spears and shattered, rotting shields lie among the fallen.
8. Part of one wall of this room has collapsed, revealing the natural rock behind the dressed stone wall. The rubble has been moved to create a breastwork across one of the room's exits. Splatters of old, dried blood decorate the top of the breastwork.
9. The remains of a cold camp are evident here. A tattered cloak—sized for a gnome or halfling—along with two empty wineskins and the stripped bones of a chicken and crusts of mouldy bread bear testimony to an explorer's rest.
10. Scorch marks on two of the room's walls and the floor bear mute testimony to—surely—fire magic being used here. The ceiling remains untouched, but the burnt, cracked bones of some unfortunate humanoid mars the centre of the scorched area.
11. Twin niches pierce the wall on either side of this room's archway. Each niche is about five-foot deep and features a wide shelf about two-foot above the floor. Scuff marks and a slight worn sheen to the floor show where many people have crossed the chamber.
12. The chamber seems to be a nexus of sorts. Six archways pierce its walls. A narrow strip of carven runes surround each archway, perhaps providing a clue as to what once lay beyond.
13. This room features a dual-height floor and ceiling. Toward one end of the room, the floor and ceiling, is five-foot higher than the rest. Shallow steps divide the room and link the two areas together.
14. Two lines of pillars run down the sides of this chamber, holding the ceiling aloft. The domed ceiling is 30-foot high at its highest point. Two of the pillars show signs of damage; each appears to have been struck repeatedly with a heavy object.
15. A raised dais dominates the centre of this chamber. Upon the dais, stands a beautifully carved fountain surrounded by a sunken pool. The fountain has been crafted to depict a trio of thick tentacles bursting forth from the pool's centre. No water now flows here and the pool is dry and full of rubbish, refuse and dust.
16. This wide chamber narrows as it approaches a ten-foot wide archway dominating the end wall. The carven stone faces of three hideous humanoids glare down from above the archway.
17. Four pillars once held the ceiling aloft, here. Three yet stand, but one has fallen scattering rubble about the area. One of the other pillars obviously once held a secret for a small one-foot square niche at its base stands open and (sadly) empty.
18. A gaping open pit in one of this chamber's doorways blocks access to the area beyond. Two skeletons, pierced by dozens of tiny stone spikes, lie in the pit. The chamber boasts a stone plinth and altar set in a semi-circular niche. The chamber's other doorway—twice the width of the trapped one—appears unprotected.
19. Water oozes down one of this chamber's walls. A mottled black and brown mould covers the wall and is slowly growing outwards across the floor. The faint scent of decay hangs in the air. Amid the mould lies a discarded warhammer; thick mould and small mushrooms cover its rotting wooden haft.
20. The once smooth floor of this chamber has been hacked and smashed. Nine small holes, only about a half-foot deep mar the floor. Near each stands a small pile of rubble.

SAMPLE CORRIDOR DESCRIPTIONS

Many corridors are featureless areas of little or no interest. Other times, a corridor serves as the location of a random encounter or the scene of a trap. Remember to modify the descriptions below to suit the PCs' explorations. Much of the descriptions below are designed to be read aloud to the players. Information inside brackets can be gleaned through investigation.

1. A noticeable groove in the floor—perhaps worn by the tread of countless feet—runs down the centre of this ten-foot wide corridor. Without deviation, it leads directly away from the party.
2. Water oozes down one wall before betraying a slight gradient and flowing away down the corridor. The floor is slick and wet and tracking through the area is all but impossible. Beyond rendering the floor slippery, the sheet of water isn't deep enough to hinder explorers' progress.
3. The corridor's ceiling is arched and about 12-foot high above the centre of the floor. Every 20-foot or so, a three-inch diameter hole pierces alternating walls. (The holes are angled downwards at about 45 degrees, well-constructed and about one-foot deep.)
4. An archway pierces one wall of this corridor. Runes once adorned the arch, but these have been hacked and smashed and are virtually unreadable. A crudely mortared wall of mismatched stone fills the archway. The work is obviously different to the surrounding style.
5. A heap of mouldering wood and thick rotting rope partially blocks the corridor. The wood and rope smell of mould and decay. The sodden wood looks so soft almost anyone could crush it in their hand. (The rope—while thick—breaks if used to support any weight greater than 100 lbs. There is 120 ft. of rope, but it weighs three times as much as normal.)
6. Partway along the corridor, a steep set of steps descends for about five-feet. Fifteen-foot further on, an identical set returns the corridor to its normal level. Above the sunken section, the ceiling—unworked stone—drops by a similar amount. Thus, explorers cannot see what lies beyond.
7. A doorway pierces one wall of the corridor. The stone around the doorway is scorched and blackened. Close to the door, some of the stone even seems to have melted.
8. The corridor doubles in width and the ceiling climbs to 15-foot high. Slender columns, carved to depict questing tentacles emerging from the floor, hold the ceiling aloft and partially obscure explorers' vision.
9. A plain five-foot wide shaft pierces the ceiling and floor. A strong breeze blows up the shaft, making the area of corridor in its immediate vicinity noticeably colder. (Explorers looking up or down the shaft discovers it extends as far as their vision. At certain points, it seems to intersect other open spaces.)
10. A cave-in blocks the corridor. Dust and grit covers the floor. Haphazardly piled stones nearby suggest someone tried to clear the blockage, but quickly gave up.
11. Half-way down the corridor a small forest of long slender stone spikes has burst from the floor. Half the skeleton of a humanoid lies sprawled nearby. The unfortunate's legs remain upright, impaled on several spikes.
12. Six staggered doorways pierce the walls of this corridor. Two have closed stone doors, while the other four stand open.
13. The bas-relief carving of a hideous, man-sized winged and be-tentacled demon leers at explorers from a plinth set in a recessed niche at the end of the corridor. Its three crimson eyes glimmer menacingly.
14. A stone channel cut into the floor by one wall holds sluggishly flowing water. The discoloured water carries much grit and silt, and is unlikely to be drinkable without treatment. Faded chalk writing above the stream comprises one word: "safe".
15. This corridor is double the width of the previous area. Bizarrely, the floor is of two heights; one five-foot above the other. A slender, unadorned stone railing separates the two sections of corridor. The ceiling is uniformly 20-foot high.
16. A short flight of cracked, shallow steps drop the corridor's level by a few feet. A broken crossbow bolt lies discarded on the bottom step.
17. A narrow opening in one wall leads to a tight spiral staircase. (It turns twice before reaching a stone door that opens to reveal long gallery. Small cunningly hidden slits cut into the wall provide a commanding view of the corridor below.)
18. The corridor opens into a 30-foot long, 20-foot wide space. The corridor continues onwards through an archway in the far wall. An immense iron brazier—easily five-foot wide and ten-foot tall stands in the centre of the area. The brazier has a small door on one side. Burnt and blackened bones half fill the brazier and the ceiling above is thickly blackened by soot.
19. Niches pierce one wall of this corridor. Each holds a three-foot high plinth. Upon each plinth stands the statue of a snarling warrior holding a spear angled out into the corridor. Each statue depicts a short, muscular reptilian humanoid with a lizard-like head. (Explorers can easily walk beneath the spears).
20. A wide stream channel cuts the corridor in half. A gently arched stone bridge crosses the stream. The bridge has no parapet or handrail, but is only 15-foot long.

EXAMPLE ADVENTURING BANDS

The PCs are not the only adventurers exploring Gloamhold. At any one time, a dozen or more groups might be active in and around the dungeon. Such parties are not necessarily hostile toward the PCs, but neither must they also be friendly. An encounter with such a group could slow down the PCs' progress through the dungeon and—at the least—offer a chance for some role-playing.

THE BLADES THREE

The Blades Three have a tragic history. Once known as The Nine, the group numbered, surprisingly, nine members. Most have since died during forays deep into Gloamhold. One, driven mad by his experiences jumped into Hard Bay when the band was returning from a particularly harrowing expedition. His body was never found.

The three survivors—now insanelly loyal to one another after countless near-death experiences—suffer from suggestions of a malignant curse hanging over the group. Others mutter, the three are in truth black-hearted and lure newcomers deep into Gloamhold before slaying them.

The Blades Three have recently relocated to Dunstone in an attempt to outrun their reputation. Their plan is to “break in some new recruits” by exploring the Mottled Spire’s wild flanks before returning to Gloamhold. Thus far only a pair of neophyte—and surely doomed—warriors have expressed interest in joining the trio.

- **Arlamen Everdun (NG male half-elf ranger 3):** Passionate in his love of life, but dispirited by the group’s fortunes, Arlamen wants to give up exploring Gloamhold. He longs for the southern forests, and would return there if not for Elimia and Neega. Both prefer to continue their adventures and Arlamen feels duty bound to protect them. Skilled and brave, Arlamen nevertheless fears his doom lies in Gloamhold’s ebon depths.
- **Elimia Itkonen (N female human wizard 3):** Intoxicated by Gloamhold’s undoubted great age, and its arcane secrets, Elimia is obsessed with exploring the Twilight City. In ancient, crumbling texts she has read of the great magics employed to create the city and lusts after them. Her single-minded determination is what drives the group on (and what has caused the most casualties). Beautiful and beguiling, she can bend the weak-willed to her will and this has directly resulted in several deaths.
- **Neega Light-Foot (N female half-orc thief 4):** Neega is a relatively simple soul. At home in the dark, she enjoys going where others cannot and sometimes sneaks off on extended solo scouting missions. She is under no illusion as to her combat prowess, however, and rarely starts fights. She is content to watch and explore. Neega wears studded leather armour stained black with soot and favours the scimitar on the

rare occasions she must fight. Her nose has been broken more than once, making an already plain face even less becoming. Neega is certain people look down on her because of her racial heritage and is determined to prove her worth.

THE DEEP DELVERS

Neophyte adventurers, the Deep Delvers have done little but talk of adventuring in Gloamhold’s depths. Without sufficient funds to purchase their own boat, they have failed thus far to retain the services of a fisherman brave enough—and in their minds, trustworthy enough—to transport them across Hard Bay (and crucially, wait to bring them back).

- **Aldal Garsten (NG male dwarf fighter 2):** A miner by trade (originally), Aldal has come to Languard to discover his cousin’s fate. Last seen exploring the ruins of Greystone along with his companions, Falgar Garsten was a warrior skilled with warhammer and shield. He disappeared six months ago and he—and his companions—have not been heard from since. The fisherman paid to wait for them reported hearing sounds of sustained battle, screams and then silence. Terrified, he fled back to Languard. Aldal chafes at the delay in reaching Gloamhold and agitates for the party to find alternate employment to raise the sums required to purchase and outfit their own vessel.
- **Aune Pasanen (CG female wizard 1):** Born with a crippled right-arm, life has ever been hard for Aune. Blessed with a lively mind, and boundless enthusiasm for magic she was privately tutored by her father who had a small amount of magical skill. Aune sees magic as the tool through which she can live a full and vibrant life. Scatter-brained and easily distracted, she is nevertheless good-intentioned and is keen to discover what ancient secrets lie within Gloamhold’s depths. Secretly, she hopes her magical pursuits might one day give her the tools to repair her shattered arm. She tolerates Ylermi for the sake of group cohesion, but is easily frustrated by his tendency to blast first and ask questions later.
- **Etune Lightstep (NG female halfling thief 2):** Well known in several of Languard’s lower-quality taverns, inn and gambling dens, Etune is clever, witty, good with her hands and—seemingly—perpetually on the edge of destitution. She fancies herself a professional gambler, but in reality, she’s a popular opponent because she loses.
- **Firatis Natityrr (CG female half-elf thief 2):** Perhaps the best-travelled of the Delvers, Firatis has visited every village and town of note in Ashlar over the last decade or so. Obsessed with gathering local lore, stories and songs Firatis can often be found in certain low-brow drinking establishments or at Languard’s gates regaling travellers with her songs. While not classically good looking, Firatis has cultivated a particularly

confident and striking persona that plays well with the masses. She is the Delver's spokeswoman and their public face.

- **Ilari Eskola (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 1):** Ilari is fascinated by stone and building works of all sorts. He has spent weeks poring over every aspect of Darlen's cathedral in Languard and is intoxicated by stories of the Twilight City and its strange architecture. While his church duties keep him ever-busy, he has received the curate's permission to travel to Gloamhold on condition he keeps an eye open for evidence of evil cults and sinister doings. Unbeknownst to himself, Ilari—strong, fit and wise—has been earmarked as a potential future member of the Order of the Watch Eternal.
- **Ylermi Rantanen (LG male human wizard 1):** Intelligent and quick witted, Ylermi has quickly progressed through the magical arts. Also, a moderately skilled jeweller, he—sadly—suffers from a certain shortness of breath that limits his adventuring activities. Never happier than when blasting his enemies, however, he can't wait to begin his career proper.

THE SHINING FELLOWSHIP

A skilled, well-established group, the Shining Fellowship have made over a dozen forays into Gloamhold's shadow-drenched depths. While they have not recovered fabulous wealth or prized ancient artefacts they are notable in that thus far not a single member of the party has died. Several group members—Amallaemar, Elgal and Urmas most notably—have other interests beyond adventuring and thus the group's forays are not particularly frequent.

The group gets its name from its members' penchant for magical light, and their extensive employment of it on their adventures. Each of the group bears silver daggers wreathed in permanent magical light as well as several carefully concealed and similarly enscribed coins and other small tokens.

- **Amallaemar Uthliavar (NG female half-elf wizard 5):** Amallaemar is a bit of a mystery to her companions. She arrived in Ashlar a decade ago and has slowly made a name for herself as a competent wizard and spellcaster for hire. From her first year in Languard, she became intrigued with Gloamhold and its legends, but was in no rush to explore the place until she found a suitable group of companions to protect her. As well as her arcane studies, Amallaemar loves to sculpt and is skilled at creating small, incredibly detailed figurines. Recently, she has begun experimenting with imbuing her sculptures with arcane power. While she has yet to master the process, she is becoming increasingly excited at the prospect of success. Thus far, she has not joined the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus, but when her experimentations bear fruit she will apply for membership.

- **Elgal Torsten (NG male dwarf thief 6):** A wanderer, before turning to the life of an adventurer, Elgal served several lords as an engineer and builder, overseeing various building projects. Thus, he has several friends in high places who look favourably upon him. Blessed with a quick mind and quick hands, Elgal makes an excellent locksmith and trap disarmer. Elgal is not a stereotypical dwarf; while he loves drink, he does not relish combat and would rather achieve his goals through stealth, cunning and planning. Since Leneal joined the group, he has begun to take more care over his appearance.
- **Leneal Ningel (NG female gnome druid 4):** The newest member of the group—but not the youngest—Leneal hails from a small gnomish enclave overlooking the Selka River far to the south where the river tumbles out of the Forest of Grey Spires. The most private and shy of the group, she nevertheless has a wicked, but hard to appreciate, sense of humour that has occasionally got her into trouble. Secretly infatuated with Elgal, Leneal has so far refrained from terrorising the quiet dwarf with her worst (best) practical jokes.
- **Ogan (NG female half-orc cleric [Kalron] 3/fighter 2):** A skilled flute player, Ogan was little more than a street performer—albeit one whom thieves and pickpockets assiduously avoided—until she met and fell in love with Valto. His love awoke a fiery lust for life in her breast and she quickly fell to worshipping the hero-god Kalron. Together they form the nucleus of the group.
- **Urmas Lankinen (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 6):** The group's leader and spokesman, Urmas hails from Languard and is well known in the city's temple. The son of an armorer, Urmas is wise and charismatic, and popular among his companions. He spends little time preaching or tending his flock; of the group, he is the most motivated to plumb Gloamhold's depths for he has come to believe some terrible, lurking evil skulks therein.
- **Valto Itkonen (CG male human fighter 6):** Immensely strong and wild of temperament, Valto was a disaster as a merchant. Travelling with his father between Ashlar's many villages, he lusted for more from life and chafed at the boredom of buying and selling. When bandits attacked their caravan near Ashford, Valto discovered his true calling. Shortly thereafter, he abandoned the life of a merchant for one of adventure. Drawn to Languard he quickly met Ogan, with whom he fell in love.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Wandering monsters are an essential facet of Gloamhold. Their presence adds verisimilitude, depth and an interesting element of randomness and unpredictability to proceedings.

However, to avoid boring and bland wandering monster encounters that make no real sense you need to think about a couple of things. Principally, beyond determining what kind of monsters the party encounters (which is dependent on the level the PCs are exploring and local conditions therein), consider:

Beyond wandering, what are the wandering monsters actually doing?

That's a pretty important question. The answer has a huge influence on the encounter set-up. For example—obviously—a gelatinous cube is unlikely to be setting up camp for the night. Other wanderers, however, have more complex motivations and reasons for their actions. In a troglodyte tribal den, for example, wandering troglodytes might be:

- fetching water
- carrying away rubbish
- watching for intruders
- doing anything else troglodytes do in their lairs

Whatever the troglodytes are doing, they are unlikely to be hanging around doing nothing (except those darn lazy teenage troglodytes, that is).

There are three basic types of wandering monster. Each type gets up to different things in the dungeon. Use the lists below, to determine what a randomly encountered monster is doing. Remember, some results may make no sense when paired with the wanderers in question; modify the results as appropriate.

ORGANISED DUNGEON DENIZENS

These wanderers belong to the group controlling the dungeon level (or this part of Gloamhold). When encountered, the dungeon denizens are:

1. Patrolling their lair
2. Shirking their duties (drinking, gambling, sleeping etc.)
3. Carrying water
4. Disposing of rubbish
5. Escorting a prisoner
6. Watching for intruders
7. Chasing an escaped slave or prisoner
8. Repairing something such as a door, piece of furniture etc.
9. Moving foodstuffs or other heavy items about the lair
10. Loitering
11. Decorating something with graffiti
12. Arguing
13. Baiting a prisoner or small animal

14. Eating
15. Failing to watch for intruders (they could be asleep, drunk etc.)
16. Preparing to go on a scouting mission
17. Brawling with each other
18. Plotting against their chieftain or leader
19. Nefariously sneaking about
20. Making a lot of noise—perhaps shouting or singing

Instead of the dungeon's denizens, the party might encounter their slaves or an escaped prisoner. Such encounters will likely result in role-playing rather than combat and could even serve as a useful source of intelligence.

OTHER EXPLORERS

The PCs encounter another adventuring group or a group working against this area's denizens. They could be friendly (or not). When encountered, the explorers or interlopers are:

1. Sneaking towards their enemies
2. Returning from a raid with a prisoner
3. Resting
4. Setting up camp
5. Breaking camp
6. Setting a trap
7. Waiting to spring an ambush
8. Wandering about lost
9. Spying on their enemies
10. Searching for something hidden (a secret door, trap or treasure niche)

SCAVENGERS

Some monsters are nothing more than mindless or near-mindless scavengers, driven by their base, atavistic influences. Rats, giant spiders and gelatinous cubes all fall into this category. The other dungeon denizens may tolerate, fear or hunt these scavengers. Scavengers rarely deliberately carry treasure. When encountered, the scavengers are:

1. Sleeping
2. Resting
3. Eating
4. Hiding
5. Waiting to pounce
6. Creating a new nest or lair
7. Dragging or carrying something (probably prey)
8. Chasing prey

POWERS OF GLOAMHOLD

Gloamhold's evil denizens primarily worship (sometimes unknowingly) one of two fell powers. In fact, followers of the two struggle for power. Both fell beings are beings from pre-history little-known to normal, decent folk. However, adventurers daring to explore Gloamhold will undoubtedly encounter their followers.

AMON-PYR

CE demon god of troglodytes, darkness, evil, madness and water

Epithets: The Elder One, Lord of Slime

Symbol: A tentacled whip

Favoured Weapon: Whip

Raiment: Amon-Pyr's followers wear no raiment. Instead, they daub their bodies with strange tattoos of varying design to designate their status within the faith.

Teachings: Truth is meaningless without its shadow. To know truth is to know madness and despair. None may know the truth of the world without knowing the depths of their madness.

Holy Text: None survive intact, but rumours of the *Amoninomicon*—a foul text so depraved that possession and knowledge of more than a few pages can drive the possessor mad with terror—continue to circulate among his worshippers.

Additional Notes: Amon-Pyr is an ancient demonic power worshipped by troglodytes since the earliest days of the race's long-fallen empire. A tentacled demon that crawled from the unknown depths of the frigid, slime-coated waters of the Sea of Perpetual Misery, Amon-Pyr is a terrible figure from the world's pre-history. Only a few isolated troglodyte clans yet cling to his worship. Guarding fragments of ancient knowledge, these groups yet perform rituals the meaning and significance of which they have long since forgotten.



DAGON

CE demon god of deformity, the sea and sea monsters

Epithet: Shadow Under the Sea, Prince of the Deep

Symbol: A gold disk inscribed with sinister runes around an open octopus eye

Favoured Weapon: Trident

Raiment: Ragged, salt encrusted clothes.

Teachings: Knowledge is ancient. Knowledge is eternal. The world is older than mortals can conceive and elder powers live and slumber in its hidden depths waiting for their time to arise again. Through dreamings and nightmares the faithful can learn of what was and what will be again.

Holy Texts: Dagon's worshippers follow no set, laid down doctrine. Dagon's cares not exactly how his aberrant followers worship him as long as they worship him.

Additional Notes: Dagon is worshipped primarily by boggard, heretical sahuagin, skum and degenerate or insane coastal dwellers. Most of his worshippers are horribly misshapen, deformed creatures that interbreed with strange aquatic creatures.

Dagon's holy places are always in or near the sea. Therein his worshippers engage in strange and abhorrent practices and often also venerate the Great Old Ones. Followers of Cthulhu and Dagon are often allied.

Dagon rules an Abyssal ocean dotted with strange and terrible islands and scarred by deep ocean trenches filled with impossible sunken cities.



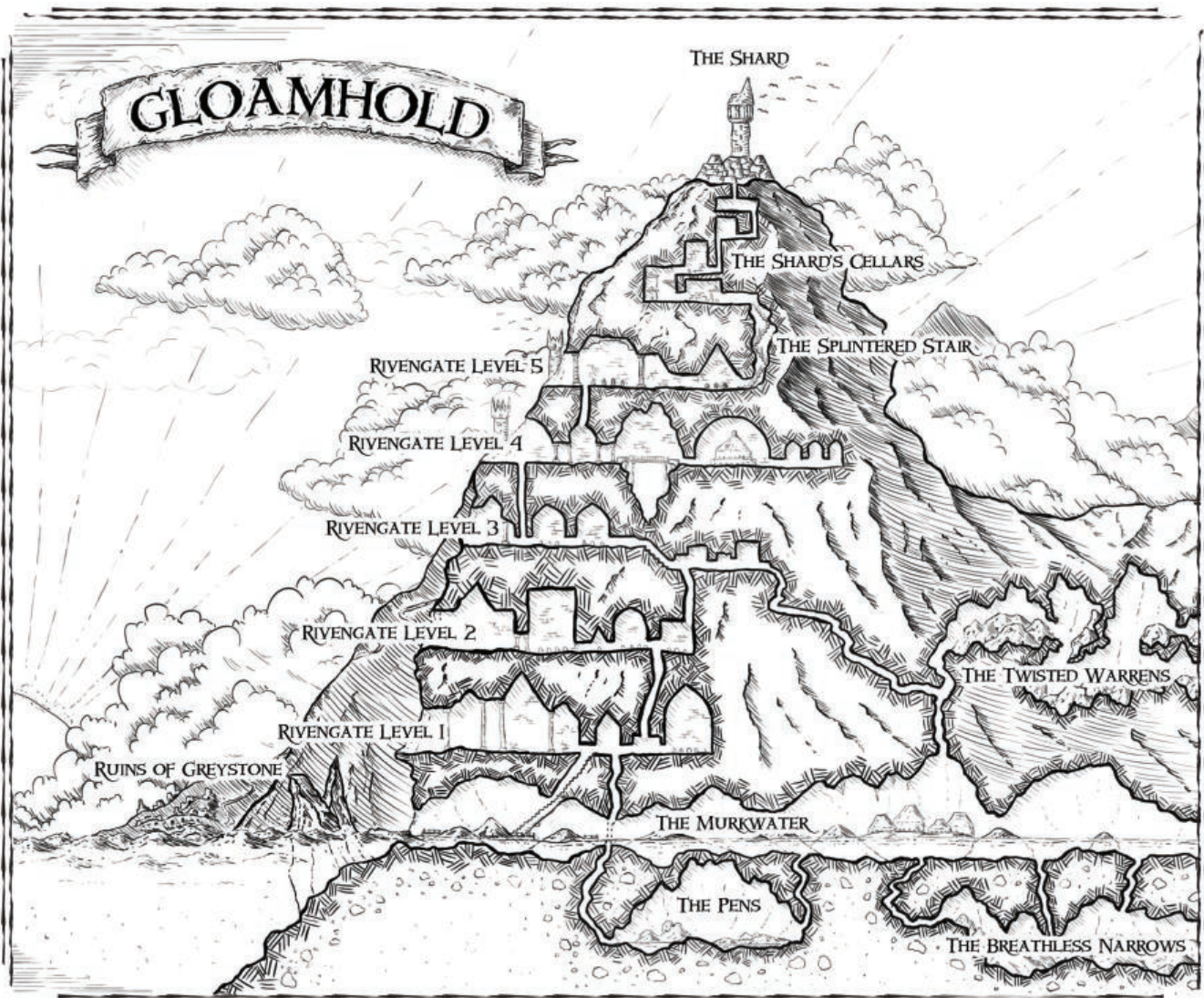
GLOAMHOLD AT A GLANCE

Glowing amid dark rumours and terrible stories of desperate adventure, death, betrayal and glimmering treasures squat the unutterably ancient halls of Gloamhold.

This crumbling, benighted, haunted dungeon complex of unknown, but undeniably vast, extent is buried deep within the grim and brooding spray-drenched headland of the Mottled Spire. It is a place of legends, madness and death.

Even reaching Gloamhold is difficult. By land, adventurers must negotiate miles of trackless, jagged crags and sullen, dark gorges, chasms and valleys. Those approaching by sea have it no better. They must brave over a mile of savage, foam-flecked waves. Tides about the headland are notoriously treacherous; wrecks of ships large and small driven to destruction on the rocks litter the seabed. Winter storms render Gloamhold all but inaccessible by sea for several months every year.

A harsh chunk of limestone rearing hundreds of feet into the perpetually cloudy sky the Mottled Spire looms over the turbulent waters of Hard Bay like a malevolent giant. Attempts to colonise the barren headland have all ended in failure and death. Surrounded by crumbled outbuildings, a now ruined lighthouse—now colloquially known as simply “The Shard”—stands atop the promontory’s highest, most wind lashed bluff. Elsewhere, on the spire’s landward side, languish the weed choked, tumbled ruins of Greystone—a fishing village abandoned decades ago. Occasionally, redoubtable bands of adventurers poke around both sets of ruins. Some return, while others simply disappear—perhaps finding certain secret connections rumoured to lead into the upper levels of Rivengate and from thence deeper into Gloamhold’s lightless depths.

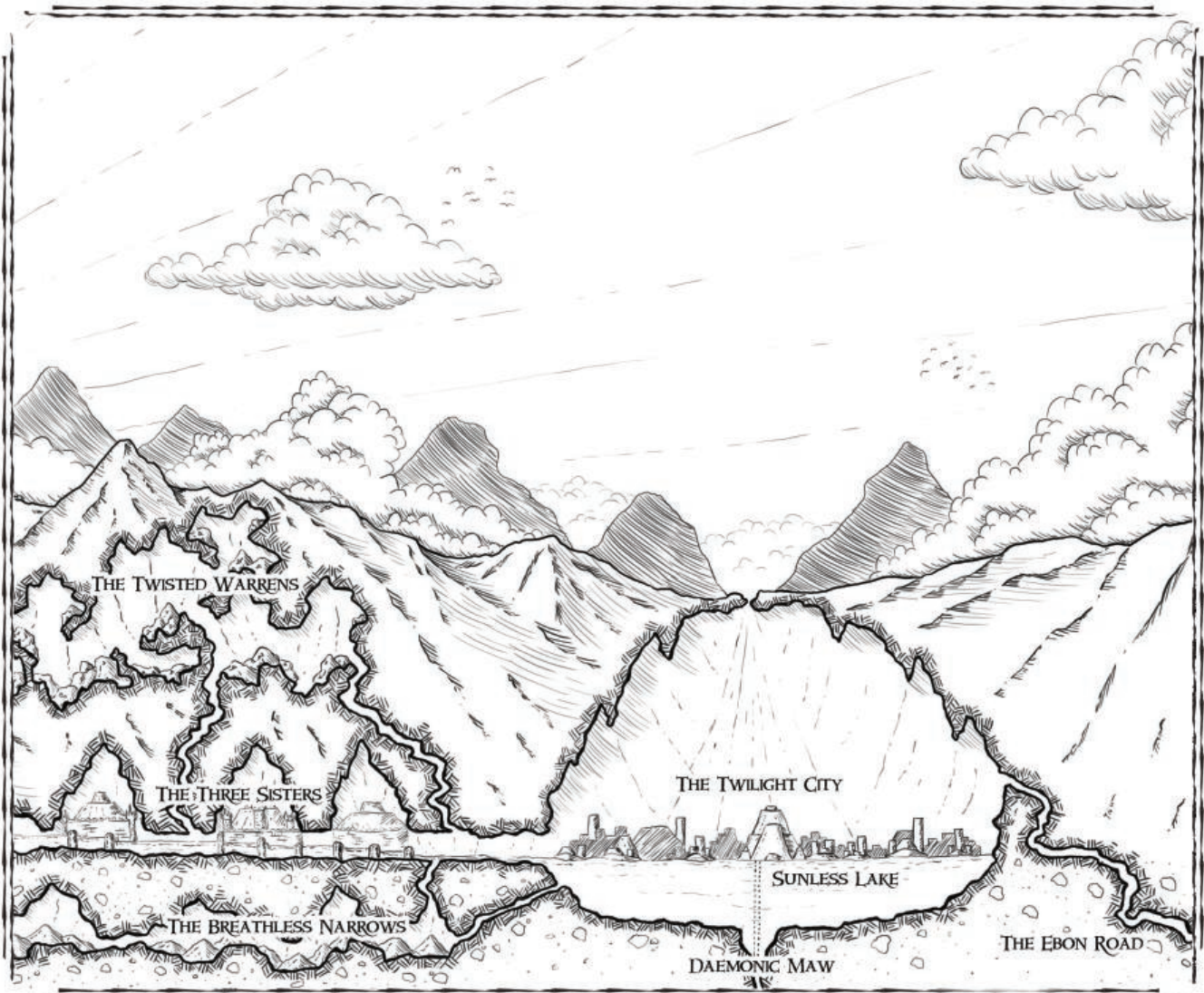


KNOWN LOCALES WITHIN GLOAMHOLD

Although much of Gloamhold remains unknown—nothing more than the subject of wild whispers and rumours—knowledge of a few locations has come to light through the explorations of brave (or foolhardy) adventurers.

- **Rivengate:** Of dark and forbidding aspect, the lower portions of once mighty Rivengate collapsed into the sea long ago. Built by unknown hands remnants of the citadel yet cling to the cliffs. The Splintered Stair links Rivengate to the cellars buried below the Shard.
- **The Murkwater:** Only skilled or lucky captains dare to sail into the gloom of Rivengate's gaping maw. Within flows the dark and treacherous Murkwater; the seething, foam-flecked waters below Rivengate are particularly hazardous because of the jagged rocks fallen from above.

- **The Twisted Warrens:** Honeycombing the rock above the Murkwater, the Twisted Warrens are a confused and convoluted network of natural caverns and passageways inhabited by derro, troglodytes, dark creepers and worse.
- **The Breathless Narrows:** A network of flooded, fractured caverns radiate outwards from beneath the Murkwater. The water therein is only fractionally above freezing and explorers need magic to survive for any length of time in this airless, lightless world.
- **The Twilight City:** Buried in an immense cavern, the Twilight City sprawls across a series of low islands struggling above the cold, dark waters of the Sunless Lake. An ancient place of stone ziggurats, fetid and twisted canals and cyclopean architecture, troglodytes fleeing the ruin of their ancient mighty empire built the city aeons ago. At the city's heart stands the titanic Whispering Fane built about the Daemonic Maw. A wide passageway—The Ebon Road—links Gloamhold to the Ebon Realm.



HARD BAY

A wide and deep bay renowned for stormy weather and savage tides, Hard Bay is aptly named. Its foam-flecked waters are deep and cold, teem with fish and are notoriously treacherous to sail. Many wrecks lie beneath its turbulent surface. Hard Bay separates Gloamhold's doom-drenched halls from the lights and comforts of civilisation offered by Ashlar's towns and cities; it is the single greatest barrier to easy exploration of the dungeon's depths.

Hard Bay's bounds are a tangle of rivers, rocky headlands, wooded isles and small, stony beaches. To the north, a range of jagged, steep-sided hills rises inexorably to the granitic bulk of the Mottled Spire, while to the south its turbulent waters occasionally flood the Saltmire—a great salt marsh that almost cuts Ashlar in twain.

The Mottled Spire and the bay's narrow mouth protect Hard Bay, and the towns and villages perched on the coast, from the worst of the winter storms sweeping in from the open sea. Yet for all that, many sailors still consider it treacherous. The most superstitious among them credit the bay with a malign intelligence of its own. They speak of strange creatures emerging from its depths and rogue waves swamping fishing boats during otherwise calm days.

Numerous small, rocky outcrops tower above the crashing waves. Experienced sailors know and avoid these islets as unpredictable tides and winds can dash a ship to pieces against them in minutes. Most of these spray-drenched chunks of rock have macabre names such as Devil's Tooth, Widow's Grief and the Sorrow Stone. Most are unoccupied, but equally gruesome legends and tales hang over many such lonely outcrops. Some of the larger islands have been settled in the past—perhaps either as a smugglers' or pirates' lair or the retreat of a reclusive wizard or hermit. Few are still occupied and most of their inhabitants value their privacy and do not welcome visitors—even those who have recently survived a shipwreck.

Many of the folk dwelling in Languard, the village of Hard Bay and the other settlements clinging to the coast make their

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about Hard Bay:

- Hard Bay is notoriously treacherous and unpredictable. Those that make their living from its waters are tough, resourceful folk.
- The winter is particularly savage on Hard Bay. Only the bravest sailors put to sea during this time.
- Many tiny islands dot the bay. A few are inhabited—mainly by folk who value their privacy above all else.

living from the sea; fishing boats are a common sight upon its waters. Few fishermen, though, are brave enough to sail close to the ruins of Greystone or Rivengate's crumbling fortifications. To do so is seen as unwise at best. Still, for the brave adventurers seeking to explore Gloamhold, all is not lost. A few fishermen and sailors—braver or more desperate for coin than their fellows—will carry passengers across the bay to Rivengate's gaping maw. None tarry long; the best adventurers can hope for is their hiring to return at the allotted hour.

Merchants often put in at Languard, both to trade and to refit before continuing their journey. Duke Armas Nenonen maintains a small navy which he uses to patrol Hard Bay and the surrounding waters. Pirates—sailing from the town of Deksport—prowl the waters thereabouts and the merchants pay the duke handsomely to curtail their depredations.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about Hard Bay. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1	Storms often savage Hard Bay and the many settlements strung out along its coastline. But, the storms have been getting stronger of late. Some suggest powerful magic is at work.
2	The ghosts of all those who drown in Hard Bay slumber in its depths. During particularly violent storms, they swim to the surface to search for fellow mariners to drag down to their deaths.
3	Hard Bay is so unpredictable because Serat—Mistress of Storms—dwells in its briny depths. Her tempestuous moods affect its tides and currents.
4	Smugglers ply Hard Bay's waters; if you know where to look anything can be had for the right place.
5	The waters around Gloamhold and the ebon-tinged Murkwater are particularly dangerous. The cliffs above are unstable and much rock has fallen into the water creating innumerable underwater obstacles.
6	Strange creatures lurk in the waters near Gloamhold. Greystone's harbour is haunted, but not by ghosts. The crabs living there have grown large and predatory on an unknown, but plentiful diet. They live in huge swarms well able to strip a man's body to the bone in minutes.
8*	A devil was imprisoned atop the Devil's Tooth long ago. Only a fool would attempt to climb that forlorn island's treacherous cliffs.

*False rumour

DEVIL'S TOOTH

This jagged spire of rock curves upwards from the roiling sea in a shape reminiscent of a huge fang. Standing deep in the Mottled Spire's shadow, seabirds of fearsome size and ill aspect dwell here in profusion. Rumours speak of an imprisoned devil trapped atop the Tooth; because of its isolated position in the far north-west of the bay, and its fell reputation, few sail within bowshot of this sinister rock.

A strangely-shaped rock formation at the Tooth's zenith is vaguely suggestive of a weather-worn ruin of great antiquity. Old mariner's tales identify the place as a monastery or temple to some forgotten sea god, demon or other power. No records of such a place exist in Ashlar's archives and so its origins remain a mystery.

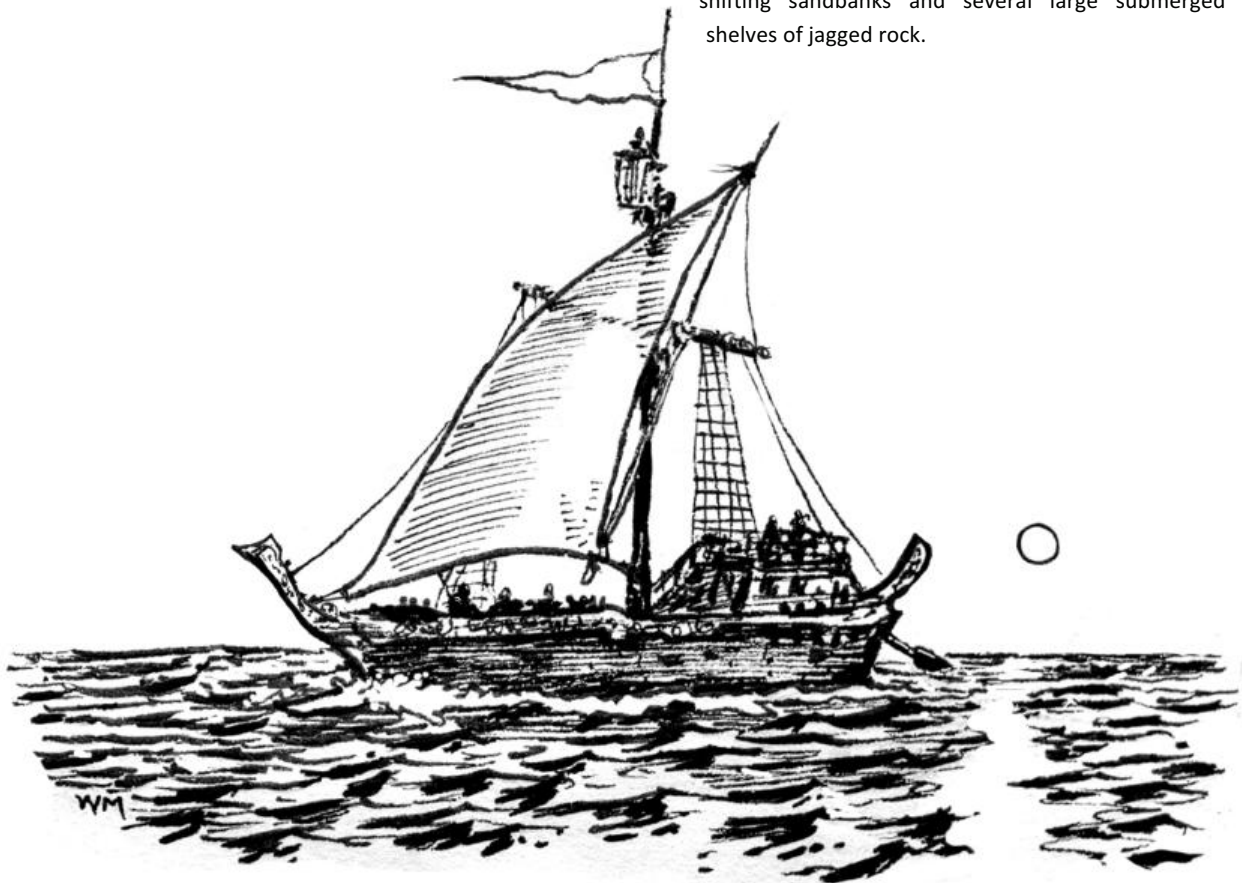
The few folk to attempt a landing on Devil's Tooth report being stymied by the aggressive seabirds nesting on the rock's flanks and the notoriously hard to climb spray-drenched overhanging cliffs. The climb is widely thought to be all but impossible for anyone without magical aid.

THE SORROW STONE

Many vessels have come to grief on the jagged Sorrow Stone. Located just south of Hard Bay's mouth, several strong currents converge around this low-lying islet. Wrecked ships litter the surrounding seabed and it is not uncommon for mariners to report shipwrecked souls huddling on the stone awaiting rescue. Several inlets pierce the Stone's flanks; flotsam and jetsam invariably choke the waters therein. A solitary storm-battered shrine dedicated to the Mistress of Storms stands atop the Stone's highest point. Sometimes a solitary acolyte dwells at the shrine, to aid shipwreck victims. Indeed, such service is the duty of every new member of the clergy.

WIDOWS' GRIEF

This chunk of seaweed-choked stone barely rises above the storm-tossed waves several miles north of where the Tanu flows into the bay. Ever-shifting sandbanks—visible at low tide—surround the island. Oysters grow in great profusion in the relatively sheltered waters to the south of the island. Most are harvested for food, but some develop translucent shells much sought after to make decorative objects such as lockets. A few—the most coveted—are harvested for pearls. The currents near Widows' grief are unpredictable—shaped as they are by the shifting sandbanks and several large submerged rocky shelves of jagged rock.



This huge chunk of granite glowers over Hard Bay's treacherous waters like an angry giant. Difficult to reach by land or sea, the Mottled Spire shelters Gloamhold deep within its bowels.

A wind-blasted, desolate place it has stubbornly resisted the pernicious encroachment of human civilisation and remains untamed. The small town of Dunstone stands upon the Selka River's western bank. Built to protect the villages to the west from attack by the Spire's denizens it serves as civilisation's final outpost and the base from which the few expeditions daring Gloamhold's landward approaches are launched.

Beyond the river, the sharp-pointed hills huddle closely together as the land rises inexorably toward the Spire's titanic bulk. Few folk ever visit these hard, rocky uplands. The Spire's own jagged and desolate valley-riven hills dissuade all but the hardiest traveller from attempting the overland route. Dark legends also speak of desperate men and vengeful spirits lurking among the valleys and crags. Here the thin top soil is stony and barren; little grows except sparse grass and small, sickly wind-lashed thorn bushes that seem to catch and tear at travellers' clothing.

Hard Bay's choppy waters and strong tides preclude casual waterborne exploration; steep cliffs, unpredictable tides and tidal beaches—little more than stretches of sucking mud and shingle—compound the problems for explorers.

In recent years, only one large-scale attempt has been made to settle upon the Spire, and that ended in disaster when the village of Greystone was abandoned. No accurate, comprehensive map of the hills and canyons is known to exist and no trail has ever been forced all the way from the small town of Dunstone's gates through to Greystone.

On occasion, bandits have taken refuge in the Mottled Spire's lower slopes. They lair in abandoned mines or the cellars of several old ruins—remnants of doomed attempts to carve out homes from the wilderness.

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Mottled Spire:

- The Mottled Spire is hard to reach; treacherous seas, rugged hills and deep valleys protect this wave-lashed, wind-blasted hunk of granite from casual exploration.
- No one explores the Mottled Spire without good reason. Smugglers, bandits and fugitive sometimes hide there.
- The Mottled Spire has a reputation as a haunted place. Vague, non-specific rumours populate its deep valleys and hills with the shades of an elder time.

DUNSTONE

Dunstone is the nearest settlement to the Mottled Spire. Standing at the end of a wide, muddy and rutted track, Dunstone was built long ago when men feared what lurked in the tangle of dells and canyons hidden among the Spire's jagged foothills, but now that fear has mostly faded from their minds.

Protected by a stout keep, thick stone walls of local granite fully 12 feet high encircled the old village. These defences are now crumbling, but remain formidable. The original dry moat dug around the old village has not been properly maintained for decades and what was once a formidable obstacle is now little more than a grassy slope upon which sheep and pigs graze.

Many homes and businesses have grown up outside the old village walls and Dunstone now sprawls across a low hill overlooking the fast-flowing Selka River. Occasionally cut off during the winter thaw, the folk of Dunstone are resilient folk.

A rickety, slowly decaying wooden bridge spans the Selka and it is across this the occasional hunter, thrill seeker or group of explorers begin their trek into the rugged uplands of the Mottled Spire. By tradition, a guard is mounted at the western end of the bridge to warn against monstrous incursions from the Spire, but such a watch is now rarely kept. Instead, such duty is reserved as a punishment for men-at-arms deemed to have failed in their other duties.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about the Mottled Spire. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1	Bandits and outlaws lurk in the wild foothills of the Mottled Spire, to the north of Dunstone.
2	The shades of previous explorers and long-dead folk dwell among the Mottled Spire's peaks and crags.
3	Civilisation ends at Dunstone's walls. Beyond, there is nothing but hardship and lurking danger.
4	Abandoned mines dot the Mottled Spire; only a few—the shallowest—were dug by human hand.
5*	When Varma led her doomed expedition to the Mottled Spire she awoke a slumbering evil and released a swarm of monstrous vampire bats that still hunt throughout the hills.
6*	A deranged sect of druids lives in the Mottled Spire's hidden valleys; they whisper to the place's ancient spirits and know its secrets.
7	No roads pierce the Mottled Spire's inner reaches.
8	Weather over the Mottled Spire is often harsh and unpredictable.

*False rumour

VARMA'S PIT

Named for the adventurer credited with discovering this gigantic sinkhole, Varma's Pit is nothing more than a huge hole piercing the rock above the Twilight City's crumbling, shadowed precincts. Hidden among a great stand of stunted, wind-blasted thorn bushes and dwarf trees, it is hard to find. To make matters worse, its walls and ledges are inherently unstable and crumble if unduly disturbed. If that wasn't enough to deter explorers, centuries of bat guano deposits make climbing here all but suicidal.

Vast colonies of bats—some monstrously huge and others strangely deformed—nest in the Pit's walls and emerge at night in a near-constant stream to hunt. Ever hungry, persistent stories circulating among adventurers bestow these bats with a sinister, preternatural hunger for warm flesh.

Even so, Varma's Pit holds a special attraction to adventurers. For on the brightest of summer days, when the sun's golden orb is directly overhead, its rays cut through the deep gloom below to caress the uppermost portions of the Twilight City's many ruined ziggurats almost 1,000 ft. below.

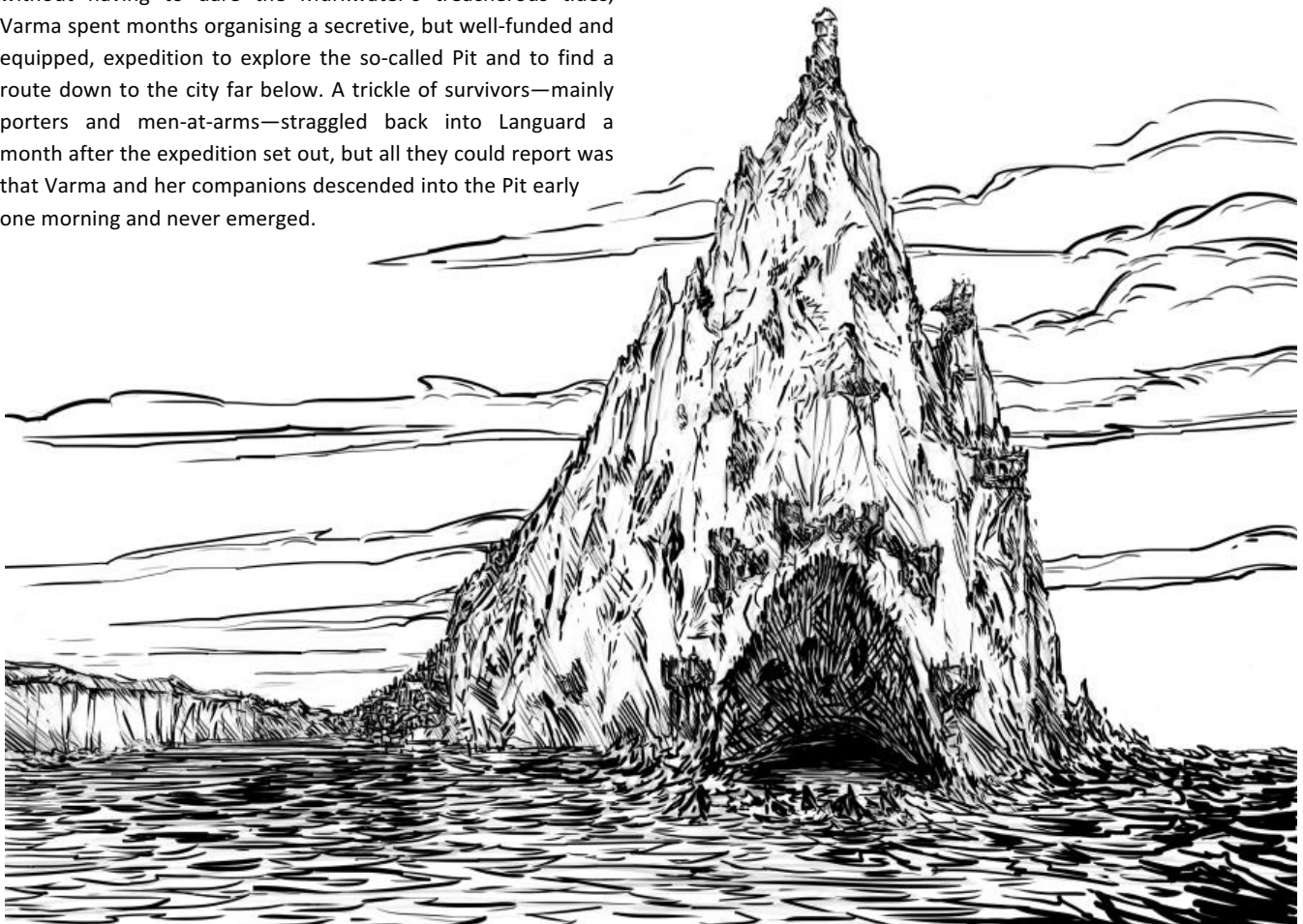
The fate of Varma herself remains unknown. After she discovered it was—in theory—possible to reach the Twilight City without having to dare the Murkwater's treacherous tides, Varma spent months organising a secretive, but well-funded and equipped, expedition to explore the so-called Pit and to find a route down to the city far below. A trickle of survivors—mainly porters and men-at-arms—straggled back into Languard a month after the expedition set out, but all they could report was that Varma and her companions descended into the Pit early one morning and never emerged.

The following night, a vast storm of carnivorous bats burst forth from the darkness and set upon those awaiting their mistress's return. The survivors fled, and Varma's fate—and that of her companions—remains a mystery.

Varma's Pit is also known as the Cave of the Long Drop and Slaughter Fall (both named after Varma's supposed fate).

OTHER LOCALES OF NOTE

- **Abandoned Mines:** Explorers occasionally come upon the crumbling, rubble-choked mouths of ancient mines sunk deep into the Spire. Who excavated the mines remain unknown, but some are of considerable depth and extent; all are obviously very old.
- **Greystone (Ruined Village):** A nameless aura of fear and decay smothers these crumbling, wind-blasted ruins. Persistent rumours of the inbred descendants of the original inhabitants lingering in the ruins are commonly held as truth among Languard's populace.
- **The Shard (Ruined Lighthouse):** Destroyed decades ago at the height of a particularly vicious and prolonged storm of unnatural virility, the Shard juts from the Mottled Spire like a jagged, broken tooth. Occasionally, faint lights are glimpsed in its vicinity.



The sharp-pointed hills huddle closely together as the land rises inexorably through the deepening shadows toward the Mottled Spire's looming titanic bulk. Shrieking wind scours the desolate, treeless hilltops and fills the tangle of uncharted steep-sided, rock-strewn valleys cutting through the hills.

Civilisation's creeping tendrils did not linger long in such a hard place. A century ago, settlers from Languard founded Greystone as a fishing village and rebuilt the shattered ruin of the Shard as a lighthouse and watchtower. However, the harsh weather, isolation and events of a certain terror-filled night doomed their efforts to failure.

Now, the decayed ruins of Greystone yet cling to the vertiginous, landward flank of the Mottled Spire and are still visible from Languard's ramparts. Most of the buildings are little more than crumbling facades built over the mouths of the numerous caves riddling the rock. Linked by steep and narrow roads hacked from the Spire's living rock, these homes once sheltered almost 200 souls. Sickly briars and the flotsam of countless winter storms now choke many of the roads rendering them all but impassable—only the nimblest or strongest travellers find the going easy.

A nameless aura of fear and decay hangs over the crumbling, wind-blasted ruins. Seemingly perpetually shrouded in shadow by the Mottled Spire's looming bulk, dark legends cluster thickly about the village. Stories of ghoulish hauntings and myths of the degenerate, inbred survivors of the original settlers lurking amid the ruins, along with the village's isolated position, conspire to keep decent folk away.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Uljas Alanen
Government Overlord
Population 68 (68 degenerate humans)
Alignments NE
Languages Abyssal, Common

NOTABLE FOLK

Few folk dwell in Greystone anymore; those that do are the degenerate, inbred descendants of the village's original settlers:

Ilari Alanen (location 6; CE male degenerate human ranger 2)
 Ilari stalks the Mottled Spire and knows its secret paths well.

Marja Alanen (location 6; NE female degenerate human wizard 4)
 Uljas' wife, Marja is even more depraved than her husband.

Uljas Alanen (location 6; NE male degenerate human cleric [Dagon] 3)
 The depraved leader of the Dagon cultists, Uljas enjoys sacrificing living victims to his dark god.

Vilho Alanen (location 6; CE male degenerate human fighter 2)
 Bloodthirsty and hideous, Vilho loves fighting.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Greystone comprises nothing but ruined buildings. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **The Docks:** Pummelled by winter storms and high tides, the docks and their tumbled stone breakwater are battered and cracked.
2. **Hall of the Storm Mistress:** Dedicated to Serat, Mistress of Storms, this ruined building stands hard against the docks.
3. **Shrine of the Father:** The walls of this building still stand proud, but surely they must soon collapse. Fallen rubble hides the entrance to a forgotten crypt.
4. **Forge of the Dead:** A small cave-home at the back of this forge is home to several ravenous ghouls.
5. **Alanen Manor:** This ramshackle manor house hides a bone-filled shrine dedicated to the Shadow Under the Sea in its cellar.
6. **The Caves:** Caves honeycomb the rock; Dagon's cultists yet use these as their home.
7. **The Twisted Path:** This precipitous path leads to the Shard.
8. **The Shard:** Destroyed decades ago, at the height of a vicious and prolonged storm of unnatural virility, the Shard juts from the Mottled Spire like a jagged, broken tooth. Occasionally, faint lights are glimpsed in its vicinity.

HISTORY

Born of a foolish, and ultimately doomed, attempt to bring civilisation to the Mottled Spire, Greystone's history is short and cloaked in sorrow, suffering and mystery. The village stood for only 20 years, before disaster overtook its folk.

Almost wholly dependent on traders for fresh vegetables, grain and other staples, the villagers were often malnourished and ill. A shortage of fresh water further exacerbated the villagers' health problems. Rumours, however, placed a strange invisible miasma over the village that made its folk sick with its noxious vapours. Such suffering and deprivation created a fertile breeding ground for Dagon's sinister message. By chance, the Alanen's built their manor over an ancient place sacred to the Shadow Under the Sea. Discovered when the foundations were laid, the family's patriarch—Armas Alanen—became obsessed with the shrine and quickly fell under its master's fell influence. From then, like a cancer, his worship spread slowly, but surely, through the populace until—in one terrible, bloody night—slaughter was visited on the unbelievers.

The few right-minded survivors of that terrible night fled while the remaining cultists made their homes among the bones of their slain neighbours. With no outside influence working to keep their souls safe from eternal damnation, the cultist' fall was soon complete and they became degenerate, twisted perversions of what they once were.

VILLAGE LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about Greystone.

- Greystone has been abandoned for decades, after a night of madness and slaughter.
- Although the ruins are visible from Languard, few bother to investigate the fallen village.
- The villagers lived in caves screened by normal building frontages. Passages and tunnels riddle the whole area.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Pale of skin and dirty, the folk of Greystone are an ugly, loathsome folk. Inbred, they are aggressive and violent and do not venture out willingly during the day. They avoid contact with others and viciously defend their cavern homes.

Dress Dressed in a patchwork of rags and ripped clothes they wrap their feet in strips of scavenged cloth and leather.

Nomenclature *male* Atro, Jani, Raimo, Valto; *female* Aila, Emmi, Laina, Satu; *family* Aalto, Keto, Outila, Takala.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

The PCs might learn one or more rumours about the ruins of Greystone. If they do, consult the table below to discover what they uncover.

D8	RUMOUR
1*	The spirits of all those who died in the ruins haunt Greystone. It is a cursed place.
2	The nobles of the village—the Alanen—went mad and delved too deeply into ancient, best-forgotten lore.
3*	An invisible miasma hung over the village in the old days. It made the villagers sick; some went mad while others died young.
4	Something large and dangerous lives in Greystone's harbour. After several fishermen disappeared in the harbour, no one voluntarily docks there anymore.
5	The nearby waters are particularly cold, but teem with fish.
6*	An invisible demon lives in Greystone and whispers maddening thoughts to those sleeping in the ruins.
7*	Expeditions to Greystone always end in disaster.
8	Lord Villamor dreams of re-establishing Greystone as a functioning settlement, but even if the place were made safe no one would voluntarily live there.

*False rumour



Standing alone upon the highest point of the Mottled Spire, far above the ruins of Greystone, the Shard was (perhaps) once a watchtower and lighthouse built to warn of the treacherous rocks and shoals lurking in the surrounding waters. However, its history is much older than that of Greystone or even of wall-girdled Languard standing proudly across the bay.

To even the most casual observer, it is obvious the Shard's architecture has two distinct styles. The lower—and undeniably older—portions are built in a time-worn cyclopean style. Such architecture is familiar to those who have gazed upon the gloam-filled precincts of the Twilight City. Oddly laid out for a watchtower or lighthouse the design suggests either the original structure was impossibly high—hence the wide, strangely-shaped base—or that two towers once abutted and supported one another. Blasted by wind and rain for centuries, the tower's huge stone blocks are worn. In sheltered places, faint suggestions of unwholesome and strangely disturbing carvings have survived nature's remorseless assault. What they represented or depicted remains a mystery.

On the surviving upper levels, the stonework is more modern and broadly in keeping with that found on the mainland or among the ruins of Greystone. Scavengers and vermin infest the lower above-ground levels.

Above the older portions of the ruin, the tower narrows abruptly. In bad repair and riven with great cracks, the upper levels become progressively more unsafe the higher one dares climb. However, something monstrous lives in the tower's upper reaches; several explorers have reported spotting something monstrous flying across the night sky and hearing strange shrieking sounds coming from high up in the sky.

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Shard:

- Once used as a lighthouse, the Shard has stood atop the Mottled Spire an unknown time. It is undeniably ancient; it appears in the writings of the earlier settlers.
- The tower is immense, and was even bigger before the top levels collapsed. Extensive cellars pierce the rock below the tower; they are said to connect to Rivengate's upper levels.
- During powerful winter storms, the ghostly outline of the tower as it once was sometimes appears. Old stories speak of at least one adventuring band who found a way to enter this so-called Ghost Tower.

THE CELLARS

Crudely constructed cellars, roughly following the path of a meandering natural cavern, lie under the Shard. Filled with sagging support pillars of once prodigious strength, they are of an elder design not conceived by human minds.

Here, among the dust and shadows lurk carvings as sharp and detailed as the day they were cut into the living rock. Something about the carvings so terrified Greystone's settlers that they destroyed all they could find before walling up the cellars so that none may stumble across what they had discovered. Of what they found within, there is no record; it is as if the community decided what they had discovered was too terrible to commit to paper.

However, their works have been undone—adventurers have smashed through several bricked-up passageways to explore what lies beyond. They have reported yet active traps of cunning and devious design as well as remorseless and merciless animated guardians that yet stand ready to slay intruders.

In the deepest part of the cellars, a sinkhole, girdled by an ancient, timeworn and precipitous set of steps, descends into the darkness. Some explorers theorise the sinkhole is the mouth of the Splintered Stair. Far below lie Rivengate's upper halls.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about the Shard. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1	Smugglers sometimes set watchers in the Shard to watch for approaching storms or their partner's vessels.
2*	Ghosts of an elder age stalk the Shard's ruined halls. Jealous of the living they slay all they encounter.
3	Several adventurer bands have managed to enter the so-called Ghost Tower over the last decade; some remain trapped within.
4*	The Shard was once a powerful wizard's tower. He was obsessed with the stars and the arcane power he could unlock by studying their movements.
5	The Shard is ancient—it is the oldest structure still standing anywhere in Ashlar.
6*	Dangerously unstable, the Shard will collapse anytime now—perhaps during the next particularly savage winter storm.
7	Dangerous traps and yet active guardian constructs lurk in the Shard's deep cellars.
8	The Shard's deep cellars connect to Gloamhold via the Splintered Stair.

*False rumour

THE GHOST TOWER

The Shard is one of the most well-known parts of Gloamhold. Visible from Languard's battlemented walls, the great ruin soars high above Greystone's ruins huddling far below. Neophyte adventurers—not ready for the terrors lurking in Gloamhold's outer halls—often dare the Shard's ruins in search of easy victories and gold.

However, persistent rumours speak of otherworldly portions of the tower that defy rational explanation or description. They speak of a so-called Ghost Tower accessible by adventurers clever enough to decipher a fiendishly complex puzzle buried far below the Shard's ruins in a hidden, savagely trapped cellar.

The puzzles scattered throughout the Shard's cellars granting access to the Ghost Tower take many different forms. Old adventurer's lore, though, speaks of a band of adventurers who claimed to have discovered and deciphered one of the puzzles—an incredibly complicated and breathtakingly detailed mosaic of stars—in a cavernous vaulted chamber protected by merciless sentient magical traps. Since their discovery decades ago, no one is known to have replicated their feat and the survivors of the

expedition seemed reticent to discuss what they discovered within the Ghost Tower.

For those who cannot find or decipher the means of entering the tower, all is not lost. Sometimes the tower's fuzzy, transparent outline, overlaid over (and soaring high above) the Shard, is visible at the height of the savage annual winter storms that lash the Mottled Spire. What otherworldly terrors lurk within the tower is a matter of wild conjecture. However, local legends whisper that at the height of the fiercest winter storms, when vicious winds tear at the ruins, bolts of lightning blast the surrounding rock and driving rain buffets the tower, the barriers between this world and the other weaken. At this time, brave adventurers can enter the tower, but they must explore quickly for when the storm dies, the barriers warding the tower strengthen trapping any who yet linger within.

The Ghost Tower has other colourful names including the Tower Unseen, the Ephemeral Spire and the Citadel of the Wraith Kings. The last of these names perhaps hints at what lurks within...



RIVENGATE

Rambling over five main levels, Rivengate comprises much of Gloamhold's ancient outer defences. Originally built to ward the approaches to the Twilight City it is the most accessible of Gloamhold's regions, and thus also one of the better known.

Still, Rivengate's upper levels remain a mystery to most. Rumours speak of vast, gloomy temples, as yet undisturbed, vaults brimming with treasures from a bygone, lost time and even of the Splintered Stair—a secret and precipitous passage reaching—it is said—all the way up to the Shard high atop the Mottled Spire.

Several locales of note lie within Rivengate. Of some, such as the Bridge of Sorrows, the Catacombs of the Sundered Obelisk and the Shrine of the Cloven Altar, little is known but their names. Some of the better-known locales in Rivengate, however, have entered local legend.

THE LANDINGS

Great stone landings, cracked and pitted with age, cluster close to Rivengate's entrance. Once used by Gloamhold's ancient lords for the supply of slaves, tribute and loot, the smugglers of Rivengate now use the landings for much the same purpose. Few boats are permanently moored here. The strength of the tides along the Murkwater's course coupled with the depredations of rival groups and other predators make such practise folly at best.

THE ECHOES

This huge vaulted chamber stretches the length of the Landings and once served as a marketplace and muster-grounds. Over the centuries many battles and skirmishes have been fought in the Echoes—as it has come to be called. Stout, twisted pillars adorned with intricate, but disturbing, designs reminiscent of

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about Rivengate:

- Rivengate rambles over five levels. Bands of smugglers are reputed to use the lower levels, although they often clash with the monstrous inhabitants of the place.
- The Landings lie close to the cavern mouth through which the Murkwater flows into Hard Bay. Here those daring the Murkwater can dock their boats.
- The Echoes is a huge vaulted chamber infested with giant spiders. It comprises much of Rivengate's lowest level and is the scene of ferocious battles between the smugglers and the eight-legged predators lurking among the many pillars holding the place's high ceiling aloft.

tentacles (or possibly impossibly thick strands of seaweed) hold aloft the vaulted ceiling. Great arching support struts hewed from the living rock link the pillars and provide safe havens for several colonies of giant spiders dwelling far above the floor.

The Echoes' cavernous reaches are a no-man's land of sudden death from above. No smuggler group claims the area, but all use it as it provides access to most of Rivengate. Small bands of smugglers, bearing burning brands to force back the darkness and ever-lurking spiders hurry across this great space with their illicit cargos. Occasionally, when the spiders grow especially bold, the smugglers form a temporary alliance and with fire and blade force the eight-legged predators up into the farthest recesses of the Echoes' ceiling.

To the west, a great balcony stretches the length of the Echoes. Below stand broken into and looted storage vaults. Warded by stone doors, desperate explorers occasionally barricade themselves inside a storage vault. The balcony itself provides access to Rivengate's upper levels as well as several sections overlooking Hard Bay. Most smugglers have their lairs in this area and operate a tacit truce with one another. The broad stairs leading to the balcony are clear of most detritus and rubbish, but bones, discarded equipment and the mouldering leavings of an ancient civilisation all litter the Echoes.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about Rivengate. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1	Packs of huge spiders infest the Rivengate's lowest level and prey on all invading their hunting grounds.
2	Rivengate was once a fortress of some elder, forgotten race.
3	From Rivengate, explorers can find links to several other levels of Gloamhold including the Shard and the Twisted Warrens.
4	Several adventuring groups have set up camp in Rivengate and use them as bases to explore the surrounding dungeon.
5*	The Bridge of Sorrows is a living thing and casts those crossing its span into the chasm it crosses.
6*	Rival smuggler bands battle for control of Rivengate.
7*	The water flooding the Pens is laced with necrotic energy—adventurers exploring the area often succumb to its fell curse.
8	Some explorers have reported encountering sentient web-creatures in the Echoes.

*False rumour

THE PENS

Gloomhold's original builders often raided the surface realms for prisoners, slaves and sacrifices. Most such unfortunates were brought to this sub-level to be catalogued and sold. Cut deep into the Mottled Spire, this sub-level lies partially under the Murkwater. Consequently, cold—almost freezing—water drips through ceilings into the cramped cells and corridors. Some portions of this miserable place are partially submerged.

The bones of many of the unfortunately incarcerated in this place yet linger among the chilled pools and rubble. Thus, undead—corporeal and non-corporeal—lurk here in great numbers. Few explorers voluntarily tread these forsaken corridors. Occasionally, a smuggler group—who call this place the Maze of Bones—exiles a member into the Pens in punishment for some terrible transgression against the group. None survive long.

The deepest portions of this level feature strange pools cut deep into the rock that are said to connect to the open sea and to a remote section of the Breathless Narrows.

DENIZENS

As well as small enclaves of undead, still active guardians such as animated statues and magical traps yet ward certain locales, most of which are on the upper levels. Wasted and pale skinned degenerate humans have even been encountered in the upper, remotest reaches of the fortress. How they came to dwell there, none know.

Adventurers: Several groups of delvers have set up semi-permanent camps in Rivengate. Such locales are normally located in hidden, hard to access or isolated places. From these camps, adventurers explore Rivengate's deeper reaches. The braver or more skilled among them also dare the tight confines of the Twisted Warrens. Here dwell troglodytes, derro and other fell things that lurk in the dark waiting for prey to stumble into their realm.

Other adventurers of darker hearts also lurk in Rivengate. Instead of simply battling the other denizens dwelling here, these folk seek to understand Gloomhold's mysteries and to unlock its builders' secrets. Scholars among them believe that yet unfound places of power still await discovery in the darkness. What secrets these places hold is unknown.

- **Company of the Flaming Torch:** Comprising exclusively humans, this band are renowned for carrying excessive amounts of torches on their forays. One of their number is a skilled sailor and so the company enjoy greater access to Rivengate than most, who must rely on hirelings—normally doughty (and well paid) fishermen—to transport them across Hard Bay.
- **Gloom Wardens:** This well-known band are veterans of several expeditions deep into the Twisted Warrens to find a route

through to the Twilight City. While they have failed to find such a path, their exploits have gained them much fame in Languard's taprooms. It is rumoured, the band are currently recruiting retainers to assist in establishing a permanent base of operations somewhere in Rivengate.

Smugglers: Several smuggler gangs lair in Rivengate's ruins. In the main, the smugglers have little interest in exploring Gloomhold's inner reaches. Rather, they use Rivengate as a safe place to meet and store their ill-gotten gains. Some—wanted for heinous crimes in Languard and its surrounds—permanently dwell in Rivengate. Others come here now and then, as their business dictates. All such groups have contacts among the populace of nearby villages and towns.

Wanderers: Occasionally, small bands of dark creepers or troglodytes, a lone derro or hunters such as chokers and cave fishers sneak into Rivengate in search of food, slaves or sport. These hunters rarely linger long, retreating into the Twisted Warrens once they have sated their hunger. Such hunters prey on the smugglers and others dwelling in Rivengate; these low-grade skirmishes ensure no group grows overly numerous or gains control over too much of Rivengate's dusty halls.

NEW MONSTER: SINKWEBS

Found in the deepest, the oldest or the foulest spider-haunted locales, sinkwebs are silent, lurking killers.

Comprising the semi-sentient tendrils of huge, ancient spider webs and an insatiable desire to hunt and kill drives sinkwebs to seek out warm flesh to feast upon. Encrusted with the dust and grime of ages past these thickly woven webs hold the mummified remains of countless creatures great and small.

Animated by the necrotic energies released when prey dies trapped within their silken confines, they are merciless, near infinitely patient ambush predators. Terrifyingly these animate undead are capable of limited movement. Unlike a normal spider web, they do not have to wait for their prey to blunder into their threads; rather they silently inch through their dungeon-homes in search of food. Countless adventurers have died screaming, jolted from their slumber by the first silken, but impossibly strong, caress of a sinkweb falling across their prone bodies.

Attracted by a ready supply of food, vast colonies of tiny spiders often infest sinkwebs and pour forth in scuttling swarms to fall upon those caught in its powerful embrace. Thus, adventurers unfortunate enough to encounter a sinkweb must not only contend with the creature itself, but also with its tiny, mindless—and ever-hungry—allies.

Sinkwebs hunt by first grappling and then pulling prey deep into their silken embrace. Vulnerable to fire, they can be driven off by its presence, but are otherwise implacable and fearless hunters.

The seething, foam-flecked waters below Rivengate are particularly hazardous. Many underwater dangers—jagged rocks, savage rip tides and more—await explorers attempting to access Rivengate and the areas beyond. Only skilled or lucky captains dare to sail into the gloom of Rivengate’s gaping maw. Within flows the dark and treacherous Murkwater.

Extensive landings provide access to Rivengate’s surviving halls. Battered by the Murkwater’s remorseless tides, the first of these landings has partially collapsed. Yet moored alongside is the battered and rotting hulk of a large fishing boat sunk during a storm last winter. The other landings, cracked and worn by time and tide, are intact. Malformed and sickly seaweed grows voraciously to the landing’s sides and abnormally large, but misshapen and often sharp, barnacles cluster here in great profusion. Hidden by the seaweed they lurk ready to rip any unfortunate climber’s hands to shreds. The slippery seaweed makes climbing onto the landings at low water difficult.

If the tide is right, explorers can pass even deeper into Gloamhold. Adventurers must time their explorations carefully for the tide is exceptionally strong which makes travel in the wrong direction dangerous, difficult and tiring as such explorers must row against the tide. The vicious tides are not the only danger lurking in the Murkwater, for unwary explorers.

Below the river itself runs a twisted, flooded network of caverns—the Breathless Narrows—and in several places the two waterways intersect. In such areas, the denizens of the Breathless Narrows often lie in wait for passing vessels. During particularly stormy weather, small localised whirlpools often form in these locations, adding an extra element of danger for explorers.

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about Murkwater:

- Vicious tides, and hidden rocks, make travel along the Murkwater perilous in the extreme without a skilled sailor.
- Many vessels—crewed by adventurers or smugglers—have come to grief on the Murkwater; more than a few sunk with holds laden with treasure or contraband.
- If the fickle tide is right, explorers can sail deep into Gloamhold’s bowels. Such a journey inevitably takes adventurers into the Fane of Bones—a ziggurat-studded cavern filled with the uncountable remains of literally thousands upon thousands of creatures. Many remains are clearly human. Others are something else entirely.

THE FLAMING LADY

Otherwise known as the Lady’s Light by delvers, this partially sunken wreck—the *Lady’s Kiss*—was once a smugglers’ vessel. Dragged deep into Gloamhold by the Murkwater’s capricious and uncaring spring tides, the boat became wedged in a deep notch cleaving the unforgiving rock of the Murkwater’s bank.

Its crew survived for a few desperate weeks, huddled on a nearby ledge until—one by one—hunger, thirst and—ultimately—madness claimed them all. Before he died, one of the doomed band wreathed the ship’s warrior woman figurehead in permanent, but heatless, writhing flames. Although the priest—and all his comrades—are long dead, the flames live on and the battered wreck has become a well-known waymarker for explorers and adventurers.

Although its crew are all dead, the *Lady’s Kiss* isn’t abandoned. Pounded by waves, picked over by scavengers and ignored by those that know better, it is home to a small colony of lacedons. Led by two particularly powerful specimens—once crewmen on the *Lady’s Kiss*—the colony prey on the weak and those venturing too close to the wreck.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about Murkwater. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1	During stormy weather, powerful whirlpools can form to drag unwary or unlucky explorers down to the Breathless Narrows’ frigid depths.
2	Many vessels have disappeared into Gloamhold. The sunken wreck of the most famous—the <i>Lady’s Kiss</i> —is still visible deep inside the Mottled Spire.
3	The Murkwater has a powerful tidal bore. Time it right and you can ride it deep into Gloamhold. Time it wrong and your ship will be smashed to bits.
4	The Murkwater passes through three great gates before reaching the Sunless Lake.
5*	A powerful water dragon lurks in the Murkwater’s frigid waters and devours all the boats passing over its lair.
6	Much of the seaweed and barnacles growing in the Murkwater are hideously warped and deformed, as are many of the fish.
7*	A necromancer has set up in the Fane of Bones and is trying to learn how to animate all the bones lying therein into a huge skeletal army.
8*	In some places, the Murkwater is unknowably deep and connects with a near limitless flooded realm.

*False rumour

THE FANE OF BONES

Roughly halfway along its course, the Murkwater widens dramatically into a lofty cavern named by explorers as the Fane of Bones. Careful examination reveals it is only partially of natural origin. The ancient troglodytes dwelling in the Twilight City excavated this area as part of their flood defences, and winter storms still regularly inundate the cavern. Cracked and pitted bones along with scraps of weapons, armour and detritus washed in from the sea form a high tide line of sorts, providing mute testimony to the winter storms' savagery.

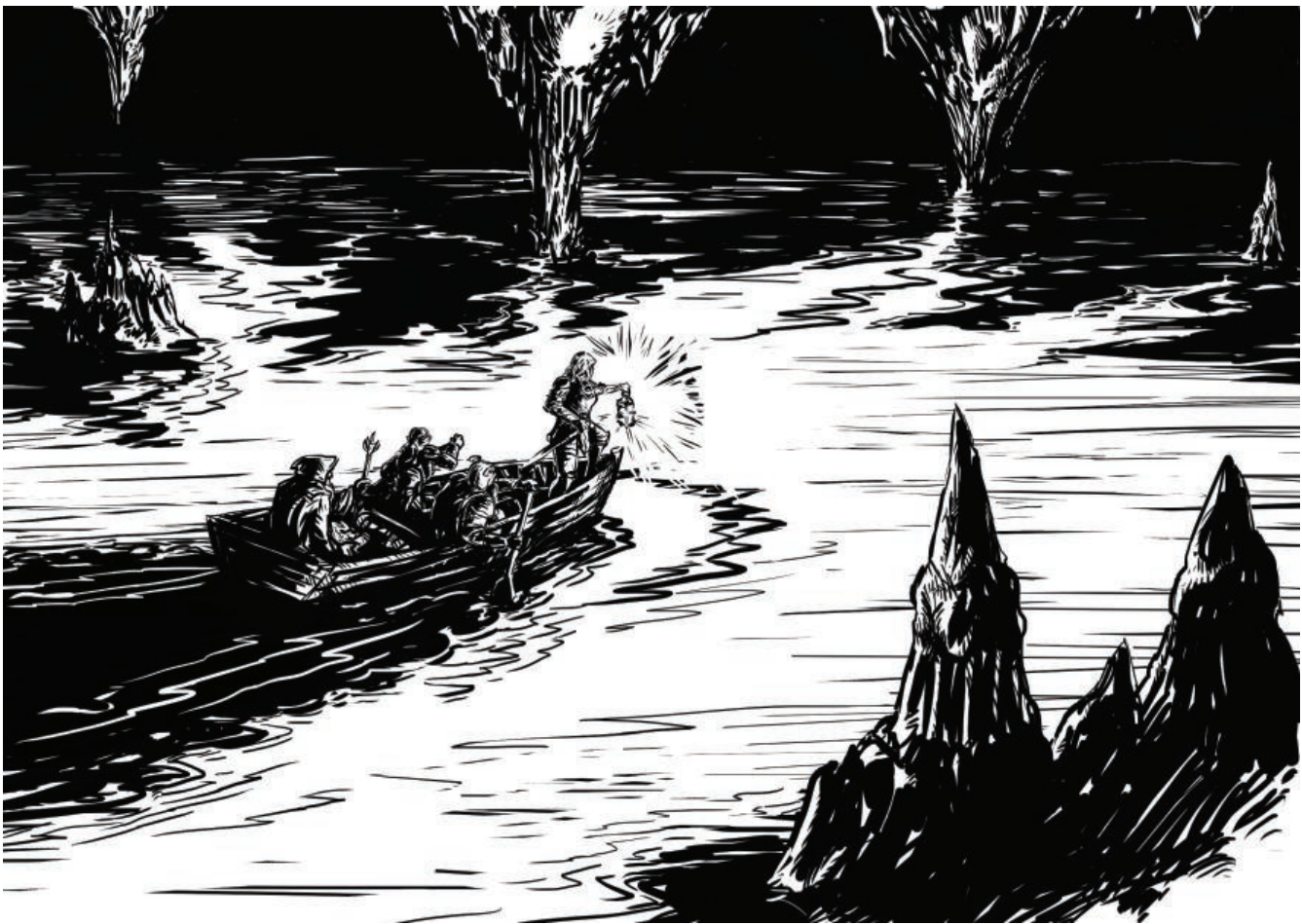
Many passageways and galleries—leading into the Twisted Warrens—stud the walls and four squat ziggurats dominate the cavern. Built to celebrate the troglodytes' many victories over their surface dwelling enemies, within lie interred the vanquished foes of their ancient civilisation. Survivors of explorations into the ziggurats describe in hushed tones horrible, eldritch symbols picked out in bones decorating the walls and of a legion of mindless undead ready to destroy all interlopers. Yet more symbols set at the ziggurats' apexes tell of a terrible ritual to control the undead sleeping within each mausoleum. Mercifully, specific details of the ritual remain lost.

THE THREE SISTERS

Beyond the Twisted Warrens, at three places along the Murkwater's course, forlorn and time-worn fortifications—the Three Sisters—ward Gloamhold's inner reaches.

Each citadel features massive stone locks designed to regulate the flow of water into and out of the Sunless Lake and several levels of heavily fortified galleries and tunnels overlooking the Murkwater's course. Still in surprisingly good repair, the Three Sisters are incessantly claimed and fought over by Gloamhold's denizens. Few smugglers penetrate this far underground; however, dark mutterings among the smugglers speak of degenerate, black-hearted individuals who willingly trade with those who dwell beyond. In return for weapons, armour and strong spirits, the smugglers carry forth fragments of the Twilight City's ancient glory. Sages, wizards and those interested in ancient history pay much for these baubles.

Few surface dwellers have voluntarily passed through the greatest and final of these structures, the Forbidden Gate. Beyond lies the Twilight City's tenebrous precincts.



Honeycombing the rock above the Murkwater, the Twisted Warrens are a confused and convoluted network of (mostly) natural caverns and passageways inhabited by derro, troglodytes, dark creepers and worse. Strange aberrations of alien aspect stalk this nightmarish cave system, hinting at hidden, terrible connections to the Ebon Ream far below.

Superstitious, or weak-minded, survivors of explorations into this twisted, cramped realm tell of sudden rock falls and crumbling precipices lurking to catch the unwary. And they speak of a sense that the very rock itself possesses a malign intelligence bent against intruders.

Life in the Twisted Warrens is brutal, hard and often brief. Resources—particularly fresh water—are rare and jealously guarded. Those dwelling here do so because they are not strong or numerous enough to take and hold anywhere better.

Of the three humanoid races, the troglodytes are the least numerous. Most such creatures dwell in the Twilight City—only renegades, outcasts and survivors of the vicious inter-clan wars that occasionally consume the city’s inhabitants live here. The dark creepers are much more at home in the Twisted Warrens and several clans led by dark stalkers dwell in the Warren’s farthest reaches. Of the derro little is known. Adventurers occasionally encounter small groups sneaking through the area, but no sizable group has yet been observed. Undoubtedly sadistic—and in all likelihood mad—nothing is known of their goals. However, of all the groups, they are most likely to mount an expedition against the smugglers lurking in Rivengate.

Ever shifting tribal alliances and the constant competition for resources make the Twisted Warrens a dangerous place to wander. Here mercy and compassion are unknown. Most adventurers venturing into the Warrens do so because they choose not to dare the Murkwater’s tumultuous course (or their boat has been wrecked and they have no choice if they want to escape to the surface).

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Twisted Warrens:

- The Twisted Warrens are a confused network of natural passages inhabited by feral troglodytes, derro and worse.
- In several places, great rifts intersect with the Twisted Warrens. Unknowably deep, these rifts are thought to reach the Ebon Realm far below.
- The Twisted Warrens enable explorers to travel from Rivengate to the Sunless Lake and the Twilight City without daring the Murkwater’s treacherous waters.

CORDATH’S MINE

Named for the adventurer who first discovered this small network of workings, Cordath’s Mine lies hidden in the Twisted Warren’s outer reaches. Hewn from the rock by unknown hands, the mines comprise a rambling network of narrow workings pockmarked by collapses, deep and flooded pits and far flung dead ends.

The mine’s deepest level terminates at the bottom of a narrow jagged chasm that meanders for almost a mile. Most explorers deem the chasm to run under Hard Bay itself—a multitude of small pools of turgid saltwater make exploration here difficult (and unpleasant). Perceptive explorers can find the signs of some sporadic mining efforts here, but nothing remotely resembling the extent of the passages, chambers and galleries leading to the chasm.

A half-dozen tribes of dark creepers claim various parts of the mine and chasm. The tribes—ruled over by a cabal of more powerful dark stalkers—live in relative peace with one another. Because they are thought to have little of actual worth adventurers rarely bother to explore this far-flung section of the Twisted Warrens.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about the Twisted Warrens. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

1*	The pits scattered throughout the Warrens are so deep they lead all the way to Hell!
2	Increasing numbers of derro have been seen in the Warrens of late. Why they are there or what they seek is unknown.
3	It is nearly impossible to make an accurate map of the Warrens. Many adventurers have gotten lost within—some permanently.
4	The Warrens are not safe. Rock falls and collapses are common, quickly rendering worthless any detailed map.
5	The various degenerate tribes lurking in the Warrens are in a perpetual state of war.
6*	Several hidden exits from the Warrens pierce the Mottled Spire’s flanks.
7	It is possible to travel through the Warrens to the Twilight City and to bypass the Three Sisters and the Murkwater.
8*	The very stone of the Warrens is alive, and it can shift and move to change the layout of the passages and chambers therein.

*False rumour

THE BLACK PITS

In several sections of the Warrens, deep rifts pierce the rock. A few merely link the Twisted Warrens to the Murkwater. Others—much deeper—avoid the Murkwater's course altogether and plunge downwards far into the earth. It is from these rifts—called the Black Pits—strange and horrible hunters creep forth to prey on the Warren's denizens.

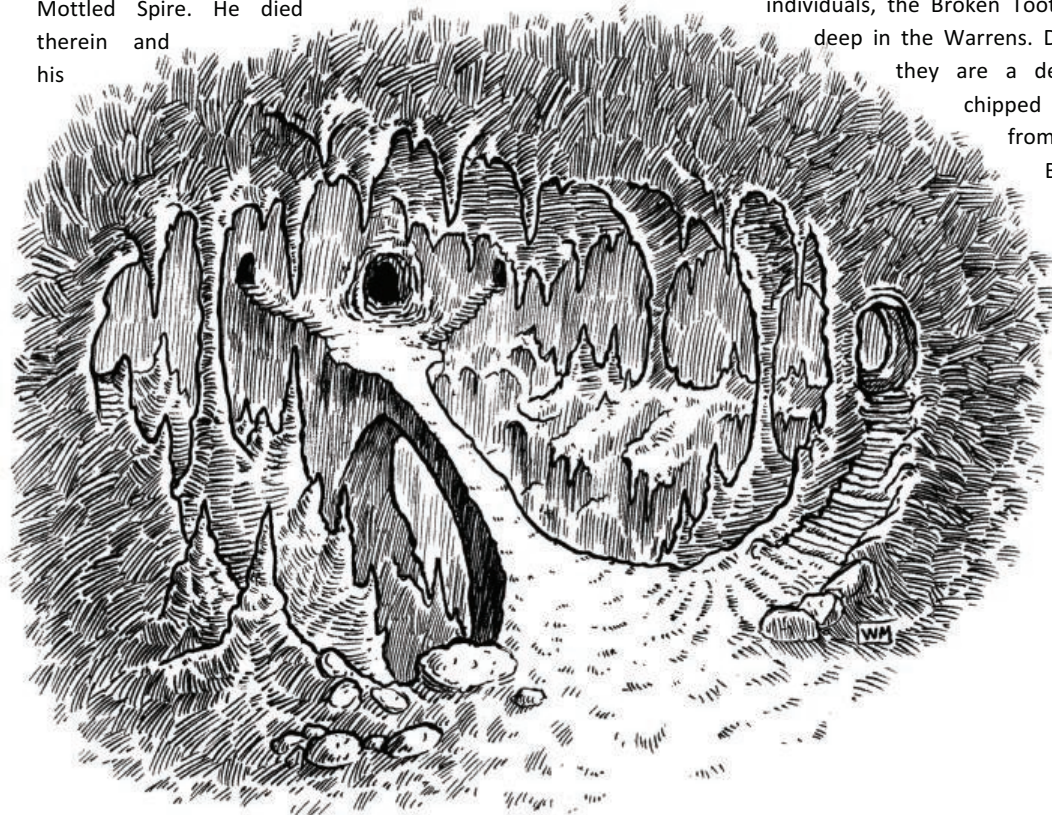
THE FANE OF BONES

Most residents of the Warrens avoid this bone-filled, terror-haunted cavern through which the Murkwater courses. Legions of unintelligent undead lurk within four ziggurats standing here. Adventurers come here to search among their remains for lost battle booty. (Learn more about the Fane of Bones on page 47).

SEPULCHRE OF THE AFFLICTED ONE

A century ago the sage and adventurer Verdusk (the Afflicted One) was particularly active in and around Gloamhold. A native of Languard, he became obsessed with Gloamhold and its unknown secrets. He spent long years exploring the place and even dwelled amid the ruins of the Twilight City for a time forging alliances with some of the ferocious, degenerate troglodyte tribes dwelling therein.

Inevitably, his obsession with Gloamhold took its terrible toll on his body and mind. His body and mind warped by the so-called Gloamhold Look, and near death, he bade his loyal friends and retainers carry him into the depths of the Mottled Spire. He died therein and his



companions built a sepulchre to honour their friend and lord.

Many adventurers know of the Sepulchre of the Afflicted one, and while some have visited the place, it remains curiously unlooted. Some say, several devious traps yet remain to slay any who would carry away Verdusk's treasures. Others swear, the ghost of the hoary old sage yet lingers among his bones and demands a steep price in knowledge before allowing explorers to rest in the sepulchre's relative safety.

TRIBES OF THE TWISTED WARRENS

Several humanoid tribes dwell in the Twisted Narrows. A sample of such groups include:

- **Gibbering Doom Derro:** These derro have come to the Warrens in search of suitable subjects for their lord's mad experiments. Merely an oversized raiding party—the bulk of the tribe dwells far below—the derro are still numerous and powerful compared to the Warren's other denizens. Their leader suffers delusions of grandeur and dreams of taking a section of the Warrens or Rivengate as his own.
- **Light Step Creepers:** Dwelling deep in a particularly fractured and confusing section of the Warrens, these dark creepers incessantly scavenge through the lightless caverns and tunnels. Instinctively, they avoid the other races dwelling therein, but occasionally fall on and slay lone or weak explorers. The creepers waste nothing and such unfortunates are carried back to the creepers' lair to feed the tribe.
- **Broken Tooth Troglodytes:** Numbering no more than 40 or so individuals, the Broken Tooth troglodytes cling to existence deep in the Warrens. Driven to the edge of extinction, they are a desperate folk. They worship a chipped and damaged statue recovered from a ledge overlooking one of the Black Pits. The statue is of Dagon and the troglodytes have unknowingly fallen under his influence. Thus, deformities and mutations are rife among them.

THE BREATHLESS NARROWS

A network of flooded, fractured caverns radiates outwards from beneath the Murkwater. The water therein is only fractionally above freezing and explorers need magic to survive for any length of time in this airless, lightless world.

Blind and colourless fish swarm through these tunnels in vast numbers. A ferocious subspecies of albino giant moray eels prowls these waters. Grown accustomed to the perpetual darkness these creatures rarely emerge from their labyrinthine hunting grounds and instead grow fat hunting the fish swarming in the tunnels.

Few folk willingly enter the Breathless Narrows. The utter darkness, freezing water and strong, but unpredictable, tides (along with the large and savage eels) make the place a death-trap for anyone without powerful magical protections.

In several places, the Breathless Narrows intersects the Murkwater. During stormy weather, water flowing in and out of these vertical shafts creates powerful whirlpools able to drag the unwary—or unlucky—down to a suffocating, terrifying death.

However, more lurks beneath the frigid waters of the Breathless Narrows than mere fish and the splintered remains of mouldering shipwrecks. For while they are one of the least populated levels of Gloamhold life yet flourishes—or at least endures—in this remote, dangerous place.

In the outermost region of the Breathless Narrows, where the inundated caverns intersect the Pens below Rivengate, explorers report a greater prevalence of undead. Some stories place a powerful undead spellcaster of indeterminate sort in the area while others speak of caverns choked with bones and the mouldering remains of ancient shipwrecks. Still other legends speak of a near-impossible-to-reach sub-level of air-filled caverns far below the Breathless Narrows. How the caverns remain water-free, and what lurks within, is unknown.

The Breathless Narrows also connect with the Sunless Lake wherein stands the Twilight City. No reliable map of such a route exists, but several adventurers claim to have fled that way after

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Breathless Narrows:

- The Breathless Narrows are a network of flooded caverns under the Murkwater. Survival in the Narrows without powerful magic is all but impossible.
- Undead along with ferocious giant eels inhabit the Breathless Narrows. Both are always hungry.
- A sunken shrine to some terrible and ancient sea god is hidden somewhere deep within the Breathless Narrows in some forgotten, bone-filled cavern.

being all but overrun by the troglodyte tribes lurking within the city's bounds.

FANE OF THE SHADOW LORD

Persistent rumour places a sunken shrine dedicated to the Shadow Under the Sea somewhere in the Breathless Narrows. Guarded by a small cult of fanatically deranged, and hideously deformed, skum it has remained hidden despite the misguided attempts of several bands of adventurers to sack the place.

The unholy bastion of Dagon lurks in a particularly deep part of the Breathless Narrows. Strong tides course through the surrounding sunken passageways making the fane hard to reach for unskilled swimmers. Monstrously large and bloated fish lurk in these turbulent waters. Ever-hungry, they savagely attack all interlopers. Bones—often stirred up into great swirling clouds by the vicious tides—fill these caverns and can cause considerable harm to those caught in them. The skum themselves rarely venture forth; such expeditions are solely mounted with the aim of capturing breeding stock or sacrifices.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about the Breathless Narrows. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8	RUMOUR
1	So many creatures have died in the Narrows that their remains coat the ground. The savage tides whip them up into great swirling clouds of bone.
2	Many undead lurk in the Breathless Narrows.
3	The waters of the Breathless Narrows are near freezing; the cold is too savage to be natural.
4	The splintered remains of many shipwrecks lie in the Breathless Narrows.
5*	A strange tribe of aquatic troglodytes lurks in the Breathless Narrows. They can breathe underwater and are fearsome foes.
6	Deep in the Breathless Narrows, the water gets even colder than normal. It issues forth from an unexplored, impossibly deep cavern.
7*	A race of even more savage giant eel dwells in the Breathless Narrows. Several specimens have been reported to possess a breath weapon of super-chilled water.
8	A sunken shrine to some dark, ancient and terrible elder powers lies hidden deep in the Breathless Narrows.

*False rumour

THE GLIMMERING GROTTO OF DESPAIR

This cave was once known as the Glimmering Grotto for its mineral-encrusted walls and ceiling. It is only reachable by a long swim through a narrow and dangerous section of pitch-black flooded tunnel replete with dead ends, narrow squeezes and sudden, deep sumps.

The cave gained its most recent epithet, “of despair” when the so-called Knights of the Dark Halls reached the cavern several years ago. Here they discovered the scattered remains of a long-term camp and the skeletons of several explorers. The journal of one of the dead named the band as the Order of the Bloodied Blade, an adventuring band that had gone missing a year previously. It transpired the group had reached this area using *water breathing* magic but lacked the resources to retreat whence they had come. Trapped, they had survived for several months by fishing and eking out their provisions until, one-by-one they succumbed to despair. Disturbingly, several of the skeletons bore certain marks suggestive of cannibalism.

THE DEEP CAVE

In one section of particularly narrow and convoluted passageways, the water gets even colder. The familiar vicious tides, huge fish and predatory eels prevalent elsewhere are strangely absent here.

The near-frozen waters flow sluggishly through these passages. One adventurer who fled into this area after his companions fell to the attentions of the Breathless Narrow’s merciless denizens spoke of a narrow, but impossibly deep and utterly black, cavern from which this cold water seemed to flow. Terrified, and only interested in escape, he did not stop to investigate the phenomena and thus the mystery of what lies within remains.



THE DROWNED ONES

This sunken cavern conceals a curious sight—a score or more incredibly detailed statues of troglodyte warriors captured in a variety of battle poses and half-buried by centuries of accumulated silt. The statues stand arrayed around a partially toppled monolith inscribed with runes of unknown provenance. The tides are strong in this cavern and whip up great clouds of billowing silt that reduce visibility to mere feet. Curiously, a great many bones are intermingled with the silt but the monstrous albino eels common throughout much of the Breathless Narrows are conspicuously absent from the area.

The faint carvings on the monolith tell of a band of treacherous warriors slain as punishment for some unspecified heinous act. The warriors’ long-suffering spirits are bound to the nearby statues and fall upon with great glee any explorers who wander unwittingly into their midst.

Clearing the silt away from the monolith reveals another set of curious engravings that tells of the *Dominant Crown*—a plain iron circlet hidden in an identical monolith that enables the wearer to control the statues. This second monolith lies in another drowned cavern behind an ancient rock fall, which has thus far hidden this great treasure from the attentions of wandering adventurers.

NEW MONSTER: ALBINO EELS

Perfectly suited for life in the lightless depths of the Breathless Narrows, giant albino moray eels are implacable, merciless hunters. Inured against the constant cold of their home and able to see in complete darkness these powerful predators are as strong as an ogre. Specimens can grow up to twice the length of a grown man. They have a powerful bite and once attached rarely release their prey. A secondary set of teeth in their throat aid in shredding and swallowing prey. Normally solitary creatures, they come together only occasionally to mate. Particularly unlucky explorers encountering more than one of these creatures have probably stumbled across a mated pair’s nest—and may even have to contend with their ravenous infants.

THE TWILIGHT CITY

The Twilight City is one of Gloamhold's best-known locations and is intermittently explored, claimed and fought over by dungeon denizens and adventurers alike. Buried in an immense cavern at the very heart of the Mottled Spire, the Twilight City sprawls across a series of low islands struggling above the cold, dark waters of the Sunless Lake. Bridges once linked these islands but several have long-since collapsed into the lake's frigid waters.

An ancient place of stone ziggurats, fetid and twisted canals, crumbling bridges and cyclopean architecture, troglodytes built the city when the world was young and their great empire straddled much of the known world.

A score or so of troglodyte tribes yet dwell amid the fallen glory of their forgotten heritage. A warlike, feral people they squabble over the ruins and wage war against one another. Well-used to outsiders intruding into their ancient home, these fearsome warriors need little provocation to fall upon explorers. Occasionally, a particularly charismatic or powerful leader arises among the tribes and leads a savage coalition of tribes to bloody war. Other particularly intelligent chieftains offer alliances with outsiders to gain advantage over their enemies.

The cavern roof soars 1,200 feet above the city's crumbling ziggurats and in places has collapsed allowing shafts of frail sunlight to pierce the gloom filling the cavern's upper reaches. (See "Varma's Pit" page 39). Sometimes, brave adventurers—not wishing to dare the dangers of Gloamhold's outer halls—use these rents in the rock to reach the Twilight City. Without magic, most such attempts are doomed to failure.

The Sunless Lake is tidal, and much of the city sporadically floods during particularly high tides or the vicious winter storms battering the coast. Set upon the largest island, about the yawning black gulf of the Daemonic Maw, squat five huge ziggurats. The greatest of these, the 500-foot high Whispering Fane, dwarfs the others.

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about the Twilight City:

- Sprawling across several low islands rising from the Sunless Lake's frigid waters the Twilight City lies at Gloamhold's shadowed heart.
- Once home to an ancient civilisation, the place is now infested with warring troglodyte tribes (and worse).
- The Sunless Lake is tidal. Sometimes, the city floods and those dwelling therein must retreat to the many ziggurats dotted about the ruins until the waters subside.

TROGLODYTE TRIBES OF THE CITY

Degenerate troglodyte tribes infest much of the Twilight City; their cloying stench rises above the tumbled ruins like an ancient miasma. The tribes constantly squabble and fight among themselves. Shadows of their race's former glory, they gaze upon the ancient ruins of their forbears with uncomprehending eyes. Four of the more notable tribes include:

- **Bloody Spear:** Well organised and numerous, the Bloody Spears benefit from the discovery decades ago of a cache of magical spears. Crafted from iron seemingly immune to corrosion and rust, the spears are carried into battle by the tribe's champions and chieftain. The tribe goes to great lengths to stop the spears falling into enemy hands.
- **Splintered Bone:** One of the most backward—but numerous—troglodyte tribes, the Splintered Bone is feared for the atavistic savagery of their warriors. The Splintered Bones gave up the use of weapons a long time ago; instead using their formidable natural weaponry. The tribe's females are unusually fecund.
- **White Skulls:** The White Skulls have dwelled in the same ziggurat for decades. The tribe is not numerous, but does

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about the Twilight City. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8	RUMOUR
1	Warring tribes of troglodytes claim different territories within the Twilight City. Warfare among the tribes is constant and brutal.
2	Five huge ziggurats dominate the city's skyline. The largest is over 500-foot high!
3	A black gulf on unknown depth—the Daemonic Maw—stands at the centre of the city.
4*	An undead dragon lairs in the city's biggest ziggurat and the troglodytes worship it as a god.
5	The leavings of an ancient civilisation can be found amongst the Twilight City's ruins.
6*	A dark-hearted adventuring band, the Lords of Shadow, once set up a fortified base in the city, but they have not been heard of in years.
7*	Five great opals—one for each mighty ziggurat—have been lost in the city. Each has terrifyingly powerful abilities to gift to his possessor.
8	Sometimes the city floods which flushes out into the Sunless Lake things that should remain hidden and lost.

*False rumour

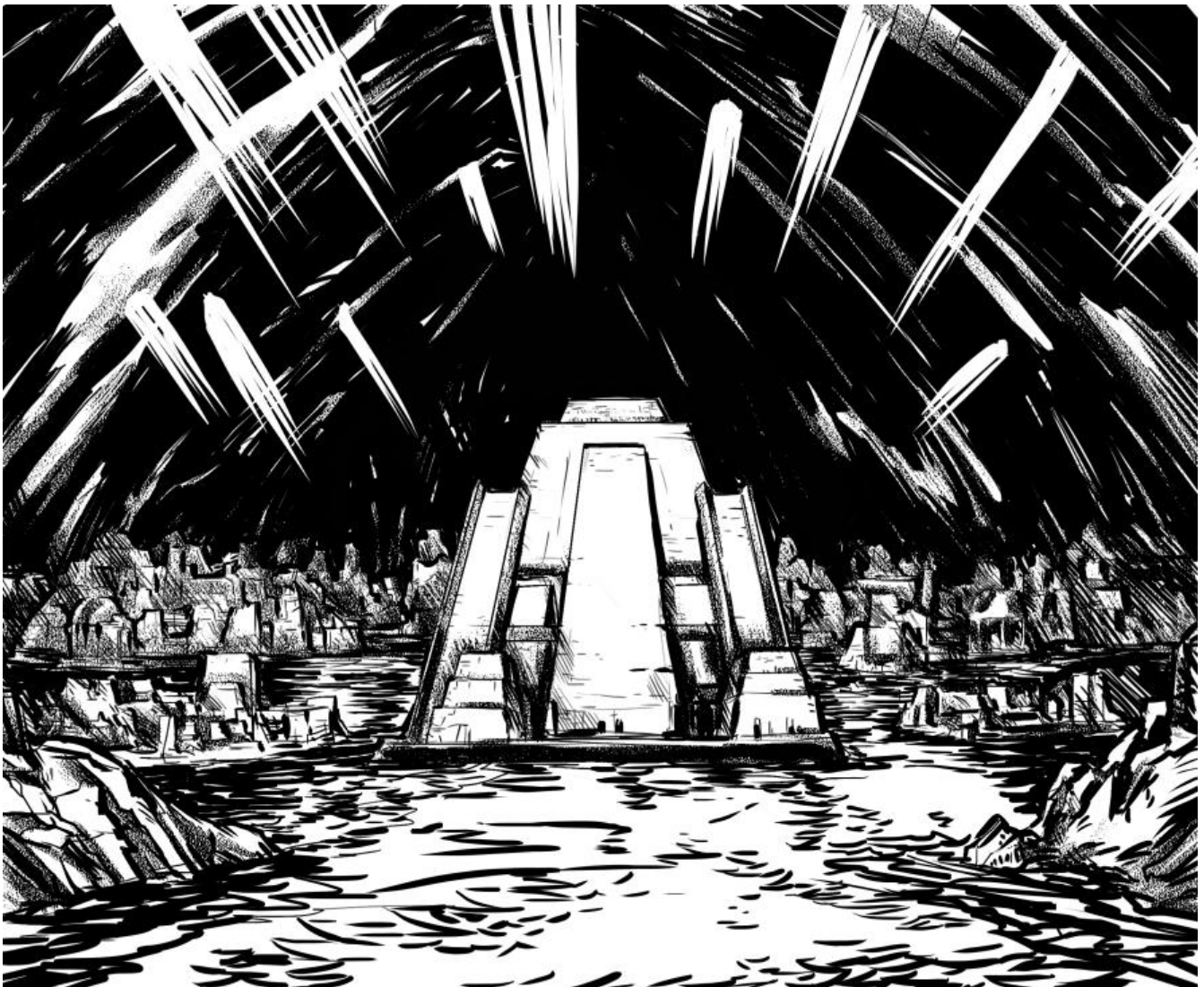
boast several powerful shamans amongst its ranks. They have made many crude additions to their ziggurat's defences—blocking off lower access points with rocks, destroying all but a few stairways leading to the upper levels and so on.

- **Yellow Eyes:** Most the Yellow Eye tribe are in thrall to a unique semi-sentient yellow mould they cultivate in hidden nurseries below their crumbling ziggurat-lair. The mould releases spores that quickly burrow their way into the troglodytes' brains enabling the “parent” mould to telepathically control its minions. Afflicted troglodytes have pale yellow eyes and are fearless in battle. Unique among the tribes of the Twilight City, the Yellow Eyes have several non-troglodytes among their ranks.

THE WHISPERING FANE

The immense, cyclopean bulk of the Whispering Fane towers over the surrounding ziggurats and city. A huge ziggurat of black, basaltic masonry it is dedicated to nameless, blasphemous gods of an elder epoch almost wholly unknown to man. The fane stands hard against the gaping mouth of the Daemonic Maw—a gigantic sinkhole of unknown depths from which a disturbingly warm breeze redolent with unknown scents of terrible, otherworldly places issues. At its zenith, a magical-crafted span of dull green stone arches over the Daemonic Maw. At its tip stands a stone altar stained black by the blood of countless sacrifices.

Within the Daemonic Maw, the darkness itself seems to breathe and shadows press closely about explorers. Magical traps, sentient construct guardians and the deranged cultists of sinister inhuman powers all lurk within the fane.



BEYOND & BELOW THE TWILIGHT CITY

In the far reaches of Gloamhold's shadowed depths—beyond even the Sunless Lake and the Twilight City—lies the little-travelled Ebon Road and the Screaming Gate. Few adventurers ever reach these fabled locales.

BELOW THE TWILIGHT CITY

Rumours persist of caverns buried deep below the Twilight City in which natural light has never—and indeed can never—shine. The few survivors of expeditions into this terrible, claustrophobic underworld heavy with the weight of untold aeons speak of a malevolent, inhuman and deathless sentience lurking in the darkness. This alien presence protects the crumbling ruins of a civilisation so old even the elves have forgotten its existence. The few individuals to gaze upon the ruin's sweeping ramps, deeply quarried pools and rubble-choked channels can scarce believe any civilisation could predate the troglodytes' ancient subterranean realm. No matter, here lies evidence of something far older and more alien than humanity could imagine.

THE SCREAMING GATE

Few explorers reach the Screaming Gate and fewer still breach its impressive defenses. For beyond the Screaming Gate lies the Ebon Road and the wild, untamed depths of the Ebon Realm. The Screaming Gate was built millennia ago by the troglodytes who founded the Twilight City. They were a ragged bunch fleeing the incessant infighting and civil wars wracking their once proud empire. The survivors eventually discovered the Sunless Lake and founded the Twilight City. They built the Screaming Gate to keep them safe from both their vengeful brethren and the vicious, unthinking beasts lurking in the eternal dark. From the Sunless Lake, the daunting fortification can only be reached via a perilous climb. A sweeping, switchback staircase scales the cavern wall from the lake's frigid, briny waters. Separated from the Twilight City by design, the stairway is built with defence in

LORE

Through dint of their personal local knowledge or their efforts to gather information, the PCs likely know some generally accepted facts about what lies beyond and beneath the Twilight City:

- A great network of tunnels extends far beyond the Twilight City. Few dare tread this lightless realm.
- Access to this vast subterranean network—by many thought to be near infinite in extent—is reached through the Screaming Gate.
- A deep network of tunnels also extends below the Twilight City. Here even the rocks are alive with a malign sentience.

mind. In several places—through clever use of architectural techniques now long-lost to the troglodytes—it is rigged to collapse. Every few score feet, sets of slender, carven enscrolled pillars flank the staircase. All were once potent magical defences drawing upon the power of the four elements to annihilate anything coming down the stairs; now some have fallen (or been destroyed) while others have lost their enchantments or malfunction in unpredictable fashions.

The Screaming Gate itself is a massive fortification built around a huge gate of living stone wrested from the very fabric of the elemental plane of earth by long-dead troglodyte artificers. Several exceedingly ancient and powerful earth elementals are bound within the gate. They give the gate an awesome array of physical attacks as well as the ability to regenerate damage wrought to the portal and the surrounding stone. The Screaming Gate—unsurprisingly given its name—also possesses a variety of powerful and devastating sonic attacks. No large body of attackers have ever breached its defenses. On occasion, though, individuals or small bands of cunning, lucky or powerful travellers have managed to pass through the area without being annihilated by discovering one of the several secret sally ports concealed about the gate's environs.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Many stories circulate about what lies beyond or below the Twilight City. If the PCs seek out such rumours, consult the table below, to discover what they learn.

D8 RUMOUR

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | The Screaming Gate was built to keep something horrifying from ravaging the Twilight City. |
| 2* | The darkness lurking in the tunnels beneath the Twilight City is sentient. It kills all who enter the tunnels. |
| 3 | Only magical light can push back the darkness of the tunnels beneath the Twilight City. |
| 4 | Huge worms and other fearsome predators lurk beyond the Ebon Road in the wilderlands. |
| 5 | The Screaming Gate itself is sentient, and can protect itself from intruders. |
| 6 | Beyond the Ebon Road lies the so-called Gibbering Chasm and its foul, unknowable denizens. |
| 7* | The approach from the Twilight City to the Screaming Gate was once heavily trapped, but these ancient protections have now all failed. |
| 8* | Everyone who has passed through the Screaming Gate has returned changed. Most have been driven mad by their experiences. |

*False rumour

THE EBON ROAD

While of predominantly natural origin, troglodyte miners modified the passageway that would become the Ebon Road to make the approach to the city as difficult as possible. In several sections, they engineered steep inclines to make an organised advance on the city by a large group all but impossible. Still, a small band of determined or desperate explorers could dare the Ebon Road, but such heroes must do so without mounts or beasts of burden unless they can employ magic to aid their beasts' passage.

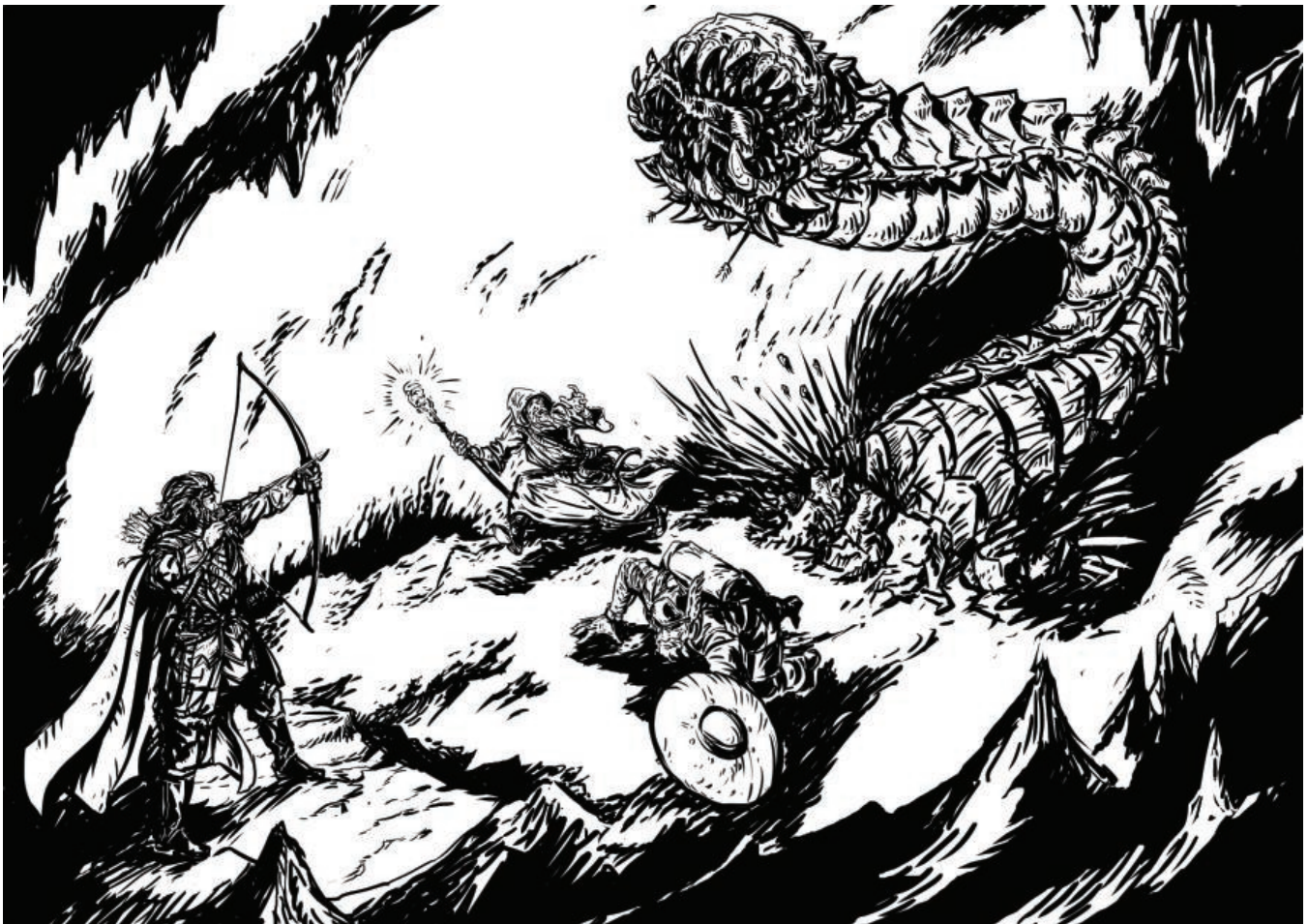
The further one gets from the Twilight City the wilder and rougher the going becomes. Beyond the relative safety of the Twilight City, there are precious few safe havens. However, fantastical tales of underground civilisations and their riches draw a trickle of adventurers through the gate; most do not return. Only the most powerful heroes stand a chance of surviving in this harsh, unforgiving realm.

BEYOND THE EBON ROAD

The wilds beyond the Ebon Road are rarely explored. Just reaching this point requires an epic effort; most judge the effort and danger not consummate with the potential rewards. Thus, little reliable information about what lurks in these lightless passages is available to prospective adventurers.

From the Ebon Road, a convoluted jumble of passageways leads roughly southward. Inevitably, they pass deep under Hard Bay's storm-tossed waters. Burrowing ever deeper, they become progressively more difficult to traverse. Occasionally, explorers report discovering sections replete with suggestions of ancient workings and construction. Whatever the truth of the matter, all now lie in ruin.

Dangerous predators, ready with claw and fang to rend the life from any adventurer wandering through their territory, lurk in this subterranean maze. Chief amongst these implacable hunters are huge purple worms able to burrow through solid rock and to detect the tread of explorers from a great distance. Old stories tell of these monstrous creatures being able to spit acid and to drive their opponents mad. Such tales are now dismissed as nothing more than the deranged ramblings of weak-willed survivors of ill-fated expeditions.



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