

# NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Dungeon Planner Set 2





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### THE DUNGEON PLANNER SERIES

Each Dungeon Planner Set contains virtually everything you need to create an exciting adventure for any fantasy role-playing system.

Each set describes and maps an Adventure Setting along with a large Play Sheet of the setting to 25mm figure scale.

The surrounding area is also mapped along with a brief history. The Area Maps in each set link together to build up an entire fantasy region for the players to adventure in and explore.

Each Dungeon Planner Set will save you a great deal of tedious writing and will give you your own ready-to-run adventure in a matter of hours rather than days.

*We do the paperwork; you have the fun.*

### SET 2: NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

#### CONTENTS

**Area Map:** This maps the area around the village of Blackmarsh.

**Play Sheet:** This maps the village of Blackmarsh to 25mm figure scale and is for use during play. The map uses our Dungeon Floor Plan system so that you can show furniture, add trapdoors to secret cellars, etc by using Dungeon Floor Plans.

**Game Master's Screen:** This has a brief history of the area on the player's side for their information. The GM's side has a keyed plan of the village and *Encounter/Event Tables*. These can be used in addition to the adventure you are playing or to provide adventure ideas.

This booklet contains general details of the villagers and buildings such that you can vary the location of the villagers to suit your adventure. Space is also provided for you to note their statistics according to the game system that you are using and details relevant to your adventure.

You can use the village as you wish. It can be placed in your existing game world. The Encounters/Events can be used as stand, altered to include new characters, or replaced entirely. The Adventure Ideas and history of the area can be adapted to suit your own game world, as required.

#### USING THIS SET

This set details the village of Blackmarsh to the north of the vast wasteland known as the Black Marsh. The entire area is immediately to the west of Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*) and can be used separately or in conjunction with *Set 1* to form a campaign setting.

The village is for use as the setting of an adventure, either based upon one of the Adventure Ideas in this booklet or of your own devising. Once the initial adventure has been completed, you can use the village as a base for your players to embark on other adventures that you set in the area. The Orekk Mines; the Crystal Cavern; the ruins of Griffon Manse; in or below Hargon's Tower; the wilds of the Black Marsh; and even the *Caverns of the Dead* in *Set 1* are all locations where you can site your own, or ready-made scenarios. Naturally, other adventures might well occur in the village while the players are based there. The village of Blackmarsh will provide you with a living backdrop to your adventures.

Alternatively, you can use it as a standard village in any adventure, or simply as the location for a one-off bar-room/quayside/market brawl.

#### USEFUL PLAY AIDS

The play sheet is designed for use with 25mm scale figures so that all the action can be played out. We recommend Citadel Miniatures for use in play.

You will also find our Dungeon Floor Plans 3 useful as this contains a sheet of boats should you players wish to use one to venture into the Black Marsh or to gain access to the rear of a waterside building. They can also be used just to set the scene. If you do not want your players to be aware of the room layout within buildings, you can cut out a rooftop for each building from the Roofing sheet in Dungeon Floor Plans 3 and place them on the buildings on the play sheet. When the players enter a building, you can then remove the roof to reveal the rooms.

#### VILLAGE BACKGROUND

Prince Hargon built the look-out tower to overlook the Black Marsh and raise the warning should the vanquished Orcs survive its terrors and one day return. However, the Orcs have never returned and the watch is continued more as ritual than necessity. The road between Blackmarsh and Elbridge is often rendered impassable during rainy spells where the Black Marsh encroaches north of the river Ormsfle. Travellers were often forced to make camp by the troop encampment manning the watch-tower. It was from these humble camps that the village of Blackmarsh evolved as a convenient stopping place for travellers by road or river.

The village sits on a huge slab of hard, impervious rock which forces an acute bend in the river. The villagers cull their livelihood from the river and the Black Marsh. Using flat-bottomed punts, the villagers catch many types of fish, but predominately bream, lamprey, eel, catfish, and freshwater crayfish. However, the village is famed for its freshwater oysters which flourish in many beds in the Black Marsh.

On rare occasions, these oysters contain a Black Pearl, built up over years from the dark sediment brought to the Marsh by the slow-moving river Blackwater from the Ravenscrag Peaks far to the south. This also gives the marsh its black hue. The Black Pearls are much prized and sought after both for their value as gems and their alleged magical powers. A Royal Charter proclaims all Black Pearls to be Crown property. Any that are found must be registered with the Registrar in Blackmarsh from where they are dispatched to the Royal Courts at Arkand, the capital. The finder of a pearl is rewarded with the statutory sum laid down by the charter of 50gp, a fraction of its true value.

To the north of Blackmarsh lies the farmland which produces most of the area's crops, mostly farmed by the folk of Elbridge who trade with the villagers of Blackmarsh.

The largest and grandest building in Blackmarsh is the Royal House, built as a station for Royal Funeral processions on their way to the Royal Tombs in Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*). The Royal House is also sometimes used as a field HQ by the Scarlet Plumes, an elite brigade of Royal troops with a riving commission to keep law in the land. They sometimes come to the area to deal with odd band of brigands who sometimes use the Tagor Hills as a base for raiding travellers on the Royal Way.

The Adventure Ideas and Encounter/Event Tables are merely guidelines to be used as you wish. The actual powers of the villagers and creatures encountered should be tailored to suit the game system that you are using and the level of proficiency of the player-characters to provide a balanced adventure.

Treasure and Magic Items should be inserted at your discretion to fit in with the economics of your game world and the player-characters. Whether Black Pearls do have any magical properties, and if so, what they are, should be specified by you in the same manner.

#### GM'S ADVENTURE NOTES

The *Open Spaces*, *Buildings* and *Villagers* are each detailed separately in the relevant sections. (*Open Spaces* are cross-referenced by a bold letter, *Buildings* by a bold number, and *Villagers* by a bold V and number.) This is to enable you to locate the villagers as you wish to suit the adventure that you have chosen, and to prevent the players knowing too much about the initial set-up. Some villagers have a recommended home, but space is provided with the details of each building so that you can note down any occupant that you might wish to locate there.

You should carefully read the details of the buildings and villagers to acquaint yourself with the various personalities, sub-plots and rumours before planning your adventure.

Some buildings have a second floor. These are mapped in the building description section. Any secret chamber that you might desire for your adventure should also be noted in the space provided in the building description. A villager's treasures and possessions should be noted in the building description and on the village map provided on the back page.

Once you have decided on your adventure, you should record which villagers are in which buildings, along with any additional information relevant to your adventure. All notes should be recorded before you start.

In the space below, you should make notes of any general information needed for your adventure and game system, for example, a special Encounter Table.

#### PLAYER'S ADVENTURE OUTLINE

You should note here the information available to the players at the start of the adventure, the outline of their mission, etc.



## ADVENTURE IDEAS

The *Dungeon Planner Series* is designed to provide ready-made settings for adventures. You may prepare your own or use one of the following ideas as a starting point for adventures set in and around the village of Blackmarsh.

Once you have decided upon the plot of your scenario, note the statistics for the villagers and creatures in the spaces provided in the relevant sections.

### I: Nightmare in Blackmarsh

A strange mist swirls across the Black Marsh. Slowly, but inexorably, it moves north towards the village. Soon visibility is virtually nil. The villagers are used to the marsh-fogs, but this is different. There are things moving in the mist: mysterious, half-seen shapes shambling through the village slaying all they encounter. Is it a band of Orcs finally returning? Has some evil wizard raised the long-dead bodies of the Orcs from the mire to form a nightmare army? Or is it some primeval horror, rising from the murky wastes to wreak its dreadful vengeance on mankind? Could this be the long-promised threat to Koss that will be met by the return of Orm from the dead? And should the players fight their way out and ride, or go by boat, to the *Caverns of the Dead* (Set 1) in an attempt to find the lost tomb of the legendary Orm?

### II: The Coming of Mordar

A band of brigands led by Mordar the cursed, has been hiding in the Tagor Hills and preying on lone travellers on the Royal Way. They have finally summoned the courage, and numbers, to mount a full-scale attack on Blackmarsh. They will make the attempt either when most of the boats are out fishing, or at night. Their tactics may be those of stealth, or, if you are using mass-combat rules such as *Warhammer*, a full-scale attack.

### III: To Catch a Thief

The Thieves Guild in Arkand City has hired the party to track down a rather large item of treasure that went 'missing' when their last Guild Master suddenly and mysteriously retired. Since this person is still influential in the city's underworld, the party must be discreet in their enquiries, and must operate without the help of the Guild. Should it turn out that the man, who is believed to be living in partial retirement in Blackmarsh, does have the item in question, the party are not to attempt to recover it, but to report back to the Guild in Arkand.

### IV: The Black Orb

A rumour is abroad that a Black Pearl has been found by an oysterman of Blackmarsh; and what's more it is apparently the largest ever found. However, no Black Pearl has yet been lodged with the Royal

### Registrar in the village.

The players are hired to investigate the rumours, and, if possible, to acquire the Pearl for their patron. There will no doubt be other interested parties, each desperate to gain the Pearl for their master. Once the rumour has reached the King's ear in Arkand, a squad of Scarlet Plumes will doubtless also descend on Blackmarsh, so the party must act quickly.

But is there a pearl? And if there is, who has it? Maybe it is not even a Black Pearl at all, but some arcane Magic Item with dark powers.

### V: Blood on the Streets

The Royal Way is flooded between Blackmarsh and Elbridge and the party must put up for the night in the village. During the night, a sudden death occurs: a child is silently taken from one of the houses and is found in the street, a shocking, grisly mess. The next night, an old farmer wending his drunken way home from the Fennock Inn meets the same fate. Despite a reinforced village watch, there are similar deaths on following nights. As the death toll mounts, there are whispers of a bestial figure in the night and of lycanthropy.

Since the grisly deaths began when the strangers arrived, they are natural suspects. To stay ahead of a lynch mob, they may have to find the real culprit quickly.

### VI: The Corpse that Walked

A Royal Funeral procession is at the Royal House on their way to the Royal Tombs in Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*). At dawn on the day the entourage is due to depart, there is pandemonium. Horns are sounded. There are Royal Guards rushing everywhere. The village is roused and assembled in the square. The Royal Casket is empty and the body is missing! Has somebody stolen it for some reason (would anyone be crazy enough to hold a corpse for ransom?), or has it been raised from the dead, and is at that very moment alive and kicking in the village somewhere?

The tortuous internal politics of the courtiers could hold the key, but the immediate attention is on the village, and, in particular, some certain strangers...

### VII: Fenhawk Hunt

A naturalist from Arkand arrives in the village. He seeks to capture a live Fenhawk for his studies. He will need an escort into the Black Marsh to try and find a suitable specimen. Being just a lowly scholar, he cannot afford to pay much, but any expedition into the marshes will be very interesting, and, of course, there is always a chance of stumbling on an oyster-bed and possibly a Black Pearl.

### VIII: Empty Vessels

One of the fisherman's boats is spotted, drifting in the river. Some villagers row

out and tow the boat to the wharf. There is blood, mingled with a sticky, green (poisonous) substance, on the side of the boat, there are clear signs of a struggle. There is no trace of the crew.

This is not the first such disappearance, but the third over the last few weeks. The villagers are now growing very concerned.

The party are hired to venture into the Black Marsh in an attempt to find and slay whatever is responsible. Few of the villagers will want to accompany the expedition, but Griff the Bane (V5) may be persuaded to act as guide.

Of course, the slime may be a decoy to conceal the real source of the trouble which could be someone in the village bent on some plot of their own.

### IX: A Crime of Passion

Whilst staying at the Fennock Inn, the party are witness to an act of revenge. A rough, uncouth man dressed in shabby leathers, and dusty from riding on the Royal Way, barges into the bar, demands a flagon of ale and quaffs it in one gulp. The few locals in the bar at the time begin edging for the door, but one stops to whisper 'Look out, for it is Karanor of Windrush'. Once the man in question has stomped out, Staffyr (V10) will tell of Karanor's rivalry with Takhos the Headman (V11) over the latter's wife, Jemia.

While he is relating the tale of their famous duel for her hand in marriage, a villager rushes in and breathlessly informs everyone that Karanor has just killed Takhos and has carried off Jemia, fleeing in the direction of Windrush (Set 1). A posse of locals is soon made up, but they will need the experience of the party to help them find and tackle Karanor, especially if he had some of his friends waiting for him beyond the village.

### X: Black Death

The party arrive to discover that the village has been blighted by a mysterious disease. (It would be best if they have already passed through the village on their way elsewhere, so that they would have seen the place healthy.) The symptoms of the strange illness are a grey pallor to the skin, loss of hair, and a dreadful fever.

The old people whisper of the Black Marsh. Some are convinced that someone, or something, is poisoning the Ormsflo. Others believe that it is some form of plague carried by the wind off the Black Marsh. All are convinced of its origins though, and speak of the need for an expedition to uncover the source of the evil disease and attempt to destroy it.

But are they right? Is there some evil force within the village, gradually taking over the villagers, of which the disease is only the first symptom? Have those who have recovered, or were never seen to be ill, already been taken over? Is it the work of Elenar (V15)? And will any of the party succumb?

## GENERAL NOTES

Most buildings are timber framed with a thatched roof of rushes from the Black Marsh. Furniture is mostly made from local wood and most matting, baskets and oyster-panniers are woven from rushes.

The main water supply is the well in the Royal Court (B). All homes will have a bucket or barrel of water from the well.

Sanitation is primitive. All homes will have a bucket or chamber pot which will be emptied as necessary into the river. Occasionally, the contents may be thrown from a window into the street, usually with prior warning.

## OPEN SPACES

Blackmarsh sits on a large slab of hard, impervious rock which juts into the river causing a sharp bend. The village's open spaces are paved with smooth slabs of local stone. The many cracks and holes are patched up with bits of stone cobbles and chips of loose rock. Most of the lanes and alleys are covered with a thin layer of dust which degenerates into slimy mud near the riverside. The following basic descriptions of the village byways, squares and wharves may be amended to add details specific to your adventure, or just to set the scene.

### A: The Village Gate

These strong wooden doors face the rutted, muddy track to the Royal Way, the main riverside route from Arkand to Windrush (in Set 1) and beyond. Although they are thick and strong, they are rarely used because the gatekeeper isn't strong enough to close them by himself and there is seldom any danger. It is only on stormy, portentous nights that any effort is made to shut them.

When the Royal House is in use, a fair number of the Royal Guard will be camped in tents in the square; the majority of them, however, will be camped outside the village on the grasslands beyond the stockade where the villagers occasionally mass for a game of Bruntball, a violent sport that is something of a cross between hurling and rugby.

The main features of the Royal Court are the shady beech tree which overhangs the chapel roof and the well of natural spring water, much purer than the waters of the brackish Ormsflo, which has been bored down through the solid rock.

slipway for minor repairs.

### B: The Royal Court

The rather fancy name for the village, or market, square is due to the Royal House which fronts it. The square is often used by visiting traders who set up shop alongside the local vegetable farmers from Elbridge, cattle herders, and fish stalls. At other times, entertainers and showmen set up their shows in the square, for the amusement of the locals.

### C: Tower Lane

A short, often muddy, lane leading from the Royal Court to the Tower Slip. It is nevertheless well-used for the village shop (3) is located in it.

### E: Back Lane

This narrow, covered passage is a back alley to the side gate of the Royal House (1) and to the Watchtower (2). It also has gates at both ends. The gate to Tower Lane (C) is 7' tall and is usually locked. Both the Registrar, Takhos (V11), and Brekk the Watchkeep (V1) have keys. The other gate conceals the privy (1/9).

### F: Chapel Steps

This narrow lane ends at a set of rotting and very precarious wooden steps that lead up to the village stockade.

### D: Tower Slip

This small slipway beside the old Watchtower (2) is the oldest slipway in the village as it was built to off-load supplies to the troops manning the Watchtower many years before the village even existed. Now it is mostly used for off-loading goods for the village shop (3), whose storeroom backs onto it. The slip itself is formed of two large, solid slabs of stone that slide quite sharply into the river, which is quite deep and fast-flowing at this point. Occasionally, if the Fennock Wharf is full, a boat will be hauled up the

**G: The Stockade**

The tall wooden stockade was originally built to protect the village in more warlike times. However, it is now neglected, overgrown and rotting. The effort of repairing it would involve transporting timber from the Forgyle Forest and the villagers can see little need at present for either the expense or the effort.

As a result, the catwalk is rather dangerous to walk on. Anyone doing so is might fall through into the damp fetid space below, between the stockade and the rear of the cottages that lie in its shadow.

**H: Ormsflo Steps**

This lane leads between some cottages to some crumbling steps into the Ormsflo. Occasionally used to off-load passengers when Fennock Wharf is crowded, it is more often the home of packs of children frolicking in the river.

**I: Fennock Walk**

This lane is at its busiest in the evenings as people make their way to and from the Fennock Inn.

**J: Long Lane**

This lane is known for the excess of mud, perpetually damp in the shadows between the cottages, that infests it as far as the alley leading to Weed Steps (K). The crumbling wooden steps at its end lead to the stockade.

**L: Fennock Wharf**

The wharf takes its name from the Fennock Inn which overshadows the quayside. (The Inn itself is named after a large bird of prey, the Fenhawk of which Fennock is a local corruption. Fenhawks dwell mainly in the Fennock Hills and prey on the wildlife of the marsh.)

The wharf is the hub of the village, and there will nearly always be boats preparing for sail or off-loading their catch. The wooden slipway on the north of the wharf is where boats are dragged up to the space there for repairs by the shipwright. There will often be fishermen and oystermen selling their wares from their boats or from barrels on the quayside. The usual fare includes freshwater oysters and crayfish, eels, lamprey and marsh catfish.

Repairs to nets, pots, and tack are usually carried out in front of the Fennock Inn where liquid refreshment is readily available.

Most of the villagers boats are moored either at the wharf or jetty, or just off of it. The jetty is used as a diving platform by the more adventurous of the local children, and, on hot languid days, by most of the villagers too.

The wharf is almost always wet and littered with mud, fish entrails, river weed, oars, nets, and broken tack from boats. It is not uncommon for a drunken patron of the Fennock Inn to take an unintentional, but refreshing midnight dip.

**K: Weed Steps**

These steps, which lead rather treacherously down into the Ormsflo, are so-called because of the unusually prolific growths of the slimy green weeds which clog the river at this point. On occasions, the weeds are so thick that a boat can hardly reach the steps for them.

## BUILDINGS

### 1: THE ROYAL HOUSE

This is the most outstanding building and often comes as a surprise to visitors as it is unusual to find architectural masterpieces in so humble a village. Its main purpose is as a stop-over for funeral parties on their way to the Royal Tombs at Orm's Finger (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*). Consequently, it remains largely unused for most of the time. It is occasionally used as a field HQ by the Scarlet Plumes, the King's roving troop of elite warriors who roam the land dealing with bandits, brigands and any other threats. The Royal House is also used by Takhos (V11) in his role as Registrar.

There are many secret niches in the Royal House, installed over the years for the use of the Registrar. You should note these and mark which one is currently used by Takhos.

The building is constructed of imported white stone of particularly fine quality. The fascia is ornately carved: the panels depicting many of the outside pursuits of the nobility (such as hunting). Much of the fine craftsmanship is obscured by years of accumulated grime and dust. The place has been greatly neglected and could do with renovation.

*If you have already chosen to have the Royal Tombs (Set 1) as unused in your campaign, then this building can either be derelict, or perhaps taken over by the villagers as a communal store/boathouse, or as a council hall, although the Fennock Inn (6) would be preferred for this.*

#### 1/1: Entrance Hall

The hallway is decorated with faded murals which depict the great victory of the Royal troops led by Hargon over the Orcish invaders of some 150 years ago. The story as depicted by the panels shows great insight into the masterful strategy and low cunning used by Hargon.

The orcs, believing Hargon's forces to be waiting in ambush in the North Wood, performed an encircling manoeuvre into the Plain of Tagor in order to isolate Hargon's troops, at the same time sweeping into the woods with a second force from the wilderness. Hargon, however, had outwitted them; his main force was waiting, concealed by a low ridge in the Plain. Only the elite cavalry was in the North Wood as a decoy. Once the main orc force were on the Plains, Hargon swept down on their rear, simultaneously, the cavalry charged their flanks from the woods. The joint attack routed the orcish forces, forcing them along their only retreat path - south into the Tagor Hills. The secondary orc force fled from the North Woods back to the wilderness. The surviving orcs were flushed from the hills, and driven across the Ormsflo into the Black Marsh where they were presumed to have perished in their

flight.

In case they could somehow survive the terrors of the marsh, Hargon built a watch-tower on the river bank so that they would be spotted should they ever re-emerge from the marsh. In addition to this purely functional tower, a larger, more ornate tower was built on the Plains of Tagor to commemorate the victory. It serves as a landmark on the otherwise featureless plain, being visible for miles.

When the Royal House is used for the purpose of a funeral procession, the body of the deceased is lain in state in the entrance hall so that the villagers may pay their respects to the dead.

#### 1/3: Storeroom

Supplies for the funeral party are housed here: trestles to rest the bier on, candles, bearer poles and such like. There are also some spare bed-rolls for servants and guards. Guards accompanying the funeral procession often use this room as a rough dormitory-cum-guardroom.

#### 1/4: Storeroom

Much the same as 1/3; this room is used to store notable relics of past processions in the event of the memory of a cherished ancestor being invoked. Such relics might be an old shroud, wax death-masks, etc.

#### 1/2: Boathouse

The large and impressive landing stage is ornately carved: the carvings depict scenes of the afterlife and are lacquered in black, with gilt highlights. Neglect shows, however: the lacquer is peeling and the gilt has lost much of its lustre. Around the walls are hung the trappings of funeral barges - black lacquered barge-poles fitted with gold trimmings, neatly coiled ropes of dark fibre, and frayed drapes. When a funeral procession is made by river, the funeral barge is moored in the boathouse. Funeral processions are only made by river when bad weather is likely to have made the Royal Way impassable (usually between Blackmarsh and Elbridge where the Black Marsh encroaches north of the river). Especially revered nobles are sometimes taken by river at their behest, since the occasion is more stately and regal than the road journey.

There is a winch on the east wall for raising the portcullis. The lower half of the portcullis is solid to prevent flotsam from drifting into the boathouse. The upper part is open, as with a normal portcullis.

#### 1/5: Servants Quarters

This room is used as sleeping quarters for the servant staff when the house is in use. It is a bare room, the servants sleeping in bed-rolls on the floor. There is a rough wooden table against the window wall with a plain, white china ewer and wash-bowl on top. The table has two drawers, both empty.

#### 1/6: Larder

The larder is sparsely stocked with non-perishable foodstuffs: at most there will be a few barrels of salted meat, neatly labelled earthenware pots of pickled vegetables, and small kegs of condiments. When notice of a funeral procession is given, the villagers must undertake to stock the larder with the best provisions available - fresh vegetables from the outlying farmsteads and daily deliveries of fresh fish and oysters from the day's catch.

Along the walls of the larder are several wooden shelves on which are racked the pickles and preserves. On the wall facing the window is a smaller shelf of bottles which contain the numerous and often rare spices used in the exotic cooking of the nobility. In the corner is a finely

polished, white marble box. The lid is easily removable, though heavy. It is used to store perishable foods, keeping them cool to prolong their freshness.

#### 1/7: Kitchen

This kitchen is furnished with some of the more convenient utensils: a large cooking range and a variety of copper pans which hang on hooks from the rafters. There are various other implements, large spoons, etc, hanging on hooks from shelving around the walls. Considering its lack of use, the kitchen is spotless. The surfaces might need a dust, but underneath they are fine marble, lovingly cleaned and polished. The work surface is below the east window, and drawers of polished oak beneath it hold numerous knives and other items of cutlery. The walls are painted with distemper, keeping the kitchen white and reassuring to visitors who might be concerned over the standards of food preparation in the house.

#### 1/8: Office

This office-cum-tradesman's entrance has a large window opening that extends virtually to floor level. It is barred by an iron gate. The room contains a rather old bureau and some chests. It is used by Takhos (V11) in his role as Registrar. Both the door and the gate have locks, Takhos having a key to both. When the Royal House is in official use, the office is used by the master of the guard so that guards and traders can report to him without disturbing the occupants of the house.

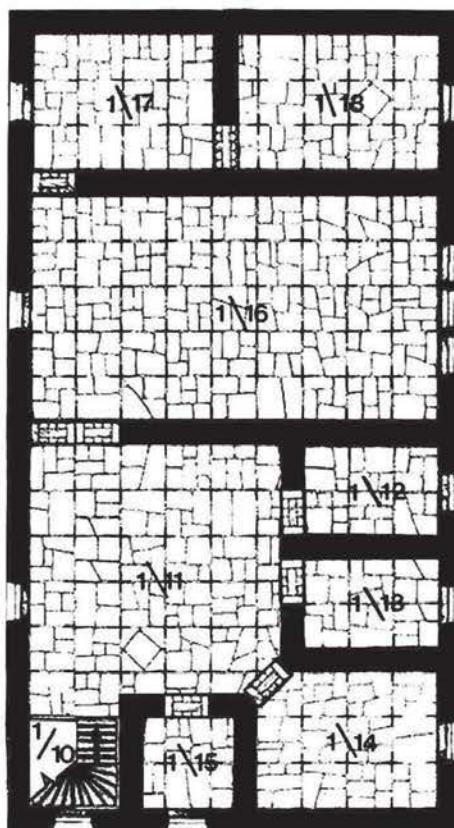
#### 1/9: Privy

This privy is for the use of guards, servants and retainers and discharges directly into the river. It is also used for refuse disposal when the house is in use.

#### 1/10: Stairway

The ornately carved timber stairs lead to the first floor. The walls are lined with portraits of various members of the royal family, past and present, but are not of particularly impressive quality. The largest and finest, which is given pride of place, is of the warrior Prince Hargon.

#### UPPER FLOOR



#### 1/11: Ante-Chamber

This large hall is plushly furnished with couches, chaise-longues, floor cushions and decorative rugs. Several ornate tapestries hang from the walls. This room is a relaxation area where the courtege can rest after their travels. More often than not, several of the guests usually end up sleeping in this area, either on the couches or in bed-rolls.

#### 1/12: Guest Bedroom

This clean room has white painted walls with a decorative frieze of dolphins and ornate water plants picked out in a pale green. There is plain, well made bed with a plain white cambric cover. There is also a sturdy table bearing a wash-bowl and ewer decorated with the same motif as the walls.

#### 1/13: Guest Bedroom

This room is exactly identical to 1/12.

#### 1/14: Guest Bedroom

This room is larger than 1/12 and 13 but is in practically all other respect identical. The only difference is that the cambric bed cover is also decorated with the frieze motif of dolphins and plants. This room would be used by favoured courtiers or members of the Royal Family.

#### 1/15: Storeroom

Spare bed-rolls, mattresses, bed-linen, pillows, chamber-pots, ewers, wash-bowls, etc, are kept here. All are plain and are used for the needs of the guests who will be sleeping in 1/11 as well as for making up the beds in the other guest bedrooms.

#### 1/16: Dining Hall

Panelled in oak and decorated with the crests of the regents of Koss, this is an impressive room to present to any visitor. Along one wall is a large dresser which contains a large, ornate china dinner service and a number of table cloths. In the centre of the room is a huge table which carries the marks of decades of use. There are many chairs around the table or stacked in the corners by the window. They are above what you might expect to find in many homes in terms of craftsmanship, but are not especially notable pieces of work. The floor is covered by rush mats which are fragile to the touch because of disuse and age. Ordinarily, they would be replaced with fresh ones should the Royal House be used for any purpose of state.

**1/17 Royal Ante-Chamber**

This room has an ornate, marble-topped table bearing an elaborately decorated ewer and wash-bowl. There are many hooks on the walls, from some of which hang some faded but nevertheless impressive robes. A large chest in the corner contains some servant bed-rolls which are used by the royal hand-servants who sometimes sleep in here depending on the number of guests in the entourage.

**1/18: Royal Bedchamber**

An ornate, but not particularly large, four-poster bed stands in the centre of the north wall. The bed cover bears the royal crest in fine embroidery. The drapes are of scarlet velvet, though somewhat faded and dusty. A large carved, wooden ottoman contains some fine bed linen and some items of clothing - bed robes, capes and a few gowns. The walls are plain but decorated with various tapestries and wall-hangings.

**OTHER FLOOR LEVELS**

If you find two levels of the house restrictive, then feel free to add more, though the house would not realistically have more than three in total. A further floor might be entirely for servant accommodation: possibly a permanent house-staff with a live-in Registrar rather than one of the villagers in that role.

**2: THE WATCH-TOWER**

Built around 150 years ago, after Hargon's success over the orcs, the now semi-derelict tower is still a reminder of the threat that was banished to the Black Marsh. It is the oldest and tallest building in the village. In former years a regular watch was maintained by the Royal Guard. With the passing of time, however, concern over the (surviving?) orcs has diminished to the extent that the tower is no longer manned by a regular detachment of troops and, with neglect, the third and uppermost floors within the tower have rotted and collapsed inwards. A token watch is still maintained at night by Brekk the Nightwatch (V1) who will climb the stairs to the second floor and gaze out over the bleak Black Marsh for a while,

usually puffing his pipe, before continuing his rounds. The shell of the tower, ground, first and second floors are still quite sound, although the second is littered with debris from the collapse of the floors above.

**3: VILLAGE STORE**

*Recommended Occupants: V1*

**3/1: The Shop**

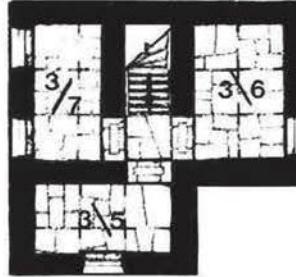
The walls and shelves of the shop are stocked with a large variety of items - mostly practical, but with a few things that might be termed luxuries in a village such as this. As well as hardware, the shop stocks basic foodstuffs such as flour, salt, dairy products, fruit and vegetables which are essential to daily life. Those goods that are not stocked can usually be obtained from caravans that pass along the Royal Way. Albran's wife, Karys, is very talented at making sweetmeats and pastries. These are also on sale at very reasonable prices (the village children regard them as special treats).

**3/3: Kitchen**

There is a cooking range against the west wall and a table under the window. There are many pans and cooking trays, dark with use and age but still very clean, hanging from the walls and rafters. Earthenware pots on shelving around the walls contain various common cooking ingredients. This is where Karys prepares the pastries and she is very fussy that no-one disturbs her while she is at work. She is very proud of her work and the kitchen is extremely well equipped by village standards.

**3/4: Living Room**

This room is plushly furnished. The local rush mats are present but covered with the odd rug, and the rough chairs have been padded with horse-hair and covered in leather. There is also a rough-hewn but sturdy table where the family group takes its meals.

**UPPER FLOOR****3/5 & 3/6: Bedrooms**

Both rooms are furnished with a stout bed, wash-stand and chest. There is a wash-bowl and ewer on the wash-stand, and a chamber-pot beneath the bed. Albran's brothers occupy these. In one is Brekk the Nightwatch, his wife Murgis and their young son Iffan. In the other is Fyros and his wife Nelwen.

**3/7: Master Bedroom**

This is the room of Albran and his wife. The contents are the same as the other two rooms, but are of a finer quality. The room is spotless and has several knick-knacks and ornaments decorating the room. None are too valuable, but are rather exotic items that Albran has acquired in trading in Arkand and with caravans as presents for Karys.

**4/2: Bedroom**

There is a simple, comfortable four-poster bed in here, with the children's bed-rolls stored underneath. Takhos also keeps a lockable chest under the bed which contains the village records and such like. The room also contains an ottoman, and a wash-stand with ewer and wash-bowl. The room has a tiled floor, covered with an enormously luxurious fur rug.

**6: THE FENNOCK INN***Recommended Occupants: V10*

Every village has its meeting-place; in Blackmarsh it is the bar of the Fennock Inn, a large, stone building overlooking the wharf and river. The battered sign outside pictures a Fenhawk, the rare marsh bird of which fennock is a local corruption. The innkeeper, Staffyr, runs the place, helped by his wife Sardis, his son Pamir, who doubles as bouncer, and Grettan, Sardis' father, who is the pot-boy and general lackey.

**4: REGISTRAR'S HOUSE***Recommended Occupants: V11*

There is a noticeable difference between this and the other village dwellings. It is constructed of the same fine white imported stone as the Royal House, with similar carved panels in the fascia, except that these depict scenes of the village's way of life - fishing boats, marsh scenes, punts working the oyster beds, etc. The thatching on the roof is ornately worked, with bird-designs featuring along the roof ridge. The house was originally built as an annex to the Royal House but now goes with the office of Registrar of Pearls. By tradition, the village Headman is appointed Registrar since the Headman is usually the most popular and trustworthy villager. This does not mean to say that they were, for many have been corrupt, attempting to keep the odd Black Pearl for themselves. Consequently, there has often been keen rivalry for the post of Headman, with plenty of scheming and skullduggery going on. The present incumbent is Takhos, who is widely reckoned to be the most honest and trustworthy person in the village. He is very popular.

**4/1: Living Room**

The wealth promised by the exterior of this building is continued inside. This room is floored with glazed tiles in the part allocated to cooking and food preparation. The rest of the room is also tiled, though in a slightly different shade, and covered with a selection of small but decorative rugs. There is also an elegant wooden table and comfortable chairs. Takhos and Jemia's children sleep here, in bed-rolls stored under the bed in 4/2.

**5: HOVEL***Recommended Occupant: V6*

This, along with 10, is the last building ever built within the village. Fennock Walk was at one time a wide space used for boat and tackle storage and repairs. Due to pressures of space and population, this ramshackle hovel was wedged in. It is no more than a crude, timber-framed lean-to propped up against the Fennock Inn. It has an ill-kept thatch roof and the walls are in terrible disrepair. The interior is something of a mystery even to the other villagers. There are heavy drapes across the inside of the door and across the window at all times to bar the inside from prying eyes. Maythen, the occupant, is a secretive and solitary individual. He is the village miser, though the locals are not particularly aware of this. They know him to be mean, but assume this to be due to poverty. The inside of the hovel is almost beyond description. Accumulated dust and filth cover most surfaces. The furniture is rudimentary and ill-kept: the bed is no more than a pile of rush matting on the floor. The place reflects abject poverty. This is because Maythen has scrupulously hoarded every penny that ever came into his possession though, and many a thief might like to know of the contents of the loft, as it contains a veritable treasure trove of items - all collected in painstaking secrecy over the years. A concealed hatch in the ceiling leads up to the loft, and a small ladder concealed in the dirt below Maythen's bedding provides the access.

**6/1: Bar**

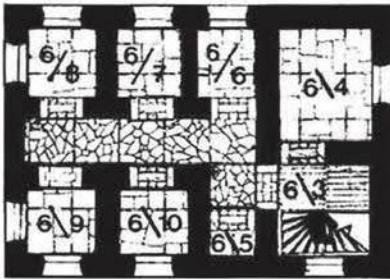
This large room has a number of tables, chairs, benches and stools scattered around it. All are of tough, servicable design. Behind the counter are shelves full of bottles and flagons which predominantly contain spirits; mostly 'Wort Water', a highly potent and rough local liquor made from a common marsh-plant. Barrels under the bar contain ale and wine. Of an evening, the bar will fill up with villagers, most of whom decry the use of tables and benches, standing in groups around the bar, normally chatting and joking with Staffyr. There may be one or two travellers staying at the inn, as well as peasant farmers from the surrounding area, though these tend to keep to themselves rather than mix with the local fishermen. House rules are posted on the wall, and they include bans on spitting, fighting, juggling with the crockery, and abusing the good name of the landlord's wife. Pamir, a short, stocky fellow, manages to enforce these quite well, especially considering the drunken state into which most customers get themselves. Meals are also served in the bar: usually a fish stew brewed up by Grettan from whatever fish were landed that day. The bar also doubles as the landlord's living room, where they sit and dine when the tavern is not open. However, it is open more often than not, in which case they eat in the kitchen or at a table in the bar, depending on how crowded it is.

**6/2: Kitchen**

The kitchen has a large fireplace with a range built in. A large fish-kettle hangs over the fire in which Grettan brews his fish stew for the customers. There is also a solid work table and shelves bearing ingredients and crockery. There is a large wash-tub and pitchers of water for rinsing mugs and plates.

**6/3: Stairway**

This leads to the upper floor of the inn. Under the stairs is a trapdoor down to a small, damp cellar the same size in which are stored barrels of wine, ale and flagons of Wort Water, along with old, spare mugs and crockery.

**UPPER FLOOR****6/4: Bedroom**

This is Staffyr and Sardis' bedroom. There is a large, comfortable bed, wash-stand, etc, a side-table and chest.

**6/5: Cupboard**

This contains spare bed-linen, etc, for the guestrooms.

**6/6,7,8,9 & 10: Guest Rooms**

These all contain a crude double bunk, a water jar and basin, and a bucket. There are no floor coverings, but they are swept out by Sardis or Grettan each day. 6/6 is usually occupied by Grettan and Pamir, though on the odd occasion when there are enough guests to fill all the rooms, these two may have to bed down in the bar. Usually, there are only one or two people staying overnight at any time.

**6/6: Bedroom**

*Recommended Occupants:*  
Grettan and Pamir

**6/7: Guest Room**

.....

**6/8: Guest Room**

.....

**6/9: Guest Room**

.....

**6/10: Guest Room**

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**7: STABLES**

*Recommended Occupant:* V5

This tall, wooden building is home to Griff, the village simpleton, who tends the odd horse stabled there by travellers. The few horses owned by locals are usually kept in the fields outside the stockades, though they may be brought in when the weather is particularly bad. Some of the local oystermen have mules which they punt out to work in the oyster-beds. These are also sometimes housed in the stable. The ground floor has a few stalls strewn with hay and rushes. Above them is an open, wooden loft where Griff lives, sleeping on hay. It costs only what a person feels like paying to lodge a horse there, but most people, especially locals, are generous with Griff so he never starves. At any one time, there will be 1d4-1 horses in the stable by day, and 2d4-1 stabled there at night. There is also a tethering rail outside. Griff makes an ideal stable boy as this gentle oaf has an uncannily calming influence on animals. By day, though, he could be anywhere other than in the stable - from playing Ring-a-roses with the children to roaming the Black Marsh. He is usually back by sundown, though.

**8 & 9: FISHERMEN'S COTTAGES**

Both these buildings are small, one-storey cottages, roughly built but fairly solid, with blackened, thatch roofs. Though one roomed, they would be fairly comfortable were it not for the village's tradition of large families. The occupants cope by sleeping communally in bed-rolls which are stored away during the day, leaving the room free for cooking and eating.

**8: Cottage**

*Recommended Occupants:* V4, V7 or V12

**9: Cottage**

*Recommended Occupants:* V2

**10: FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants:* V4, V7, V8, V12, V14 or V15

This, together with 5 was the last construction within the confines of the village. Like its neighbour, it is a simple, thatched, timber-framed lean-to but is in much better repair. The walls are clean and the thatch well maintained.

**10/1: Living Room**

This contains a crude cooking range, virtually an open fire with a fish-kettle suspended over it, with cooking utensils, a table and chairs. The floor is covered with the local rush matting.

**10/2: Bedroom**

This contains a rough, wooden bed. The children would sleep in bed-rolls, either in the living room, or, on odd occasions, in the bedroom.

**11: THE SHIPWRIGHT'S**

*Recommended Occupants:* V3

This single-storey, timber building sits on the edge of Fennock Wharf. Here dwells the village shipwright and chandler, Bannyr and his family. Being the only person skilled in carpentry and metal-working, Bannyr also doubles as carpenter, blacksmith, cooper and coffin-maker.

**11/1: Living Room**

This is furnished in typical Blackmarsh fashion with locally made stools, table and cooking range. Bannyr's daughter and her child also sleep in here.

**11/2: Bedroom**

This contains a single bed - Bannyr's. The twins sleeping in bed-rolls on the floor.

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**11/3: Workshop**

This is taller than the rest of the building and has a makeshift timber loft which is used for storage. The building is full of tools, stocks of wood, pitch, ropes and other materials. There is a large work-bench furnished with a crude vice, and an ever-bubbling cauldron of thick, black pitch on a fire in the corner. There is also a small forge and anvil for preparing the metal fittings for the boats, and a small pile of bronze ingots with a rack of metal-beating tools beside it. The workshop is usually in apparent disorder, with bits of wood and equipment strewn around, but Bannyr is in fact an extremely efficient and methodical worker. It is simply that there is usually so much work that little time is spent in keeping the place in order. At any one time, there will be at least a couple of jobs in progress. Boats are built and repaired on the wharfside outside the workshop. New boats are slid down the slipway into the wharf as soon as the hull has been completed, and finished off in the water. There will often be a partly built boat on the wharfside. Minor repairs to boats are usually carried out by their owners in the wharf.

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**12: VILLAGE CHAPEL**

The small chapel is relatively impressive in that it is built of brick, a rare material in these parts. It has a thatched roof and a small bell-tower over the south-west corner. The bell is sounded to summon the villagers to services and the children to school which, Tamalin the cleric conducts in the chapel. Neither the services nor the lessons are particularly well-attended unless it is for a special festival or occasion. The interior walls are covered with many instructive murals, detailing the deeds of local deities, but the most recurrent figure is that of Forlos, the river god, worshipped by most of the locals. There is a small wooden altar at the eastern end of the chapel on which stands a green-veined, marble statue of Forlos, flanked on each side by an ever-lit candle in a gilt candleholder. There are no benches in the chapel, but there is a pile of small cushions in a pile by the door, and everyone takes one as they enter. The usual congregation mostly consists of the older fishermen and their families, and some of the younger women. The whole village usually turns out for the river and boat blessing ceremonies, as well as for the harvest and other festivals. These ceremonies are therefore conducted in

the Royal Court. There are short services each day, one hour before sunset, and an extra one at dawn and noon once a week on the deity's Holy Day. There is a chest which contains the school equipment: slates, chalks, a few picture scrolls, even fewer books and some very well-used toys and knick-knacks. The school is run every day, except the Holy Day, from after the boats go out to noon. Depending on the number of children, Tamalin sometimes conducts lessons in his living room (13/1).

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**13: THE PRIESTHOUSE**

*Recommended Occupants: V13*

This is built of the same brick as the chapel and has a thatched roof. When Tamalin came to the village, he found both this and the chapel abandoned by the people. He has single handedly rebuilt both them and the village's faith. Tamalin's boundless energy and love of life means that he is here only rarely during the hours of daylight.

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**13/1: Living Room**

Apart from the usual table, chairs and cooking range, Tamalin has a stack of small stools that he has made from log sections. These are used whenever he conducts lessons here. The room is gaily painted with religious scenes, as well as children's pictures, including a picture alphabet (in an attempt to have a few villagers who can actually read and write their own language!). There are bed-rolls tucked away on which the orphans sleep.

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**13/2: Bedroom**

The room is typical of Blackmarsh with its reed-matting floor, low bed covered with rugs and wash-stand. There is also a large, usually locked, chest which holds Tamalin's ceremonial vestments, and the chapel's one real treasure, a silver chalice in the form of a stylised fish, standing on its tail, with mouth wide open and small jet black eyes. Not even Tamalin knows it, but both eyes are in fact small Black Pearls set within the metal. Only a small part of them is visible though.

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**14, 15, 16, 17 & 18: COTTAGES**

These are some of the original cottages of the village, clustered hard against the stockade. All are of traditional style with mud bricks packed between timber frames and stiffened with plaster and whitewash, and with a thatched roof. Each of them has two rooms and is considered quite spacious. The front room of each is the living area, and will have the all-purpose fire-place and chimney pipe, a low table and some roughly made stools. There will rarely be any decoration on the walls, although there may be the odd tapestry, or wall-hanging, if someone in the family can weave. Since these are fishermen's cottages, there may well be tools, nets and crayfish pots scattered around, in the process of repair. These are mostly stored in the loft space though. There will inevitably be a large fish-kettle hanging over the fire.

The rear room will be the bedroom with either low beds or piles of rugs to sleep on. Children would normally sleep on the living room floor, as would other adults in the household, depending on numbers.

**14: COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V12, V14 or V15*

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**15: COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15*

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**16: COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15*

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**17: COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15*

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**18: COTTAGE**

*Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15*

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## VILLAGE LIFE & INHABITANTS

The villagers are detailed in this section along with rumours and an outline of the village life.

### VILLAGE LIFE

Within the village, life is very close-knit, and pretty-well everyone will know most of the community news and gossip. This would be freely available to newcomers once they have been accepted by the villagers and have lost their 'stranger' status, which may take some time in this slow-moving place. However, there will usually be some individual who, for his or her own reasons, will inform the party of some rumour or other. The villagers rarely talk of the strange happenings that seem to spring out of nowhere, now and again. They have lived too close to the Black Marsh for too long to be outwardly disturbed by anything that happens. No matter what, the Black Marsh is their provider and they have the utmost respect for this watery wilderness.

The general trend amongst the villagers and farmers in the surrounding area is to have quite large families, for all hands are needed in the strenuous work of fishing and farming, and also to compensate for the inevitable, though occasional, fatalities that arise from working in the Black Marsh.

During the day, only the youngest will be excused any work for any length of time, for even the clumsiest 10-year old can sweep fish heads into a pile. In general, everyone will help get the boats out at dawn. The women of the village will then often spend the morning doing their washing. This is usually done on a spot on the riverbank just upstream (east) from the village. At the same time, some of the children may spend a few hours in the village school run by Tamalin (V13) in the chapel (12). They will then return about noon to help their mothers on the quay-side or in the market-place (B), until the boats return later in the day. The catch is usually on sale late in the afternoon, with the stalls manned by the women and children while the men ready the boats for the next day. Evenings are usually spent with the family around the fire, mending nets and crayfish pots; but the older men-folk are quite likely to be found in the Fennock Inn (6), though not all revel as often as some.

Farmers from the outlying areas also come into the Fennock in the evening, but there is some local rivalry between the fishermen and the farmers, with each considering themselves to be better than the others. There is not that much intermingling, and if a brawl starts, no matter what the original reason, it will usually end up as fishermen versus farmers. However, if either group are threatened by an outside agency, then the other group will unhesitatingly come to their aid.

Practically all the families in Black-

marsh have one or more boats. Ordinary dinghies and sail-boats are used for working the river, while rush coracles and flat-bottomed punts are used for working the Black Marsh. The oyster-beds are found in the Marsh itself, and each family works a different oyster-bed. Some take out a mule in their punt, laden with panniers, to help with the culling of the oyster-beds. Each family jealously guards the location of its oyster-beds, and there is some rivalry and in-fighting between villagers for the rights to the various beds as some seem to have a higher yield in Black Pearls - though they are still very rare. The fishing stretches on the river are not held in secret but by mutual agreement. However, this does not stop some of the long-running feuds between families over the rights to fish the various river stretches. By tradition, the best stretch is allocated to the Headman, at present Takhos.

All the boats are generally moored in or off Fennock Wharf. A few are moored at the Tower Slip (D).

Most families have several cats. These can usually be seen prowling around the village at all hours. However, when the boats come in, practically all the cats will converge on the wharf to scavenge scraps.

Funerals are quite ceremonious affairs. The corpse is taken in its coffin on a boat and a whole fleet will escort it to the special burial ground in the Black Marsh where it will be slid into the mire to sink to its watery resting place.

### VILLAGE CUSTOMS

The main annual festival is the Fish Fair detailed on the *Encounter Tables*.

There are other harvest and thanksgiving ceremonies of a more religious as well as the odd village fete and boat-launching ceremony, etc.

Often, when a large group of travelling entertainers sets up, or one of the trading river-boats from Arkand calls in, there may be a spontaneous day of festivities. These occur at semi-regular intervals.

Once a month, there will be a full-scale market in the Royal Court with a smaller one weekly, usually just local produce and farm goods from Elbridge. Most days, though, there is usually a stall selling oysters, crayfish and fish.

The village council meets once a week in the Fennock Inn, though sometimes a week is skipped, and other times an additional meeting may be called in unusual circumstances. The meeting is chaired by the Headman, Takhos (V9). Others usually in attendance will be Tamalin (V11), Albran, Brekk and Fyros (V1), Zelwyn and Norden (V15), Triston (V2), Regnar and Urmic (V8), Burgis (V4), Staffyr (V10) and, keeping a low profile, Sartor (V12). Others will attend irregularly depending on whether there is something of interest to them on the schedule of items to be discussed.

### RUMOURS

The rumours given here are 'major' ones and should be worked carefully into your adventure. They should not all be readily available, but should be sought out, one at a time, as the occasion demands. Whether they are true or not is up to you to determine according to your adventure.

They should be mixed in with ordinary day-to-day ones such as: there is a petty thief in the village - small items have disappeared from homes, boats, and market stalls; so-and-so is carrying on with someone, etc.

There are spaces provided in the rumours section for you to note down any special rumours that you may require and some day-to-day ones.

Griff (V5) is not an orphan, but the son of Allania (V2) and Takhos (V11). The rumour, though given little credence and voiced by very few, is based on these facts: Allania was absent from the village for some months, apparently in Arkand, prior to and during the time that Griff was orphaned; she returned shortly afterwards; a ramshackle hut was later found in the Black Marsh with evidence that someone had spent some time living there; and that Takhos found the boat containing the orphaned Griff. The 'story' built around these facts is that Takhos hid Allania in the hut during her pregnancy. When Merthen, Holwen and their newborn child (V14) met with their horrific death in the Black Marsh, Takhos and Allania discovered them first, and put their child into the boat as though it had survived. Takhos then brought the boat back to the village and all presumed the child to be that of Merthen and Holwen. Allania then returned to the village with no-one the wiser. Most villagers have little time for this rumour, believing it to be an attempt to blacken the name of Takhos who is highly respected. The few who circulate the rumour point out the above facts and that Takhos seems uncommonly fond and tolerant of the large oaf.

Staffyr (V10) did not gain his wealth (by village standards) by working the remains of the mines in the Glimmer Heights, but was really in Arkand at the time.

There are many rumours concerning Sartor (V9). They are all basically that he 'is up to something'. Some of the more liberal villagers such as Takhos (V11) and Tamalin (V13) discount them as malicious gossip because Sartor is still not considered a 'local' by most of the villagers and keeps himself to himself. The rumour mongers, however, point out that though he is rarely seen around the village, he is even more notably scarce whenever the Scarlet Plumes have been stationed in the village. The current rumour is that he is something to do with some bandits in the Tagor Hills.

Zelwyn (V15), who was Headman before Takhos (V11), lost his post because of dishonesty. Many villagers believe that he has some unregistered Black Pearls hidden somewhere as he seems relatively wealthy. Zelwyn, himself, puts this down to petty jealousy because he and his sons are the best fishermen in the village.

Bannyr (V3) poisoned his wife! This is a particularly malicious rumour, as Bannyr and his wife were generally regarded as the ideal couple. The only grounds to the rumour was that Olgenia died of fish poisoning. Usually, when this happens, a few people are affected. In this instance, however, Olgenia was the only person in the village affected.

Fyros and Albran (V1) deal in stolen goods, brought at night to the Tower Slip (D) from Arkand, and sold to passing caravans heading east. The only evidence of this is that on the odd occasion, Fyros and Albran have been seen returning from trips to Arkand late at night and unloading stuff into their storehouse. Albran would simply state that sometimes his business in Arkand has meant a late return.

Griff (V5) has some Black Pearls somewhere, possibly in the Black Marsh. Griff calls Black Pearls 'toys', a word he uses for many different items. Some villagers have simply picked up on the fact, that Griff has on the rare occasion mumbled that he has some 'toys'. He never says more than this. The alleged reason for his coyness on the subject is that he did once have a Black Pearl, but the Registrar at the time, Zelwyn (V15) took it from him. Griff was very upset that his 'toy' had been taken; the 50gp reward being of little importance to him. Also, Jedmar (V8) has occasionally boasted that he knows Griff's 'secret'.

Palon (V15) murdered his wife, Queela. She allegedly left by horse late at night, but nothing has ever been heard of her, even by her family, farmers in the outlying areas. Nobody dare voice this in the presence of Palon or any of his family.

Elenar (V15) is possessed by demons. Anyone who upsets her often seems to suffer ill-fortune.

There is a current rumour that Karanor of Windrush has hired an adventurer or a group to come to Blackmarsh and abduct Jemia, the wife of Takhos (V11). The entire village knows of the famous duel between Takhos and Karanor for her hand years ago and that the defeated Karanor left swearing that, no matter what, she would one day be his.

Delina's (V3) attacker was a local. Somewhere in the marshes, someone saw an old chest containing a black cape and scarf.

#### Other Rumours

#### VILLAGERS

The life expectancy of the Blackmarsh villagers is not great due to the ravages of the Black Marsh and illness. Few can expect to reach their sixties. Younger villagers often leave to seek their fortune elsewhere, usually Arkand, though some return to the village life.

Most of the men are fairly skilled with weapons which they take with them on all fishing (and other) trips into the Black Marsh. Most have fought and slain some creature or other in the marshes.

The villagers are detailed by household with their age in brackets. There are tables listing adults, male and female, and children, male and female. When a villager is required, either select a suitable one or decide at random from the tables.

Before starting an adventure, you should decide where each household is located. Some have only one location recommended, with others there is a choice. Simply circle the location that you prefer for your adventure, similarly, circle the relevant household reference in the building description.

#### ADULT VILLAGERS (Aged 18+)

Die Roll	Male (Household No)	Die Roll	Female (Household No)
1-2	Albran (V1)	1-4	Alika (V15)
3-4	Anders (V15)	5-8	Allania (V2)
5-6	Aranys (V12)	9-12	Bethessa (V15)
7-8	Bannyr (V3)	13-16	Delina (V3)
9-10	Bergan (V2)	17-20	Demia (V8)
11-12	Brek (V1)	21-24	Emmalina (V14)
13-14	Buklim (V7)	25-28	Ginnie (V12)
15-16	Burgis (V4)	29-32	Irvell (V12)
17-18	Celops (V14)	33-34	Jeroma (V10)
19-20	Chesmon (V13)	35-38	Jemia (V11)
21-22	Fyros (V1)	39-42	Karys (V1)
23-24	Grammon (V4)	43-46	Losslyn (V11)
25	Grenton (V8)	47-50	Maloma (V7)
26-27	Grettan (V10)	51-54	Mimeva (V2)
28-29	Griff (V5)	55-58	Murgis (V1)
30-31	Gurmon (V2)	59-62	Nelwen (V1)
32-33	Kareth (V12)	63-66	Olmis (V8)
34	Kylene (V11)	67-70	Sardis (V10)
35-36	Malom (V2)	71-74	Selamin (V4)
37-38	Malthen (V2)	75-78	Svengola (V7)
39-40	Maythen (V6)	79-82	Tilda (V4)
41-42	Norden (V15)	83-86	Viona (V14)
42	Pallin (V1)	87-88	Vygola (V8)
43-44	Palon (V15)	89-98	Farm-woman
45-46	Pamir (V10)	99-00	Stranger
47-48	Penrik (V7)		
49-50	Regnar (V8)		
51-52	Sartor (V9)		
53-54	Staffyr (V10)		
55	Stanton (V14)		
56-57	Takhos (V11)		
58-59	Tallan (V12)		
60-61	Tamalin (V13)		
62-63	Tinmos (V7)		
64-65	Triston (V2)		
66-67	Urmic (V8)		
68-69	Wimgin (V14)		
70-71	Zelwyn (V15)		
72-87	Peasant Farmer		
88-92	Merchant		
93-97	Troubador		
98-00	Stranger		

#### VILLAGE CHILDREN (Aged 2-17)

Die Roll	Male (Household No)	Die Roll	Female (Household No)
1-8	Alaman (V15)	1-8	Bella (V4)
9-16	Frentrant (V13)	9-16	Burba (V7)
17-24	Hollom (V3)	17-24	Caron (V4)
25-32	Iffan (V1)	25-32	Elenar (V15)
33-40	Jedmar (V8)	33-40	Felima (V7)
41-48	Jesmon (V14)	41-48	Groscha (V14)
49-56	Koram (V15)	49-56	Hoilessa (V13)
57-64	Mallyn (V12)	57-64	Liliana (V14)
65-72	Petram (V11)	65-72	Lisma (V8)
73-80	Rugis (V8)	73-80	Loren (V11)
81-88	Stranmos (V11)	81-88	Raynor (V12)
89-96	Farm youth	89-96	Wennecca (V13)
97-00	Wandering Urchin	97-00	Farmer's Daughter

#### THE BLACK MARSH

The Black Marsh is a vast untamed wilderness. It varies from great tangled forests of moss covered undergrowth to open stretches of ebon black quagmire. There are myriad waterways running through it as well as safe paths on land. One false step, though can be fatal. The villagers venture into the fringes, mostly keeping to their boats. Griff (V5) is the only one believed to venture into the interior, often leaving his coracle to proceed by foot. It is very easy to get lost in the maze like by-ways, especially when the low marsh mists roll in restricting visibility to virtually nil. Many wild animals and strange creatures still dwell in the marsh and the villagers have a healthy respect for it.

### V1: Albran and family

### **Recommended Location: 3**

Albran (42) runs the village shop (3) with his wife Karys (37). Their home is shared by Albran's brothers: Brekk (28), his wife Murgis (24) and their son Iffan (6); and Fyros (36) and his wife Nelwen (34).

Albran and Kary's son, Pallin (20) now lives in Arkand but occasionally visits. They had a daughter, Zinala, but she died of an illness in her teens.

Albran is rather hot-tempered and has often been known to have violent arguments with customers, refusing to serve them for days until his temper has cooled. He has also been involved in many dust-ups in the village. He is also energetic, careless and untidy.

Karys, the sister of Sardis (V10), balances him, being prim, neat and prissy. She loves a good gossip with customers and often secretly supplies those that Albran has refused to tide over the ill-feeling. However, when she does lose her temper, all hell is likely to break loose. When she and Albran have a row, the whole village usually knows about it. The shouting and noise are tremendous. Albran is usually quite subdued for days after. Their rows usually centre on his boorishness and total lack of manners. He invariably brings Karys a present back from Arkand on his next trip. He frequently makes trips to Arkand to buy goods, sometimes by boat with Fyros, and sometimes alone on horseback, in which case the goods will be delivered by one of the river-boats that ply the Ormsflo. Sometimes, though, he has dealing with the caravans that pass through on their way east.

Brekk the nightwatch is a short, sturdy fellow who is one of the best warriors in the village, being a lot more nimble than he looks. As well as conducting the night-watch, he also doubles up as gatekeep. He is an amiable fellow, who usually puffs a pipe as he strolls round. He usually sorts out most problems and arguments within the village.

Murgis, Brekk's wife, is equally as amiable, if a little more rotund. She is a homely, motherly sort and is very popular with all the children. Her father is Grammon (V4).

Fyros runs the family boats, fishing the river and culling oysters in the Black Marsh. He also uses the boats for Albran's trips to Arkand. Fyros is a kindly soul, and, since his realisation that he and Nelwen would never have any children of their own, has put his wing over Triston and Bergam (V2). He allows them to use one of his boats when theirs is under repair, and has shown them where his oyster-bed is (though no-one else knows this). He plans to bequeath it to them, unless they should find one of their own.

Nelwen is a bitter shrew of a woman. Once she was reckoned to be different, but that was years back before she

realised that she could never bear children. She makes Fyros' life a misery, but he endures it in kindness, knowing her reasons. She is a native of Arkand, the daughter of a trader that Albran and Fyros had regular dealing with.

was also courting Jemia, a girl from Elbridge.

Mimeva is a sprightly, wizened old woman, full of high spirits who is one of the village characters. She is often in the Fennock Inn supping ale and cackling with cronish laughter. She treats the other villagers with good natured disdain, hurling good-natured insults at them (for the way her daughter was treated, but she bears no grudge, just mocking amusement at their hypocritical morals). Her best gibes are usually reserved for her brother Wimgin and his family (V14). Takhos (V11) who she obviously likes enormously, is the only one excepted; however, she has no time at all for his wife, Jemia.

Triston and Bergam are quiet men, wise beyond their years. Triston is very well-liked by the other villagers and it is generally accepted that he would one day make a fine Headman. Both are very honest and moral, but Bergam tends to sullen moods. They fish the worst stretch of river, a reminder to Bergam of the low esteem in which the villagers hold his mother, in an old boat that Allania saved for and bought for them. They work hard and long, but their catches ill-reward their effort and their boat often needs maintenance.

Malom is a complete contrast to his brothers having more of Mimeva's sparkle. He is gregarious, fun-loving and a talented musician. He often plays his lute and sings rollicking songs in the Fennock Inn much to the enjoyment of everyone. He is usually well supplied with ale for his troubles. He often journeys as a minstrel to other villages and to Arkand, but invariably returns to Blackmarsh. He originally helped his brothers with the fishing, but soon stopped, deciding that his skills lay elsewhere.

## V2: Allania and family

*Recommended Location:* 9

Allania (40) is still an attractive woman full of vitality. She lives with her three sons, Malom (23), Bergam (21) and Triston (24), and her mother Mimeva (64). Her eldest child, Demia, is married to Urmic (V8).

Allania's husband, Vergis, was killed in the Black Marsh while Allania was pregnant with Bergam. Shortly after this, she went to Arkand to seek her fortune, leaving Mimeva to look after her children, but returned disillusioned and despondent some months later. She then struggled to raise her children alone, acquiring a rather disreputable reputation among the other women. Men can still be spotted slipping into her door from the shadows of Fennock Walk, but it has been going on so long now, that most turn a blind eye.

Mimeva, Triston, Bergam and Malom are often to be found in the Fennock Inn so as to leave Allania her privacy to conduct her business.

In her youth, Allania was the belle of the village and most believed that she and Takhos (V11) would marry. They courted for years, until Allania broke it off, apparently falling for the handsome Vergis, a riverboat-man from Arkand.

Local rumour has it that she did this in a fit of pique on discovering that Takhos

### V3: Bannyr and family

*Recommended Location: 11*

Bannyr (48) is the village shipwright and chandler. His twin sons, Gurmon (25) and Malthen (25) help their father in his business, while his daughter Delina (19) has looked after the home since her mother Olgenia, the sister of Yvgola (V8) and Bethbecca (V15), died four years ago of fish poisoning. She has a young son, Hollom (3). Bannyr's sister is Alikia (V15).

Bannyr is a great, swarthy, gentle bull of a man. Probably second in strength only to Griff (V5). Bannyr and Olgenia were an idyllically happy couple until her untimely death. Since then, Bannyr has mourned privately. He always seems to have a great weight on his shoulders, and throws himself into his work, whether it be boat-building, smithy work or carpentry. He has never been known to have raised his hand in anger against anyone, but the whole village knows that if he ever found the one who raped his daughter, he would tear them limb from limb.

Gurmon and Malthen are non-identical twins. Both are strong of arm, if a little short on brains. They help their father with his work and also run the family boat. They are devoted to their father and would not tolerate a word said against him. They are a likable if noisome pair, especially when they have had a few ales in the Fennock Inn. They are regular members of the village Bruntball team. Gurmon is at the moment courting Losslyn (V11) and Malthen is ardently pursuing Raynor (V12), but with little success.

Delina is a beautiful, if withdrawn, young woman. She has lovingly and devotedly tended her father and brothers since their mother died. She loves her baby despite the fact that he resulted from a brutal rape three years ago. On the night in question, her father and brothers were doing some night fishing when a cloaked man, his face covered by a black scarf broke into the house. He never uttered a word, and Delina has no idea as to who he was. Most villagers believed the assailant to have been a stranger to the village; but some, including Bannyr, reckon the culprit to be a local. Many of the young men in the village make excuses to visit Bannyr or the twins just to talk to Delina, but she nervously has nothing to do with any of them. However, she does seem to cheer up whenever Malom (V2) is about.

Hollom is a cheerful little soul. He is often seen tottering around the village and loves to tag along with anyone who is passing.

to be in the right. Unfortunately, this is not too often. He and his father run the family boats, working the river and the Black Marsh. Burgis is clearly in charge of their work.

Selamin is an attractive, head-strong woman who is a good match for Burgis. She always speaks her mind and is very community-spirited and moral. She is quite prepared to stand up to even the most brutish ruffian, and on many an occasion has sent trouble-makers in the village packing with their tails between their legs. She and Tilda keep their home spotless and her children are always encouraged to attend the school in the chapel. Selamin is the daughter of Staffyr and Sardis (V10).

Caron and Bella are two of the most precocious children in the village, and are often in trouble with other villagers for talking back, though everyone is very fond of them. They are a right pair of tomboys and are often up to mischievous pranks.

### V4: Grammon and family

*Recommended Location: 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18*

Grammon (52) and his wife Tilda (50) share their home with their son Burgis (28), his wife Selamin (26) and their children: two daughters, Caron (5) and Bella (4); and a baby son, Nordis (1). Grammon and his wife also have a daughter, Murgis (V1).

Grammon is known and avoided throughout the village. A thin, wiry man, he continually whines about his ill-fortune, his lack of money, his health, the poor catches in his stretch of the river, the fact that no-one in his family has ever found a Black Pearl, etc, etc. He will often latch on to strangers in the village in the hope that they might feel sorry enough for him to buy him a drink or two. He generally mopes about the village looking as miserable as sin.

Tilda, the sister of Zelwyn (V15) is a huge, domineering woman. She continually berates Grammon on his inefficiency as a provider, his lack of manhood, and just about anything else she can think of. Consequently, Grammon does all he can to be anywhere other than at home. In fact, Grammon doesn't do too badly, and Tilda has never lacked for anything. She spoils her son and his family, and the only one who ever has to go without is Grammon.

Burgis is a strong-minded individual who has no qualms about standing up to Tilda, or anyone else for that matter, and is highly opinioned. He is often at the centre of any debate in the Fennock Inn and is always ready to voice his opinion at the village council. If anything needs organising, Burgis is usually the one to do it. Within the house, he will only stick up for Grammon when he considers his father

### V5: Griff the Bane

*Recommended Location: 7*

Ophaned in an horrendous incident in the Black Marshes, Griff (20) seems to have suffered many misfortunes in life. Whether the death of his parents, Merthen son of Wimgin (V14) and Holwen daughter of Maythen (V6), and the shock of this dreadful event contributed to Griff's idiocy or was already inherent in his nature will never be known. Forced into a solitary lifestyle, Griff's only real friend, as such, is Jedmar (V8), although the villagers generally like him and would take great exception to anyone upsetting him or cause him harm, especially the Headman, Takhos (V11), who shows great consideration towards Griff. The incident in which his parents died remains a strange enigma. No-one knows why they ventured into the Black Marsh late in the day and with their new-born child. The general belief is that they were somehow aware of the child's abnormality and planned to leave him in the marsh to perish. They had left Griff's brother with Merthen's father, Wimgin (V14). When Takhos (V9) found Griff alone in the boat with the mangled bodies of his parents, and brought it back, Griff's grandparents were loathe to accept him. They blamed him for his parents' fate and gave him his nickname of 'The Bane'. However, they raised him until he was 9, and then turned him out to fend for himself. Both Wimgin and Maythen have nothing to do with him, refusing to accept that his blood is of their line.

Griff has the mind of a child, and is easily pleased by simple playthings, though anything complex is liable to upset and frustrate him. Physically, he is of a large build, towering massively over the average villager, and is as strong as an ox. Everyone remembers the time, when at the age of 14, he found a Black Pearl in the marshes and was so upset when the then Headman Zelwyn (V15) forced him to hand it in and register it, that it took some dozen or so of the men in the village to restrain him. Selamin (V4), eventually calmed him.

Griff is extremely popular with the village children, and has an uncannily calming influence on animals. Everyone was therefore content to see him make his home in the stables (7), the benefits of an unpaid guard notwithstanding. Though he sleeps in the stable loft by night, by day he could be anywhere. He wanders around the village, playing with the children or just observing life in the village. All the villagers will be at ease in his presence and have no qualms about Griff being around their children - they will at least be safe with him about. More often than not, though, he will be off roaming the Black Marsh, which seems to hold a strange allure for him. He uses an old coracle which Takhos (V11) gave to him and never seems to come to any harm there. He knows the Black Marsh like the back of

his hand. He knows all the safe paths and backwaters; and can even find them by instinct in areas where he has never ventured before. If the party ever need a guide through the marsh, then Griff is the only candidate for the job - although his confidence will need to be gained.

Some of the villagers believe Griff to have some hide-away hidden in the marsh where he keeps his 'toys'.

accumulated over the years with his penny-pinching ways. Most put this down to poverty, evidenced by his life-style and the ruinous state of his hovel, though none have seen the squalour inside. Some suspect that he has greater means than is apparent, for he has never owed anyone a penny. (His accumulated treasures are hidden in the loft.)

Although he walks with a limp, a legacy from an accident in the Black Marsh, and uses a stick, Maythen is a sprightly and energetic healthily tanned old man. As he wanders the village in his rags, even the children know better than to try and scrounge off of him for they will usually be rewarded with a well-aimed kick or blow from his stick, accompanied by muttered oaths and advice to 'Go out in the marsh and earn your keep, you little brats!'

He has no kin in the village, with the exception of Griff (V5) his grandson who he has nothing to do with. Although a loner, he may associate with people for further profit (but don't expect him to buy the drinks!).

## V6: Maythen

**Recommended Location: 5**

In a village which is purported to be the source of some great riches, there will always be one who is more adept at finding his wealth than any other. Such a person is Maythen (62) who lives alone in the most squalid conditions. The conditions were no different when his wife Bethzelda was there. Even then, Maythen gave her no money, and ultimately she ran off with a travelling merchant taking all their children except the oldest daughter Holwen (V14) with her.

Maythen, since his youth, has always been very active on the fishing front, both on the river and in the marshes, but has always worked alone. He has played little part in routine village activities and has always kept very much to himself, almost brooding behind the screened windows of his hovel. He has always been prepared to go without himself, simply to hoard his wealth. Consequently, though the villagers know Maythen to be mean, none is aware of quite the wealth he has

## V7: Penrik and family

Recommended Location: 8, 10, 14, 15,  
16, 17 or 18

Penrik (43), the step-brother of Tallan (V12), and his wife Svangola (37), daughter of Wimgin (V14), have two sons, Tinmos (18) and Buklim (21) and a daughter Irvell, married to Kareth (V12). Their home is shared with Buklim's wife, Maloma (20), a daughter of Tallan (V12), and two daughters, Burba (4) and Felima (2).

Penrik's mother, Heloinda died when he was a child. His father, Kasper, then married the widow Isseldar. Thus her son, Tallan (V12) and Penrik grew up as brothers and have always been very close. So close, in fact, that two members of each family have already intermarried, and Tinmos is courting Raynor.

Penrik is most notable for his ordinariness. Indeed, he is the typical, average villager. He, Buklim and Tinmos work their boats efficiently and without any fuss. However, they and Tallan's family (V12) tend to be very clannish. Penrik, Buklim, Tinmos, Tallan, Kareth, and Aranyss spend much of their spare time together, sticking in a group in the Fennock Inn and fighting together should the need arise. As a group, they form the only family 'gang' in the village, though they are not generally trouble-makers.

Svengola is a plain woman with little time for frills or ornaments. She has several mouths to feed and carries out her duties conscientiously and without fuss. She and Ginnie (V12) are as thick as thieves and love a good gossip, spreading rumour and scandal about everyone barring their own families.

Buklim is a sullen, broody, unattractive, ignorant young man. He has a nasty nature and is unpopular in the village, though his mother loves him overmuch and jealously protects him against anyone. Though no-one knows it, not even his kin, it was Buklim who assaulted Delina (V3).

Maloma is a suitable match for Buklim. She is an ugly, brutish woman much given to temper tantrums. She has a slight cast in her eye, and often uses language so foul that even hardened fishermen blush. It is best by far not to get on the wrong side of her, as she is very vindictive, carrying grudges for years. She has a particular loathing for Losslyn (V11) who she often spits at and takes every opportunity to abuse. No-one knows why: but it is simply that she had a girlhood crush on Gurmon (V3) who is now courting Losslyn.

Tinmos, unlike his brother, is quite popular. He is a gregarious youth and is the only one of the family to associate with anyone not in their 'clan'. He is always willing to help anyone with their work, when he has the time and others in his family are not around. He is a great friend of Jesmon (V14) and Petram (V11), and the three often play and swim together with Raynor (V12), whom Tin-

mos is courting, and Petram's sister Loren.

Felima is still a toddler, and can usually be found covered in dirt, crawling around in an alley. Burba, though young, is a rather nasty little girl who has on occasion been seen to hit some of the local cats with a stick and to throw kittens in the river. She usually carries a few scratches for her troubles. She is generally unkempt and is the typical snot-nosed kid.

and has been known to send many a young trouble-maker packing with a hefty cuff around the ears. He often goes on fishing and oyster culling trips with his grandson Urmic, but not as frequently as he used to. This has caused some talk that his health is not what it was. If the village has a wise elder statesman, then this is Regnar. Takhos (V11) the Headman often consults him on village council matters. All of Regnar's immediate family are dead. The only blood relatives he has in the village are his nephew Staffyr (V10) and niece Allania (V2), though he has nothing to do with her as he disapproves strongly of the life she has led and feels that she shames the name of his brother, her father. He generally knows what is going on in the village and has a loose tongue once he has had a few ales. He also likes to regale listeners with tales of the old days.

Olmis is a rotund, jolly woman, whose sister was Penrik's (V7) mother Heloinda. She loves a good gossip and can usually be found chatting with some of the other women, somewhere in the village. She is very houseproud and will invite anyone into her home to sample her fish stew and rootcakes (a sort of biscuit made from the ground roots of a marsh plant), which she is especially proud of. She and Regnar are very hospitable, and have been known to allow strangers to the village to sleep on their floor when the inn has been full.

She is an expert herbalist and is the village healer along with Tamalin (V13).

Urmic is a straight-forward fellow. Simple in his ways and pleasures. He enjoys the village life, fishing and oyster-culling. He is quite settled and has little ambition to gain rights to better fishing stretches. He is content with his lot.

Demia, Urmic's wife, however, is far from content. She does not like the way the village has treated her mother, Allania (V2). She constantly pushes Urmic to try for a better stretch of the river, to get another boat, to take on a helper now that Regnar is not so active, etc. She would dearly like Urmic and her to go to Arkand for a better way of life, and this is often the cause of argument between them. Many times she has stormed into the Fennock Inn, bags in hand telling all and sundry that that's it! She's off. However, after a few slugs of Wort Water, all such thoughts have slipped from her mind and she will be laughing and joking with the regulars before going home. Despite her ambitions, she is dearly in love with Urmic and would never leave him no matter what. She is a raven-haired beauty and by far the most charismatic woman in the village. She has much of her mother, Allania, and grandmother, Mimeva (V2) in her, and is something of a firebrand. She stands for no nonsense, and once had a ferocious fight with Maloma (V7) who had just been particularly spiteful to Losslyn (V11). This still

## V8: Regnar and family

*Recommended Location: 10, 14, 15, 16,  
17 or 18*

Regnar (64) is the oldest inhabitant of the village. He is frequently looked to for counsel by other villagers, and usually is a level-headed presence at council meetings. Together with him and his wife Olmis (60), live their grandson Urmic (25), his wife Demia (24) and their children: two sons, Jedmar (7) and Rugis (5) and a daughter, Lisma (6). Regnar and Olmis' son, Urmic's father, Grenton (44) and his wife Yvgola (43), the sister of Olgenia (V3) and Bethbecca (V15), are now living in Arkand where they have a small shop. They occasionally visit the village to see their family, but usually keep in touch through Fyros and Albran (V1) when they visit Arkand. Regnar had two other sons, Portliss and Fransom, but both vanished without trace in the Black Marsh.

Regnar is a portly, stalwart old man with a full head of long grey hair. He is still active and strong, despite his years.

causes many a chuckle in the Fennock Inn.

Jedmar, Urmic and Demia's elder son, is a playful, mischievous, adventurous lad. He is often being told off by other villagers for his reckless behaviour. He is very fond of Griff (V5) and follows the hulking oaf around the village like a puppy. Sometimes he has even ventured into the Black Marsh with Griff. If Griff does have some hide-away in the marsh, then Jedmar knows of it, but says nothing. However, on the odd occasion when he has been feeling particularly boastful, he has let slip that he knows Griff's secret: but never more than that, as Jedmar is a great respecter of secrets. He also confesses to lots of other secrets, but tells no-one what they are.

Lisma and Rugs are two pretty little girls who can usually be found playing happily around the village, throwing scraps to the cats or paddling or catching minnows at the Weed Steps.

#### V9: Sartor

*Recommended Location: 15, 16, 17 or 18*

Sartor (51) is the mystery of the village. He arrived seven years ago, paid a handsome sum to the village coffers for the purchase of the cottage vacated by the killers of Hoilessa and Weneca's (V11) parents, and slipped into, and out of, village life so easily it was as if he had been born there. One of his first acts was to install a pigeon loft in the roof. He has always kept several pigeons there, much to the amusement of locals who consider them strange pets. It is known in the village only that he had been a servant of the Crown, who was retired after injury, for Sartor has a hook in place of his right hand. He now lives a withdrawn, almost secretive life, occasionally slipping back to the city of Arkand, as if to keep in touch with the past. The villagers hold a silent, grudging respect for Sartor.

This respect would evaporate, however, if the truth were known. Sartor was once the Master of the Thieves' Guild in the city of Arkand. He held this post until the fateful day when a jeweller's sharp-eyed guard removed his thieving hand with a pole-axe. Rather than retire from the trade which had filled his life until that point, he gladly stepped into the recently vacated shoes of the Master of the Beggars' Guild. After some trouble with the local militia, Sartor moved his operational headquarters to the village, where he now resides free from interference. Far from being retired, he is now more active than he has ever been, with many of his deputies arriving and departing on Guild business through a secret door that he has built in the old stockade behind his cottage. The pigeons are also used to carry messages.

Were any of the villagers allowed a peek inside his cottage, they would find not a humble, retirement cottage, but a veritable treasure trove. All the many trophies of Sartor's long life of thieving are here, as well as many beggar's disguises and costumes stored here away from the prying eyes of the city's militia.

Although keeping himself to himself, he pays his way as far as village affairs are concerned and often attends council meetings, though he sits quietly, masked in his cloak. This is simply so that he remains aware of activities in the village for his own benefit and to stop any villagers becoming too suspicious. He usually knows in advance when the Scarlet Plumes are coming, or any other official party for that matter, and usually remains in his cottage during such times.

Should anyone decide it might be worthwhile to explore the mysterious Sartor's cottage, don't forget that it will be well-guarded by traps, and there will also be a couple of visiting beggars or thieves staying there at any time, with others, possibly, in hiding in the loft.

#### V10: Staffyr and family

*Recommended Location: 6*

Staffyr (48) is the landlord of the Fennock Inn which he runs with his wife Sardis (44), their son Pamir (28) and Sardis' father Grettan (61). They also have two daughters, Selamin who is married to Burgis (V4), and Jeloma (25) who married a peasant farmer much to her parents displeasure. She rarely visits, even though she lives in the surrounding area. This is thought to be why Staffyr is not too happy at having farmers in the Fennock, though he still serves them, after all, business is business.

Staffyr is a heavily-built, jovial fellow who loves practical jokes, though not those played at his expense. His father, who was landlord before him, married one of Regnar's (V8) sisters. Staffyr left the village in his youth to go adventuring. He allegedly found an unworked seam in an abandoned mine in the Glimmer Heights, and spent some time there alone working it. In any event, he later returned to take over the Fennock when his father died. He is a popular figure with a loud booming laugh and is not averse to sampling his own wares, often ending the evening a little the worse for wear.

Sardis, the sister of Karis (V1) leaves Staffyr to work the bar while she concentrates on the finances. She is a careful

woman and watches every penny. She is also jovial, friendly and highly efficient, effectively managing the place while Staffyr socialises with the locals in the bar. She is a particularly hard task-mistress to her father Grettan who dutifully trots around the place, collecting pots and plates, washing up, and cooking his infamous fish stew.

Grettan is a sprightly old soul and doesn't seem to mind his daughter's chiding one bit. He shuffles around the place doing his work, chatting with locals and finishing off the dregs in every mug he collects. He seems to enjoy his life very much since he retired from the boats. He has a soft spot for Mimeva (V2) who he often sits and chats with.

Pamir is a short, stocky man. As stout in the arm as he is thick in the head. He helps Grettan and also acts as bouncer, enforcing the house rules. There is not often trouble in the Fennock because of him. Although a bit slow on the uptake, he is a soft-spoken genial fellow who has the knack of settling matters quietly and without fuss, his plain, slow, sensible speaking being an asset in this, as well as his undoubted strength.

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#### V11: Takhos and family

##### *Recommended Location: 4*

Takhos (43) is the village Headman, a popular successor to Zelwyn (V15). He lives in the Registrar's House with his wife Jemia (40) and their children: two sons, Petram (16) and Stranmos (7), and two daughters, Losslyn (20) and Loren (17). Their eldest son Kylane (23) left the village some years ago.

Takhos is a popular figure in the village. Though not particularly intelligent, he is undoubtedly extremely honest and is very fair in all his dealings. He chairs the village council in the Fennock Inn and keeps the village records. He is also the Registrar of Pearls, and uses the office (1/8) in the Royal House for this function. However, the registered Pearls and the gold for the rewards are kept somewhere in a secret cache within the Royal House, in a location known only to Takhos. (Whenever a new Registrar is appointed, the Royal Mason comes to Blackmarsh and builds a new, secret niche within the Royal House.) Takhos is very tolerant of Griff, but this is down to his sense of fair play more than anything else. Everyone respects Takhos' judgment, though he often consults Regnar (V8) before making some decisions.

Takhos was the only member of his family to survive a particularly savage outbreak of fish poisoning. This happened when he was 19. In his distress at the time, he ran away from the village, living rough in the fields around Elbridge where he met Jemia. Shortly after his return, his romance with Allania (V2) ended when Allania married Vergis. Takhos rode off the same night to return to the village with Jemia, followed shortly by Karanor of Windrush who was a suitor for Jemia. There followed the famous duel in the Royal Court where the two fought for Jemia's hand. Takhos won, but it was a epic fight which the villagers well remember. They have since had a healthy respect for Takhos' prowess in combat. Rumours persist, however, that the love between Takhos and Allania still persists, though there is little evidence in their actions to support this, for Takhos has, to everyone's knowledge, remained a faithful and loving husband to Jemia.

Jemia is a not unattractive woman. She has an air of the country about her and is always fresh-faced and trim. She is a proud house-keeper and excellent cook. Her parents are relatively wealthy farmers in Elbridge. They feel that she married below her station as Takhos at the time was an orphaned fisherman. They would rather that she had wed Karanor of Windrush. However, since Takhos has become Headman and Registrar, they have thawed and sometimes come to visit. Jemia and Takhos also visit them in Elbridge. Jemia is a very moral and proper lady. She disapproves of Allania (V2) and can often

be found lecturing children on their untidiness, cleanliness, behaviour, bad language, etc, though in a kindly, motherly way. She is often at the heart of the more prim-minded, disapproving gossip.

Petram is devoted to his father. Especially so, over the last year when he became old enough to help with the family boats. Their catches are good, since by tradition the Headman has the best fishing stretches, but to hear Petram talk, you'd think it was all down to him. He has begun to slip into the Fennock Inn to sup ale and is proud of his coming manhood. However, the ale quickly goes to his head, and his more obstreporously boastful moments are usually terminated by a fatherly shove from an older fisherman with the advice to 'sleep it off, son'. Petram is a great friend of Timos (V7).

Kylane, sometimes pays a call to his father. He is a mysterious figure and none of the villagers know anything about him other than that he is 'studying' in Arkand. He left the village after a tremendous row with his father, no-one knows what it was about. He usually arrives on a fine horse though, and is dressed in swirling dark capes and robes. He stays a night or two and then leaves as abruptly as he came. Takhos speaks very little of him, and when he does it is in a somewhat disapproving tone, as though Kylane were somehow up to no good. He is never turned away though. The village gossip about Kylane is that he either lives in Arkand or has joined the Kokomists, a strange quasi-religious sect who live in the Fennock Hills.

Losslyn is a plain but still attractive young woman. She still has a girlish air about her and is full of fun. She is very dutiful and will usually be found helping her mother run the household. Many of the young men in the village have paid her their attentions, but at the moment she is being courted by Gurmon (V3). It is generally expected that their marriage is imminent, though Losslyn is not so sure. She is quite happy playing Gurmon along at the moment.

Loren has much girlish charm too, though is quite an ordinary young girl. She is happy helping out with her mother's work but still often slips off to play with some of the other children, especially when Timos is around as she has a crush on him. Timos, however, is oblivious to this as he is more interested in Raynor (V12), and sees Loren more as a sister, much to her chagrin. She will often be sulking around as a result of this.

Stranmos is a playful child who would like to be best friends with Jedmar (V8). Jedmar has little time for him, however, spending most of his time with Griff (V5). Lacking Jedmar's adventurous spirit, Stranmos is usually left to mooch about the village and play with the other children. Jedmar's taunts that he is too

chicken to go into the Black Marsh, however, sit heavy with him, and he has a silent resolve to do so should the chance arise.

..... that her home is not very well-kept.

Aranyss, the eldest son, is a violent, quarrelsome brute of a man. He has a vile temper and delights in practical jokes of a very physical nature: if there is a large puddle nearby, it causes him the greatest mirth to shove someone into it - that is the level of his humour. A typical loud-mouth, along with Palon (V15) he is the most unpopular person in the village. The only good thing is that he and Palon vent most of their spleen on each other and often have violent arguments.

Kareth is a rather awkward young man. While remaining loyal to the Tallan/Penrik clan, he sometimes seems embarrassed at their behaviour and is often the mediator in any disputes, reasoning with his family in an effort to resolve matters peacefully. However, when the crunch comes, he always sticks with his group.

Kareth's wife Irvell, the daughter of Penrik (V7) is a much put-upon and nervous young woman. With Ginny being very lackadaisical around the home, it is left to her to do most of the housework, cooking and washing. With this and her baby daughter, Abatha, to contend with, she has a continual harrassed air about her, scurrying around the village with scarcely time to talk to anyone. She gets the work done though, and is totally unaware that Ginny and Raynor take great advantage of her presence in the house.

Raynor avoids helping around the house as much as possible, leaving the work to Irvell. She is not a bad lot though, and sometimes is pricked by her conscience to help out. It is just that she prefers to flirt with the village lads. Tinmos (V7) is courting her, but this does little to modify her behaviour. She often flirts with any strangers in the village.

Mallyn, the youngest of the family is the local bully. A large boy, he delights in pushing the other children around, taking their toys, etc. He rarely attends the school run by Tamalin (V11).

#### V12: Tallan and family

*Recommended Location: 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18*

Tallan (43), the step-brother of Penrik (V7) and his wife Ginnie (36) share their crowded cottage with their son Kareth (20) and his wife Irvell (18) and child Abatha (1), as well as their two other sons, Aranyss (21) and Mallyn (9) and daughter Raynor (17).

They form a very clannish group with Penrik's family (V7), but Tallan is clearly the recognised leader of the group. A surly man of few words, he dominates by his brooding physical presence. He can, on the odd occasion, be generous and outgoing, but usually seems to regret it, seeing it as a sign of 'softness'. He firmly believes that his family is entitled to a better stretch of the river, and feels that once Regnar (V8) is gone, he should be able to acquire Urmic's (V8) rights.

Ginnie is the daughter of a peasant farmer from the outlying areas. She has taken to the village life though and loves a good gossip and tongue-wag, usually with Svengola (V7). She loves to know the ins and outs of everything that is going on, who the strangers are, etc. She devotes so much time to fussing around the village trying to find out this and that,

..... that her home is not very well-kept. Aranyss, the eldest son, is a violent, quarrelsome brute of a man. He has a vile temper and delights in practical jokes of a very physical nature: if there is a large puddle nearby, it causes him the greatest mirth to shove someone into it - that is the level of his humour. A typical loud-mouth, along with Palon (V15) he is the most unpopular person in the village. The only good thing is that he and Palon vent most of their spleen on each other and often have violent arguments.

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Mallyn, the youngest of the family is the local bully. A large boy, he delights in pushing the other children around, taking their toys, etc. He rarely attends the school run by Tamalin (V11).

#### V13: Tamalin and orphans

*Recommended Location: 13*

Arriving in the village twenty years ago, when he was a fresh faced, eager young acolyte, Tamalin (41) found the chapel abandoned by its people, the ancient ceremonies forgotten, and the village full of ignorance. Powered by a breathless vivacity, he set about rebuilding the chapel and the religious faith of the villagers. He is a loving, cheerful person, always prepared to calm the waters or hear any troubles. He has a boundless energy and love of life that has endeared him to most villagers, though he can be rather tiresome with his continual exhortations to attend chapel, etc.

He also fills the role of village healer along with Olmis (V8).

He has taken into his home the village orphans: Chesmon (19), Frentram (17), Hoilessa (13) and Wennecca (9).

Chesmon and Frentram work a boat which the villagers gave to Tamalin along with the rights to a poor stretch of river. A small enough gift, but a mark of the acceptance and esteem that Tamalin has gained. Chesmon's father and brother were killed in the Black Marsh and his mother and young sister died of a dreadful disease. Chesmon is an extremely well-behaved and conscientious young man. He appreciates the kindliness that Tamalin has shown and helps with the chapel work, services and Tamalin's other duties

Frentram was orphaned when the rest of his family were killed by brigands while travelling on the Royal Way. He was a baby at the time and has known no other parent other than Tamalin, who he adores. He wants to go to Arkand when he is older to study for the cloth. At the moment he realises that he is needed here to work the boat to help feed the others. He is as equally conscientious as Chesmon and also helps around the chapel with the services, etc.

Hoilessa and Wennecca are sisters. Their parents were murdered in their beds one night, in the only such crime in the village in living memory. The culprits, two brothers after Hoilessa's parents fishing rights, were soon found and lynched by an angry mob led by Zelwyn (V15) on the tree in the Royal Court. The rest of the murderers' family were banished from the village. The rights to their fishing

stretch and that of Hoilessa's parents were promptly claimed by Zelwyn for his sons causing much resentment and speculation at the time. Hoilessa is a sprightly young girl with a slight limp that she has had since birth. She loves helping out around the village, usually for Alika (V15) who gives her a small payment. Her sister Wennecca is a quiet young girl who spends most of her time looking after the stray dogs and cats that Tamalin allows to wander in and out of his home.

..... whenever a certain marsh plant grew in abundance near an oyster-bed, those oysters often seemed to contain the odd Black Pearl or two. Wimgin has exploited this, still roaming the marsh with Calops finding new oyster-beds and more than their share of Black Pearls. He has shared his secret with Calops, but no-one else. He is a tall, arrogant man with a fairly intolerant nature. He is proud of his wealth and family and consequently has disowned his grandson Griff (V5) who he refuses to believe is of his blood. On some occasions when he is the worse for drink, he is prone to voice his belief that Griff is the illicit offspring of Takhos (V11) and Allania (V2), though most locals pay little heed to this. Some tongues do wag, however, on the 'no smoke without fire' line and that Wimgin may know what he's talking about since if anyone knows why Merthen and Holwen went into the marsh with their son, Wimgin does.

Viona is the moderating influence in the house. She is a friendly, apologetic sort who has learnt long ago to live with her husband's arrogance. She mixes happily with the other women of the village. She eschews the fine clothes that Wimgin often brings her from Arkand, feeling that this would divorce her from the other women in the village.

Calops is very much like his father, tall and lean, he looks down his nose at most others in the village. He and his father do little fishing, preferring to work the oyster-beds. Since they have spent much time in the marsh, and faced many of its perils, Calops has developed into a fine warrior and swordsman. He is particularly proud of this, and often performs feats of swordsmanship at the Fish Fair and other local festivals.

Emmalina is a social climber. Wimgin took her into his house as an orphan, and to begin with, she was treated little better than a slave. However, as she grew older, a bond developed between her and Calops, whereupon, at Calops insistence, she was treated as an equal member of the family. Eventually, they married. Emmalina now considers herself to be better than the other fish-wives and enjoys wearing the finest clothes. The other women consider her 'stuck up', and 'hoity-toity'.

Jesmon is a constant worry to Emmalina. Though she dresses him in fine clothes, he always slips off to play with Petram (V11) and Tinmos (V7) much to her disapproval and comes back covered in mud and worse. Emmalina is often seen walking about calling for him, while he does his best to avoid her.

Gresha and Liliana are proper little madams. Always dressed cleanly and rarely mixing with the other children who knock of finding Black Pearls. He claims they think of as urchins.

#### V14: Wimgin and family

*Recommended Location: 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18*

Wimgin (58) and his wife Viona (56) share their luxurious (by village standards) home with their son Calops (38), his wife, Emmalina (32) and their son Jesmon (15) and two daughters, Gresha (12) and Liliana (8). Wimgin's other son was Merthen, the father of Griff (V5) who died an horrific death in the marshes. The other member of the household is Stanton (21), Griff's brother. He was raised by Wimgin after his parents death but left the village some four years ago to seek his fortune. It is rumoured that he is apprenticed to some worker of magics in Arkand. He rarely visits the village.

Wimgin is possibly the wealthiest of the village inhabitants. He has an uncanny knack of finding Black Pearls. He claims he has his method, as he calls it. In reality, Wimgin's father noticed that

#### V15: Zelwyn and family

*Recommended Location: 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18*

Zelwyn (55) is the head of the family with possibly the worst reputation in the village. In the cottage with Zelwyn live his wife Alika (52), their sons Norden (33), Palon (32) and Anders (28) as well as Norden's wife Betherica (30) and their sons Koram (14) and Alaman (13) and daughter Elanar (11).

Zelwyn is the brother of Tilda (V4). He is a dark, swarthy, saturnine man with a powerful build and a sharp devious mind. He became Headman, through his own machinations and the default of Wimgin (V14) who had no desire for the best fishing stretch as he preferred to search the marshes for Black Pearls and the chores of the Headman would also have deprived him of the time for this. Zelwyn's reign as Headman was quite eventful. There was the only lynching in living memory, after which Zelwyn acquired two additional stretches of river for his sons, and a scandal when Zelwyn was removed from office as Registrar by Royal command. He was consequently also forced to relinquish the post of Headman since the two posts have always, by tradition, gone hand in hand. Takhos (V11) was elected the new Headman and Zelwyn lost the rights to the best river stretch which went with the post. Much to Zelwyn's annoyance, he received no replacement stretch, as the family had the rights to the two other stretches already.

Zelwyn still chafes over this and regularly argues at council meetings that since his family are the best fishermen in the village, they should have most of the best stretches; but to no avail. No-one knows why Zelwyn was relieved of the post as Registrar. There are rumours that he failed to register some Pearls himself and that he misappropriated some of the funds for rewards, but nothing was proven and he was dismissed rather than arrested. behavior when Palon is among them without his family, for none know what real or imagined grudges he harbours. Aliko and Bethecca are tolerant of him, arguing that he is 'not all there' and that he has had a hard life from his father as a result. Palon, however, has some brains for he can be quite devious in his revenge and can always control himself if he feels the odds are against him, preferring to settle the score at a more advantageous

Alika, the sister of Bannyr (V3) is a slovenly, lazy woman who does little work around the house, preferring to pay the orphan Hoilessa (V11) to do this for her (the family always seems to have substantial funds, though they flaunt it very little). She much prefers to spend her time chatting and is often on the quayside, supping ale, gossiping and laughing with Ginny (V12) and Svengola (V7). She does not care what Zelwyn and her sons get up to as long as she can do what she wants. Alika, the sister of Bannyr (V3) is a time to himself. He is a hard worker, and is quite content to follow the orders of his older brother Norden. Palon was married to Queela, the daughter of a peasant farmer. However, she apparently left in strange circumstances. Neighbours remember a blazing row between her and Palon, that could be heard through most of the village. There were sounds of violence and then total silence. Later that night, a horse was heard leaving the village. According to the family, Palon had indeed

Norden, the eldest son, is the worker in the family. Although his father rules the roost with an iron hand, Norden is the one who bears most influence with him, deciding which stretch to fish on what day, who should man what boats, etc. Zelwyn cedes him most responsibility in these matters, realising that Norden has extraordinary skills as a fisherman. This also leaves Zelwyn more time to devote to village politics. Zelwyn's aim is to one day engineer Norden into the position of Headman. Consequently, Zelwyn is always critical of Allania's (V2) behaviour, though he is rumoured to be one of her most regular clients, and takes any opportunity to run down or criticise Takhos (V11) and Triston (V2). Norden secretly wishes to become Headman, but resents his father's methods. He would prefer to do it on merit.

struck Queela who then decided that that was the last straw, packed her bags and went. However, she did not go to her father's farm, for they came looking for her when they heard the news of her departure, and she has never been heard of since. Many villagers believe that Palon killed her, and that her body was dumped somewhere in the Black Marsh. This was some ten years ago.

Anders, the youngest of the three sons, is a pale sickly youth who never seems to be in the best of health. He always breathes with a faint, but continual wheeze. Because of this, he is a great disappointment to his father who gives him an unnecessarily hard time, coupled with the occasional beating. Consequently, Anders works extremely hard on the boats, and is generally reckoned to be almost a good a fisherman as his brother.

Bethbecca is the sister of Yvgola (V8) Norden. She is a typical fish-wife. She is a large hard-working woman. She refuses to allow Hoilessa to do a lot of the donkey work and is quite kindly to her. However, she is a loyal family woman and will not tolerate a word said against any of the household. She will always stick up for any of them, including Palon, regardless of whether they are in the right or not. The family always comes first. He gains little recognition for this from his father though, who despises his physical frailties. Anders is in fact quite strong and agile, but tends to be cowed in his father's presence. If there is a fight involving the family, Anders will usually be to the fore, hoping that his father might acknowledge his worth more. He has little hope, however, for Zelwyn has always suspected that Anders is not his son, but that of his brother-in-law Grammon (V4) who has always been close to Alika since childhood.

Palon is as near to a psychopath as the village has. A malevolent individual of average build, he tends to store any grudges he bears, bottling them up until some relatively innocuous slight unleashes the storm. If Zelwyn or Norden are not around to restrain him, his violence, once begun can border on the murderous. On one occasion, he battered a harmless stranger way beyond unconsciousness, and it was only Zelwyn appearing on the scene that prevented the stranger's death. The villagers are very watchful of their Koram, Norden and Betherica's oldest child, is a foul-mouthed brat, who is always causing trouble. Norden and Betherica are usually too wrapped up in their work to pay him much attention, and Tilda and Zelwyn spoil him something rotten. They will always pay for any damage that he causes rather than admonish him, regarding his behaviour as high-spirits. He gets his own back on people by telling a pack of lies to his family so that they will go and sort out the person that he wants to get.

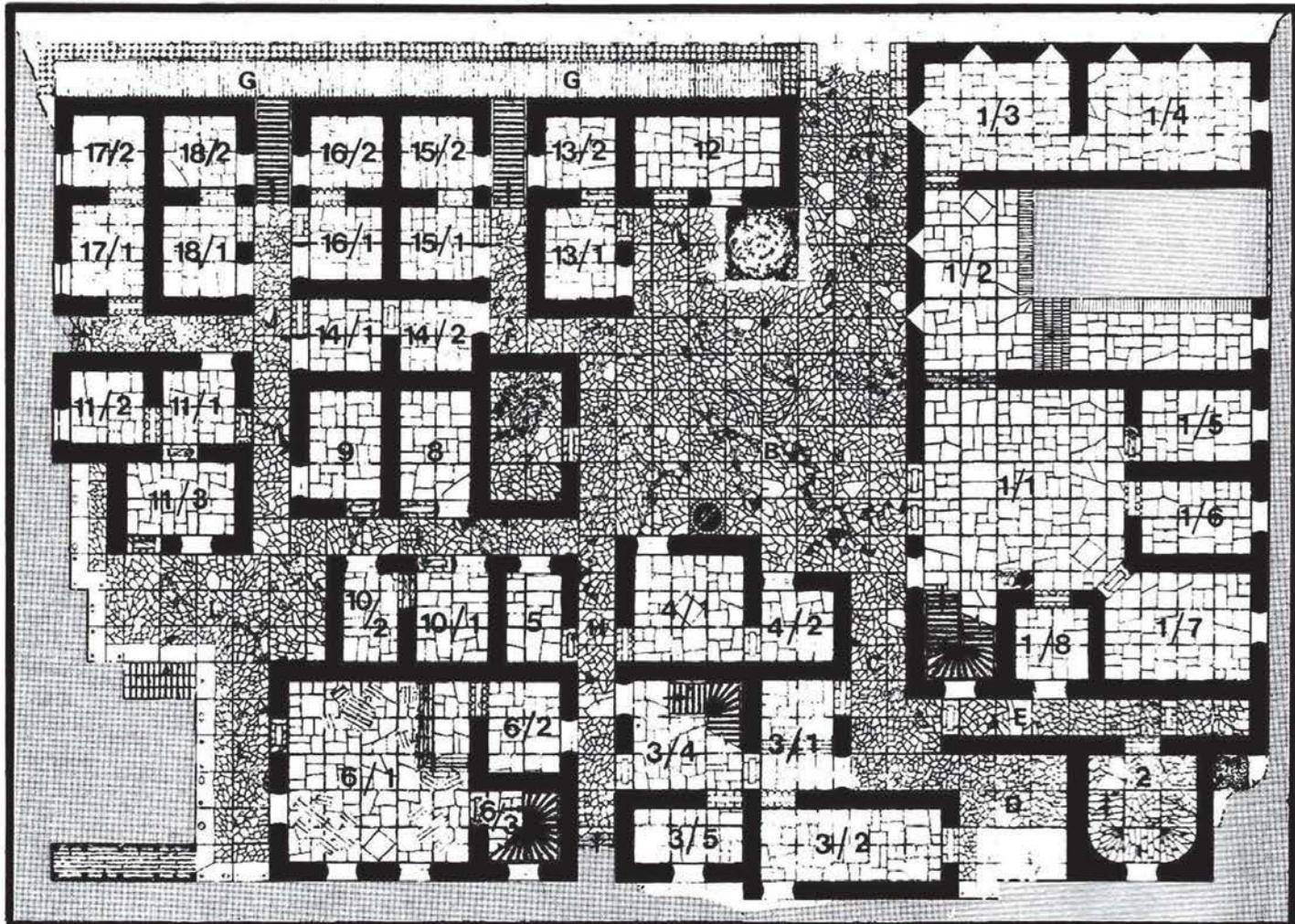
Alaman follows Koram everywhere, and is much the same as his older brother, who he thinks is really something. The two are known locally as the 'terrible twins'.

Ellanor is quite different, she is a strange, wan broody creature who can often be found sitting on the jetty staring blankly out across the Black Marsh. She rarely speaks to anyone and her baleful stare can raise the hackles on even the most hardened warrior. She is shunned by the other children. There are whispers of witchcraft, and dark powers among the other villagers who secretly believe that the child is possessed. Anyone who gets on the wrong side of her, often seems to suffer small mishaps: a knife slips while they are gutting a fish and they receive a nasty gash; the fish become scarce in their stretch of the river; they suffer a mild dose of fish poisoning; their boat is holed in the Black Marsh; etc. Never anything really serious; but usually bad enough to be taken as a warning.

**OTHER VILLAGERS & CREATURES**

If your adventure requires details of any other villagers (possibly peasant farmers), personalities, or creatures to be found in the Black Marsh, these should be noted on this page.





## GM'S ADDITIONS

The village map above is for you to record any secret doors, trapdoors to cellars and passages between buildings, etc. This page is for you to note the details, descriptions and contents of these additions.



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## ENCOUNTER TABLES

The *Encounter Tables* can be used to generate scenes of interest in the village. *Daytime Encounters* come in two parts; *Table 2A* details ordinary run-of-the-mill events and *Table 2B*, the more unusual happenings. With the special encounters from *Table 2B* in particular, you should roll up any events in advance so that preparatory work, such as the particular villagers involved, can be done without impeding play. The *Night-time Encounters* are provided should the party be out after dark. They are, of course, a little more sinister than daytime events. There are also *Tavern Encounters* since the players will invariably head towards the nearest source of refreshment.

The encounters can be used to introduce the players to some of the characters and rivalries of the village. Using the brief details provided, whole adventures can be constructed, either using a single event, or possibly linking a number of them together or with one of the *Adventure Ideas*.

Where an unspecified villager is mentioned, determine the villager at random from the *Villagers* section in the booklet, or select the most appropriate to suit the circumstances of your adventure.

### NIGHT-TIME ENCOUNTERS

Table 1

Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	A piercing scream rings out from one of the cottages in the fields outside the stockade...
2	The party stumble into a noxious trail of sticky green slime that leads to the quayside and into the water.
3	1d4-2 drunken fishermen are battering a stranger in a dark corner of the Royal Court. They will be displeased if interrupted, but the stranger could do with some help.
4	A small monkey drops onto a character's shoulder from a tree or overhanging roof. It will try to steal something valuable before scampering off to a tavern, where it will leap into an open window and disappear.
5	A formidable fish-wife struggles past, dragging a guilty-looking (and trouserless) husband by the ear. She is mouthing all sorts of obscenities and curses, while he contritely mutters 'Yes, dear', to all she says.
6	The party finds the body of a young girl in the shadows, apparently lifeless and drained of blood. <i>Healing Spells</i> (from the local cleric if necessary) will eventually bring the 'corpse' to life. She will be very weak, and talk only of 'He in black who called me'. She can remember no more, since the last she knew, she was in bed at home.
7	A knife flies out from the shadows and embeds itself in the wall opposite. Footsteps are heard running off. The knife is of a strange design and very crudely made. There is no trace of the mysterious assailant.
8	Two drunken fishermen are arguing loudly in the street, apparently about the respective sizes of their catches. There is much shouting, cursing and arm-waving. The two seem close to coming to blows.
9	Two figures slip through the shadows to the well. They glance furtively around before throwing in something wrapped in a bundle of rags. If challenged, they will explain that their daughter's kitten has died. Not wishing to upset her, they have just disposed of it. (A moron might guess they are lying as they could use the river rather than risk polluting the village's water supply!)
10	Tamalin, the cleric, hails the party as he returns from a call to a sick child. He is determined to tell them about it, the chapel roof restoration fund, the orphan's fund, why the party haven't been to chapel recently, and so on...
11	3d6 peasant farmers, obviously the worse for wear after an evening in the tavern, are making their way home to the fields outside the village. They are very belligerent, shoving any and everybody out of their way.
12	A bestial shape leaps from a low rooftop and runs off into the shadows, heading either towards the stockade or the waterside leaving damp, webbed footprints.
13	A very drunk dwarf is desperately trying to clamber onto a very tall warhorse which is tethered outside the stable. Unfortunately, in his present state, he has forgotten that he came on a small mule (in the stable). He won't take kindly to being laughed at; nor will the large warrior in the tavern whose horse it is take kindly to its loss.
14	A very distressed man stands in the middle of the street. He has just been relieved of all his belongings by foot-pads; not just his money and weapons, but also his cloak and the rest of his clothes. He can promise a good reward to those who help him get back to his room at the tavern with minimal embarrassment.
15	A dark, mysterious, cloaked stranger slips past in the shadows on the other side of the street. He disappears from sight in the twinkling of an eye.
16	Brekki, the night-watch, comes down the street in all his glory carrying a lantern and longsword. Though short and stout, he is a lot more agile and skilled in combat than he appears. Every two hours or so, he makes a 20 minute circuit of the village. The party will need a good excuse (depending on the hour) for being out at night. Any attacks will simply result in the blowing of the very large and loud horn that he carries around his neck.
17	On an odd occasion when the village gates are closed for the night, there is suddenly someone banging on them desperately and screaming for help. They are obviously scared witless. Before the gates can be opened, there is a scuffling sound, muffled cries, and then silence. When the gates are opened, there is only fresh blood on the walls and lots of large footprints to be seen.
18	With a sudden clatter of squeaks and squeals, a flock of small black bats flaps around the roof of the chapel. They are not dangerous, but are very noisy and rather scary.
19	A small rat dashes into a dark alley, followed by a mangy, tabby cat. Suddenly, there is a rather surprised miaow: the terrified cat tears back out, closely followed by...
20	With a blast of horns, a small raiding party of marsh orcs bursts through the gates. Simultaneously, another group lands in boats at the wharf. They aim to burn and loot, but will kill those who get in their way. There are 3d6+2 orcs, but this should be adjusted depending on the strength of those in the village at the time.

### DAYTIME ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1d6. On a 1-4 use *Table 2A*, a 5-6, *Table 2B*.

Table 2A - Routine Daytime Encounters

Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

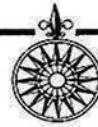
Die Roll	Encounter
1	1d4 fishermen are sitting on the quayside, sewing nets, drinking and talking. They know all the local rumours and are not averse to discussing them.
2	3d4 ragged local children pester the party, demanding money and/or sweets. A few well-aimed kicks will disperse them. However, the villagers might not take too kindly to strangers roughing up their children.
3	2d4 fishwives are gossiping furiously across the way from the party. They know many local rumours but mostly trivial ones. It is near impossible to get any useful information out of them.
4	Griff, the village simpleton, prances up and skips around the party whooping disconcertingly.
5	Some revelling entertainers are performing in the Royal Court. A crowd of locals stands gaping at the spectacle. It is an excellent opportunity for the light-fingered (in conjunction with, or separate from, the troubadors) to practice their skills or for other nefarious activities.
6	A cat grabs a fish from a market stall and runs off, hotly pursued by a loudly cursing fishwife.
7	An indistinct shout from above is closely followed by the contents of a large pail. One of the party is soaked in foul-smelling guunge. People will avoid this person and their friends until the befouled individual has a bath (or a dip in the river) and gets a fresh change of clothes.
8	It is the local harvest festival (or another celebration if this is unsuitable for your campaign). A procession to the chapel is followed by a thanksgiving service in the Royal Court. It will be attended by the locals and farming families from outlying farmsteads and Elbridge whose carts are already blocking the gates. The Fennock Inn and quayside will be crowded with drunken revellers tonight and there will be a number of strangers in the village.
9	A large, mangy dog suddenly gives a party member quite a savage nip and races off. A nearby villager seems to recall that it was foaming at the mouth.
10	A travelling quack sets up in the Royal Court and hawks an amazing 'Cure-All' lotion (a rather nasty mix of apple juice and creosote). Anyone gullible enough to drink it will be laid low for 1d4+2 days. If the quack is found again, he will swear it must be rubbed in, not consumed.
11	2d6 drunken peasants brandishing particularly nasty agricultural implements, barge sullenly through the party.
12	Tamalin, the local cleric, greets the party, as newcomers to his parish, entreating them to attend chapel as soon as they are able and to give generously to the chapel roof repair fund...to the poor and starving orphans fund...to the home for sick animals fund...and so on.
13	An entertainer in the Royal Court is taking the hat round for his dancing-bear act when the beast suddenly snaps its chains, and goes wild. The bear heads off towards the stockade. Pursuers of it will have to be careful if they start clambering about on the rickety old structure.
14	A cart has lost a wheel in the gateway and shed its load of cabbages all over the place. While its owner is arguing with Brekki the gatekeeper, local women and children are helping themselves to free cabbages. It will be hours before the mess is sorted out and the gateway cleared.
15	1d4+2 fishermen, laden with nets and fishing tackle, are heading for the wharf to take their boat out.
16	A game of Bruntblat, a sort of cross between rugby and hurling, against a team from Elbridge is due to take place on the grassland outside the stockade in half an hour's time. The party is invited to join in. (The game usually degenerates into a brawl within minutes.)
17	A very large peasant farmer is unknowingly kicked by a donkey tethered by the wayside. Turning to find the culprit, he spots the party. He's had a bad day and will take some persuading that it was the donkey. (A drink might soothe matters.)
18	A finely dressed traveller tosses a few coins to some local children, and is promptly mobbed by villagers: polishing his shoes, carrying his bags, minding his horse, etc. He looks as if he would gladly befriend someone nearer his own social class who could rid him of these 'peasants'.
19	A local fishing boat has just berthed in Fennock Wharf. Its catch is being gutted on the quayside to the delight of the scruffy local cats who are avidly fighting over the scraps. The noise is terrific, and is only surpassed by the smell, which is quite overpowering to non-locals.
20	Amid much shouting and screaming, some children are diving recklessly from the jetty at Fennock Wharf. If they notice the party of strangers, one will immediately pretend to be drowning, and his friends will entreat the party to dive in and help. The children will look too shocked and worried to do anything themselves.

Table 2B - Special Daytime Encounters

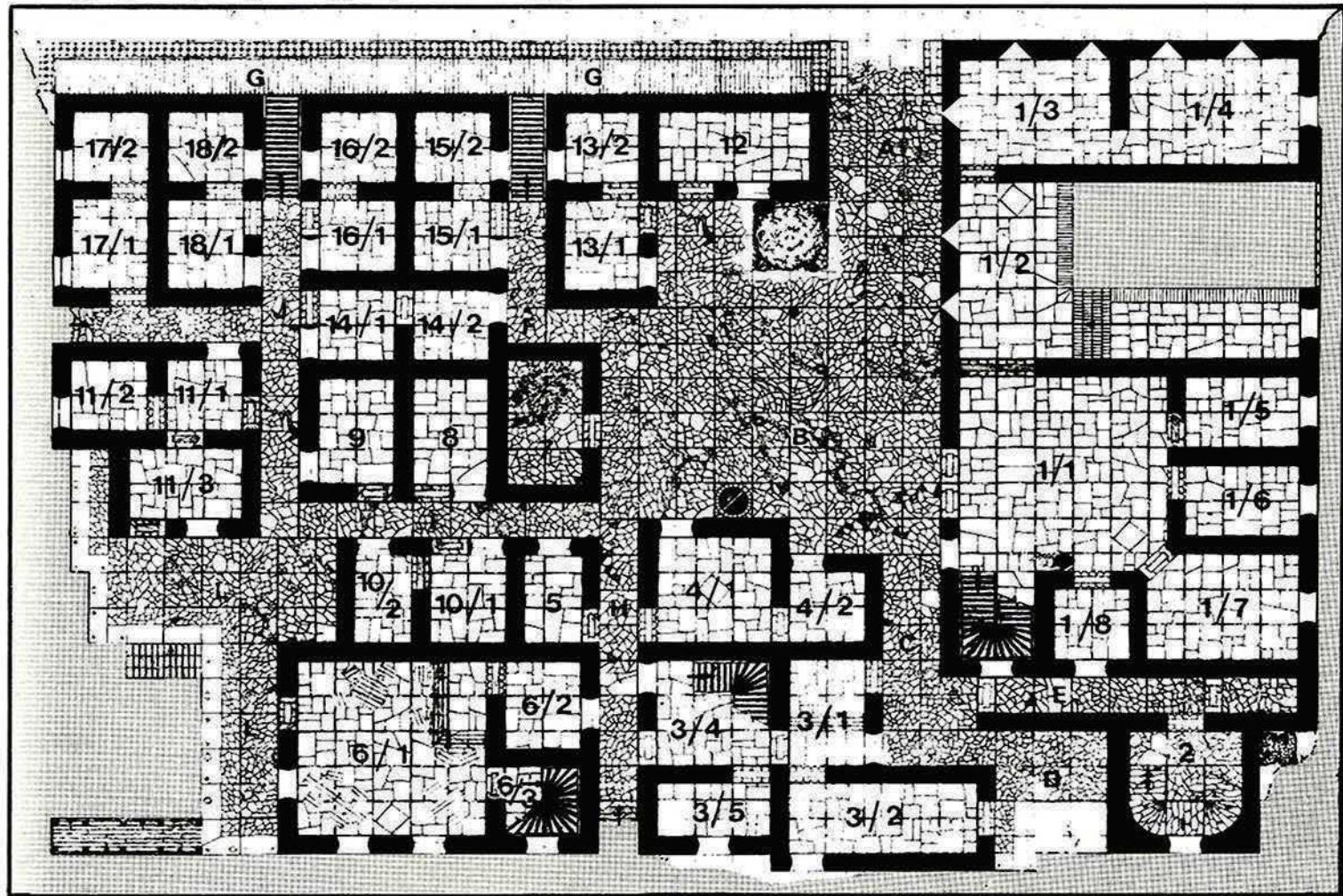
Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	A boat pulls into Fennock Wharf amid much commotion. A fisherman has been injured by something with tentacles that attacked them in the Black Marsh. Some locals want to investigate, but others consider it too dangerous.
2	A small girl is sobbing loudly. Her cat is up the tree by the chapel, and can't (or won't) come down. If the party helps, they will discover that the cat is quite vicious; the little girl is not at all grateful afterwards; and that the chapel roof is not particularly strong or sound.
3	A herald announces the approach of a royal funeral procession. It will stay overnight in the Royal House and move on at dawn. The news is met with frenzied activity: the gateposts are painted, the Royal Court swept, stray animals rounded up, the royal larder stocked, and so on. The villagers will dress in their best clothes. Though a solemn occasion, it will be treated much like a holiday. Villagers will pay their respects as the procession arrives at the Royal House and an overnight vigil will be kept in the chapel. There will be guards camped in the Royal Court and outside the stockade.
4	A villager crawls from an alley, clutching a chest wound. He is another victim in the long-running dispute over the rights to the best fishing stretches and oyster beds.
5	The village simpleton, Griff, runs up and heftily pokes one of the group in the ribs. He then giggles and mutters 'You're it!' before running speedily away.
6	A boat is to be launched. Tamalin the cleric will bless it before it is pushed down the small slipway at the wharf. It is a good excuse for celebration in the tavern tonight.
7	A large, menacing bird of prey alights on the chapel roof. It is a rare Fenhawk. There are rumours that these birds have, in the past, carried off babies. Much to everyone's horror, it appears to be building a nest.
8	Some travelling jugglers are performing in the Royal Court. Given half a chance, they'll 'borrow' items from the party (usually helms, swords and daggers), and juggle with them to the amazement of the locals, and to the chagrin of the party when they are not returned.
9	Torrential rain has flooded the Royal Way in several places, effectively cutting the village off. The river is in full spate: close to flooding the village itself and too dangerous for boats to venture out. After a few days, a party will need to reach Elbridge for some supplies.
10	A very large and plain fishwife makes amorous advances to the smallest member of the party. She is very overbearing and will take a lot of persuasion to let up. After a while, her sheepish-looking husband will turn up to drag her off, apologising profusely while she berates him.
11	A random building catches fire. A human chain is formed from the river to the building to put it out. Once the fire is doused, questions will be raised as to how it started. If it is a prominent building, such as the chapel, suspicion may well fall on any strangers in the village!
12	A fishing boat pulls into the wharf. The fishermen have caught a particularly large catfish, and a rumour soon spreads that a Black Pearl has been found in its gut.
13	A scream comes from the river. A little girl has fallen in and she cannot swim. If she is rescued, she will point to the nearest stranger, bawling that they pushed her in.
14	A strange warrior arrives in the village. His armour, equipment and clothes are all of the finest materials, yet it is obvious that they come from numerous sources. He is a professional duellist, and will challenge any brave young blade to a fight (to first blood only), for a bag of gold pieces. If the duellist wins, he will demand an item of his own choosing as a forfeit from the loser.
15	A renowned (and rich) merchant arrives with his gaudy caravan selling the rarer, more exotic items not usually available in the village, but at up to five times the normal price! He may want a few bodyguards to join his caravan on a trip upriver, and it is said that he pays well.
16	A fishing boat pulls in towing another boat found adrift in the marshes with everything in order, but no trace of the crew. It is one that failed to return the previous night. One of the men who found it swears he saw something skulking in the undergrowth as they recovered the boat.
17	An eastern prophet is preaching in the Royal Court of the Holy Wars being fought in distant lands. He will decry the local gods, stating that the true deities are those he serves. Tamalin, the local cleric, will not take kindly to this, and at the very least a verbal battle will occur between them, possibly leading to much more.
18	The tinker pays his monthly call. The villagers will be eager to buy new items and get their knives sharpened and pots and fish-kettles mended. The queue will spread around the Royal Court for most of the day. He is a good source of news, but holds his tongue until his work is over. He then retires to the tavern to regale the locals with news and rumours in return for a supply of ale.
19	A fishing boat pulls into the wharf. Along with the usual catch, the fisherman dumps the body of a lizard-man on the quayside. Quite a crowd is attracted, for although there have been rumours of a settlement somewhere in the marsh, none have actually been seen for years.
20	It is the annual Fish Fair. Stalls are set up in the Royal Court, Fennock Wharf, and in the fields outside the stockade where there will also be games and ale-tents. Boats will be decked with bunting, coloured flags and ribbons. Farming families will arrive from Elbridge and the surrounding area for this annual festival. The events will include a lucky dip in a barrel of fish, fish throwing contest, fish juggling, guess the weight of the fish, a fish fancy dress contest, fish-slapping dances, and many more. The party might even be coaxed into partaking of the local speciality served solely on the occasion: a dish of small live fish that are swallowed whole, one at a time, with each one being chased down by a swig of a rather course local liquor. The locals make a sport of this, competing in speed and quantities. It is the one time of the year that virtually everyone gets together, lets their hair down and has a whale of a time! There will be ample opportunity for a good drunken brawl and for the light-fingered to chance their arm. Practical jokes also abound.

# The Village of BLACKMARSH



Scale: 1 square represents 5 feet (1.5 metres).



## TAVERN ENCOUNTERS

There will always be 2d6 assorted customers in the Fennock Inn, mostly fishermen and peasant farmers from the farmlands outside the village, as well as Staffyr, the innkeeper, Sardis, his wife, and their eldest son, Pamir, who doubles as the bouncer. The following table is for special encounters and events to occasionally liven up the evening.

Table 3  
Roll 1d20 or choose an appropriate event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	As a practical joke on strangers to the village, Staffyr has sawn halfway through the legs of one of the tables and its benches. Anyone leaning heavily on them will cause a collapse, sending drinks and people flying.
2	A travelling bard begins to sing, strumming his lute in accompaniment. His songs are mostly old legends set to music, but if requested (together with some ale), he will sing of more local subjects, such as Hargon's battle with the orcs. (His songs are a good way to introduce some of the local history to newcomers.)
3	A wrinkled old man who wears some of the finery of a merchant sits at a table. He has a small monkey with him which he is feeding with tidbits. It is very cute, and will playfully try to steal small items (which the old man returns to their owners). It is only at the end of the evening, when he has retired to his room, that it is noticed that other items are missing. Should the party try to recover them, they may well discover that the old man is a wizard, and a rather skilled one at that...
4	Griff, the village simpleton, rushes in, points at one of the party and in a very accusing tone splurts out a load of gibberish. He then bursts into tears and rushes out again. What it was all about, no-one will ever know, but the locals will be rather abrasive with anyone who has upset Griff, who is one of them, after all.
5	As the evening progresses, the beer gradually becomes more and more watered down. Staffyr refers to it as his "Special Brew" (reserved for strangers). By the end of the evening, the party might notice that their drinks are getting lighter and lighter in colour, and that they have consumed rather a lot without getting very drunk.
6	Some locals are playing knucklebones, and they will invite newcomers to try and beat them, with a small wager on the outcome. They are highly skilled, and will win five times out of six unless their opponent has an extremely high dexterity. It is virtually impossible to cheat at the game.

- An adventurer staying at the inn comes downstairs and complains in a loud voice that some money has been stolen from his room. Staffyr explains that there has been no crime in the Fennock Inn for many years and will personally vouch for all the locals in the place. As for any strangers, however...
- A stray dog wanders in and soon attaches itself to one of the party. It will be identified as their dog ever after, and won't stop following them. Unfortunately, the dog is prone to emitting obnoxious fumes and the contents of its bladder at the most inconvenient moments.
- Tamalin the cleric enters and rattles a collection box under everyone's noses. He loudly proclaims the evils of excessive drinking, and points out that it would be more worthy to donate the money to a good cause, such as the chapel roof restoration fund, the orphan's fund, the sick animals home, and so on.
- A bedraggled child runs in screaming that her younger brother has fallen in the river and he can't swim. If the party joins the rush outside to help, they will see a small shape splashing about among the moored boats. If they dive in, they will find nothing: the shape apparently disappearing among the boats. On returning to the inn, they will discover that their drinks have also disappeared and the locals chuckling, 'Works every time!'
- Grammon, the local whinger comes and sits at the same table as the party, if only because no-one else will talk to him. He will try and make them feel sorry enough for him to buy him a drink or two. Then he will whine on and on about all his monetary problems; then his health; then his wife; and then... The locals know and avoid him, but will be very amused by his antics.
- It is a fisherman's birthday and everyone is expected to contribute a flagon of ale to him. Then the ancient local birthday ritual is carried out: the birthday boy's breeches are filled with minnows and he is pelted with larger fish by his friends and anyone else who has one handy. It often turns into a good-hearted fish fight with fish being thrown at all and sundry to much merriment.
- While Staffyr is out getting another barrel of ale, one of the locals juggles with some mugs and plates, and then challenges any of the party to do better. Should they try, they will find that the mugs and the plates that they are given have been greased. Staffyr will be none too happy with anyone damaging his crockery.
- For some unknown reason, one fisherman stands up and throws his drink in the face of another. A fight ensues. The fight can be restricted to these two, or can blossom out into a full scale brawl. If the latter occurs, those staying in the inn will be expected to recompense the landlord for some of the damage done.
- The door of an upstairs room is flung open and a rather ugly little man is thrown out backwards. Unfortunately for him, his trousers are around his ankles. He tumbles down the stairs and crashes through the door into the bar. A rather ropey-looking lady appears on the stairs, throws a bundle of clothes and equipment at him and shouts 'And stay out!', before stomping back upstairs.
- A local fisherman, dressed in his tatty working clothes, comes in looking rather flushed and pleased with himself. He buys a round for everyone in the bar. When questioned by his friends, he says only that he has had some good fortune and is sharing it with them. He adds, rather testily, that if they don't like free drinks, then they needn't finish them or drink with him again. The truth is that he has found a Black Pearl and has just handed it to the Registrar in return for the 50gp. He is trying to keep quiet about the affair, but is not doing very well.
- Late in the evening, a tremendous storm breaks. All the locals rush out and there is a flurry of activity in the dark and rain as they check that all equipment is lashed down and the boats are securely moored in the lee of the village. This might involve moving the boats upstream, depending on the direction of the wind. They will greatly appreciate any help that the party might offer, but there is a good chance of an accident since the waters are very rough. Once the storm has passed, boats and equipment will be checked and repaired. A good storm will be the talking point for the next few days, with great debate as to whether it was worse than the one five years back, etc.
- The party somehow manage to overhear snippets of a conversation between two nearby traders (not strangers but still rare visitors) drifting over the general noise of the bar: 'Tomorrow' ... 'skinned alive' ... 'lot of gold' ... 'steal' ... 'killing' ... 'proper fool' ... 'need to find a priest afterwards'. They are only talking about getting a good deal on some cassocks that they are buying from the chapel, but they appear very mysterious.
- The tavern cat, for reasons best known to itself, decides to sharpen its claws. The first thing it sees is the leg of a party member. They might find out, though, that the creature is the beloved pet of Sardis, the landlord's wife.
- It is Staffyr's innkeeper's birthday and a special entertainer has been hired from Arkand for a celebratory evening in the tavern. For days there have been rumours of nubile girls doing the dance of the 23 veils (the same as the dance of 7 veils, but more suspenseful). The bar is packed on the night. Many will be violently disappointed, however, when Enarico's 'Birds of Paradise' turn out to be some seedy parrots who do impressions of the Royal family. Fish will be thrown, and all hell could break loose. It will be a night to remember!

## A GENERAL HISTORY OF BLACKMARSH AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

Over 150 years ago, Prince Hargon and his forces routed an army of invading Orcs on the barren Plains of Tagor. The surviving Orcs fled through the Tagor Hills and into the mysterious Black Marsh. Uncertain whether the Orcs would perish or somehow survive and return, Hargon built a look-out tower on a large, flat, rock outcrop in the river Ormsflo. Over the years, the village of Blackmarsh grew around the tower. A more ornate tower was built on the plains to commemorate Hargon's victory.

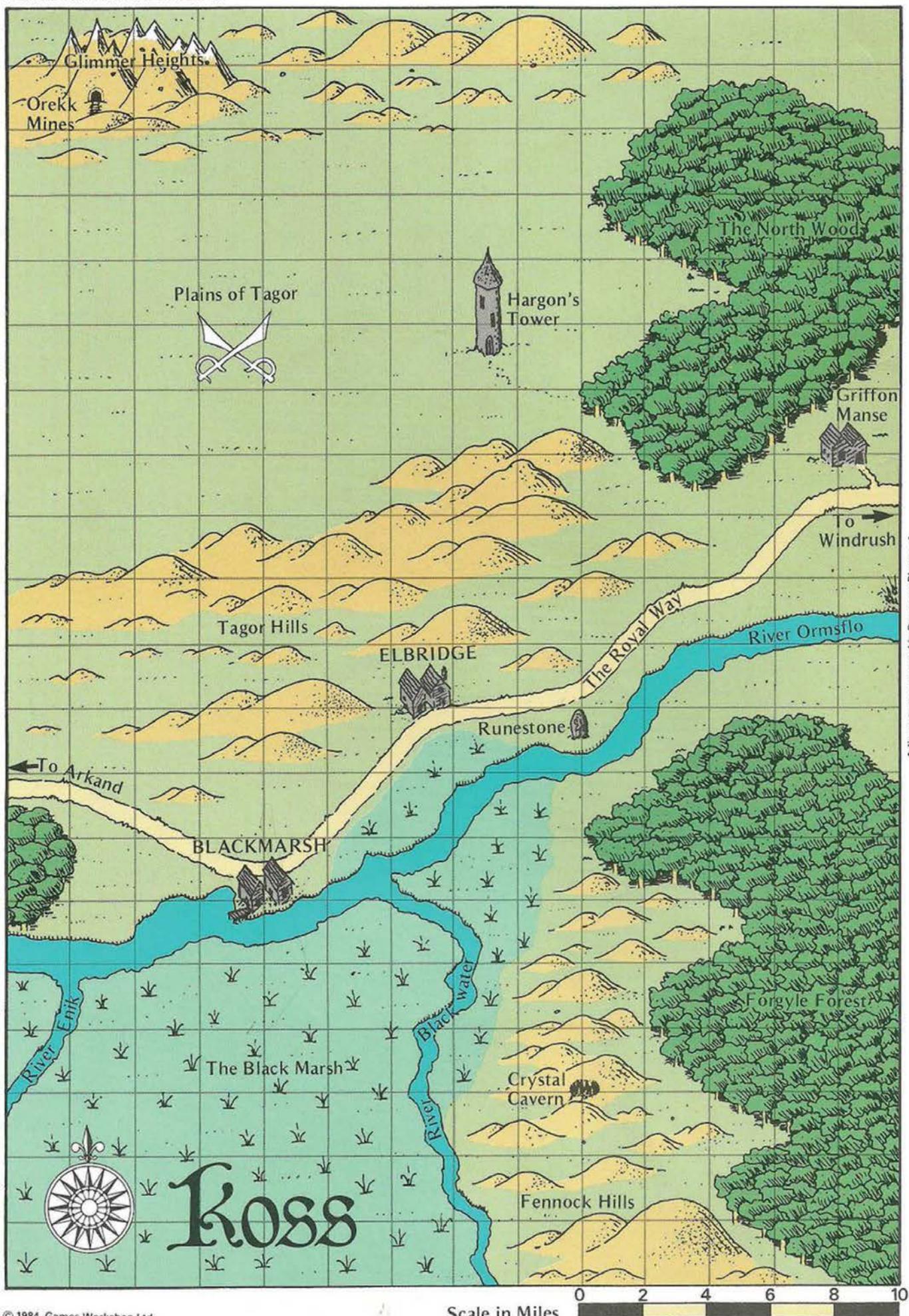
Some 50 years later, the Plains were the main route for fortune hunters during the Gold Rush to the Glimmer Heights where rich deposits of gold and platinum had been found. The dwarven Orekk Mines were the most reknowned and productive but greed and overworking left them exhausted and derelict along with the other mines and boomtowns that sprung up at the time.

The Crystal Cavern, one of many natural caverns in the Fen-nock Hills, is one of the wonders of the area. Its walls, encrusted with profuse deposits of a valueless, glittering crystal, are of breathtaking beauty when illuminated by torchlight.

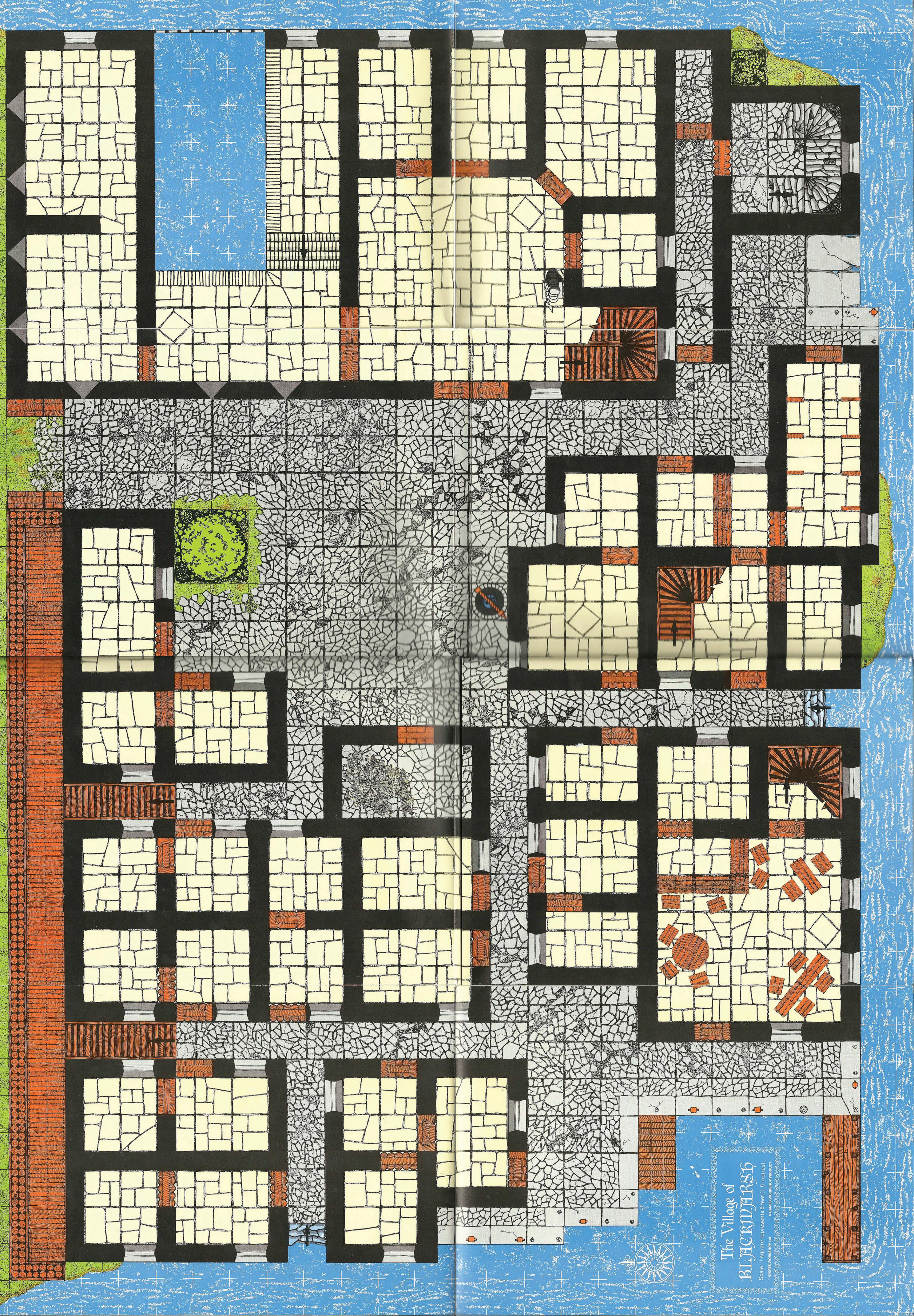
The fishing community of Blackmarsh is the principle village of the area. It is the natural stopping point for Royal funeral processions en route, by road or river, to the Royal Tombs (*Caverns of the Dead: Dungeon Planner Set 1*). The villagers work the river as well as venturing into the Black Marsh itself where freshwater oyster beds are to be found. On rare occasions, some of the oysters contain a fabled Black Pearl, built up over the years from the sediment brought to the marsh by the Stygian river Blackwater from the Ravenscrag Peaks far to the south. However, the Black Pearls are both so prized and rare that a Royal Charter decrees them crown property. All pearls found must be registered and sent to the king at Arkand.

The Black Marsh is still a dark, dangerous place though. Rumours persist of strange creatures and Orc settlements in its tangled depths. And when the thick, grey mists roll out over the village, it is not hard to imagine that fell creatures of the marsh are prowling the sleeping streets of Blackmarsh.

DUNGEON PLANNER SET 2



Adjacent area mapped in Dungeon Planner 1



The Village of  
**BLIGHEDMARSH**

Scale: 1 square represents 5 feet (1.5 metres).

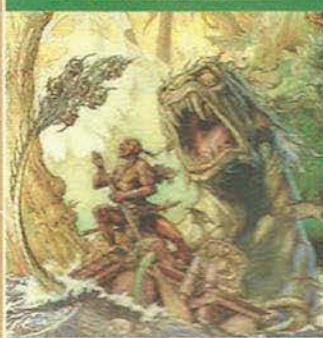
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## NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Dungeon Planner Set 2



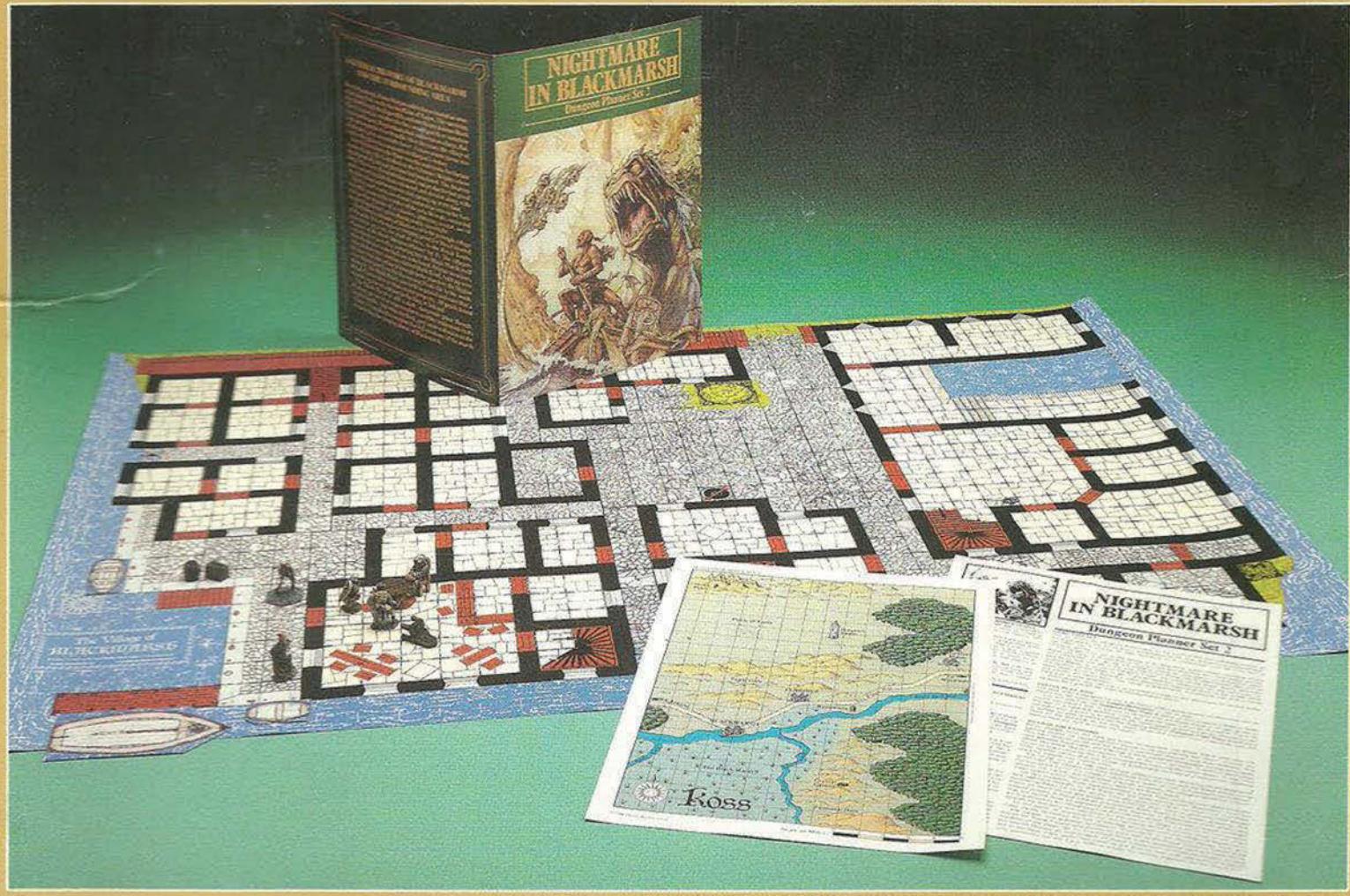
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The painted Citadel miniature figures and boats in the photograph are not included in the set. The boats are from *Dungeon Floor Plans*.

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What will befall your adventurers in the village of Blackmarsh? Will they become involved in a brawl in the tavern? Discover a fabled Black Pearl? Or save the village from dark powers rising from the Black Marsh?

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Designers: Albie Flore & Robert Neville

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