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VILLAGE BACKDROP: SKAALHAFT



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VILLAGE BACKDROP: SKAALHAFT

Skaalhaft is a whaling village, where the quarry are drakes, kraken and other magical aquatic beasts as well as more mundane prey. Each kill provides food and alchemical supplies for weeks, both for use in the village and profitable export. Whaling crews, marked with glowing tattoos, carved scrimshaw necklaces or strange arcane gifts, return with a prize or sometimes not at all. Back in Skaalhaft, women and children work in a miasmic processing mill. Stone faced and silent, they collect the valuable scales, blood and bone from rare beasts. The bay is thick with mutated sharks from the runoff of such arcane waste.

Despite the insular atmosphere, strangers roam the streets. A traveling wizard and alchemist, rich with gold from past misdeeds, make special requests of the whalers and pay their hires well. An orphaned daughter bent on revenge seeks her father's killer among the villagers. And now the PCs have arrived...

Designed for use with the 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

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SKAALHAFT AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Svaad Ruun

Government: Dynasty

Alignments: LN, N

Population: 187 (187 humans)

Notable Folk: Gremheks (Vaydmar's Light), The Alchemist (Wayhouse), The Poacher (Wayhouse), The Wizard (Wayhouse)

Languages: Common

Resources & Industry: Alchemical good, rare creature parts

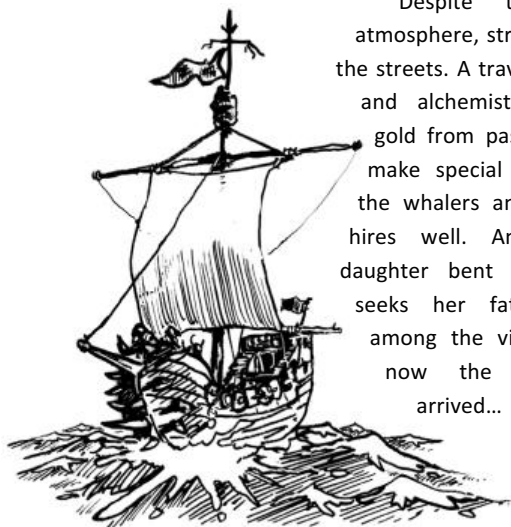
Skaalhaft is a whaling village, where the quarry are drakes, kraken and other magical aquatic beasts as well as more mundane prey. Each kill provides food and alchemical supplies for weeks, both for use in the village and for profitable export. Whaling crews leave for days at a time, returning with a kill or empty handed (or sometimes not at all). These warriors use specialized tools and techniques to take on creatures that would slay far greater warriors.

Back in Skaalhaft, women and children work in a miasmic processing mill. Stone faced and silent, they separate valuable scales, blood and bone from worthless refuse. The bay is thick with mutated sharks from the runoff of such arcane waste.

The citizens of Skaalhaft are strong, sombre and scarred, some marked with glowing tattoos, carved scrimshaw necklaces or strange magic gifts from the alchemically charged meals they consume. While the village's mood usually matches the stormy grey skies, a valuable kill is marked by raucous celebrations which can last many days.

Sadly, mourning can be as frequent as celebration. Two months ago, one of the village's four ships went missing at sea. Svaad Ruun proclaimed the souls aboard lost, and a mass funeral is planned. The village digs deep into their treasury to purchase a new ship even as the local witch insists the crew still lives.

Despite the insular atmosphere, strangers roam the streets. A traveling wizard and alchemist, rich with gold from past misdeeds, make special requests of the whalers and pay their hires well. An orphaned daughter bent on revenge seeks her father's killer among the villagers. And now the PCs have arrived...



VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Skaalhaft, its history and surrounds. A PC making a DC 10 Intelligence check knows one or more pieces of information from the list below. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: The founder of Skaalhaft was the legendary dragon-slaying hero Vaydmar.

DC 15: The blue light in the lighthouse is kept aflame by Gremheks the widowed witch.

DC 20: At any given time, the stores beneath the mill hold several thousand gold pieces worth of valuable ingredients used in various magical and alchemical processes and rituals.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: The villagers are large, muscular, heavily tattooed and acid scarred. Their skin is pale, almost blue, but thick without any sign of veins. Both men and women either tie their dark hair in braids, or cut it off completely.

Dress: Here in the cold, there is little difference between the dress of men and women. Villagers wear leather and furs crafted from both land and sea creatures alike. Many wear white and black scrimshaw necklaces from familial kills.

Nomenclature: *male* Gunvor, Hakron, Magnor, Olvar, Ranghide, Torhyld; *female* Fridys, Hyldys, Sigryd, Trygvinn, Yngryd; *family* Baas, Frys, Gurs, Mys, Ruun, Lyne, Ulf, Vyn.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Skaalhaft, a PC may hear one or more rumours. A PC making a DC 10 Charisma check learns one rumour from the table below. A PC exceeding this check learns an additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10.

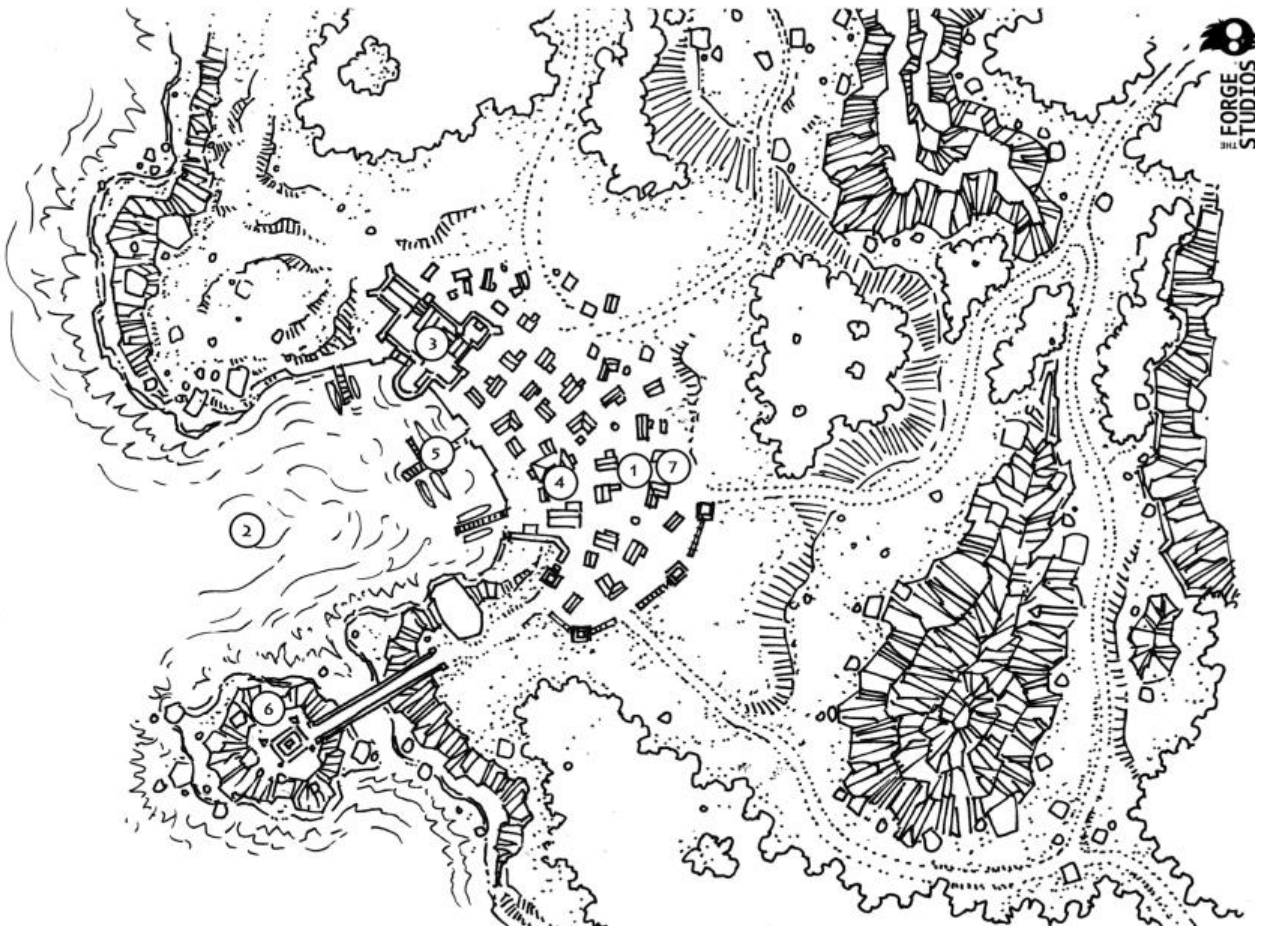
D6	RUMOUR
1*	Svaad Ruun, the burly chief, lost his arm fighting the black kraken. (He was born without his right arm).
2	Two of Skaalhaft's wealthiest customers, the Alchemist and the Wizard, live in the wayhouse.
3	Late at night, the Poacher skulks around the village spying on families in their homes. Patience with this intruder wears thin.
4	Gremheks of the lighthouse believes she deserves to be chief. After all, she is a descendant of Vaydmar.
5	The Alchemist and Wizard disappear one night and are not seen at the Wayhouse or anywhere in Skaalhaft.
6	Gremheks thinks the sailors aboard the lost ship Breakhelm are still alive, but none believe her.

*False rumour

NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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

1. **Black Room:** Within the Wayhouse, the Wizard has constructed a tiny pocket dimension for her dark work. Inside, she and the Alchemist store alchemical goods, piles of gold and their secret project. The pair use materials purchased from Skaalhaft to slowly reconstruct and revivify their fallen leader: the antipaladin Greigard.
2. **Blood Bay:** All runoff from the mill flows into Blood Bay, chumming the water with foul arcane waste. The overwhelming smell attracts gigantic sharks that, over the centuries, have grown misshapen with magical power. Even the black sands and rocks are stained with acid and the entire area smells of rotting fish.
3. **Grey Mill:** Within this massive warehouse, women and children process their kills. Drakes and other creatures are divided into exportable products, which are stored in the basement until traders arrive.
4. **House of Ruun:** The house of Ruun is the ancestral home of the line of Skaalhaft chiefs. Here, the chief negotiates and proclaims, usually to small groups or individuals. Village-wide meetings are exceedingly rare. The current chief, a one-armed giant of a man named Svaad Ruun, decrees with absolute authority and listens stone faced to any concerns.
5. **Hunter's Dock:** Only ships which have killed a drake are allowed the honour of docking at this wooden pier. Until recently, this meant four vessels docked here. However, the *Breakhelm* was recently lost at sea, so only the *Serpent*, *Ygdris* and *Moonborn* remain.
6. **Vaydmar's Light:** This craggy and misshapen lighthouse was raised out of the rock by the hero Vaydmar in ancient times. His decedents have manned it ever since, keeping the arcane blue flame alight through storm and disaster. The witch Gremheks lives here now, all alone and somewhat senile.
7. **Wayhouse:** The Alchemist, Wizard and Poacher all stay within the Wayhouse's crumbling walls. The Alchemist and Wizard live together and in relative comfort, while the Poacher restlessly prowls the village. Their true motives remain unclear to the villagers, but their gold is good.



LIFE IN SKAALHAFT

Skaalhaft is sombre and its folk hard-working, without time or desire for the frivolities of play or art. Large men and women walk in silence, work in silence and largely socialize in silence. At night, the sounds of warm laughter sometimes emanate from the closed shutters of houses, but these displays of affection are deeply personal and not for outsiders or even other villagers.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Villagers hunt and process rare aquatic creatures, then sells the results to alchemically minded patrons around the realm. The entire village pursues this industry with single-minded enthusiasm. Almost half of all men are hunters, while the other half trawl the waters for fish or perform various odd jobs. Hunting is deeply engrained in Skaalhaft's culture and closely tied to success and virility.

LAW & ORDER

Skaalhaft's chief, Svaad Ruun, has total governance over the village. He issues all decrees, adjudicates all major decisions and passes down judgement when necessary.

In reality, Svaad makes very few real choices. The traditions of Skaalhaft are deep-seated and clear to all villagers. Respect for one another is paramount. Physical affection outside the home is discouraged. Remain quiet unless you have something important to say. Split proceeds from the hunt evenly between all villagers. While there are the occasional rule-breakers, a strong work ethic combined with harsh punishments ensure there are few major problems.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Skaalhaft's citizens seem neither a religious nor celebratory lot. However, their lives burst with small rituals and customs nearly robbed of purpose by time. Scrimshaw takes on traditional significance, embodying the spirits of great kills of the past. Many villagers carry a lucky piece of scrimshaw, or make sure to touch the various whale bones embedded in the village's buildings as they pass by.

Seasonal monster migrations are marked by short ceremonies, usually at sunrise and only involving the chief and the captains. Births and deaths are marked by small rituals confined to the immediate family, chief and lighthouse keeper alone. If there is disaster at sea, the entire village mourns for as many days as the number of sailors lost. By sharing the load, the mourning period is minimized and those affected may quickly return to work. Public weeping is always discouraged, even in the case of close loss.

VILLAGE DRESSING

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

D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A dire shark at least 30 feet long washes ashore. The villagers immediately drag it inside the mill and get to work.
2	The mist turns to freezing rain; ice forms on the sand and cliffs.
3	An icy fog bank moves in. It is bitter cold despite the lack of wind.
4	A caravan with six ox carts rolls into Skaalhaft. Many of the workers set up camp outside the walls, while the merchants meet privately with Svaad.
5	A flamboyant wizard <i>teleports</i> into Skaalhaft, then makes his way to the mill to purchase valuable goods. When he is done, he <i>teleports</i> away.
6	The light in the lighthouse flickers, turns momentarily purple and then returns to its normal blue. Gremheks is reportedly somewhat ill, but recovering.
7	A bloodstained carving of Vaydmar washes ashore. It is the masthead of the lost <i>Breakhelm</i> hunting ship.
8	A dire shark briefly savages one of the smaller fishing ships, forcing it to return and make repairs.
9	A giant squid attacks a shark in the bay. Between the blood and froth, it is impossible to determine a winner.
10	Svaad calls a private meeting between three seemingly random young men. They emerge as stoic as ever.
11	A piece of cliff gives way, eroded by the ceaseless acidic surf.
12	It is an unusually clear day, bringing unseasonable heat. The processing mill becomes a foul-smelling sauna.
13	The <i>Serpent</i> returns with a magnificent catch: a dragon. The ship was damaged in the fight, but no sailors were lost.
14	After a week at sea, <i>Ygdris</i> returns with nothing. The sailors disembark silently fuming, none angrier than Captain Ranveig.
15	The <i>Moonborn</i> returns to port with four rare kraken tentacles, and several injured sailors. One sailor was dragged off the ship and killed.
16	Acid explodes over a young child in the mill. Her mother rushes to take her to Gremheks, but some suggest she visits the Alchemist instead.
17	A terrible ice storm rolls in, preventing any ships from leaving port.
18	A child sits on the black sand, carving a magnificent piece of scrimshaw.
19	A baby receives its first tattoo on its first birthday. It does not cry during the process.
20	The Wizard and Alchemist wander the streets, drinking heavily and celebrating something.

THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

Skaalhaft rests on a blustery spit of northern land. It is a week's ride to the nearest major town, far enough to feel secluded but close enough that traders may reach it without extensive travel. The trails are not well-maintained, but the caravans make do. For the unique products that Skaalhaft offers, the trip is worth it.

If the village had an inn, however, the trek might be far more enjoyable. Instead, visitors must set up their own camps among the black boulders littering the landscape. The reception visitors receive is as frosty as the trail they have travelled.

It is cold, up here in the north. Most of the year, freezing sea mist, fog and rain cover the land. For a few weeks every summer, the land becomes stifling hot and still, without even a breeze to provide respite. For a few weeks every winter, the village endures a blizzard (though the snow does not survive long on the salted earth). Regardless of the season, however, the sea is always bitterly cold, hovering just a few degrees above freezing. It is not uncommon to see detached icebergs floating by in the distance.

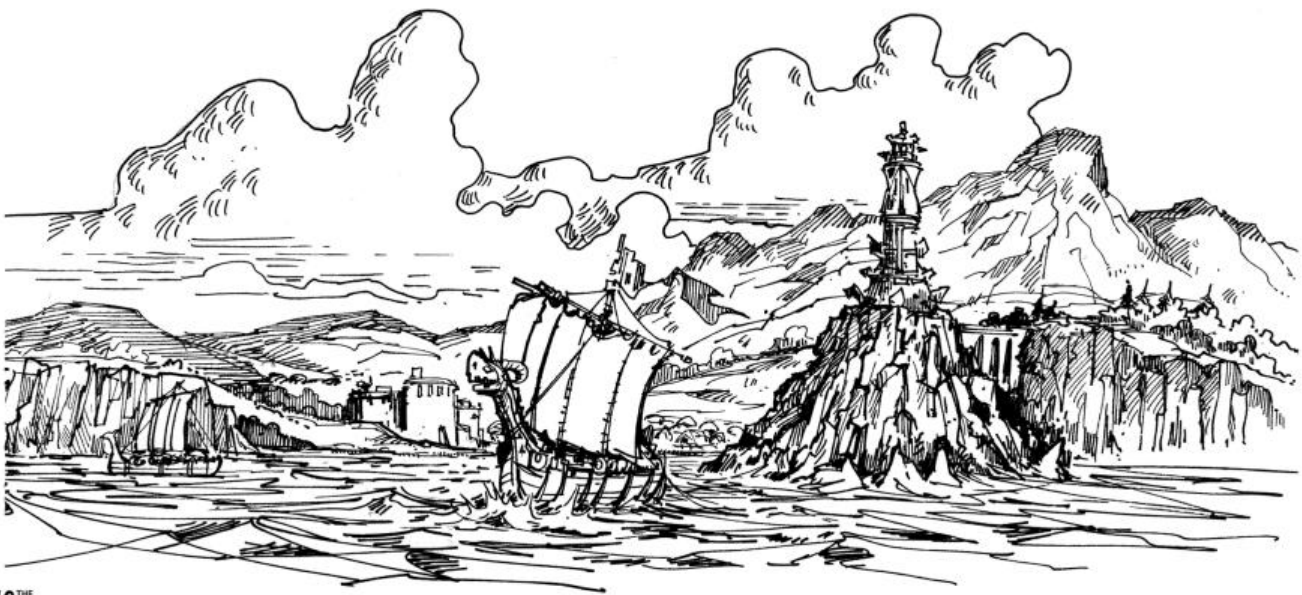
The terrain around Skaalhaft is volcanic in origin, though no volcano has erupted here in millennia. Rocks are black and jagged, whipped into unnatural sharp shapes by wind, salt and

time. Instead of earth, the ground comprises black gravel for several days travel in any direction. The few plants growing here are highly sought after by the herds of elk migrating through this bleak land.

Up and down the coast, cliffs and razor-sharp boulders make sailing difficult. A crew seeking respite from a gale must find one of the few black sand beaches piercing the cliffs, then pull their boat high out of the water to avoid the rough surf. Skaalhaft sailors are specially trained to navigate such harsh waters without smashing their boats to bits.

Many sea creatures revel in these conditions. Drakes, kraken, whales and dire sharks all travel and feed in abundance along the coast and in deeper waters. The rich seawater draws a range of prey and predator alike, including great colonies of seals and orcas along with the fiercer beasts. While most sailors avoid the region at all costs, those in Skaalhaft use secret techniques to bring down such valuable quarry.

In short, the area around Skaalhaft is not unlike the villagers themselves. In the cold and quiet, the land might seem lifeless and inhospitable to foreigners. However, great energy and strength lie hidden just beneath the surface.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN SKAALHAFT

1: THE BLACK ROOM

Dark magic pulses throughout this black void, though the invisible ground seems solid enough. A corpse in full plate mail lies stretched on a rack in front of an alchemy lab piled high with arcane ingredients.

The Black Room is a pocket dimension created by the Wizard and only accessible by speaking a passcode while touching the Wizard's staff. In it, the Wizard and Alchemist store piles of gold and perform their dark magic.

The Alchemist and Wizard once served the powerful half-orc antipaladin Greigard. Together, they plundered the realm, amassing riches and murdering as they pleased. Finally, the trio were overcome by a paladin and her adventuring party. Greigard was killed, but the Alchemist and Wizard escaped with his corpse. The pair now work to revive the antipaladin using the arcane materials procured by Skaalhaft's sailors. Soon Greigard will rise again, and the trio will seek revenge on the paladin who wronged them. If the PCs learn the Alchemist's or Wizard's actual name, or overhear their private conversation, they may make a DC 15 Intelligence check to recognize the dastardly crew. Alternatively, PCs making a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check realise the requested ingredients' possible application.

2: BLOOD BAY

The bay's black sands are stained with blood and thick with discarded bones. The waters themselves churn opaque and rough, perpetually chummed with runoff from the mill.

Blood Bay deserves its name. The arcane refuse of Skaalhaft runs into the waters, attracting sharks and other, more fearsome creatures. After centuries of feasting on magical runoff, the beasts lurking in the waters have grown mutated and gigantic. A villager who falls into the water is likely to be eaten before hypothermia claims him. For that reason, ships sunk in the bay remain unlooted. It's simply too dangerous to attempt any sort of salvage.

The bay's black sands are more like tiny river rocks than the powdery sand of the tropics. Smooth and flat, they make for passable skipping stones on calmer days. These pebbles, and even the nearby cliffs, are stained into complex patterns by the blood and acid of a thousand kills.

3: GREY MILL

This large grey warehouse stinks of fish guts and acid. Dozens of women and children work at weathered tables, separating the corpses of drakes and other creatures into valuable ingredients.

Within the cavernous Grey Mill, women and children process the monsters taken from the sea. The area is busy, but orderly and strangely quiet. Corpses are taken to a storage basement on the dock side of the mill. From there, they are brought up piece by piece and separated into valuable products and refuse. Working with incredible proficiency, the women and children wield bone tools, peeling scales, extracting blood and drying viscera as needed. Long metal gutters drain the acidic bile into Blood Bay.

Filled boxes and ceramic jugs of product are carefully stored in a second basement. Meat is dried, washed and prepared for eating (a process involving fermentation in charcoal for the more acidic creatures). Here the valuables are stored until a trading caravan or patron comes to purchase them.

THE ALCHEMIST (JORY GULE)

CE male human wizard (necromancer) 6

Not an inch of the alchemist's skin shows under thick black robes, a wide brimmed hat and an ebony plague doctor's mask. The saccharine scent that wafts from beneath his garments is unbearable.

Mannerisms: Jory introduces himself as "the Alchemist," and gives no other name. He finds everything funny and giggles in a high, disquieting tone in response to any comment. He mumbles to himself in a nearly incomprehensible chatter as he works.

Personality: Jory is deranged, but not overtly dangerous. He appreciates a good joke, though his sense of humour is an acquired taste.

Background: The Alchemist and Wizard once worked for a powerful antipaladin and now seek revenge on those that wronged them (see location 1 for more details).

THE WIZARD (MAIAG BENTH)

The wizard is all smiles, and her white teeth gleam in any light. Well dressed, attractive and full of swagger, this is a spellcaster with real confidence.

NE female human sorcerer (wild magic) 7

Mannerisms: The Wizard, who refuses to give her true name, is loud, charming and clever. She seems completely unperturbed by the villagers' flat responses.

Personality: Maiag is extroverted, gregarious and without scruples. However, she has grown enamoured of this funny little village and will be sad to leave it.

Background: See above, for more.

Freyga Ruun (LN female human **commoner**): As is tradition, the chief's wife oversees the Grey Mill. Freyga is almost as large as her gigantic husband, and commands authority with equal proficiency. She always carries her tools (a dozen knives, deboners and hammers) in her jacket pockets. She is not above smacking a lazy worker or distracted child.

- **For Sale:** All alchemical substances and ingredients worth 1,300 gp or less, various scales, bones, eyes and so on of dragons, sea serpents and other aquatic beasts.

4: HOUSE OF RUUN

Except for its size, this house looks identical to the nearby structures. Its weathered, blue-grey wooden walls hold up a ceiling tall enough for even the largest villager to stand comfortably.

The house of Ruun is the ancestral home of Skaalhaft chiefs. The walls, made of rough blue-grey wood, separate the area into two bedrooms, a dining area and a large receiving area. Amenities are scarce, furniture is unpadded and decorations take the shape of monster scrimshaw.

At the receiving room's whalebone table, Svaad Ruun occasionally holds small meetings. As is customary, these meetings are private between the relevant parties. Like other

CHIEF SVAAD RUUN

LN male human ranger (beast master) 5 (and Sif his arctic fox beast companion)

This massive man seems the pinnacle of all Skaalhaft hunters: thick runic tattoos covering acid scars, immense muscles over a huge frame and piercing blue eyes in a stony face. It is almost easy to miss his shrunken and malformed arm, or the nearby arctic fox that mirrors his scowling gaze.

Mannerisms: Svaad Ruun seems almost a statue. He listens in unmoving silence, hands clasped at his chin, and refuses to fill long pauses or gaps in conversation. When he finally speaks, his deep voice carries the weight and power of the hundred chiefs that came before him.

Personality: Svaad is as cold and severe as the land he rules. Skaalhaft's chief, his decisions are made with absolute authority. He does not mince words and has little sympathy for outsiders.

Background: When Svaad was born, his mother nearly threw him into the sea. A chief with one arm is no chief at all. But Svaad's father convinced his wife to stay her hand. Even without his arm, Svaad became the village's strongest hunter. His mother relied on him for advice and passed easy knowing Skaalhaft was in his care.

Skaalhaft houses, the receiving area is open to guests but the bedrooms and dining area are only used by the occupants. Trespassing therein is an unthinkable breach of protocol.

5: HUNTER'S DOCK

The dock's blue-grey wood is stained with blood and acid, but intricately decorated with scrimshaw ornaments.

While fishing boats dock at the two smaller piers, only the mighty hunting vessels may anchor at Hunter's Dock. The three remaining ships (*The Serpent*, *Ygdris* and *Moonborn*) are sturdy, lean and fast. They are each mounted with two ballista harpoons and their hulls can withstand acid and crushing blows. The port side of each ship is stained with green and red blood from a hundred kills, and evidence of countless repairs are clear to any competent sailor. Each ship has a crew of fifteen to twenty, so when all three ships are at sea the village is noticeably emptier.

The Serpent is the oldest of the three ships and the most respected. To be accepted aboard the *Serpent* is a great honour. The captain, a wizened old man named Brynhyld, knows more about hunting drakes than any other man alive. The *Serpent* has the masthead of a dragon.

The Ygdris hunts smaller game and its captain Ranveig is an opportunist. His crew is trained with axe and bow and they often explore windswept islands and caves for unusual creatures. More often than not, however, the *Ygdris* returns with nothing more than a dire shark. Svaad is beginning to doubt Ranveig's ability as a captain. *Ygdris* has the masthead of a griffon.

The Moonborn runs errands for special customers and its crew is well equipped for any challenge. Occasionally, captain Vynhert takes the *Moonborn* farther afield, seeking bounties for

RANDOM EVENTS: HUNTER'S DOCK

D6	EVENT
1	The Alchemist makes his way to the dock, parchment in hand. He confers with captain Vynhert of the <i>Moonborn</i> , listing a range of unusual ingredients but neglect to mention their purpose.
2	Sailors board the <i>Ygdris</i> , prepare for another voyage. Each gives a small piece of scrimshaw to a loved one as they go, which they will collect upon their return.
3	Captain Ranveig of the <i>Ygdris</i> begins a heated argument with elderly Brynhyld of the <i>Serpent</i> , over an apparent slight.
4	A gigantic spiked shark presses up against the dock, then recedes into the opaque green water.
5	A child stumbles and falls into the freezing water. If the PCs act quickly enough, they can save him from the beasts swimming within.
6	The <i>Serpent</i> returns early from a trip. Captain Brynhyld has come down with a terrible sickness which racks him with bloody coughs.

monsters terrorising merchants. For the past few months, *Moonborn* has been at the almost exclusive service of the Alchemist and Wizard. *Moonborn's* masthead is a likeness of the captain's deceased wife, Lyselis.

The Breakhelm hunted whales and kraken, but went missing two months ago. At this point it is presumed destroyed and a mass funeral for the sailors is scheduled to take place shortly. In reality, the ship was destroyed by a kraken, but about half of the crew still survive on a barren island far to the west. The *Breakhelm's* masthead was Vaydmar, founder of Skaalhaft.

Rescue of the Breakhelm: Gremheks has a vision of the surviving Breakhelm crew, but cannot convince the villagers the crewmembers are still alive. Reluctantly, she asks the PCs to bring the stranded sailors home.

6: WAYHOUSE

This awkwardly constructed house looks somewhat more dilapidated than the others, its blue-grey walls nearly rotten from the salty air.

Skaalhaft is not accustomed to visitors, yet at the moment they have three: the Wizard, the Alchemist and the Poacher. These travellers have taken up residence in an abandoned home. However, the Wizard and Alchemist have little to do with the Poacher who has claimed another room as her own.

The Wizard and the Alchemist have taken on the role of eccentric patrons. They make special requests of the whalers, and purchase rare products with an unending stream of gold.

THE POACHER (ALAINA KRAYLOCK)

The poacher is dangerously thin, pale and sweaty. Dressed in heavy cloth armour, she seems animated by a nervous paranoia.

CN female elf **scout**

Mannerisms: The Poacher tries but absolutely fails to remain in the shadows. She eats very little, fidgets incessantly and skulks around the village.

Personality: The Poacher is a dull and unsuccessful person, but is utterly consumed by a desire to avenge her father. She has little else in life.

Background: The Poacher sometimes worked with her father aboard a ship which hunted the same waters as Skaalhaft's vessels. They were constantly harassed by the villagers, so the Poacher could blame no one else when her father's ship went missing. She now seeks revenge on whomever is at fault (though she doesn't know who this is). In reality, Gremheks sent a storm to destroy the ship without the knowledge of the rest of the village.

The Poacher is even more mysterious. She refuses to give her name, and wanders the village brooding and without apparent purpose. She only arrived recently, but the villagers will drive her off if her attitude does not improve.

7: VAYDMAR'S LIGHT

This jagged lighthouse looks like it was summoned out of the black rock. The skill required to construct such a monolith seems beyond the ability of any mortal mason.

According to legend, the hero Vaydmar raised the lighthouse using powerful magic after his lover's ship was dashed on the rocks below. He took up residence inside, keeping the torch lit and guiding the hunters home every night. The black spikes and glowing runes crawling over the sides of the lighthouse certainly bear the mark of a powerful mage...or an otherworldly demon.

Vaydmar's Light has been in a single family's care for at least four centuries (as far back as records date). This lineage claims Vaydmar as their heroic ancestor, and they have the arcane prowess to substantiate such a tale. The family has always lived within the lighthouse and maintained the torch, but only a single member now remains: Gremheks.

- **For Sale:** *potion of healing* (50 gp), *potion of invulnerability* (2,000 gp), *scroll of lesser restoration* (250 gp)

GREMHEKS

This ancient woman wears tattered grey robes and moves with a debilitating hunch. Blue tattoos pulse like blood across her wrinkled body.

CN female human cleric 6

Mannerisms: Gremheks sneers and rolls her bulbous eyes at the slightest mistake, and openly complains about guests to her pet crab. However, she is unendingly kind and patient with children, who love her immensely.

Personality: Gremheks is crotchety, nasty and suspicious of outsiders, but provides her services to any who can stand her stream of acerbic complaints and insults. She will do anything to protect Skaalhaft, including murder. In fact, she is responsible for the storm that killed the Poacher's father.

Background: Unable to bear children despite decades of happy marriage, Gremheks is the last of the Vaydmar line. Now she lives alone, tending to the light at the top of the lighthouse and assisting the villagers with healing magic. In recent years, Gremheks has gotten it into her head she deserves to be chief. Luckily, few take her seriously.

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