

LANGUARD

CITY OF ADVENTURE



OSR

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OUR QUEST

WE BELIEVE games set in a richly detailed, immersive world are better than games that are not. **WE PUBLISH** richly detailed, easy-to-use material designed to help you, the busy GM, prepare quicker and prepare better. **WE HELP** you have more fun with your friends.

VOCAB FOR YOUR GAME

01 Weal: sound, prosperous or healthy state	11 Antaeon: mammoth, having superhuman strength
02 Torpid: apathetic, sluggish	12 Baetyl: a sacred meteoric stone
03 Egregious: exceptional	13 Nascent: starting to grow or develop
04 Temerity: rashness or boldness	14 Rake: a dissolute man
05 Dretch: to torment or to be troubled in sleep	15 Necrology: list of people recently dead
06 Dun: a brownish-grey colour	16 Redolent: having a pleasant smell; fragrant
07 Evanescent: fleeting, vanishing, impermanent	17 Supernal: divine or celestial; from above or from the sky
08 Gambrinous: drunk, full of beer	18 Somnolent: drowsy, sleepy; causing drowsiness
09 Manse: house provided for a minister	19 Fulsome: excessive flattering; disgusting or offensive; copious
10 Fulgent: shining brilliantly; gleaming	20 Gadzookery: the use of archaisms

STREET NAMES FOR YOUR GAME

01 Broad Street	11 Mead Road
02 Friar Street	12 Fleet Road
03 Bridge Road	13 Castle Street
04 St. Lucio's Way	14 Fore Street
05 Cheap Side	15 Nearwater Way
06 Knight's Way	16 Sweetbriar Road
07 Priest's Bridge	17 Southview
08 Avenue of Glory	18 Oldwell Street
09 Bren's Way	19 Barnfield Hill
10 Greyfriars Road	20 Copperford Street

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FOREWORD

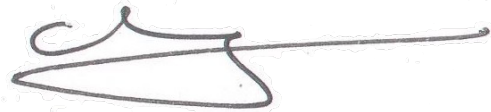
Welcome to *Languard: City of Adventure*! I hope you and your players spend many happy hours together exploring Ashlar's capital and its environs. Several of my Ashlarian campaigns have been set in and around Languard, and I've had a blast exploring the city with my friends. Even though I've been playing here for almost a decade, I still haven't discovered all Languard has to offer, and I've long lusted after a big City of Languard book. That was the impetus behind this project.

Once we've "finished" Languard, we'll compile the whole into a Gigantic Hardback of Adventure—note the capitalisations! (For more on this, check out "About this Book" overleaf.) I can't wait to get the Languard hardback into the world and start my new campaign in Languard! Inevitably, as I toil over Languard, my eyes have repeatedly drifted north

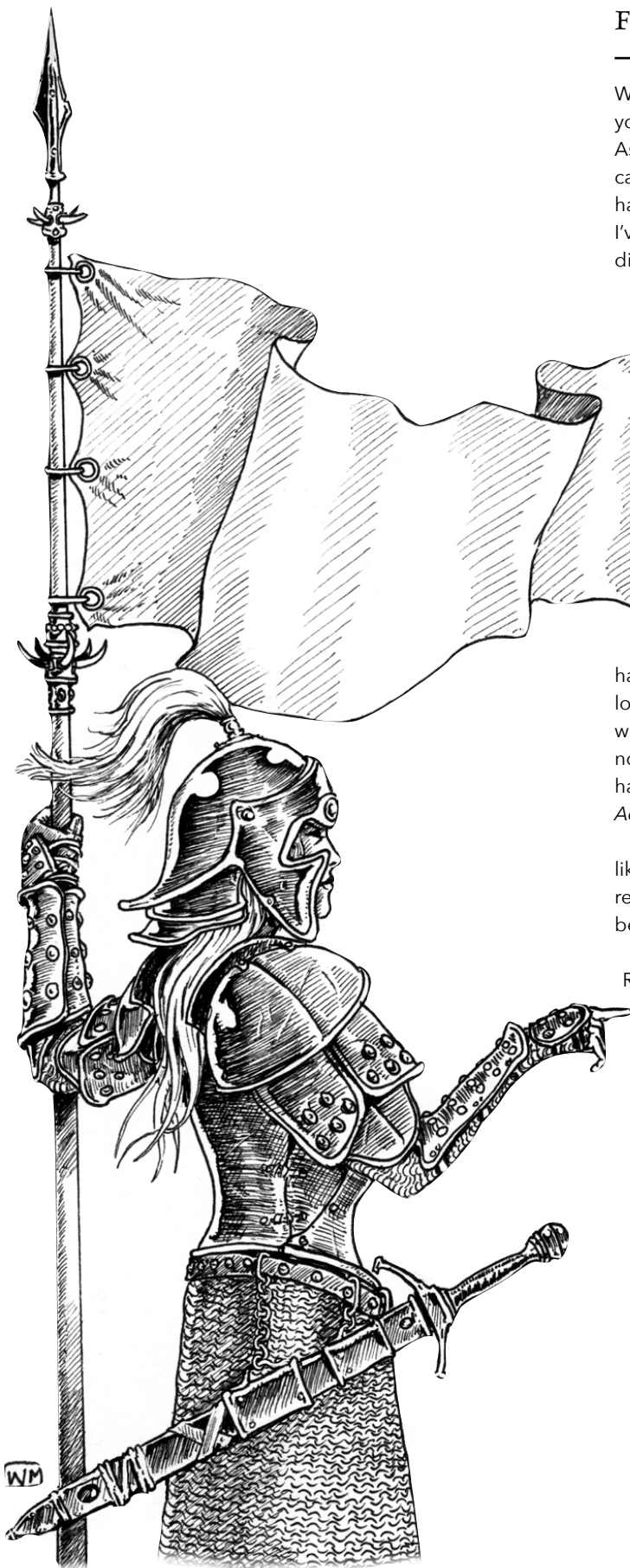
across Hard Bay's fretted, storm-wracked waters to Gloamhold's doom-drenched halls. I ran a Gloamhold campaign during the dark days of lockdown, and short dungeon forays worked really well when we were forced to play online. I'd love to dust off my old notes and revisit Gloamhold in 2026 (and beyond); its outer halls would make a perfect companion to *Languard: City of Adventure*.

In any event, as you read this, the design of Languard is likely ongoing. If you have any suggestions, feedback or requests, or spot a typo, drop me a line; my email address is below.

As always, thank you for using our books and GM's Resources at your table. I'm dead chuffed (English for "jolly proud") that we can be part of your fun!



Creighton Broadhurst
Publisher of Useful Items
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Torquay, March 2025



CONTENTS

Credits.....	2
Foreword.....	3
About This Book.....	4
LANGUARD: CITY OF ADVENTURE	5
Languard at a Glance	6
Lie of the Land	6
City Lore	7
Talk of the Town	7
Inhabitants.....	7
Languard's Wards	8
The High City	8
The Low City	10
The Shambles	10
The Fishshambles.....	11
The Wrecks.....	11
The Hinterlands	12
The Underlands.....	13
Notable Locales at a Glance	14
Notable Locales by Type	15
Minor Locales.....	17
Demographics of Languard	18
Daily Life	18
Faith & Religion	18
Trade & Industry	19
The Languardian Daily Diet	20
Major Festivals & Fairs.....	20
Law & Order	22
Crime & Punishment.....	22
The Courts.....	22
The Sentences	22
Factions of Languard.....	24
Lesser Guilds	24
Religions & Cults	24
Important Organisations.....	25
The City Watch.....	25
The Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus	25
The Shadow Masks	25
The Worshipful Company of Freetraders.....	25
Notable Historical Events	26
Ancient History	26
Middle History	26
Recent History.....	27
RUNNING A LANGUARD CAMPAIGN	29
Running a Languard Campaign.....	30
Adventures in Languard	30
Adventures in Languard's Environs.....	30
Nearby Adventure Sites.....	31
Gloamhold at a Glance	32
Greystone at a Glance	34
Villagers.....	34
Whispers & Rumours	34
Notable Locations at a Glance	35

Notable Folk at a Glance.....	35
Dagon.....	35
Adventurers in Languard.....	36
The Blades Three	36
The Deep Delvers	36
The Shinning Fellowship	37
Whispers & Rumours.....	38
Major Events in Languard.....	41
Generating Random Events.....	41
ADVENTURER'S GUIDE TO LANGUARD	47
Languard at a Glance.....	48
Lie of the Land	48
City Lore	49
Talk of the Town.....	49
The Cost of Living	49
Places for Adventurous Folk	49
OGL V1.0A	51

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Languard: City of Adventure presents a foundational overview of Languard, the capital city of the Duchy of Ashlar. Herein, you will find basic details of the city—its wards, hinterland, notable locales, history, major factions and folk, and more. You'll also find tables designed to help you add whispers, rumours and major events into your campaign. The book's last section comprises a brief player's guide you can use to facilitate the characters' adventurous doings in the city. It's designed to serve as a player handout and can be printed and distributed "as is".

But, Languard is not yet complete. There is so much more to cover! That's why we'll be adding additional chapters to your download throughout 2025. Each standalone chapter will focus on one of Languard's wards, presenting its notable locations as well as random tables designed to make the ward seem like a living, breathing place. Every time we add a chapter to *Languard: City of Adventure*, its price will increase. However, as you have already purchased the book, these updates are free for you!

Once the book is complete, we'll release soft cover, hardback editions and a PDF. (And fear not, we'll also include a change log so you can see what has been added and amended to the city.)

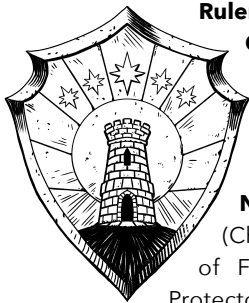
LANGUARD: CITY OF ADVENTURE

LANGUARD AT A GLANCE

Storied Languard is a noisy, dirty place. Here, amid broad, muddy streets teeming with life and shadow-mantled, danger-filled alleyways, there is little beneath the sun that cannot be had somewhere—for a price.

Languard stands hard against Hard Bay's turbulent waters. To the north, across the bay, lies the Mottled Spire's brooding spray-drenched mass, the curse-haunted ruins of Greystone and Gloamhold's doom-wreathed halls.

Few Languardians overly concern themselves with the brooding terrors lurking within Gloamhold's halls. But for others, the legendary, benighted ruin draws them to Languard as a moth to a flame. For within Languard's stout walls live, plot and die an ever-changing hodgepodge of adventurers, freebooters and mercenaries lured here by the treasures said to lie but a scant few miles to the north.



Ruler: Duke Armas Nenonen

Government: Overlord

Population: 7,923 (6,614 humans, 287 dwarves, 189 elves, 236 half-elves, 264 half-orcs, 189 halflings, 144 gnomes)

Notable Folk: Atro Ahokas

(Chancellor of the Worshipful Company of Freetraders), Elmo Rekunen (First Protector of Ashlar), Hannele Auvuinen (High Priestess of Conn), Heimo Karppanen (High Priest of Abarin), Marja Pasanen (Chancellor of Ashlar), Taneli Eronen (Serat's Stormlord), Taneli Laitnen (Guildmaster of the Shadow Masks), Varma Nikkonen (Lady Protector [High Priestess of Darlen]), Veli Nikkonen (Captain of the Watch)

Notable Religions: Abarin, Conn, Darlen, Serat

Alignments: LN, N, NG

Languages: Common (commoners), Elvish (nobles, high society, the courts and so on)

Resources & Industry: Fishing, commerce, general industry

Ashlar's capital is a busy, noisy place filled with opportunity and danger. As Ashlar's only city and largest port, it is the duchy's administrative and mercantile heart. Much wealth and power are concentrated in the city.

At some point or another, most adventurers in Ashlar visit Languard—if only to rest, relax and refit between adventures. However, Languard is the closest settlement to Gloamhold's benighted, doom-drenched depths. Many adventurers, sell-swords and mercenaries come to Languard. For such folk, this proximity offers the greatest opportunities for fame, gold and advancement in Ashlar. But for the careless or foolish, or the merely unlucky, Languard offers just as many opportunities for infamy, madness and death. For all its glittering lights and soft comforts, Languard is a place of lurking fear, grinding poverty and gradual decay.

LIE OF THE LAND

Sprawling over a series of rocky bluffs to the north of the River Svart and across the lower-lying land south of the river, Languard is a place of great wealth and profound poverty. The great and the good dwell to the north in High City—literally above the great stink of the rest of the city, where the poor live cheek to jowl with one another—often in conditions of terrible poverty and hardship.

Languard is heavily fortified and strongly garrisoned by the Nenonen's soldiers. Set in a commanding position at Hard Bay's narrow mouth, its ramparts, siege engines and ships of war defend Ashlar from seaborne assault. Meanwhile, its high walls, lofty towers and stout gates protect it from any invasion erupting from the south. If the ever-present darkness and chaos pressing close in upon the duchy should rise to flood Ashlar with horrors, Languard will be its sanctuary of last resort.

Visitors approaching Languard likely first spy Castle Languard's towers and battlements looming above the city. Then, the spires and lofty roofs of the city's great churches and abbeys, along with the city's impressive outer defences, come into view. If the winds are blowing in the right direction, visitors will smell the city long before they pass through one of its four great gates.

From each of Languard's gates, broad and often muddy streets lead into the city. The finest houses and inns of each ward flank these roads. Therein, merchants live above their shops, sea captains rest when not voyaging, and other folk—members of the clergy, adventurers (both retired and still active) and so on—enjoy life. Narrower roads lead away from these bustling thoroughfares; along these, the houses are narrower, taller and in worse repair.

In the worst parts of the city, a tenebrous warren of alleys and tiny lanes radiate outwards from the main streets. Perpetual gloom cloaks these alleys—the jetties of the ramshackle houses almost meeting those of the house opposite high above the street. This is the Shambles. Here, down shadowed alleys and in dilapidated inns and shops, much not available in the nicer (and safer) parts of the city is on offer. Respectable folk rarely visit the Shambles.

There are worse places to live, though, than the Shambles. Where the dilapidated houses run down toward the Svart's southern bank, the Shambles blur into the Fishshambles. Here, among the tangled, reeking labyrinth of narrow alleys, dwell the city's fisherfolk and other nautical ne'er-do-wells.

However, the basest folk—the degenerate and debased Takolen—dwell in the Wrecks, a swath of waterfront dominated by rotting wharves and fetid, half-sunken boats. The Wrecks form a confused mishmash of homes, warehouses, whorehouses, taverns and other unsavoury businesses. A cancerous evil lurks within the Takolens' hearts; one day, it may ooze forth to draw Languard and its folk into a terrible, ancient darkness.

CITY LORE

A character likely knows some basic facts about Languard, its history and its people:

- As the capital of the Duchy of Ashlar, Languard is its largest and wealthiest settlement. It is also the nearest settlement of note to Gloamhold's doom-shrouded halls. As a result, many adventurers visit Languard.
- Languard is the oldest settlement in modern Ashlar, founded almost 600 years ago by the first duke, Arndul Nenonen. Castle Languard is the city's oldest structure.
- Languard is the administrative and mercantile heart of the duchy.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Some news and rumours are so widespread that a character spending any time in Languard cannot fail to hear of them:

- Ruined Greystone is cursed; a miasma of evil lies over the abandoned village, whose ruins are still visible from Languard's seaward walls.
- While Duke Armas rules the city, the Shadow Masks are a power unto themselves; only the foolish risk their attention and ire. Guildmaster Taneli Laitnen's word is law in the baser parts of town.
- Languard is a place of many competing interests; it is wise to avoid the attention of the city's powerful folk, but it is also a place of opportunity for the bold, the quick and the cunning.

INHABITANTS

Many thousands of people dwell within Languard's walls, and many more visit the city every year. Most such folk are merely peasants, mercenaries or merchants— one among the city's faceless masses.

Although Ashlar's rulers—the Nenonens—are half-elven, Languard is overwhelmingly a human city. Most Ashlarian humans are a mixed blend of successive waves of immigrants and settlers intermixed with the area's original inhabitants—whose ancestral purity only lingers in such out-of-the-way places as the swamp-village of Thornhill. The common sorts of non-humans—elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings and the like—also dwell in the city, but such folk are not numerous, and most are not native to Ashlar. Those of rarer stock are noteworthy and sure to garner notice.

Appearance: Languardians are fair-skinned folk. Brown or sandy-coloured hair and brown or hazel eyes predominate. Facial hair is worn mainly by the lower classes. Being clean-shaven (for men) or sporting elaborate and impractical hairstyles (for women) is a mark of breeding, class, and wealth.

Dress: Woollen tunics and breeches, along with heavy woollen cloaks in the winter, predominate. Clothes worn by the wealthy are of finer quality and more colourful.

Nomenclature: Most of Ashlar's humans draw from a common pool of nomenclature. A few humans may have elven names—such names hint at an elven or half-elven ancestor somewhere in their ancestry.

D12	FEMALE	MALE	SURNAME
1	Aila	Armas	Ahokas
2	Asta	Arvo	Eskola
3	Elina	Einar	Keto
4	Esteri	Ilari	Korpela
5	Helmi	Jani	Leino
6	Kaari	Onni	Nieminen
7	Laina	Panu	Ojanen
8	Marja	Taisto	Purho
9	Pia	Teuvo	Rintala
10	Saini	Valto	Takala
11	Ulpa	Veijo	Varala
12	Virpi	Ylermi	Yala

THE TAKOLEN

Of obviously different racial stock to the majority of Ashlar's human population, most ordinary people see the Takolen as a debased, lesser—or perhaps even aberrant—strain of humanity. Most Takolen live in—or on the brink of—poverty, and all have an eye for a quick profit no matter the consequences to others.

Appearance: With grey or dark blue eyes and dark brown, jet black or occasionally red hair, a profusion of wild, unkempt body hair marks the Takolen as a strange folk. Most make their living on or near the water and thus possess a fisherman's wiry build, strength and stamina.

Dress: Most Takolen wear dirty, hard-wearing work clothes suitable for a life of toil. Such clothes—normally of layered leather with perhaps a heavy sailcloth or canvas cloak—serve as light armour. A Takolen is never unarmed, and all carry a few daggers or a handaxe as “tools”.

Nomenclature: The Takolen have a markedly different style of names to normal Ashlarian humans.

d8	FEMALE	MALE	SURNAME
1	Amare	Agga	Akkad
2	Aya	Dungi	Der
3	Delondra	Enki	Dilbat
4	Irkalla	Enmul	Erech
5	Nigbau	Gudea	Isin
6	Radjni	Namtar	Larsa
7	Siduri	Sargon	Mari
8	Urnina	Utu	Zimbir

LANGUARD'S WARDS

Languard has five distinct wards of varying characters and styles. Most of the city comprises homes or businesses of little interest to adventurers. A few locations, however, are of interest to such folk and are tagged on the city map with a letter followed by a number. The letter portion of each tag identifies either the part of the city where the location can be found (L, S, F, W, H) or the location's type (G, T). Thus:

LOCATION BY TYPE

- G: One of Languard's gates.
 - OD: Outside Duke's Gate.
 - OL: Outside Low Gate.
 - OR: Outside River Gate.
 - OT: Outside Traitor's Gate.
- T: One of Languard's great temples.

LOCATION BY WARD

- F: A location in the Fishshambles.
- H: A location in High City.
- L: A location in Low City.
- S: A location in the Shambles.
- W: A location in the Wrecks.

THE HIGH CITY

Set upon the Svart's northern bank, High City rises above the stink and muck of the rest of Languard by dint of a series of bluffs rising from the river. Here dwell the great and the good (or perhaps just the wealthy) of Languard.

In High City, the streets are cleaner and broader, the houses are of stone and slate, and the folk are wealthier and healthier. The concentration of so much wealth and power should attract thieves and other ne'er-do-wells. However, given the large numbers of men-at-arms, bodyguards and other armed personages serving the folk dwelling here, it is a brave, stupid or superlatively skilled burglar who works in High City.

All of Ashlar's noble families have townhouses in High City used when family members visit the city for business (or pleasure). Such places are permanently staffed by trusted servants and a small garrison of men-at-arms to discourage theft, vandalism and the like.

NOTABLE HIGH CITY LOCATIONS

G2 River Gate: These two towers oversee all river traffic.

G4 Duke's Gate: Only those travelling northwards pass through the least-used of Languard's gates.

H1 Castle Languard: Family Nenonen's seat, Castle Languard, is the safest place in all Ashlar.

H2 High Market: Those with a taste for the finer things in life come to High Market.

H3 Urmas Aalto's House: The aged, cantankerous sage Urmas Aalto—perhaps Ashlar's greatest authority on Gloamhold—dwells here.

H4 The Dreaming Spires: Ashlar's centre of learning and education, the library here is only matched by that held at the Black Tower.

H5 Anku Sennra's Fine Gemstones: Offering the finest gemstones, this shop has a surprising, nefarious connection with Low City.

H6 High Bank: One of the best-protected buildings in Languard, many nobles keep their coin wealth here.

H7 Miya's Stable: This stable caters to the well-to-do visitors who have "strange" or "atypical" steeds or pets to stable.

H8 Kilpikonna's Fine Baked Goods: This bakery of renown is where the assassin Ohto Paivanen plies his trade.

H9 Dragonheart Tavern: A favourite among nobles for its wide and ever-changing menu, this tavern is always busy.

H10 Old Mother Grumm's: Here can be found for sale tasty pastries of all descriptions...and magical potions.

H11 Needle's Poise: The finely tailored clothes crafted here are the best in Languard.

H12 The Emerald Medusa: A popular eatery, the Emerald Medusa was once the *Medusa*, an oceangoing caravel that is now permanently moored in High City.

H13 Pharran's Shroud: This high-end brothel is famed for its decadent—and expensive—pleasures.

H14 The Ruby Plate: This open-air eatery is famed for its weird, but not always wonderful, food.

H15 The Screaming Halls: Riddling the ground beneath a grand house of fine aspect, the so-called Screaming Halls is Languard's insane asylum. The Screaming Halls is not its real name, but its proper moniker—the House of the Clouded Mind—is only used by those who have consigned a friend or family member to its care.

H16 Shrine of the Underfolk: Buried in a network of natural caves under High City, this is the only church in Languard dedicated to the dwarven gods.

H17 The Low Shard: Set around a shard of unidentifiable rock, this large chamber is a popular meeting place for merchants engaged in discrete business, courting couples and others desirous of privacy.

H18 The Dark Market: The gloom of this subterranean market conceals many stalls offering esoteric, hard-to-find items, including dwarven crafted weapons, strange drugs and more.

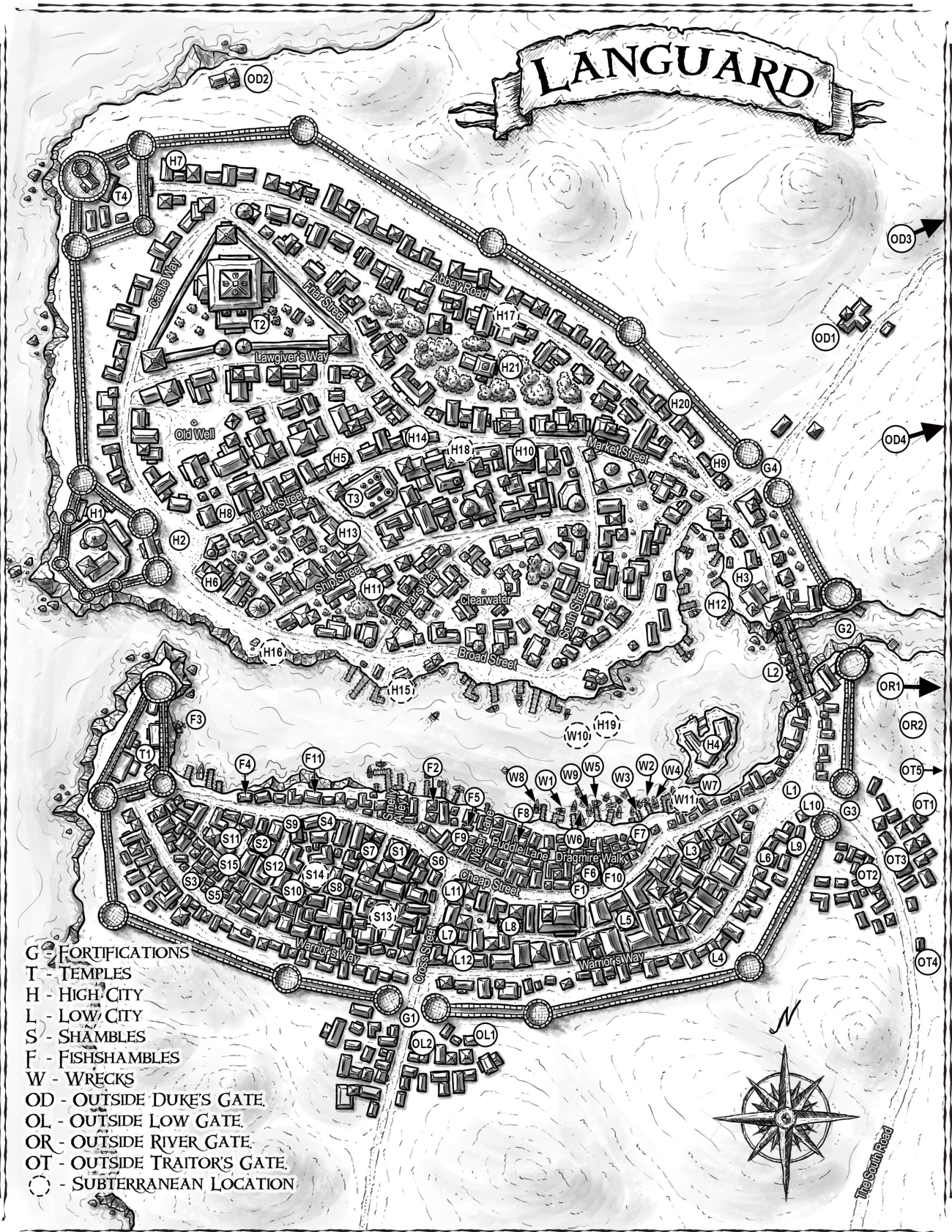
H19 Tunnel of Shades: This mostly forgotten, partially flooded tunnel runs under the Svart. Smugglers of the foulest sort lurk therein.

H20 Chapel of the Maiden of Death: Abandoned church dedicated to Tuonetar and the Knights of the Black Swan.

H21 Tenhunen Mansion: This once opulent, now abandoned, mansion was home to the master vampire Kaarlo Tenhunen. Terrible stories hang over the place, and it has stood empty for over a century.

T2 The Father's Hall: This huge and impressive cathedral is the centre of Conn's worship in Ashlar. Extensive catacombs lie under the cathedral.

T3 The Great Forge: A clamour of noise and smoke perpetually rises from Abarin's temple-forge.



T4 Watcher's Spire: Darlen's followers dwell in this heavily fortified temple.

HIGH CITY'S SEWER

High City's sewers predominantly run through a series of natural caves and caverns, but in many places, these passageways have been worked to improve the flow of waste south to the Svart. Several subterranean streams and rivers draining from the surrounding area intersect with the sewers, and their water flow helps to keep the sewers "moving".

Short sections of narrow, constructed sewer tunnels link High City's houses and buildings to the sewer's main arteries. Thus, access to the sewers is tightly controlled as the tunnels link to the cellars and basements of many of the city's most important buildings.

DARK WARDENS

The duke maintains a force of 40 or so individuals charged with maintaining and patrolling the sewers. Unsurprisingly, dwarves are well represented among this force, as are half-orcs—prized for their ability to see in pitch darkness. Separate from the city watch, the Dark Wardens report directly to Chancellor Marja Pasanen (location H1). The duke pays for the Dark Wardens by levying an extra tax on High City's residents. This is not a popular tax—some call it the Shit Tax.

THE LOW CITY

The name given to the bulk of Languard sprawling south of the Svart, the Low City is home to most of the city's populace. (Some use the name "Low City" in a derogatory fashion to refer to everything south of the Svart.) The Low City is named both for its position below the High City and for the low-born status of the folk dwelling therein.

NOTABLE LOW CITY LOCATIONS

G1 Low Gate: Low Gate is always busy, choked with many carts piled high with trade goods flowing into and out of the city.

G3 Traitor's Gate: "Decorated" with the remains of traitors to the crown, Traitor's Gate is well named.

L1 Low Market: A bustling market fills this muddy space.

L2 Vonya's Span: Of dwarven craft—and reputedly haunted—Vonya's Span is the only bridge spanning the Svart.

L3 The Scythe: The one-legged Arvo Outila runs this drinking den, which is famed for its music.

L4 Arlo's Stones: Sullen and consumed with jealousy and anger against anyone better off than himself the jeweller Arlo Itkonen is a sycophant and frustrated social climber.

L5 The Mixing Pot: Hidden in the lower basement of a nameless tenement, here rich brews are shared in merry (but odd) company. In this drinking den, social class and wealth are irrelevant.

L6 The Orc's Head: Notorious throughout the duchy as the haunt of adventurers preparing to dare Gloamhold's depths, the Orc's Head is a place of tall tales and hard drinking. Decent folk rarely venture inside.

L7 Laukkanen's Collectors: Raimo Laukkanen is ostensibly a dealer in manure—his four carts trundle about Languard day and night collecting the leavings of horses, residents' night soil and other foul things. Not all as it first seems—Raimo is also a prolific and skilled fence and smuggler with extensive links to the Shadow Masks.

L8 Marja's House of Sighs: Famed through the city—and also known as the Moaning Halls—for the pleasures to be had therein, Marja's House of Sighs is a popular destination for those seeking respite from their troubles.

L9 Hannu's House of Healing: Location trumps reputation, particularly when most clients are visitors to the city. Hannu's House of Healing is one of the first buildings inside the Traitor's Gate, and it advertises well.

L10 The Last Chance: In sight of the corpses swinging from Traitor's Gate crouches a tavern with a deep, shadowy porch furnished with scarred tables and a sign bearing a grinning skull with a die between its teeth.

L11 Sentinel Apartments: A series of small, semi-uniform houses line a small cobblestone street that leads to a tall tenement building.

L12 The White Tower: Here dwell the Esoteric Fellowship—a rival wizards' guild to the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus; most of its members have little magical skill or talent.

T1 Fane of the Waves Eternal: Here, Serat's worshippers commune with the ocean's eternal glory.

THE SHAMBLES

Lying between Cheap Street and Low Gate, the Shambles is a place of narrow, twisting alleyways, tottering tenement buildings and cloying desperation. Here dwell Languard's poor in cramped, unsanitary conditions.

Most of the Shambles' dilapidated buildings are of shoddy wooden construction. Typically, three—or sometimes four—stories high, they cluster together; upper levels jut out over the alleys below, giving the whole district the aspect of a gigantic sunken maze. The streets are nothing more than packed, worn earth that turns to slippery mud during heavy rainfall. To the north, Cheap Street divides the Shambles from the Fishshambles.

NOTABLE SHAMBLES LOCATIONS

S1 Raisa's Curios: Idle adventurers often browse the eclectic range of goods in this large, packed shop.

S2 The Bloody Eagle: A seemingly destitute merchant runs this tavern, which is a Shadow Mask front.

S3 Veera's Corpsewear: While most Low City haberdashers obscure their products' provenance, Veera bothers with no such pretence—her small shop's stock comes straight from corpses.

S4 The Broken Elbow: This rough tavern is famed for its cheap beer, cheaper women and arm wrestling contests.

S5 Kardagg's Discount Emporium: This large shop is where failed adventuring groups come to sell off their unwanted equipment. Many deals can be had here.

- S6 Crier's Corner:** From this dubious vantage point, criers read proclamations, merchants advertise their wares and drunkards rail at the world.
- S7 Kaino's House:** Here in this ramshackle house dwells the ill (or more accurately cursed) scribe Kaino Perspoika.
- S8 Mongrel Alley:** Light barely reaches this dismal alley through the overlapping roofs, and the narrow, rough street feels all the longer for the shadows looming over it. Something terrible lurks on Mongrel Alley.
- S9 The Spinning Coin:** Coin and valuables flow through this aged, unassuming pawnbroker shop, which sells everything from ancient art to newly-forged weaponry.
- S10 The Stone Cauldron:** This infamous tavern is run by the former thief, Havu Rinne, who sells the cheapest alcohol in the city.
- S11 The Rookery:** Crows and ravens perch on this building's crumbling stone overhangs and branches of nearby trees. Here, the druid Irja Lintunen trains her birds.
- S12 Well of Dreams:** Depending on who you ask, this well is a great place to throw away hard-earned coppers or a site where earnest wishes come true.
- S13 Saren the Ear:** This reviled information-gatherer is rumoured to be undead but actually "merely" suffers from a horrible skin-rotting disease.
- S14 The Maze:** Home to the Shadow Masks, the Maze is a confusing mishmash of wood-lined tunnels connecting a multitude of cellars and cisterns.
- S15 Martryn Manor:** Home to Rahvu Rantanen, who seems merely eccentric and reclusive but who is really an evil and sadistic murderer and blackmailer.

THE FISHSHAMBLES

Fishshambles sprawls along the waterfront north of Cheap Street. Here, a tangled, reeking labyrinth of narrow, tenebrous alleys—punctuated by a few wider roads—runs down to the Svart and the rickety wharves and jetties jutting from its southern bank. A few folk maintain totteringly decrepit warehouses hard against the docks; most such locations are used for nefarious activities—chiefly smuggling. At least two are under the Shadow Masks' control.

The folk here are tough, well used to dealing with the vicissitudes of life and Hard Bay's perils. Adventurers seeking a boat and its master brave enough to sail to Gloamhold will likely eventually gravitate to the Fishshambles.

Many of the folk and businesses in the Fishshambles—unsurprisingly—make their living from the sea. Most of the choicest fish is landed in High City—sold to merchants who would never deign to catch their own; the folk dwelling here must make do with the cast-offs and leavings of the wealthier folk across the river.

NOTABLE FISHSHAMBLES LOCATIONS

- F1 The House of Sighs:** Seeking shelter in this almshouse is little better than living on the streets.
- F2 The Drunken Sailor:** A popular dockside tavern.

- F3 Castoffs' Sanctuary:** This wrecked freighter is a sanctuary of sorts for those suffering from the Gloamhold Look—a mark of those who have spent too much time in Gloamhold's benighted, doom-drenched depths.
- F4 Jaakola's Periwinkle Palace:** The Palace is famed for providing healing, narcotics or other diversions harvested from the sea.
- F5 Kingsfail:** This barren, broken chapel once had a kinder name and a happier purpose. Sages once foretold the birth of the "Great King of the World" here but now all is ruin and decay.
- F6 Molley's Bearded Lady:** This much-converted, labyrinthine inn is a good place to hide from debtors or the city watch. Its owner—Mugwort "Molley" Zinthra—regularly dresses as a bearded lady and was once a member of the city watch.
- F7 Ruusu's Rathole:** Though boarded up, this shop—selling spell components of an unwholesome nature—is open for business—at least in mad old Aalto Ruusu's mind.
- F8 Sea's Bounty:** Despite standing at a drunken angle and in outright defiance of its malodorous smell, this tavern is bustling with customers.
- F9 The Five Cuts:** Raucous cries and the stink of blood come from within this large basement drinking den. This fighting den is renowned throughout Ashlar.
- F10 The Arches Bazaar:** Set under a large building's wooden supports, this small market offers strange fruit, narcotics and cheap drinks as well as other more eclectic wares and services.
- F11 Sandu's Grog and Grub:** Dark and dingy, yet filled with laughter and the enticing scents of rich, spicy food, Sandu's Grog and Grub is a renowned tavern. Its owner is rumoured to be a retired pirate-adventurer.

THE WRECKS

Where the ramshackle and slimy, sagging wharfs redolent with decay cluster thickly along the Svart's muddy and slick southern bank gather the ferociously independent and inbred Takolen.

A singular air of ruin and decay hangs heavily over the rotting wharves and the festering, stinking boats moored alongside or grounded in the shallow water thick with silt, seaweed and jetsam. Many of the fetid hulks moored alongside the crumbling docks have not put to sea in living memory. In truth, most cannot. Lashed together, the boats form a gallimaufry of homes, warehouses, whorehouses, taverns and other less pleasant businesses. Even the agents of the Shadow Masks dare not work here, but some of Languard's braver—or perhaps more debased—souls do occasionally visit certain of these uniformly foul, unwelcoming businesses.

Perhaps numbering 200 souls, the Takolen are universally considered a surly, rude and violent folk. Rumours of inbreeding, the fate of some who ventured into the Takolen's rotting realm and strange religious practices conspire to keep outsiders at bay. Even among the unsavoury and

debauched Takolen, however, the cult of Dagon—the Shadow Under the Sea—has found little purchase. Still, a few of the more deranged and morally bankrupt individuals have embraced his blasphemous teachings. Hidden deep in the part-flooded hold and bilges of the semi-sunken *Acheon* lurks the centre of this profane cult—the so-called Briny Fane—in the Wrecks.

NOTABLE WRECKS LOCATIONS

W1 Duranki's: The Duranki family will ferry (unwary, too-trusting) adventurers to Gloamhold for a fee.

W2 The Fallen Maid: Here dwells one of Ashlar's pre-eminent assassins.

W3 The Flotsam Pyre: Fop-house, sin-beacon and rum-den, this ramshackle pure comprises a teetering mass of dead ships. Mister Palate—a ghoul—secretly owns the place.

W4 The Cauldron: This curious shipyard comprises a trio of landlocked barges. Here can be had certain foul concoctions useful to sailors. The shipyard specialises in creating secret holds and so on.

W5 Shackle: The infamous Shackle—once the river barge *Redemption*—is one of Languard's most twisted and notorious gambling establishments. A foul fighting pit fills the great barge's hold.

W6 Devil's Bridge Wrecks: A shanty village huddles beneath this ruined arched bridge. Mudgran Ki-Feg, possibly the most repulsive man in Languard, rules this seedy mix of brothels, taverns, shops and fop-houses.

W7 The Briny Fane: The part-flooded, ruinous wreck of the *Acheon* hides a secret temple to ancient, terrible Dagon.

W8 Gulping Lyza: Only the most depraved or uncaring customers visit this mermaid brothel run by the Dagon-worshipping Elisa Lyza.

W9 Last Voyage of the Faithless: The uncrewed *Faithless* ran aground 12 years ago. Now, it is a market where most common goods can be purchased.

W10 The Gape of the Eye: This sunken, bloated ruin hidden deep beneath the Svart's waters is a sahuagin temple devoted to Dagon.

W11 Smuggler's Crux: Hidden beneath the Wrecks, this baffling collection of ever-shifting sodden tunnels is home to a small group of misfits and outcasts dedicated to battling the followers of Father Dagon lurking among the depraved Takolen.

THE HINTERLANDS

Languard dominates a wide peninsula of rich, fertile land separating Hard Bay from the sea; ferocious winter storms often lash the city, as a result. About five miles to the north west lies the Mottled Spire and Gloamhold's doom-drenched halls. Easily visible from the city, the Mottled Spire lurks on the horizon like some gloomy giant of fell mien eternally plotting the city's doom.

The city sprawls across both banks of the Svart River, where it widens before flowing into Hard Bay's turbulent

waters. It stands at the head of the Great South Road, which links it with Ashlar's network of towns and villages.

The surrounding lands are mostly ordered, peaceful and civilised. A disordered patchwork of farms, fields and small homesteads spread south of the city. Huge fields—segmented into scores of smaller plots—abut the Great South Road. Some of these smaller fields grow corn, while others are left fallow to be grazed by cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. In less fertile or low-lying, flood-prone areas, shallow ditches or low earthen walls bound meadows used for common grazing. Some more prosperous farms have a small field enclosed by a stone wall or ditch, bank or hedge; here, animals are brought in the winter months to endure the season's harsh storms.

Small, carefully managed stretches of woodland interspace the patchwork of fields and farms surrounding the city. Within, the peasants collect firewood and nuts, berries and other wild foods. Rarely, bandits lurk in these woods, but it is a lucky or cunning group that lingers for longer than a few weeks or that successfully raids more than a handful of merchant caravans for frequent cavalry patrols ride the road all the way to Wellswood. A fortified ferry and toll station controls traffic over the Tanu, further reducing bandits' ability to operate near Languard.

OUTSIDE DUKE'S GATE NOTABLE LOCATIONS

OD1 Tor's Tannery: The Tor family once served as Foresters to the Nenonens, but their status was reduced to that of mere tradesmen after Jarvi's grandfather was discovered taking bribes from poachers. In reality, the Tor family now serve as the duke's spymasters outside Languard's walls.

OD2 Church of the Brae Waves: At this church dedicated to the Serat, a zealous prophet proclaims a message of repentance and damnation.

OD3 Gallen's Lost Manor: A mere shadow of its former glory, Gallen's Lost Manor sprawls in ruin north of the city walls. Here dwells the last of the Gallens, Haaken Gallen, who seems not to notice the walls crumbling around him.

OD4 The Pungent Grove: The unhinged halfling Tapani tends this stand of large trees and stinking mounds; this is Languard's dump. And much of the city's refuse eventually ends up here.

OUTSIDE RIVER GATE NOTABLE LOCATIONS

OR1 The Mother's Garden: The Mother's Garden is an open-air temple that blends into a riotous garden of uncanny fecundity dedicated to the Mother in her agricultural aspect. It is set around a megalithic double ring at its centre, called the Eye.

OR2 The Twisted Wreath: Criminals were once hung from the boughs of this mighty oak. The tree was split in twain during an execution by a bolt of lightning; most people now consider the place haunted, cursed or both.

OUTSIDE LOW GATE NOTABLE LOCATIONS

OL1 Karvonen's Shaded Shack: A mighty olive tree grows amid the ruined stone shack. The strange and distant Onni Karvonen dwells within.

OL2 The Outside Inn: The Outside Inn offers more than simply food and lodging. Thought of by most as a traveller's inn, few know the elderly barmaid is a streetwise information broker.

OUTSIDE TRAITOR'S GATE NOTABLE LOCATIONS

OT1 Heckler's Hall: Heckler's Hall is part mobile circus, part jester's academy and part rent-a-riot.

OT2 Jokinen Passenger & Freight: Aina Jokinen's boasts she can transport any cargo anywhere within Ashlar. She is famed for her reliability but always needs more trustworthy guards and workers.

OT3 The Reinsman's Rest: This sprawling compound contains a stable, farrier, smithy and so on set around an inn catering mostly to merchants and wagon drivers.

OT4 Acorn's Wayshrine: This single-storey church of Conn features a vandalised statue of an ancient barbarian, or perhaps inhuman, god.

OT5 Redfern Cemetery: This abandoned cemetery lies three miles east of Languard at the end of the so-called, and now overgrown, Dead Road.

THE UNDERLANDS

As above ground, below-proud Languard, the capital of Ashlar, is a city of contrasts.

To the north lies High City, named both for the august status of its residents and because it is set upon a series of high bluffs overlooking Hard Bay and the rest of the city. A confused jumble of natural caves honeycombs the bluffs. When the original settlers discovered this network, they employed it for various uses, including as a nascent sewer network. Over the centuries, work has—sporadically—continued to enlarge and improve the sewers. Now, High City is well served by an extensive sewer network; this is just one of the many reasons why it is a desirable place to live—the stink prevalent in the rest of the city is mostly absent from High City when the wind is right.

Across the Svart, it's a different story.

To the south lies the rest of the city—bustling Low City, the cramped Shambles, malodorous Fishshambles and slowly sinking Wrecks. The lower part of the city has no formal sewer network. No natural cave system of note runs under this portion of Languard, and successive dukes have concluded that building a sewer network for the rest of the city was far too expensive. Thus, the city's poor must carry their waste to the river or pay others to dispose of it. Consequently, the city's southern portion is much dirtier and unhealthy than High City.



NOTABLE LOCALES AT A GLANCE

The table below presents an alphabetical summary of Languard's notable locales. Subsequent tables present a breakdown of many of these locations by type. All the tables use these notes:

1. This locale might be of interest to adventurers for one reason or another.
2. Magic items for sale can sometimes be found here.
3. Subterranean locale.
4. Offers healing services.

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F1	The House of Sighs	Almshouse
F2	The Drunken Sailor	Tavern (fisherfolk)
F3	Castoff's Sanctuary	Adventurer's sanctuary ¹
F4	Jaakola's Periwinkle Palace	Shop (healing, narcotics) ⁴
F5	Kingsfail	Ruined chapel
F6	Molley's Bearded Lady	Inn (seedy)
F7	Ruusu's Rathole	Shop (foul spell components) ¹
F8	Sea's Bounty	Tavern (seedy)
F9	The Five Cuts	Tavern and fighting den
F10	The Arches Bazaar	Market (oddities) ^{1,2}
F11	Sandu's Grog and Grub	Tavern (seedy; adventurers, thieves) ¹
G1	Low Gate	City gate
G2	River Gate	City gate
G3	Traitor's Gate	City gate
G4	Duke's Gate	City gate
H1	Castle Languard	Family Nenonen's seat
H2	High Market	Market
H3	Urmas Aalto's House	Sage (Gloomhold) ¹
H4	The Dreaming Spires	University, library ¹
H5	Anku Sennra's Fine Gemstones	Gem merchant
H6	High Bank	Bank
H7	Miya's Stable	Stable (exotic mounts) ¹
H8	Kilpikonna's Fine Baked Goods	Bakery, assassin
H9	Dragonheart Tavern	Tavern (high class)
H10	Old Mother Grumm's	Pastries and potions ^{1,2}
H11	Needle's Poise	Tailor ¹
H12	The Emerald Medusa	Festhall (high class)
H13	Pharran's Shroud	Brothel (high class)
H14	The Ruby Plate	Festhall (high class)
H15	The Screaming Halls	Insane asylum ^{3,4}
H16	Shrine of the Underfolk	Church (dwarf gods) ³

H17	The Low Shard	Meeting place ³
H18	The Dark Market	Market ^{1,3}
H19	Tunnel of Shades	Smugglers' den ³
H20	Chapel of the Maiden of Death	Abandoned church (Tuonetar)
H21	Tenhunen Mansion	Abandoned mansion
L1	Low Market	Market ^{1,2}
L2	Vonya's Span	Bridge (reputedly haunted)
L3	The Scythe	Tavern (music)
L4	Arlo's Stones	Jeweller
L5	The Mixing Pot	Tavern
L6	The Orc's Head	Inn (adventurers) ¹
L7	Laukkanen's Collectors	Dung collectors
L8	Marja's House of Sighs	Brothel
L9	Hannu's House of Healing	Healer ⁴
L10	The Last Chance	Tavern
L11	Sentinel Apartments	Tenement building
L12	The White Tower	Minor wizard's guild ¹
OD1	Tor's Tannery	Tanners (secret Nenonen spymasters)
OD2	Church of the Brae Waves	Church (Serat)
OD3	Gallen's Lost Manor	Mouldering manor
OD4	The Pungent Grove	Dump
OL1	Karvonen's Shaded Shack	Necromancer
OL2	The Outside Inn	Inn, information broker
OR1	The Mother's Garden	Temple (the Mother)
OR2	The Twisted Wreath	Hanging tree (haunted and/or cursed)
OT1	Heckler's Hall	Circus of sorts
OT2	The Outside Inn	Inn, information broker
OT3	The Reinsman's Rest	Inn
OT4	Acorn's Wayshrine	Church (Conn)
OT5	Redfern Cemetery	Abandoned cemetery
S1	Raisa's Curios	Bric-a-brac shop ^{1,2}
S2	The Bloody Eagle	Tavern (thieves)
S3	Veera's Corpsewear	Clothes
S4	The Broken Elbow	Tavern (low class)
S5	Kardagg's Discount Emporium	Cheap adventuring gear ^{1,2}
S6	Crier's Corner	Public announcements
S7	Kaino's House	Scribe (cursed)
S8	Mongrel Alley	Shunned alley
S9	The Spinning Coin	Pawnbroker ¹
S10	The Stone Cauldron	Tavern (low class)
S11	The Rookery	Trained birds
S12	Well of Dreams	Wishing well (thieves)

S13	Saren the Ear	Information broker ^{1, 3}
S14	The Maze	Shadow Mask's den ³
S15	Martryn Manor	Rahvu Rantanen's home
T1	Fane of the Waves Eternal	Temple (Serat) ^{2, 4}
T2	The Father's Hall	Cathedral (Conn) ^{2, 4}
T3	The Great Forge	Church (Abarin) ^{2, 4}
T4	Watcher's Spire	Temple (Darlen) ^{2, 4}
W1	Duranki's	Ferry service
W2	The Fallen Maid	Assassin
W3	The Flotsam Pyre	Fop-house, tavern
W4	The Cauldron	Shipyards
W5	Shackle	Tavern, gambling den, fighting den
W6	Devil's Bridge Wrecks	Ruined bridge, market
W7	The Briny Fane	Temple (secret; Dagon)
W8	Gulping Lyza	Brothel (foul)
W9	Last Voyage of the Faithless	Market
W10	The Gape of the Eye	Temple (secret, sunken; Dagon) ³
W11	Smuggler's Crux	Hidden village ³

NOTABLE LOCALES BY TYPE

These tables present an alphabetical summary of Languard's notable locales broken down by various types.

ADVENTURER'S SERVICES & HANGOUTS

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F3	Castoff's Sanctuary	Adventurer's sanctuary ¹
F10	The Arches Bazaar	Market (oddities) ^{1, 2}
F11	Sandu's Grog and Grub	Tavern (seedy; adventurers, thieves) ¹
H3	Urmas Aalto's House	Sage (Gloomhold) ¹
H4	The Dreaming Spires	University, library ¹
H7	Miya's Stable	Stable (normal and exotic mounts) ¹
H10	Old Mother Grumm's	Pastries and potions ^{1, 2}
H11	Needle's Poise	Tailor ¹
H18	The Dark Market	Market ^{1, 3}
L1	Low Market	Market ^{1, 2}
L6	The Orc's Head	Inn (adventurers) ¹
L12	The White Tower	Minor wizard's guild ¹
S1	Raisa's Curios	Bric-a-brac shop ^{1, 2}
S5	Kardagg's Discount Emporium	Cheap adventuring gear ^{1, 2}
S9	The Spinning Coin	Pawnbroker ¹
S13	Saren the Ear	Information broker ^{1, 3}

ASSASSINS

Locale	NAME	NOTES
H8	Kilpikonna's Fine Baked Goods	Bakery and assassin
W2	The Fallen Maid	Assassin

CATHEDRALS, CHURCHES, & TEMPLES

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F5	Kingsfail	Ruined chapel
H16	Shrine of the Underfolk	Church (dwarf pantheon) ^{3, 4}
H20	Chapel of the Maiden of Death	Abandoned church (Tuonetar)
OD2	Church of the Brae Waves	Church (Serat)
OR1	The Mother's Garden	Temple (the Mother) ^{2, 4}
OT4	Acorn's Wayshrine	Church (Conn)
T1	Fane of the Waves Eternal	Temple (Serat) ^{2, 4}
T2	The Father's Hall	Cathedral (Conn) ^{2, 4}
T3	The Great Forge	Church (Abarin) ^{2, 4}
T4	Watcher's Spire	Temple (Darlen) ^{2, 4}
W7	The Briny Fane	Temple (secret; Dagon)
W10	The Gape of the Eye	Temple (secret, sunken; Dagon) ³

HEALING SERVICES

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F4	Jaakola's Periwinkle Palace	Shop (healing, narcotics) ⁴
H15	The Screaming Halls	Insane asylum ^{3, 4}
H16	Shrine of the Underfolk	Church (dwarf pantheon) ^{3, 4}
L9	Hannu's House of Healing	Healer ⁴
OR1	The Mother's Garden	Temple (the Mother) ^{2, 4}
T1	Fane of the Waves Eternal	Temple (Serat) ^{2, 4}
T2	The Father's Hall	Cathedral (Conn) ^{2, 4}
T3	The Great Forge	Church (Abarin) ^{2, 4}
T4	Watcher's Spire	Temple (Darlen) ^{2, 4}



INNS, TAVERNS & FESTHALLS

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F2	The Drunken Sailor	Tavern (fisherfolk)
F6	Molley's Bearded Lady	Inn (seedy; thieves)
F8	Sea's Bounty	Tavern (seedy)
F9	The Five Cuts	Tavern and fighting den
F11	Sandu's Grog and Grub	Tavern (seedy; adventurers, thieves) ¹
H9	Dragonheart Tavern	Tavern (high class)
H12	The Emerald Medusa	Festhall (high class)
H14	The Ruby Plate	Festhall (high class)
L3	The Scythe	Tavern (music)
L5	The Mixing Pot	Tavern
L6	The Orc's Head	Inn (adventurers) ¹
L10	The Last Chance	Tavern
OL2	The Outside Inn	Inn, information broker
OT3	The Reinsman's Rest	Inn
S2	The Bloody Eagle	Tavern (thieves)
S4	The Broken Elbow	Tavern (low class)
S10	The Stone Cauldron	Tavern (low class)
W3	The Flotsam Pyre	Fop-house, tavern
W5	Shackle	Tavern, gambling den, fighting den

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F1	The House of Sighs	Almshouse
F3	Castoff's Sanctuary	Adventurer's sanctuary
H6	High Bank	Bank
H7	Miya's Stable	Stable (exotic mounts) ¹
H11	Needle's Poise	Tailor
H13	Pharran's Shroud	Brothel (high class)
H15	The Screaming Halls	Insane asylum ^{3, 4}
L8	Marja's House of Sighs	Brothel
L9	Hannu's House of Healing	Healer ⁴
S7	Kaino's House	Scribe (cursed)
S11	The Rookery	Trained birds
S13	Saren the Ear	Information gatherer ^{1, 3}
W4	The Cauldron	Shipyard
W8	Gulping Lyza	Brothel (foul)

SAGES & LIBRARIES

Locale	NAME	NOTES
H3	Urmas Aalto's House	Sage (Gloamhold) ¹
H4	The Dreaming Spires	University, library ¹
L12	The White Tower	Minor wizard's guild ¹

SHOPS & MARKETS

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F4	Jaakola's Periwinkle Palace	Shop (healing, narcotics)
F7	Ruusu's Rathole	Shop (foul spell components)
F10	The Arches Bazaar	Market (oddities) ¹
H2	High Market	Market
H5	Anku Sennra's Fine Gemstones	Gem merchant
H8	Kilpikonna's Fine Baked Goods	Bakery, assassin
H10	Old Mother Grumm's	Pastries and potions ^{1, 2}
H18	The Dark Market	Market ^{1, 3}
L1	Low Market	Market ^{1, 2 (?)}
L4	Arlo's Stones	Jeweller
S1	Raisa's Curios	Bric-a-brac shop ^{1, 2}
S3	Veera's Corpsewear	Clothes
S5	Kardagg's Discount Emporium	Cheap adventuring gear ^{1, 2}
S9	The Spinning Coin	Pawnbroker ¹
W6	Devil's Bridge Wrecks	Ruined bridge, market
W9	Last Voyage of the Faithless	Market

THIEVES & SMUGGLERS

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F6	Molley's Bearded Lady	Inn (seedy; thieves)
F11	Sandu's Grog and Grub	Tavern (seedy; adventurers, thieves)
H5	Anku Sennra's Fine Gemstones	Gem merchant
H19	Tunnel of Shades	Smugglers' den ³
L7	Laukkanen's Collectors	Dung collectors
OL2	The Outside Inn	Inn, information broker
S12	Well of Dreams	Wishing well (thieves)
S14	The Maze	Shadow Mask's den ³
S15	Martryn Manor	Rahvu Rantanen's home

WIZARDS AND THEIR ILK

Locale	NAME	NOTES
F7	Ruusu's Rathole	Shop (foul spell components)
H3	Urmas Aalto's House	Sage (Gloamhold) ¹
H4	The Dreaming Spires	University, library ¹
L12	The White Tower	Minor wizard's guild ¹
OL1	Karvonen's Shaded Shack	Necromancer
S7	Kaino's House	Scribe (cursed)

MINOR LOCALES

Countless small shops, taverns, inns, artisans' workshops, homes and other places of momentary interest lie within and without Languard's walls. Some such minor locales have been a local fixture for generations, while others come and go in but a year. Most locales of minor interest will play little or no part in your campaign.

If the characters suddenly have a burning desire to buy some gear, sell some minor pieces of loot, learn a rumour or two, slake their thirst and so on, they can do so. You can easily gloss over such interactions, or you can design a minor locale of your own. If you do so, be sure to mark the location on your campaign map in case the characters should return there in the future.

Artisan's Workshop: Leatherworkers, cobblers, smiths, bakers and more all carry out their craft in the city. Virtually every craft is represented somewhere in the city. Artisans in High City cater to wealthy folk; their prices are higher, and the quality of the goods is correspondingly better. Characters seeking to sell high-quality items or find artisans capable of creating items suitable for enchantment would be well served by focusing their attention on High City.

Chapels & Shrines: Languard is well endowed with impressive places of worship—the great churches of the city dominate both the skyline and religions fabric of the city.

However, countless small shrines and chapels dot the city. Most are small neighbourhood affairs dedicated to Conn, Serat or (rarely) Darlen and have few worshippers; many may not even have a priest capable of casting spells. Other shrines may be dedicated to a local hero or a minor deity with but a few worshippers in the city.

Dwellings: A huge variety of dwellings stand within the city. Buildings in High City are larger, in better repair, and often built with stone, while those in Low City are small, often of wood construction and sometimes in poor states of repair. Some buildings are ruined—perhaps the result of a fire, general dilapidation, a curse or terrible rumours about what events occurred within.

Inns & Taverns: Innumerable inns, taverns, alehouses, drinking dens, and so on are scattered about the city. Such establishments are good places to meet a patron, gather rumours, spy on other adventuring bands and so on. Many such establishments have flavoursome names such as the Boar's Head, the Owl and Weasel, the Dungeon and the Dragon and so on.

Shops and Markets: Most shops and market stalls in Languard sell mundane items of little or no interest to adventurers. Others sell weapons, armour and expedition gear suitable for dangerous pursuits. Small street markets dot Low City, and many vendors sell their wares and offer refreshments from hand carts and barrows they push through the throng.



DEMOGRAPHICS OF LANGUARD

Although Languard is a civilised city, it is a city on the edge of civilisation, and the Duchy of Ashlar is a lonely point of light amid the howling darkness of the trackless, monster-infested wilderlands. Evil and peril hem the duchy in on all sides, and its protectors must be ever-vigilant to keep it at bay.

Given Ashlar's precarious position, it is unsurprising, through dint of their adventuring, military service, larcenous doings, piety, or eldritch research, that more folk than normal are exceptional in one way or another. Perhaps 15% of the population is exceptional in some way or another. Overwhelmingly, these folk are warriors—brave, doughty souls handy with a blade; such skills are often called upon on the frontier, after all. Of the remaining folk, thieves are most common, for where there is wealth, there is opportunity, and Languard hosts the duchy's greatest concentration of wealth.

True workers of arcane magic and pious folk able to call upon the blessings of their patron are the rarest. Most workers of divine magic belong to one of the city's main religions—Abarin, Conn, Darlen and Serat—and dwell in one of the city's great churches. Minor, less popular religions boast a few actual spellcasters, but such individuals can normally cast only the most simplest spells. Those able to control arcane sources of power mostly belong to the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus or are visitors to the duchy. Outside the Black Tower, Languard hosts the greatest concentration of arcane might in the duchy. If one seeks spellcasting services or arcane knowledge, Languard is a good place to find such.

The Duchy of Ashlar is overwhelmingly a human state, and humans make up the vast bulk of the population. Languard hews to this trend; perhaps 80% of the population is human, and Common is the dominant language. Since its inception, Languard has been ruled by half-elves, and thus, Elvish is the language of the nobility and the courts. Folk wishing to move in high society—wealthy merchants looking for a noble partner, a skilled artisan seeking a rich patron or adventurers hoping to rub shoulders with Ashlar's great and good—all speak Elvish. Scholars and those who remember, or yet practice, the old ways speak Old Common—the dialect spoken by the humans indigenous to Ashlar before the coming of the Nenonens and the resultant influx of settlers.

Of the other common races, half-elves, half-orcs and dwarves are well represented; true elves and halflings are less commonly seen, and gnomes are a relative rarity. The languages of all these folk can be heard on Languard's streets and in its taverns.

More exotic races are rare sights in Languard—and indeed Ashlar as a whole; individuals of exotic heritage are notable and inevitably draw stares, crowds of curious children, and atypical treatment by the commonfolk. Such attention can be a boon or a curse, depending on the individual and their needs.

DAILY LIFE

Although it is a city—and Ashlar's largest and richest settlement—living in Languard still feels like living on the frontier. Although the city has not been attacked or overtly threatened in living memory, its proximity to Gloamhold's doom-drenched halls throws a pall over its alleys and thoroughfares. The high proportion of adventurers, retired adventurers and others well-used to magic and/or violence means the city is rarely truly peaceful.

Winter storms all but cut off the city and the duchy from the outside world. With travel by sea too perilous, the populace turns inwards. Little of import or excitement is accomplished over the winter months.

As the days grow warmer, however, the city comes alive. Merchant ships from distant lands arrive to offload their cargo, major building works begin (or resume), and folks' general mood rises. The winter months can be dull, grey and depressing, but summer in Languard and its environs is a time of hope. Farmers tend their fields in the city's hinterlands, and a steady stream of carts trundles into the city from all over the duchy to feed Languard's voracious hunger for all manner of things—foodstuffs, building materials and the thousands of other things that make civilised life possible and comfortable.

FAITH & RELIGION

Languard's populace is a religious bunch. Lurking evils and terrible perils ever-hover about the city, and its folk seek divine protection to both keep them safe and to ease life's daily hardships.

All of humanity's major and minor faiths have adherents in the city. Some powers—notably Abarin, Conn, Darlen and Serat—have particular prominence in the city's religious and secular life, while the Mother enjoys much worship in the city's hinterland. These faiths dominate the city's religious landscape, while their great churches and cathedrals dominate its skyline.

Other shrines and local churches are scattered throughout the city, but these—except in High City—are often small affairs devoid of pomp and majesty. Few such churches are overseen by an actual spellcasting priest—most are staffed by a few particularly devout lay members. Thus, for adventurers, little succour can be found therein.

Evil also lurks in Ashlar's folk, and such black-hearted individuals invariably worship forbidden and blasphemous powers. Braal—eternal enemy of Darlen—is perhaps the most widely worshipped of such powers, but certain ancient demons—notably Dagon with the Takolen—have found a purchase amid Languard's populace. Other lesser-known, but equally foul and terrible powers worshipped in Languard by mad or depraved individuals include Orcus, the Charnel One and Bibeldoop, the Amorphous One.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

In Ashlar, Languard is an unrivalled place for commerce and opportunity where fortunes can be made and lost. Only in Languard can true wealth be found, and in Languard, much—luxuries, contraband and pleasures—is available that would be impossible to find elsewhere in the duchy.

Daily life for Languard's great unwashed centres around the Low Market (location L1) and the sea. A great, wide-open space of mud and sparse, worn grass, the marketplace hosts weekly markets. Then, small stalls and tents crowd the place as merchants and tradesmen from the nearby settlements, as well as visiting merchants and itinerant pedlars, flock here to sell their wares.

THE SEA

Much of Languard's prosperity comes from the sea. Except during the long, dark winter months, Languard's docks are thick with visiting merchantmen come to trade. In many ways, Hard Bay's daily tides are like the blood coursing through Languard's stinking body. Scores of fishing vessels set sail on the ebb tide and return only when Hard Bay's turbulent waters once again flow towards the land. Despite the risks inherent in fishing Hard Bay's turbulent waters, catches are always plentiful; the waters around Languard ever-teeming with fish. Much of the food consumed in Languard—particularly by the poor and lower middle classes—comes from the sea. The choicest catches go to the rich folk in High City; the leavings are sold in Fishshamble's stinking shops.

Languard has but a small navy—just three heavily armed caravels—and thus pirate and smuggling activity are a perennial problem for the duke and his officers. Family Nenonen has destroyed all permanent pirate bases in Hard Bay—the village of the same name was the last such place to fall—but pirates sailing from distant Deksport yet prey on merchant ships as they approach Hard Bay from the open sea. Smugglers also dwell in Rivengate's lower, more accessible reaches, and the duke sometimes underwrites expeditions—using privateers and mercenaries—to stymie their nefarious activities.

THE HINTERLANDS

A wide belt of farmland extends outwards from the city. It extends furthest along the Great South Road, but farms and farmsteads reach into the foothills of the Ochels, where hardy shepherds tend their flocks and keep them safe from predators (both human and animal). The surrounding farms supply the city with all manner of produce—fruit, vegetables, grains, meat and dairy products, along with wool, cowhides and coppiced wood and charcoal for fuel.

SERVICES

A vast array of mundane services are available in Languard. The chances are that if it cannot be found in Languard, it cannot be found in Ashlar. Here are gathered most of the duchy's best artisans and sages, along with most of the

duchy's most puissant spellcasters. The best-stocked shops, markets, and merchants with contacts throughout the known world also congregate here. And, if all else fails, Languard is home to the duchy's most daring and skilled thieves.

For the wealthy, Languard is a playground in which any number of folk will meet a wealthy patron's desires if they are given enough gold.

Similarly, the city hosts innumerable alehouses, taverns, inns and other locales offer many pleasant and diverting ways to pass the time.

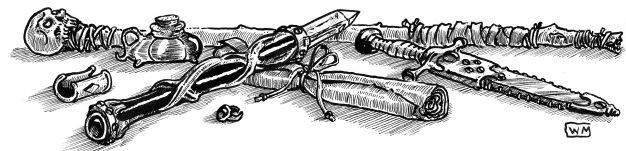
Alchemical Gear: Several alchemists dwell in the city and carry out their experiments and tinkering; most are affiliated with the clergy at the Great Forge (location T3). Thus some items of alchemical craft are available for purchase in the city.

Gunpowder and Guns: The secret of gunpowder came to Ashlar in 522 NR, when followers of Abarin at the Great Forge (location T3) learnt of gunpowder and begun building their first cannon. Several large cannons now perch atop Castle Languard's (location H1) battlements and ward the city's seaward approaches. In Ashlar, the development of more portable gunpowder weapons, though, is in its early stages, and such items are not readily available.

Magic Gear: Although Languard has no dedicated magic shops, wondrous items are regularly bought and sold in the city. Some adventurers sell their items privately, letting word of their offering percolate through the adventuring community. Others might hawk their wares to fellow adventurers they encounter—perhaps in the Orc's Head (location L6) or other places frequented by their ilk. Still other items are uncovered by accident in Low Market (location L1) or a bric-a-brac shop such as Raisa's Curios (location S1). Other locations—particularly Languard's main temples—also offer minor magic items for sale on occasion.

Mundane Gear: Almost anything listed on the normal equipment lists is available in Languard. Special weapons—for example, silvered arrows—are likely available but may take a bit of effort to locate. Similarly, all sorts of armour can be had in Languard, although those purchasing plate mail and the like must pay to have their purchase modified and adjusted to fit their form.

Spellcasting Services: All of Languard's major temples offer spellcasting services for believers and nonbelievers (although members of their congregation often get preferential treatment and, perhaps, even a discount). Thus, getting access to low-level healing spells and the like is a relatively trivial affair for wealthy adventurers. Spellcasters that can return the dead to life, however, are vanishingly rare in the city (and the duchy as a whole). Under a half-dozen such individuals are thought to dwell in all Ashlar, and such folk can—and do—charge a premium for their services.



THE LANGUARDIAN DAILY DIET

Over 7,000 souls call Languard their home; visitors further swell this number, and it is no surprise that the city seems to some like an insatiable beast, gobbling up everything thrust into its gaping maw. A steady stream of carts laden with sacks of grain, vegetables and cages filled with chickens and the like trundles into the city daily along with cows, sheep and pigs, all destined for the city's slaughterhouses.

The poor, of course, eat worst while the rich enjoy a much finer and more varied diet. Fish, unsurprisingly, comprise a large part of the average Languardian's diet. The poor make do with thin fish stew while the rich consume fresh-cooked fish pies, smoked fish and other delicacies. While the rich can also afford lamb, chicken, venison and other more exotic meats, those of lesser means must make do with vegetable potage and the like. As always, the quality varies wildly. All must eat bread, and many bakers ply their craft in the city. The city's water sources are often of questionable purity, so many folk drink weak (or small) beer instead; many taverns and families brew their own while small brewing operations service the remainder. Wine, mostly imported, is only drunk by the wealthy.

TAXES & TITHES IN LANGUARD

Languard's residents are subject to many taxes and tariffs. Most are no consequence to adventurers who do not own property in the city. Adventurers, however, will likely pay some or all of those listed below:

- **Cargo Tax (1%):** Those entering Languard with more than their personal possessions—trade goods, loot and so on—pay this tariff. The tariff is equal to 1% of the value of the goods brought into the city.
- **Gate Tax (1 cp):** Payable by everyone except fisherfolk and those directly serving the duke entering the city, whether by land or sea.
- **Horse Tax (1 sp):** Levied on every mount (horse, donkey and so on) brought into the city, regardless of its size. This tax is also levied on exotic animals brought into the city.
- **Sword Tax (3 gp):** Payable when an individual enters the city bearing arms. In this context, "arms" comprises any weapon longer than a dagger (except quarterstaves or any weapon such as a labourer's scythe, a smith's hammer and so on). This tax is a flat rate and is not levied per weapon.

It is customary for residents and visitors to make a donation to their church's coffers after the weekly service.

City residents pay property taxes equal to 10% of their total worth. Many make strenuous efforts to avoid or reduce their payment, and tax avoidance is a perennial problem for the duke and his agents.

MAJOR FESTIVALS & FAIRS

The populace celebrates many festivals, both major and minor. Some are secular—celebrated by all—while others are only sacred to one faith or another. Major celebrations and events, presented in yearly chronological order, included:

EXECUTION DAY (EVERY MONTH ON THE 28TH)

Held on the last Freeday of every month Execution Day is exactly what it sounds like. On Execution Day, the normal business of Low Market (location L1) is put aside. On this day, Languard executes those guilty of a wide range of crimes (see "Law & Order"). Justice is brutal, swift and final in Ashlar. The populace views execution day as a public holiday, and hundreds converge on Low Market to witness the prisoners' final moments—pedlars sell their wares, beggars beg for coin, and an almost carnival-like atmosphere fills the air.

STORMS' END (DATE VARIES)

Celebrated when the worst of the winter storms have abated (normally sometime in early Nithui), the exact date of Storms' End is at the whim of Taneli Eronen, Serat's Stormlord. (However, an early Storms' End is universally seen as a good omen for the year.) The festival occurs on the open water and comprises a great flotilla of fishing vessels and other small craft setting sail into Hard Bay to release offerings into the water for good weather and catches for the rest of the year.

FOUNDER'S DAY (ARDUCHIR 7TH)

Founder's Day, the 7th day of Arduchir, commemorates the day Arndul Nenonen, first Duke of Ashlar, came ashore and established a camp on the headland upon which Languard now stands.

On this day, the duke and his household process through the streets to the commoners' acclaim. Family Nenonen also provides a feast for the city's commoners at High Market, to which all are invited. It is a day of great celebration and game-playing. The revels go on late into the night.

In anticipation of Founder's Day many people travel to the city; consequently, finding lodgings in the city around this time can be all but impossible.

MIDSUMMER (GALAER 14TH)

The summer solstice, the 14th day of Galaer, is a day of celebration for all, but it is of particular significance to those who venerate the Mother. The Mother's Garden (location OR1) sees a great influx of worshippers at the summer solstice; those who dwell outside the city, farmers, shepherds and the like also mark this day, as do those who yet cling to the Old Ways. It is customary to wish folk you know a "Midsummer's Blessing" on this day.

SUMMER FAIR (NORITH 8TH - 21ST)

Languard's Summer Fair is the greatest in all Ashlar. The fair runs for two weeks from Norith 8th to the 21st, and innumerable traders, merchants, entertainers and visitors make their way to the city to enjoy its unrivalled array of goods and entertainments. During the fair, there is barely any room in the city's boarding houses and inns as the city's population swells dramatically.

In the weeks leading up to the fair, merchant vessels hailing from many far-off places cram into the Svart's estuary. Visiting merchants bring luxuries—fine cloth, wine, furs and so on—and curiosities—exotic animals (some domesticated and some wild), strange peoples, travelling freak shows and more—not normally seen in the duchy.

The fair has a seemingly endless array of stalls, selling an eclectic range of everything from pots and pans to wool to spices to exotic pets. These stalls are organised into "streets" often named after the craft or trade of the stalls to make navigation through the fair easier. Thus, the market has Cheese Street, Iron Street and so on.

Over its two weeks, the fair also hosts tournaments, competitions and exhibitions, circuses, dancing, freak shows, travelling troupes of entertainers and, of course, serious drinking. Minstrels, jugglers, dancers, poets, actors, fire-breathers, and more descend on the fair to entertain the masses, earn coin and gain renown. Some inventors, artists and artisans also bring their latest inventions and creations to show off—perhaps in the hopes of attracting a wealthy patron to fund their ongoing work.

During the fair, merriment abounds, and many romances and marriages have their beginnings at the Summer Fair. Local gossip has it that the birth rate spikes about nine months later, and babies born then are called "Fair Babes".

THE BLOOD MOON

Every year, on the 14th of Narberon (the eleventh month of the year and the last month of autumn), the moon bleeds, heralding the beginning of winter and the time of year when evil is in the ascendancy—or at least that's what Ashlar's superstitious commoners believe.

Even the wisest of sages do not know why the moon takes on its mottled blood-red hue every year in Narberon, but many folk—both human and nonhuman alike—take it as a dire warning of the evil that will creep into the world during the dark, cold winter to come.

Peasants light great bonfires on the night of the Blood Moon to drive away evil spirits. This practice is forbidden within the city (except in Low Market [location L1] and High Market [location H2], where Darlen's priests oversee proceedings). Thus, some groups light communal bonfires outside the city walls. Ashlar's priests are particularly vigilant for rumours of demonic possessions and haunting at this time of the year and take reports of such events and occurrences far more seriously than normal.

Many dark priesthoods and sects hold the Blood Moon as a sacred night to be marked by sacrifices and certain other debauched practices. Reports of missing people often increase in the weeks leading up to the Blood Moon. Necromancers and demonologists also view the night as a propitious time to perform their own vile rituals.

DARKNESS RISING (GRITHEREON 14TH)

On the shortest day of the year, the 14th of Grithereon—the winter solstice—Languardians light candles and place them in their windows to ward away the coming winter darkness, and fires are kept burning bright through the night. On this day, evil's influence is seen to be strongest over the world, and it is a night of wicked deeds and foul doings.

Those able to seek out life and entertainment on such nights to keep evil thoughts at bay. The wealthy often give fabulous parties full of light while the poor congregate in each other's homes or gravitate to the city's taverns to drink away the darkness.



LAW & ORDER

Duke Armas Nenonen, through his elected officials and the city watch, seeks to hold Languard in an iron grip. A certain amount of low-level crime is—of course—inevitable, and the Shadow Masks continue to operate in the city, something which greatly vexes the duke. However, despite his best efforts, lawlessness—particularly in the Wrecks, the Shambles and the Fishshambles—endures.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Justice in Ashlar is often brutal, and death is a sentence levied for a wide range of offences. Prison terms are virtually unheard of; criminals are either fined, forced to endure physical punishments—branding or mutilation—or are executed. Wealthy or influential criminals may be able to avoid the death sentence, but a ruinous fine and exile are the best such an individual can hope for. Those caught and convicted of a crime in Ashlar's capital can expect little in the way of leniency or mercy.

Of course, some parts of the city are more vigorously patrolled by the watch than others. High City—with its concentration of wealth and power—is the safest part of the city; here, watch patrols are common, and crime is dealt with quickly and decisively. The watch is also active in Low City, but patrols in the Fishshambles and Shambles are less frequent and mostly for show. The watch rarely, if ever, enters the Wrecks, and when it does so, priests from either the Father's Hall (location T2) or the Watcher's Spire (location T4) accompany the patrol.

THE COURTS

Conn is the god of law and order. His teachings bind the people of Ashlar together, and his clergy are, consequently, the most powerful in the duchy. Conn's clergy serve as judges who oversee Ashlar's law courts, and thus, they are widely reviled by near-do-wells, thieves and assassins alike.

Languard's courts stand in the Father's Hall (location T2), and it is here that the vast majority of cases are heard. Only the most severe cases—those involving high treason, the security of the duchy, crimes against the duke and his family or those perpetrated by a noble—are dealt with by the duke and his advisors; such cases are heard in Castle Languard (location H1).

Those accused of a crime who are wealthy enough can hire a lawyer (from the Guild of Scriveners) to investigate and argue their case. Such a development can delay a trial for some considerable time as lawyers are given wide discretion to investigate thoroughly; some wealthy folk have thus avoided trial (and punishment) for years.

Ashlar's legal code is broadly divided into three categories of offences:

- **Minor:** Minor offences include theft (where the value of items stolen is less than 1 gp) and various public order offences, such as public drunkenness, failure to control an animal in the city limits, causing a public nuisance, minor property damage, minor vandalism and so on. None of these crimes are punishable by death.
- **Moderate:** Moderate crimes include theft and property damage of up to 100 gp value, tax evasion, smuggling, major property damage, fighting in a public place, assault, vandalism, bribery of a ducal official and so on. These crimes are usually punishable by fine or service, although repeat offenders may also be mutilated as a warning and example to others.
- **Major:** Major crimes include murder, kidnap, arson, treason, sedition, worship of a forbidden power (any demon lord, Braal and other evil deities), keeping slaves, tomb-robbing and so on. All major crimes are punishable by death.

(The crimes listed above are not an exhaustive list of Ashlar's laws but provide a broad outline of Ashlar's legal system.)

After conviction, punishment is swift. Fines must be paid before the convicted is released, while those sentenced to death are returned to the dungeons below Castle Languard to await the next Execution Day.

Convictions may be appealed if the judge allows it or if the accused pays a special supplement to compensate the court for reviewing a case at a later date.

THE SENTENCES

Crimes in Ashlar are punishable in five basic ways; these appear below in descending order of severity.

1. **Execution:** The nature of the crime determines the method of execution; some, such as sawing, breaking on the wheel, being boiled alive or being hung, drawn and quartered—are particularly feared.
2. **Exile:** Wealthy folk convicted of a major crime can sometimes—at the court's discretion—pay a ruinous fine to commute their sentence to permanent exile. After paying their fine, such folk have one month to put their affairs in order before they must leave Ashlar; if they return to the duchy, their original sentence is reinstated, and only the duke can commute it.
3. **Mutilation:** The nature of the crime determines the method of mutilation. For example, thieves lose a hand, those guilty of seditious gossip have their tongues cut out and so on.
4. **Fine:** The levy of fines is an important source of revenue for the duke and his officials. Thus, fines are rarely reasonable and are at the judge's discretion. Some judges take into account the criminal's circumstances,

while others do not. Those who cannot pay their fine must instead perform service for the duchy.

5. **Service:** Criminals unable or unwilling to pay a fine must perform services for the duchy until they have paid off their debt. The duchy's needs and the criminal's skills determine the nature of service. For example, a stonemason could be put to work repairing Castle Languard's battlements, a warrior could be enrolled in the duke's naval forces and so on.

Incarceration: Incarceration is virtually unheard of in the duchy and only occurs while the accused awaits trial or if a powerful individual wills it. Those incarcerated can improve their lot, and their friends and family can—if they bribe the guards—bring food, drink and other comforts to Castle Languard's dungeons to make their stay more comfortable.

EXECUTIONS

Most of those sentenced to death suffer their fate on the next Execution Day. The manner of execution depends on the crime. The more serious the crime, the more drawn-out the execution. Common forms of execution include:

- **Boiling Alive:** Poisoners, counterfeiters, swindlers and coin forgers are boiled alive. The condemned is lowered into a large water-filled cauldron which is then boiled. Sometimes, oil or tar is substituted for water.
- **Burning:** Those guilty of blasphemy, heretics, necromancers and those caught worshipping "unorthodox" powers are burned at the stake. The bigger the fire, the quicker the death. In a big fire, the victim dies of asphyxia; a small fire results in death by heatstroke or loss of blood.

WEAPONS & ARMOUR IN LANGUARD

Carrying weapons and wearing armour in Languard is legal, with some caveats.

Nobles and their bodyguards can wear and carry whatever armour and weapons they choose wherever they choose. Members of the duke's soldiery and the city watch must obviously wear and carry armour and weapons to carry out their duties and are permitted to wear and carry such while off duty.

For commoners and the like, wearing heavy armour and carrying large weapons in the streets is frowned upon but not illegal. Any weapon larger than a rapier must be peacebound. Characters wandering the streets in heavy armour and carrying heavy weapons are likely to be refused admission to many businesses and other locales. Some establishments—particularly those serving alcohol, such as the city's numerous inns and taverns—may have their own rules about weapons and armour—deadly weapons and alcohol are rarely a good mix.

Inappropriate use of a weapon brings severe penalties.

- **Decapitation:** The quickest, most merciful form of execution is reserved for nobles and the like. Wealthy folk condemned to death can, at the court's discretion, pay to have their sentence commuted to decapitation.
- **Hanged, Drawn and Quartered:** This brutal, drawn-out method of execution is reserved for traitors to the crown. Offenders are drawn behind horses from Castle Languard, hung until nearly dead before being emasculated and their intestines removed and burnt while they are still alive. Their body is then dismembered and decapitated before the remains are displayed on Traitor's Gate (location G3).
- **Hanging:** Hanging is the most common form of punishment used for a wide variety of crimes. The victim can be hung by a rope (around their neck), hook (rammed up under the ribcage) or cage (which results in the slowest, most drawn-out death over three or more days). In all cases, the body is left to rot in plain sight as a warning to others.
- **Sawing:** This tremendously painful and bloody method of execution is used to punish those guilty of witchery (using magical powers to control others), murder, blasphemy and—sometimes—theft. The victim is tied in an inverted X position and then sawn in half, starting at their crotch. Normally, the sawing finishes when the executioner reaches midway into the victim's intestines (who is then left to die). A merciful version of this punishment involves the condemned being sawn in half from hip to hip. This results in almost immediate, although excruciating, death.
- **The Breaking Wheel:** Reserved for hated, reviled or infamous criminals, murderers and bandits, the breaking wheel brings death over the course of a long, pain-filled day (or two if the victim survives to die of dehydration). The condemned is tied to an oversized wagon wheel before having their legs and arms broken with a hammer. They are then hoisted onto a tall pole and left to die. Sometimes, birds feed on the still-living condemned, but often, shock and blood loss kill the criminal. If bribed by friends of the condemned, the executioner breaks the victim's neck before beginning the rest of the punishment.

SPELLCASTING IN LANGUARD

Spellcasting is not illegal in Languard, with several caveats. Using any damaging spell (except in self-defence) or any spell that affects an individual against their will is illegal. Destructive area of affect spells, such as *fireball*, *lightning bolt* and so on are forbidden except in the most extreme circumstances. (Those found guilty of using such spells are heavily fined—the minimum amount being the cost of repairing any damage their spell caused—and will likely suffer additional punishment.)

FACTIONS OF LANGUARD

A few large and powerful organisations—the Worshipful Company of Freetraders, the Shadow Masks, the clergies at the Fane of the Waves Eternal (location T1) and the Father's Hall (location T2), to name but a few—dominate Languard's social fabric. These powerful groups affect the affairs of most citizens to a lesser or greater extent.

But in this bustling capital city of thousands, many other smaller groups work to protect their members and advance their own interests. In Languard, countless small gangs, guilds, neighbour organisations and minor religions work to protect and expand their influence. Some, such as the many small gangs endemic to the Shambles and Fishshambles, work to control a specific part of the city, while others—such as the Guild of Brewers—work to control a particular trade. Still others, such as the holy folk at the Watcher's Spire, concern themselves with loftier goals.

Added to this gallimaufry of competing interests, the duke's many servants work to manage and oversee the city:

- **The City Watch:** The watch struggles to constrain lawlessness throughout much of the city and only enters the dim, tenebrous alleys of the Shambles and Fishshambles in numbers; they almost never set foot in the Wrecks.
- **The Tax Collectors:** Those who ensure the duke receives his due are universally disliked, and their arrival is always unwelcome. Most citizens assume—rightly in some cases—that the agent will keep a little something for themself.
- **The Ducal Navy:** A flotilla of three powerful warships—*Repulse*, *Revenge* and *Retribution*—patrols the nearby waters and inspects visiting merchant ships. (All such vessels carry customs and excise officials to levy the appropriate fees upon the merchants' cargoes.)
- **The Ducal Army:** The duke's standing army is not large and mainly comprises infantry. The duke's forces are concentrated on Languard, but small cavalry patrols range down the Great South Road to keep it bandit-free. In times of need, the duke can call upon the nobility for aid, hire mercenaries or muster the duchy's militia.
- **The Duke's Spies:** The duke's spies creep through the city, ever-watchful for threats to their liege's rule. The duke's spy network is well established, particularly in Languard, and little of import occurs within the city that does not eventually come to their attention.

LESSER GUILDS

Historically, Ashlar's nobles—led by the duke—and the priests have controlled and guided Ashlar. However, a rising merchant class—with its increasing wealth and influence—has begun to challenge the old social order. The Worshipful Company of Freetraders is Ashlar's preeminent guild, but other groups, such as the Stonemasons, Ironmongers, and

Skinner's, are critical to Ashlar's economy and thus enjoy great power and prestige.

Many small guilds protect and regulate their member's interests and practise in Languard. These lesser guilds include the Drapers (wool and cloth merchants), Brewers (ale, beer and cider), Leatherworkers, Bakers, Barbers and Apothecaries, Chandlers (candlemakers), Butchers, Saddlers, Coopers, Weavers, Carpenters, and Scriveners (scribes, notaries and solicitors).

Other guilds are more informal being little more than a group of allied artisans—often local in nature—or merchants specialising in a particular trade. Their power and influence is proportional to the size, wealth and importance of its trade.

Abarin's priesthood, of course, also enjoys considerable influence among artisans, inventors and alchemists. Various rival "guilds" fight over the right to manage and protect Fishshamble's trade; thus, several guilds of fishmongers struggle incessantly with one another for power and influence over Languard's docks.

RELIGIONS & CULTS

Worshippers of scores of deities dwell in Languard and most faiths practise their religion openly in the full light of day.

The most powerful, influential faiths in Languard have raised great halls of worship to venerate their patrons and such buildings—Conn's Father's Hall (location T2), Serat's Fane of the Wave's Eternal (location T1) and Darlen's Watcher's Spire (location T4) loom large over the city's skyline. Artisans, merchants and inventors honour Abarin at the Great Forge (location T3), while those cleaving to the old ways worship their patron at the Mother's Garden (location OR1).

Smaller churches, shrines and temples are scattered throughout the city. Some such locales are small neighbourhood churches attended by fewer than a score of locals, while others are tiny shrines thought holy by one faith or another for some reason or another.

Several sects dedicated to Braal—the Dweller in Shadows—lurk in the city, ceaselessly working to advance their lord's power while stymying that of the hated followers of Darlen—Braal's traditional enemy. Such cults favour dark, hidden places far from the prying eyes of the common folk, and members are secretive types well-versed in hiding in plain sight. Cults devoted to Braal exist in every part of the city wherein dwell the disposed, the bullied and the power-hungry; that is to say, every part of the city. These groups are often small—numbering under a score of adherents—but often count exceptional folk among their numbers.

Other darker, fouler groups—the Dagon-worshipping Takolen of the Wrecks who meet in the filthy Briny Fane hidden in the *Acheon's* part-sunken wreck (location W7) or the sahuagin who gather in the bloated and drowned Gape of the Eye (location W10)—worship forbidden, abhorrent powers. (Almost everyone hates and fears the Takolen and gruesome rumours of the most horrible sort tell of their foul practised and noisome, squalid home.)

IMPORTANT ORGANISATIONS

A few organisations are notable for the power and influence they wield over daily life in the city.

THE CITY WATCH



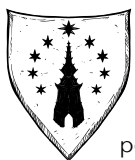
Charged with maintaining law and order throughout the capital, except within Castle Languard's walls, the watch has stations at strategic points throughout the city.

Led by Veli Nikkonen (LN middle-aged male human fighter 5), the watch numbers roughly 180 individuals. Roughly a third of this number are on duty at any given time throughout the city. However, in times of great need, the watch can call upon Castle Languard's garrison for help.

The watch maintains a continuous presence in High City and Low City with daily and nightly patrols. Disturbances—particularly in High City—are quickly investigated. In the Shambles and Fishshambles the watch is a rare sight; here, they only venture in large numbers and with a set purpose. The watch avoids the Wrecks except in times of great need; incursions against the clannish Takolen are always well-planned and often have support from the Watcher's Spire (location T4) or the Father's Hall (location T2), such is the foul reputation of these degenerate folk.

Unless they are specifically expecting trouble, watch patrols normally comprise four warriors. Sometimes, in the Low City, the watch mounts double patrols led by an experienced sergeant. Most of the watch prefer working in the High City; here, the folk are generally more pleasant, violence and robbery are rarer, and the opportunity for bribery—or “the receipt of small considerations” is greater.

THE SAGACIOUS MASTERS OF THE ELDRITCH NEXUS



The pre-eminent wizard's guild extant in Ashlar, the Sagacious Masters of the Eldritch Nexus have their seat in the Black Tower. Their home is a heavily fortified, vitrified tower-complex perched on the coast to the north east of Languard. Common folk rarely visit the Black Tower; many strange rumours swirl about the wizards' home and the mysterious practises conducted therein.

Members of the Nexus also dwell in Dulwich, Dunstone and Languard, where they often serve as magical advisers and sages to all who can afford their services. Most wizards and their ilk belong to the guild or aspire to join, although some neophyte spellcasters have found instruction with independent wizards.

In Languard, several members of the Eldritch Nexus serve the Nenonens directly, acting as advisors on matters eldritch and arcane. Others dwell at the Dreaming Spires, working as teachers and lorekeepers. Both the Master of Tomes (LN old

male human wizard 6) and Mistress of the Spires (NG old female human wizard 9) are members of the order.

Membership of the Eldritch Nexus: For wizards, and other practitioners of the arcane arts, full membership of the order is not automatic. Only those able to master the second rank of spells are eligible for membership; neophyte wizards and the like can only join the order as apprentices and must study under their master until they gain the requisite power.

THE SHADOW MASKS



Languard's pre-eminent thieves' guild, the Shadow Masks, rule the city's underworld from a network of hideouts, safe houses and subterranean dens scattered throughout the Shambles. Led by Taneli Laitnen (LE middle-aged male human thief 9), the Shadow Masks are well-organised and the scourge of the city watch. Other notable members of the Shadow Masks include:

- **Tahlys Azariarn** (CE female half-elf thief 8) is widely acknowledged as the guild's most skilled burglar and deputy guild mistress.
- **Narlen Vuolle** (LE female half-orc fighter 3/thief 2) gladly serves as the Shadow Masks' chief enforcer.
- **Haguk Salonen** (LE male half-orc thief 8) self-styles himself the “Gentleman Explorer” and is known for his expeditions into Gloamhold's outer reaches in search of lost treasures or—if the price is right—lost adventurers.

Many businesses in Low City pay the Shadow Masks protection money, and the guild has hundreds of informers among the common folk. Little occurs in the city that Taneli does not eventually learn about. The Shadow Masks do not often work in the High City; in the past, that has brought swift retribution from the watch and other invested parties.

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FREETRADERS



Several guilds have established themselves in Ashlar's towns and cities, but the Worshipful Company is the most successful of these organisations. The company's influence and power grow daily as it spreads its tentacles throughout Ashlar's commercial landscape.

Open to traders and merchants who practise their craft or trade regularly and who have a place of business—membership is not open to itinerant traders and the like.

The Worshipful Company has strong links to Abarin's clergy. Many company members worship the Great Craftsman, and several can channel his divine powers. Atro Ahokas (LN male human cleric [Abarin] 2) leads the Worshipful Company. He is a wealthy merchant, specialising in importing fine, rare and exotic goods for Ashlar's “great and good”. He is an influential man, has many powerful contacts and is not someone to cross lightly.

NOTABLE HISTORICAL EVENTS

Languard is as old as Ashlar. In some ways, it is even older. It was on the city's present-day site that Arndul Nenonen came ashore and claimed the land as his own. Castle Languard (location H1) stands on the spot of Arndul's first camp.

The city's fortunes have ebbed and flowed with the Nenonen's fortunes. War has scarred its walls, and waves of building and rebuilding have changed it beyond all recognition. Of the balance of the city, High City is older than the malodorous Low City, and no structure is older than Castle Languard's grim, monolithic inner keep.

ANCIENT HISTORY

-381 NR: The Year Without Summer visits much suffering upon the world. Low temperatures, heavy rain and gloomy skies result in failed crops and famine throughout the Known World. Several doomsday cults predicting the End of All find fertile ground among the resultant misery but most quickly collapse when the world does not end.

-184 NR: On the Night of Star Fall, a Vile Star flashes across the night sky and explodes before its largest fragment crashes into the Bitter Sea. Hours later, a tsunami devastates the ancient island-kingdom of Varakar. Its shattered remnants become known as the Isles of Sorrow. Smaller fragments of the Vile Star rain down over what would become the Duchy of Ashlar, the Skeleton Coast and other diverse locales.

-1 NR: Arndul Nenonen and his friends and followers begin to explore Gloamhold's nefarious, illimitable depths.

1 NR: Arndul Nenonen wades ashore and claims the land around present-day Ashlar as his own. With his friends and followers, he establishes a camp and begins to pacify the surrounding area. Ashlar's boundaries slowly expand outwards thereafter.

3 NR: Construction begins on Castle Languard (location H1) proper. The first bout of building finishes three years later, but subsequent waves of construction work expand and strengthen the original small keep.

5 NR: Construction begins on the Watcher's Spire (location T4). Initial building work is swiftly completed, but subsequent bouts of construction expand and strengthen the fortified temple complex. When finally completed, its fortifications rival Castle Languard's (location H1).

67 NR: Construction begins on the Father's Halls (location T2) and its catacombs. It takes almost a century to complete the cathedral.

132 NR: The Takolen arrive and claim the boggy, low-lying area that no one else wants, which today comprises the Wrecks. The Wrecks quickly gain a reputation as somewhere best avoided by all decent folk.

137 NR: The keystone of the Fane of the Wave's Eternal (location T1) is laid.

MIDDLE HISTORY

207 NR: The Time of Two Crowns begins when Crown Prince Ilasual Nenonen—the so-called Bloodstained Prince—tries to wrest the throne from his older sister, Aelliah Nenonen.

207 NR: On the night of the Blood Moon, the faint glimmer of Morden's Dagger appears in the night sky as it does every 370 years. Its arrival is met with superstitious dread by the commonfolk. Morden's Dagger—also called Thaur's Ember by the dwarves and Nargen's Claw by the orcs—is a Vile Star. It grows brighter as the year ends.

208 NR: The Time of Two Crowns ends when Aelliah Nenonen utterly defeats her traitorous brother's forces at the Battle of Selka River. Ilasual Nenonen is presumed slain, but his body is never found, giving rise to all manner of wild rumours and stories regarding his fate.

302 NR: Plague emerges in a distant land and, carried by ship, reaches Ashlar two years later. An uncountable number of people die slow, agonising deaths.

325 NR: The vampire Kaarlo Tenhunen arrives in the city and begins to feed. At first, he is subtle and slowly builds a small group of devoted (living) minions to do his bidding. As his hunger and appetite grow, so do rumours of a predator dwelling in the city.

384 NR: Languard's Haunted Years begin; the dead rise from their tombs and sepulchres all over the city empty. The high priest of Conn founds the Knights of the Black Swan and charges its members with finding the source of the undead plague. The knighthood takes Conn's daughter, Tuonetar, the sullen-eyed Maiden of Death, as its patron.

386 NR: The Haunted Years end when the knight Talis Ritari discovers a stygian hollow overflowing with lost spirits beneath the city's sewers. He uses his sword, *Valcorim*, to seal the portal to the underworld. *Valcorim* is broken—its blade wedging the portal shut, but the plague is ended.

387 NR: Their holy mission completed, the Knights of the Black Swan disband with honour.

412 NR: The followers of Abarin begin construction of the Great Forge (location T3); of all Languard's major temples, it is finished the quickest (in 448 NR).

437 NR: The Great Storm pummels Ashlar, causing widespread destruction. Low-lying portions of Languard—notably much of Fishshambles and the Wrecks—are extensively flooded. Parts of Low City's dock are destroyed, and numerous moored ships, both small and large, are battered to pieces. Many lives are lost.

473 NR: The vampire Kaarlo Tenhunen is driven from the city by the Fellowship of the Light after his depredations draw far too much attention. Shortly afterwards, he is slain in the dismal swamp-village of Thornhill. Unbeknownst to all, however, some of his loyal minions survive his fall and remain in the city to prepare for his inevitable return.

481 NR: The Sharkrazor pirates of Hard Bay village are defeated by the duchy's naval forces. Three privateers engaged by the duke to assist the campaign are raised to the nobility and given shared lordship of the village.

- 485 NR:** The wealthy Alanen family are raised to the nobility by Arndul Nenonen II and given a charter to found a new village on the Mottled Spire. The new village—Greystone—rises in a sheltered spot but two miles from Gloamhold.
- 491 NR:** The prosperous, isolated town of Deksport, far to the south and west of Ashlar, falls to a loose coalition of orc and goblin tribes after a week-long orgy of fire and blood. A few survivors crammed onto merchant ships in the town's harbour at the time of the attack flee to Languard. The surviving orcs and goblins move into the town's ruins and sporadically fight amongst themselves.
- 509 NR:** The village of Greystone falls after a confused night of horror, madness and death. The few survivors to reach Languard speak of an orgy of slaughter and mayhem. An expedition mounted by ducal forces is beaten back by terrible weather. When relief finally reaches the village, nothing but ruins, bones and silence remain. Greystone quickly gains a reputation as a cursed place.
- 513 NR:** The pirate Anarven Redsail seeks sanctuary in Deksport's harbour to elude a vengeful flotilla of Ashlarian warships. The canny pirate makes a pact with the orcs and goblins living in the ruined town. Other pirates begin using Deksport as a sanctuary, and soon orcs and goblins number among their crews, and piracy becomes an increasing problem for Ashlar and the merchants seeking to trade with its folk.
- 522 NR:** Followers of Abarin in the Great Forge (location T3)—the centre of the Creator's worship in Ashlar—learn of gunpowder and begin building their first cannon.
- 533 NR:** The famed adventurer Varma Karmala discovers the great chasm atop the Mottled Spire that subsequently becomes known as Varma's Pit. After her disappearance into it a few months later, the chasm gains two other lurid names—Cave of the Long Drop and Slaughter Fall.

RECENT HISTORY

- 538 NR:** Rumours spread through Languard that the grandson of the traitorous Crown Prince Ilasual Nenonen is in the city, come to wrest his ancestor's birthright from the duke. A wave of arrests and disappearances sweeps the city, and unrest and discontent among the townsfolk leads to ugly scenes. Peace is only restored late in the year when a masked half-elf, along with half a dozen followers, are publicly executed in a most drawn out and gruesome display. The savagery of the executions is the subject of whispered mutterings for many years.
- 543 NR:** A noticeable increase in stormy weather and ship sinkings leads to scandal engulfing the priesthood at the Fane of the Waves Eternal (location T1). It emerges that a priestess has been retrieving the offerings cast into the sea during services to venerate the capricious goddess and fencing them in the city. The priestess escapes justice by fleeing into Gloamhold's hideous depths.
- 547 NR:** A rise in cult activity leads to a city-wide crackdown on "obscene, depraved and forbidden" religious practices. The duke's executioners are kept busy.

- 553 NR:** The winter storms at the end of 553 are savage and prolonged and dump vast quantities of snow over the duchy. Travel becomes all but impossible, and food shortages are widespread. Comparisons are drawn to the legendary Year Without Summer.
- 555 NR:** The medusa Deszraul Valos arrives in the Ochels and claims a small cave complex as her own. She comes from the far east. Many adventurers attempt to slay her in the following years.
- 556 NR:** A mighty dragon turtle, Thraxwyr, claims the waters around the Shoalstone and begins to demand tribute from passing ships. Wise captains pay the bad-tempered dragon; the turtle sinks those who do not. Thraxwyr keeps the pirates of Deksport away, and trade blossoms. After three years, the dragon turtle disappears.
- 562 NR:** A pirate flotilla from distant Deksport preys on merchant shipping, trying to reach Ashlar. The actions of several adventuring parties, along with the pirates' chaotic nature, doom the flotilla as a short-lived enterprise. By the time the winter storms arrive, the pirates have been driven off or sunk.
- 566 NR:** Werewolves become more active throughout the Ochels, and many travellers are slain or injured. The problem seems worst near the Briarwood to the south.
- 570 NR:** The merchant ship *Sun Chaser* arrives in Languard, its crew beset with plague. Vigorous and swift action by customs and excise officers aided by the priests at the Father's Hall (location T2) contain the plague, but half the ship's crew die before the outbreak abates.
- 575 NR:** Rumours circulate among Languard's populace that the master vampire Kaarlo Tenhunen has returned to unlife (and the city). Several bands of adventurers search the city, but no sign of the vampire is found. Several adventurers, however, disappear while searching the vampire's old crumbling mansion in High City. Calls to burn the shunned place down come to naught.
- 576 NR:** A band of heroes returns from Gloamhold's benighted depths. They bring news of a strange couplet found on one of the upper levels of the Wailing Citadel—a grim fortress of dripping wet stone that protects the Murkwat's inner reaches. The couplet—*Seek the Five in Caverns Deep, Bind the Five the World to Keep*—defies easy explanation and is the subject of wild conjecture before being mostly forgotten.
- 576 NR:** The present day.

NENONEN RECKONING (NR)

Years are noted in Nenonen Reckoning (NR). Nenonen Reckoning is unique to Ashlar; its numbering system exactly mirrors the Common Reckoning (CR) dating system used by various kingdoms, independent fiefdoms and so on in this part of the world. Common Reckoning exactly mirrors Ashlar's Nenonen Reckoning (NR) dating system. Thus, 1 NR corresponds to 1 CR.



RUNNING A LANGUARD CAMPAIGN

RUNNING A LANGUARD CAMPAIGN

Languard is the perfect urban location to run a campaign—it's large enough to provide many of the services and opportunities adventurers need while not being so vast as to be unwieldy. Similarly, while Languard has over 100 keyed locations, ample space remains to make the city your own.

ADVENTURES IN LANGUARD

Dark cults dedicated to forbidden powers worship in hidden temples, scheming merchants and nobles plot to increase their wealth and power, and thieves prey on those careless (and not so careless) with their wealth.

Near boundless opportunities for adventures exist within Languard's walls. You can use the material presented in "Whispers & Rumours" and "Major Events in Languard" to foreshadow or introduce side quests and full-blown adventures if you so wish. As always, be guided by the players; if they are not interested in pursuing a particular rumour or adventure seed, simply move on—there are many other opportunities for adventure to be had!

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Use these adventure seeds or design your own.

Angry Scenes on the Docks: Languard's fisherfolk are an independent lot, and no single guild or organisation has succeeded in asserting control over them all. An increase in brawls, beatings, sabotaged boats and the like shows that many rivalries between crews and boats are still active. If the characters want to hire a fishing boat (perhaps to sail to Greystone or Gloamhold), they must first reduce the tension and violence on the docks. Alternatively, they'll have to pay way over the odds to secure a fishing boat and its crew.

Desperate Escape: The characters are at the monthly Execution Day when the proceedings descend into chaos when one of the prisoners is rescued by their friends. Several guards are killed during the escape, which is successful unless the characters intervene. If the escapee gets out of Low Market, they head toward the docks where a ship waits to spirit them away from the city. A mad chase through the streets could result.

Guards! Guards! The characters are about their lawful business in High City when they hear someone shouting for help. If the characters investigate, they discover a wealthy woman standing in the street. She has been stabbed, and her two servants lie on the road near death. If the characters help, she is grateful and explains that she was just attacked by ruffians who stole her purse and a singular ring that has been in her family for generations. She is desperate to get the ring back and offers the characters a handsome reward if they retrieve it. Of course, everything is not what it seems. The woman is a priest of Braal, and the ring—a magical item—is sacred to her faith. The thieves belonged to a rival cult and stole the enc scrolled ring for their leader.

Fire! A vigorous fire blazes to life in the middle of the night at a warehouse near the docks. As dawn breaks, a pall of smoke hangs over the gutted building. A surprising number of bodies lie amid the wreckage. As the watch investigates the scene, one of their number discovers a sunken stairway leading down to the warehouse's cellar. As they clear the wreckage away from the stairs, an undead horror or other animate guardian thing emerges from the cellar and savages anyone nearby. Luckily, the characters are close enough to hear the victims' screams. If the characters investigate, they discover a necromancer's grim workshop and laboratory beneath the warehouse.

Missing Beggars: Beggars have been going missing from the Shambles's twisted, tenebrous alleyways in alarming numbers. The mood among the district's street denizens is ugly, and the general feel of the Shambles is worsening. A cult worshipping Braal, led by a wealthy merchant, is at work, abducting street folk for their foul rites and rituals. The Shadow Masks have noticed the increased disappearances—several of the missing beggars work for them—and have decided to take action. The guild finds a likely group of hapless adventurers—the characters—and deliberately botches a burglary of their rooms while they are out. The thieves leave certain clues behind that will inevitably lead the vengeful adventurers to the cult's secret fane.

A Vampire Abroad: A vampire—or perhaps a lesser vampire spawn if the characters are low-level—stalks the city, and the populace is growing increasingly terrified. The creature dwells somewhere in High City, where most of the attacks have occurred. The watch has doubled the strength of their patrols, but the simple warriors have no chance of catching the vampire (and most of the watch assigned to High City have no intention of trying). The characters are approached by a merchant or other wealthy personage for whom they have worked before. The individual represents a small group of citizens who have put together a reward for anyone killing the vampire. Are the characters interested?

ADVENTURES IN LANGUARD'S ENVIRONS

Across Hard Bay Gloamhold's tenebrous, cursed entrance gapes wide to entice adventurers to explore its illimitable depths. In the Ochels, bandits lurk, ready to prey on merchants, travellers and peasants alike. Smugglers—in lightless vessels—ply Hard Bay's stormy waters. For the adventurous, there is much opportunity in Languard's immediate environs.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Use these adventure seeds or design your own.

Bandits: A large band of bandits recently fell on and looted a merchant's caravan. The merchant, a vindictive fellow pushed close to bankruptcy, needs to get his goods back and offers the characters a reward he can ill afford to hunt the brigands down to their camp in the southern Ochels. When the characters return to the city with his goods, the merchant makes sure to meet the characters somewhere

public with many witnesses and tries to wriggle out of paying the whole reward.

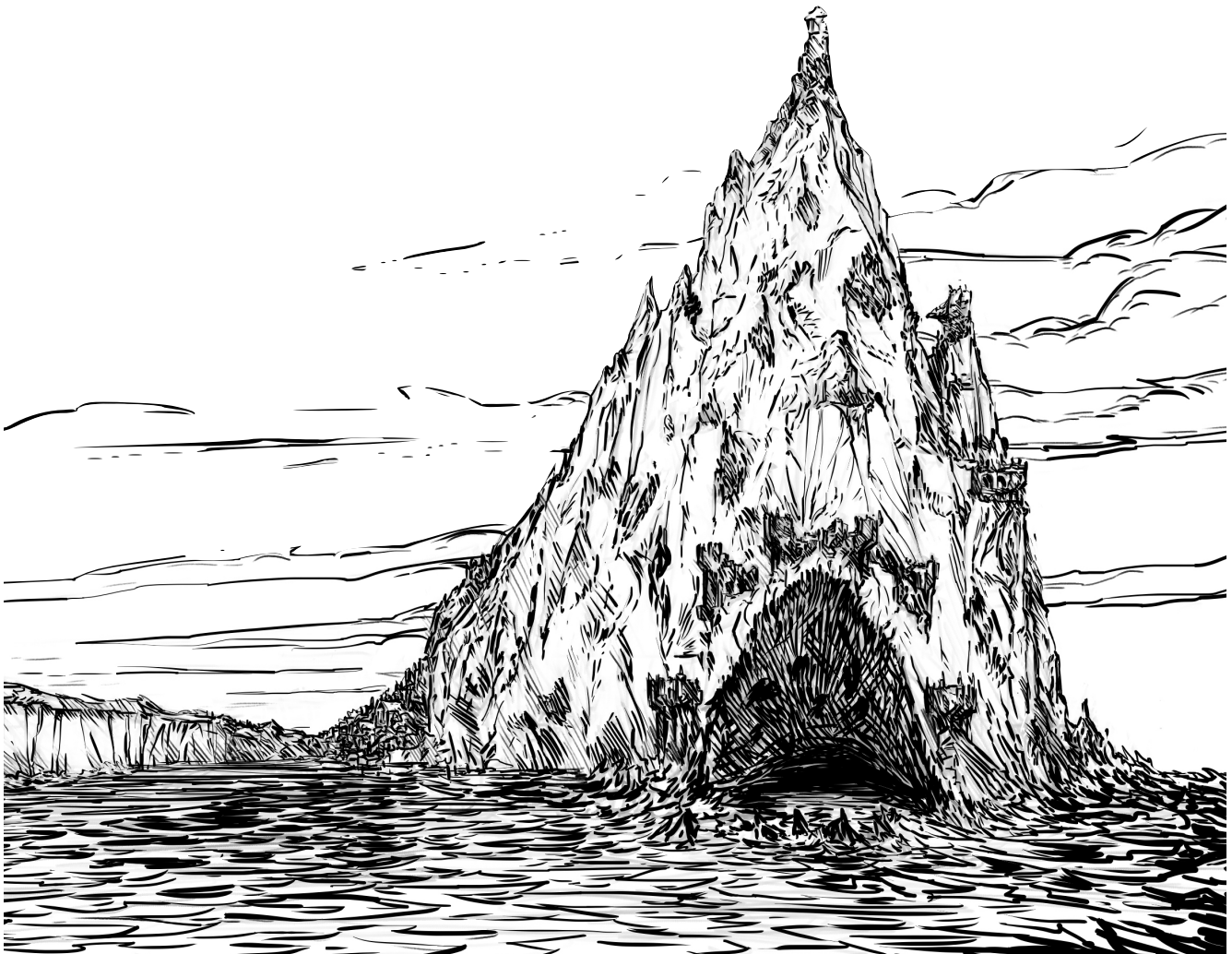
Derelict Ship: A derelict ship drifts dangerously close to Gloamhold's gaping maw. The ship looks abandoned as far as anyone can tell from Gloamhold's walls, and no one seems particularly keen to investigate. However, the derelict vessel—or its cargo—could be valuable. Will the characters let such an opportunity slip through their fingers? A rival group of adventurers also intent on salvaging the ship's cargo, bad weather, or even something terrible from Gloamhold's bowels could all await the characters on this adventure.

Lights Amid the Ruins: A fire blazes amid Greystone's cursed, windswept ruins for three nights in a row, sparking curiosity and concern among Languard's populace. If the characters decide to investigate, they first discover Languard's fisherfolk are consumed with in-fighting (see "Angry Scenes on the Docks" and must resolve that situation before finding someone willing to sail them across the bay. Once they reach the ruins, they find evidence of a huge fire but no signs of who set it. Who lit the fire—and why—remains a mystery, but the ruined village's denizens are unlikely to let such lovely sources of sustenance—the characters—leave without a struggle.

Lurking Pirates: A merchant hires the characters to accompany him aboard ship to White Moon Cove. The merchant worries about pirates, and they are right to be so! Once the merchant ship emerges from Hard Bay, a pirate vessel pounces, and a chase down the coast results. A vicious melee breaks out once the pirates get close enough to board the slower merchant vessel. During the fight, the ships get jammed together. The characters must either utterly defeat the pirates or negotiate a truce. If the characters board the pirate ship, they may discover several questionable items in its hold...

NEARBY ADVENTURE SITES

Several adventure sites of note loom large in the psyche of the average Languardian and all adventurers who come to the city. Preeminent among these is Gloamhold's granitic, be-shadowed and legend-shrouded depths that lie five miles across Hard Bay. Similarly, the cursed ruin of Greystone is visible from Languard's seaward ramparts on good days. Sometimes, lights glimmer enticingly amid the ruins, and sometimes, adventurers sail across the bay to investigate. Sometimes, they return, and sometimes, they do not.



GLOAMHOLD AT A GLANCE

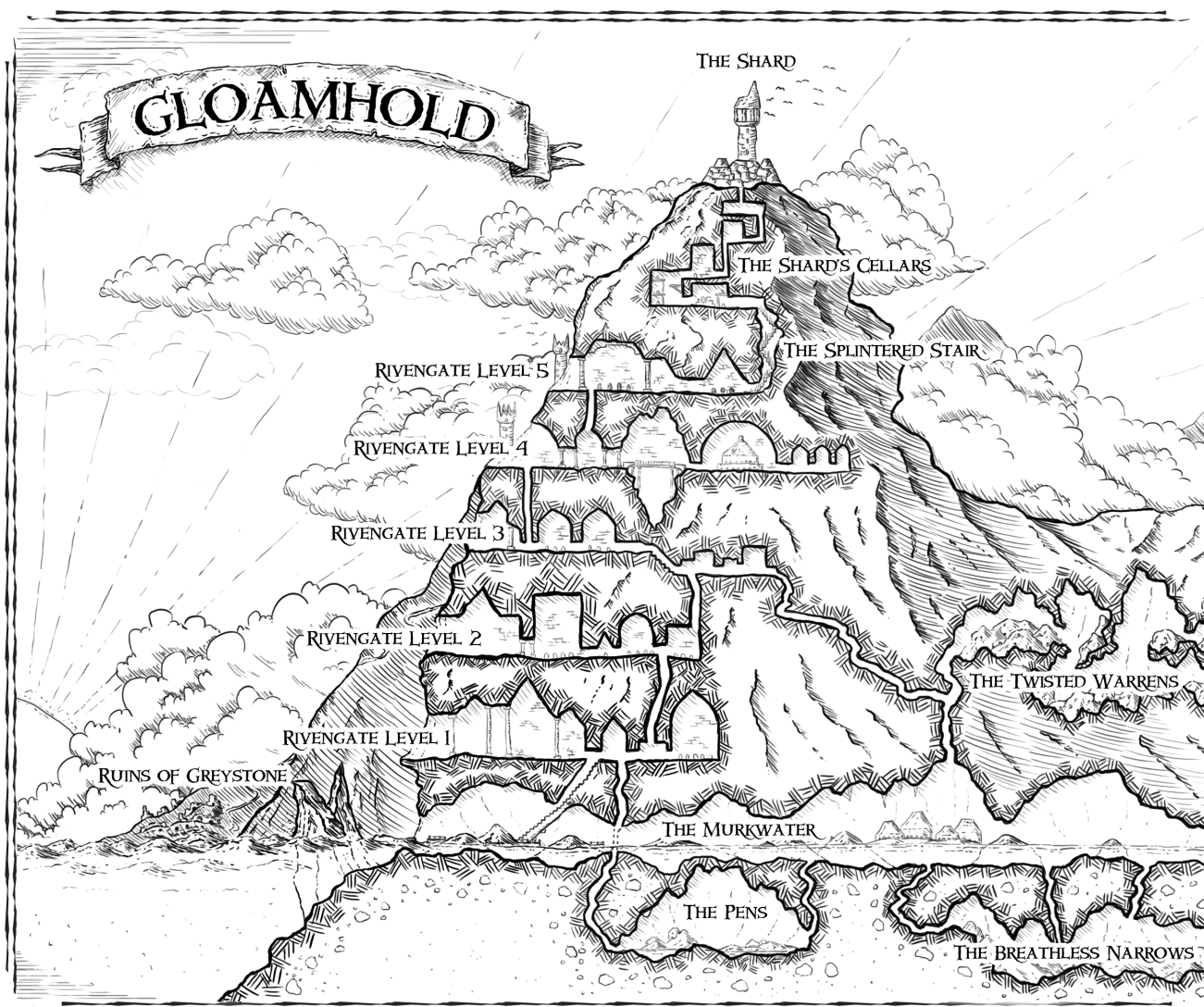
Glowering amid dark rumours and terrible stories of desperate adventure, death, betrayal, and glimmering treasures squat the unutterably ancient halls of Gloamhold. This crumbling, benighted, haunted dungeon complex of unknown, but undeniably vast, extent is buried deep within the grim and brooding spray-drenched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

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

KNOWN LOCALES WITHIN GLOAMHOLD

Although much of Gloamhold remains unknown, knowledge of a few locations has emerged through the explorations of brave (or foolhardy) adventurers.

- **Rivengate:** Of dark and forbidding aspect, the lower portions of once mighty Rivengate collapsed into the sea long ago. Built by unknown hands, remnants of the citadel yet cling to the cliffs. The Splintered Stair links Rivengate to the cellars buried below the Shard.
- **The Murkwater:** Only skilled or lucky captains dare to sail into the gloom of Rivengate's gaping maw. Within flows the dark and treacherous Murkwater. The seething, foam-flecked waters below Rivengate are particularly hazardous because of the jagged rocks fallen from above, and only supremely brave—or handsomely paid—sailors will risk their vessel therein.
- **The Twisted Warrens:** Honeycombing the rock above the Murkwater, the Twisted Warrens are a convoluted network of caverns and passageways inhabited by aberrant monsters, troglodytes, and far, far worse.



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

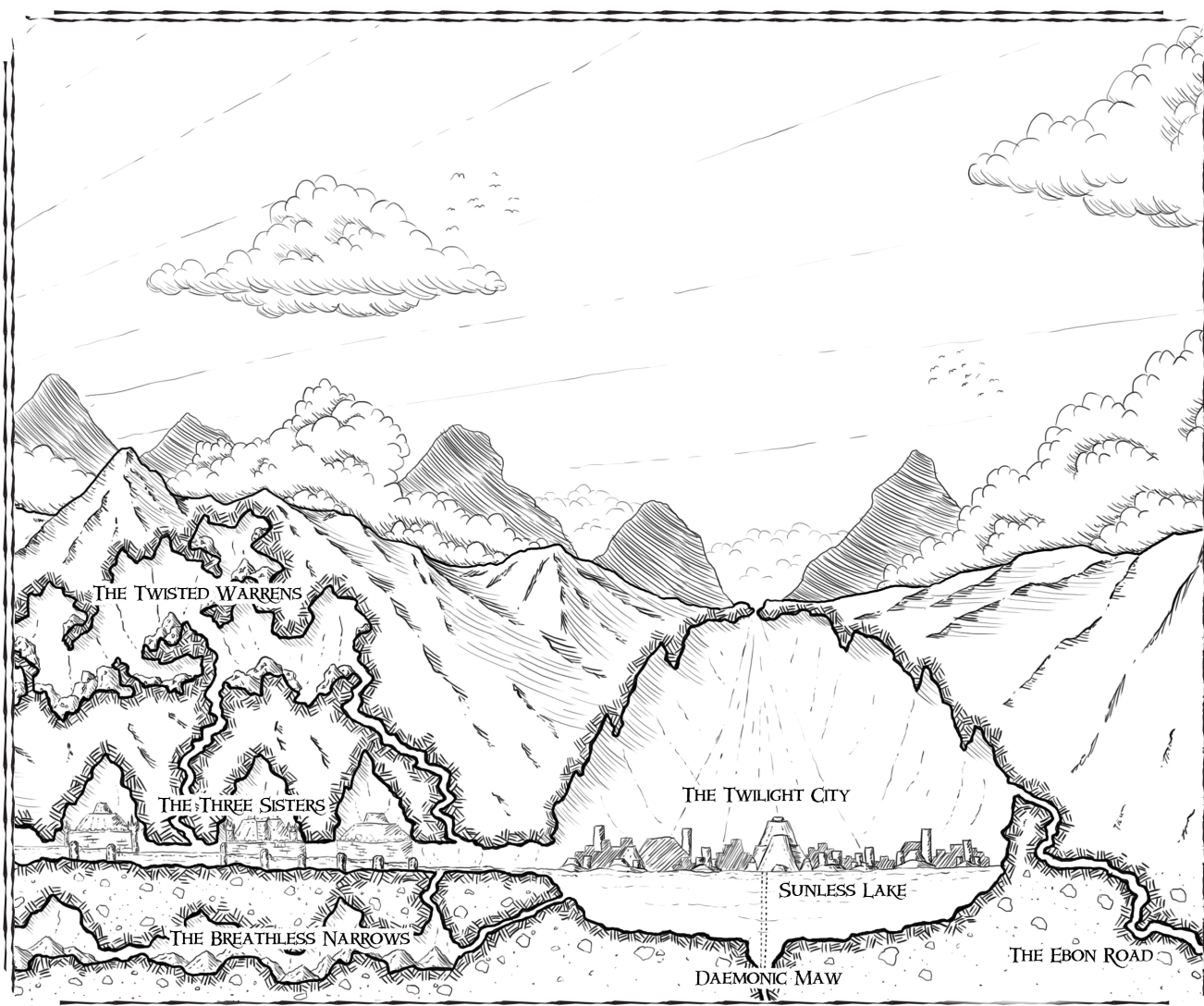
THE GLOAMHOLD LOOK

A subtle and ancient curse of great potency and malignancy lurks within Gloamhold's gloomy, dust-shrouded halls. Curiously, it seems only those who dwell in the world of men—humans, elves, dwarves and the like—fall prey to its malign

influence. Those accustomed to living underground in the permanent dark of the ancient fortress's ebon reaches appear immune to its effect.

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

Some explorers resist Gloamhold's insidious influence longer than others, while the unlucky quickly succumb to its subtle influence. To begin, the Gloamhold Look is a subtle thing—perhaps manifesting as slightly greying hair or deep bags under the afflicted individual's eyes. However, as the curse takes hold, these changes deepen and become more severe. Most healers are powerless to slow, hinder or reverse the progression of their patient's Gloamhold Look. Only powerful magic beyond the reach of all but the richest or most powerful folk or time spent away from Gloamhold's gloomy precincts can loosen the curse's persistent grasp.



GREYSTONE AT A GLANCE

Civilisation's creeping tendrils did not linger long upon the vertiginous bulk of the Mottled Spire. A century ago, settlers from Languard, led by the newly ennobled Alanen family, founded Greystone as a fishing village and rebuilt the shattered ruin of the Shard as a lighthouse and watchtower.

However, the harsh weather, isolation and events of a certain terror-filled night doomed their efforts to failure. A nameless aura of fear and decay now hangs over the crumbling, wind-blasted ruins. Seemingly perpetually shrouded in shadow, dark legends cluster thickly about the village. Stories of ghoulish hauntings, a sinister cult and myths of the degenerate, inbred survivors of the original settlers lurking amid the ruins, along with the village's isolated position, conspire to keep decent folk away.



Ruler: Uljas Alanen

Government: Overlord

Population: 68 (68 degenerate humans)

Alignments: NE

Languages: Abyssal, Common

The decayed ruins of Greystone yet cling to the vertiginous, landward flank of the Mottled Spire and—on a clear day—are still visible from Languard's ramparts. Most of the buildings are little more than crumbling facades built over the mouths of the numerous caves riddling the rock.

Linked by steep and narrow paths hacked from the Spire's living rock, these homes once sheltered almost 200 souls. Sickly briars and the leavings of countless winter storms now choke many of these paths, rendering them all but impassable—only the nimblest or strongest travellers find the going easy.

Greystone—precariouly perched upon the Mottled Spire—was almost wholly dependent on traders for fresh vegetables, grain and other staples. The villagers were often malnourished and ill, and a shortage of fresh water further exacerbated their health problems. Rumours circulating in Languard placed a strange, invisible miasma over the village that made its folk sick with its noxious vapours; they were partly correct.

By chance, the Alanens built their lofty manor over an ancient shrine sacred to the Shadow in the Sea. This deep cave, discovered when the manor's foundations were laid, became the obsession of the family's patriarch—Armas Alanen. Armas quickly fell under the fell influence of the shrine's baleful, alien master. From that day forth, an inner cult lurked at the heart of the Alanen family.

The daily suffering and hardships suffered by the villagers created a fertile breeding ground for Dagon's sinister message. From the Alanens, like a cancer, his worship spread slowly but surely through the populace until—in one terrible, bloody night—slaughter was visited on the unbelievers.

The few right-minded survivors of that terrible night fled while the victorious cultists made their homes among the

bones of their slain neighbours. With no outside influence working to keep their souls safe from eternal damnation, the cultists' fall was soon complete, and they became degenerate, twisted perversions of what they once were.

But, civilised folk are not yet done with Greystone. Adventurers sometimes sail across Hard Bay to explore the ruins, and every few years, someone bearing the name Alanen tries to claim the village and their family's place among Ashlar's nobility as their own.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: Pale of skin and always dirty, the villagers are an ugly, loathsome folk. Wildly inbred, they are aggressive and violent and do not venture out willingly during the day.

Dress: Dressed in a patchwork of faded and filthy rags and ripped clothes, the villagers wrap their feet in strips of scavenged cloth and leather. Some also wear scraps of leather or studded leather armour; all are armed.

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

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

The characters will likely want to learn as much about the Greystone as possible. A character spending 1d4 hours (and 2d6 sp on drinks and bribes) asking around in taverns and markets learns one rumour and one additional rumour for every additional 1d4 hours and 2d6 sp they spend.

1. The spirits of all those who died in the ruins haunt Greystone. It is a cursed place. (Partly false rumour.)
2. The nobles of the village—the Alanen—went mad and delved too deeply into ancient, best-forgotten lore. The first Alanen, Armas Alanen, was a powerful wizard who set up a laboratory under the manor to continue his horrible, sinister experiments. (Partly false rumour.)
3. An invisible miasma hung over the village in the old days. It made the villagers sick; some went mad, while many died young. (False rumour.)
4. Something large and dangerous lives in Greystone's harbour. After several fisherfolk disappeared in the harbour, no one voluntarily docks there anymore.
5. Wan flickering lights are sometimes seen amid the ruined village and in the Alanen's ruined manor. No doubt, adventurers carry some of these; others have a more sinister origin—the ghosts of the long-dead Alanens! (Partly false.)
6. The Scarlet Fellowship—a relatively inexperienced adventuring band—mounted an expedition to Greystone's ruined manor about a week ago. They have not returned. Not every member of the party went on the expedition, though—the wizard Sakari Purho—remained behind and is now worried about his companions. (Refer to "Lights Amid the Ruins" in "Adventures in Languard's Environs.")

NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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

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

NOTABLE FOLK AT A GLANCE

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

Ilari Alanen (location 6; CE male degenerate human fighter 2) stalks the Mottled Spire's trackless valleys and knows its secret paths well. Ilari is the cultist most likely to be encountered away from the village.

Marja Alanen (location 6; NE female degenerate human wizard 4) revels in her depravity. She is Uljas's wife and is even fouler and deranged than her husband. She is steeped in ancient and forbidden lore.

Uljas Alanen (location 6; NE male degenerate human cleric [Dagon] 3) leads the Shadow's cultists and exults in sacrificing living victims to his dark god. Uljas's loyalty to his patron is absolute.

Vilho Alanen (location 6; CE male degenerate human fighter 2) loves fighting. He is bloodthirsty and hideous.

DAGON

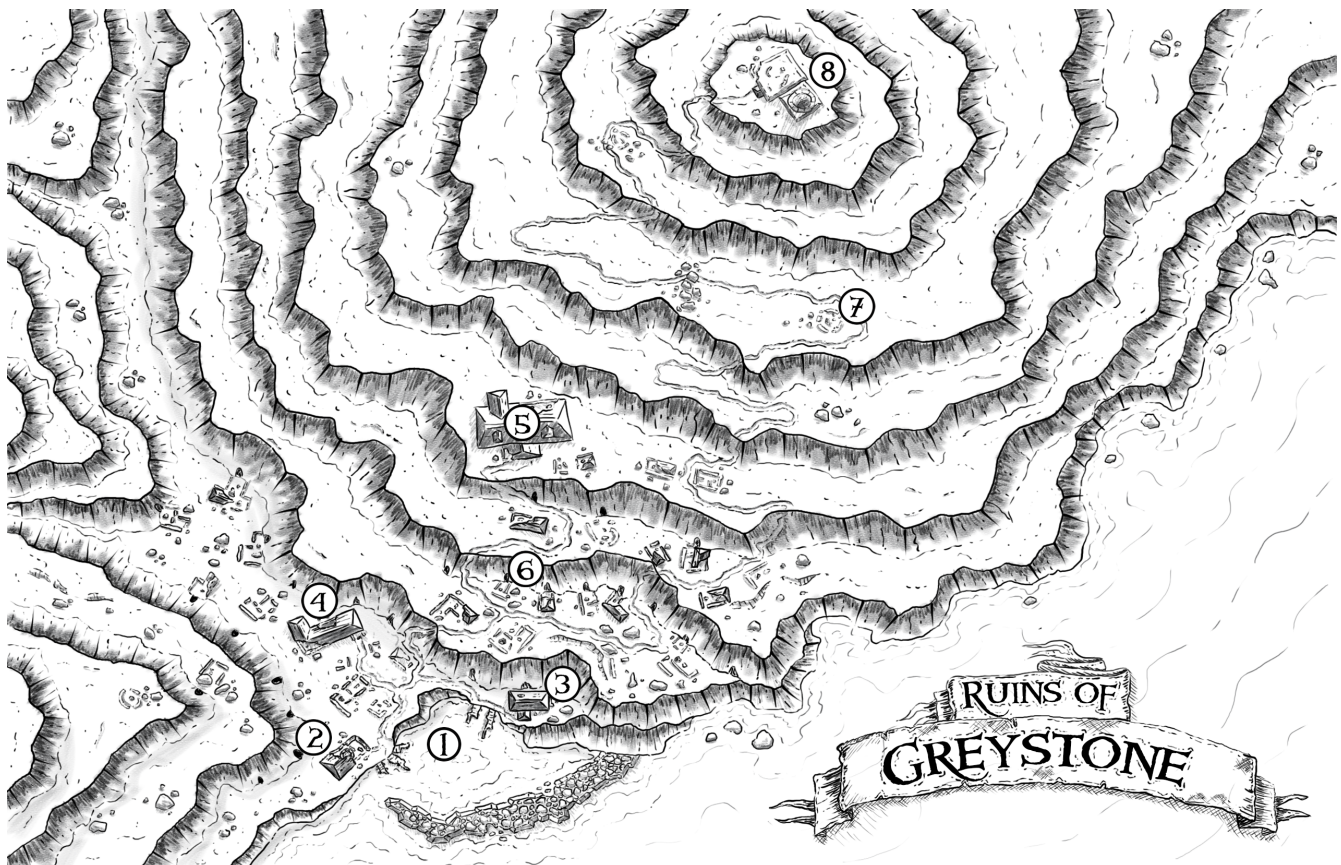


CE demon god of deformity, the sea and sea monsters

Epithets: Shadow Under the Sea, Prince of the Deep

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

Favoured Weapon: Trident



ADVENTURERS IN LANGUARD

Although Languard is Ashlar's heart and has stood for five centuries, it is still very much a city on the edge of civilisation. Thus, numerous opportunities for adventure lie in its immediate environs—not least Gloamhold's benighted and reputed cursed doom-drenched halls.

Many adventuring groups—large and small, new and established—make their temporary or permanent homes in Languard. These adventurers are a diverse lot, however, and all have their own hopes, dreams and goals. While the characters may be fixated on exploring benighted Gloamhold or cursed Greystone, it does not mean that every other adventurer in the city is also keen to do so. Some adventurers have come to the city to rest and recover from their last adventure, while others may be retired or inactive for various reasons.

Adventurers are not uncommon sights on the city streets. However, such folk rarely go about their business heavily armed as the city watch takes a dim view of those carrying weapons and armour without just cause.

Still, for all that, some adventuring parties have gained fame (or infamy) and influence over the years. These groups are normally well-established, have set up a base in the city, and their members are amongst the most individually powerful and formidable folk in the city.

THE BLADES THREE

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

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

- **Arlamen Everdun** (NG male half-elf ranger 3) wants to give up exploring Gloamhold as he is dispirited by the group's fortunes. He is passionate in his love of life, longs for the southern forests, and would return there if not for Elimia and Neega. Both prefer to continue their adventures, and Arlamen feels duty-bound to protect them. Skilled and brave, Arlamen nevertheless fears his doom lies in Gloamhold's ebon depths.
- **Elimia Itkonen** (N female human wizard 3) obsesses over the Twilight City, its arcane secrets and its undoubted great age. In ancient, crumbling texts, she has read of the great, now lost magics employed to create the city and lusts after them. Her single-minded determination is what drives the group on (and what has caused the most casualties). Beautiful and beguiling, she

can bend the weak-willed to her will, which has directly resulted in several deaths.

- **Neega Light-Foot** (N female half-orc thief 4) enjoys going where others cannot and sometimes sneaks off on extended solo scouting missions. She is a relatively simple soul and at home in the dark. She is under no illusion as to her combat prowess, however, and rarely starts fights. She is content to watch and explore. Neega wears studded leather armour stained black with soot and favours the scimitar on the rare occasions she must fight. Her nose has been broken more than once, making an already plain face even less becoming. Neega is certain people look down on her because of her racial heritage and is determined to prove her worth.

THE DEEP DELVERS

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

- **Aldal Garsten** (NG male dwarf fighter 2) chafes at the delay in getting Gloamhold. He has come to Languard to discover his cousin's fate. Last seen exploring the ruins of Greystone along with his companions, Falgar Garsten was a warrior skilled with warhammer and shield. He disappeared six months ago, and he—and his companions—have not been heard from since. The fisherman paid to wait for them reported hearing sounds of sustained battle, screams and then silence. Terrified, he fled back to Languard. Aldal agitates for the party to find alternate employment to raise the sums needed to purchase and outfit a vessel. He is a skilled miner.
- **Aune Pasanen** (CG female wizard 1) has a crippled right-arm; life has ever been hard for Aune. Blessed with a lively mind and boundless enthusiasm for magic, she was privately tutored by her father, who had a small amount of magical skill. Aune sees magic as the tool through which she can live a full and vibrant life. Scatter-brained and easily distracted, she is nevertheless good-intentioned and is keen to discover what ancient secrets lie within Gloamhold's depths. Secretly, she hopes her magical pursuits might one day give her the tools to repair her withered arm. She tolerates Ylermi for the sake of group cohesion but is easily frustrated by his tendency to blast first and ask questions later.
- **Etune Lightstep** (NG female halfling thief 2) fancies herself a professional gambler. She is well known in several of Languard's lower-quality taverns, inn and gambling dens, but only because she loses—a lot. Etune is clever, witty, good with her hands and perpetually on the edge of destitution.
- **Firatis Natityrr** (CG female half-elf thief 2) serves as the Delver's spokeswoman and public face. Perhaps the

best-travelled of the Delves, Firatis has visited every village and town in Ashlar over the last decade or so. Obsessed with gathering local lore, stories and songs Firatis can often be found in certain low-brow drinking establishments or at Languard's gates, regaling travellers with her tales. While not classically good-looking, Firatis has cultivated a confident and striking persona that plays well with the masses.

- **Ilari Eskola** (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 1) loves architecture and stonework. He has spent weeks poring over every aspect of Darlen's cathedral in Languard and is intoxicated by stories of the Twilight City and its strange, alien architecture. While his church duties keep him busy, he has the high priest's permission to travel to Gloamhold on the condition that he searches for evidence of evil cults and their foul doings. Unbeknownst to himself, Ilari—strong, fit and wise—has been earmarked as a potential future member of the Order of the Watch Eternal.
- **Ylermi Rantanen** (LG male human wizard 1) possesses intelligence and quick wits and has quickly progressed in the magical arts. Also, a moderately skilled jeweller, he—sadly—suffers from a certain shortness of breath that limits his adventuring activities. He is never happier than when blasting his enemies and can't wait to begin his career properly.

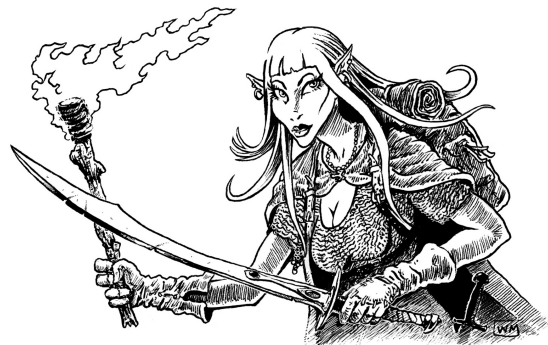
THE SHINNING FELLOWSHIP

A skilled, well-established group, the Shining Fellowship have made over a dozen forays into Gloamhold's shadow-drenched depths. While they have not recovered fabulous wealth or ancient artefacts of note, they are remarkable in that none of them has died on these expeditions. Several group members—most notably Amallaemar, Elgal and Urmas—have other interests beyond adventuring; thus, the group's forays are infrequent at best.

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

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

- **Elgal Torsten** (NG male dwarf thief 6) wandered across Ashlar and served several lords as an engineer and builder, overseeing various projects before turning to the life of an adventurer. Thus, he has friends in high places who look favourably upon him. Blessed with a quick mind and quicker hands, Elgal makes an excellent locksmith and trap disarmer. He is not a stereotypical dwarf; while he loves drink, he does not relish combat and would rather achieve his goals through stealth, cunning and planning. Since Leneal joined the group, he has begun to take more care of his appearance.
- **Leneal Ningel** (NG female gnome druid 4) from Goldentree, a small gnomish enclave overlooking a spur of the Ost River far to the south, where the river tumbles out of the Forest of Grey Spires. She is the newest member of the group—but not the youngest—and is the most private and shy of the six. Nevertheless, she has a wicked, hard-to-appreciate sense of humour that occasionally gets her into trouble. Secretly infatuated with Elgal, Leneal has refrained from terrorising the quiet dwarf with her worst (best) practical jokes.
- **Ogan** (NG female half-orc cleric [Kalron] 3/fighter 2) was little more than a street performer—albeit one skilled with a flute whom thieves and pickpockets assiduously avoided—until she fell in love with Valto. His love awoke a fiery lust for life in her heart, and she quickly fell to worshipping the hero-god Kalron. She and Valto form the nucleus of the group.
- **Urmas Lankinen** (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 6) hails from Languard and is well known at the Watcher's Spire (location T4). He is the group's leader and spokesman. The son of an armorer, Urmas is wise, charismatic, and popular with his companions. He spends little time preaching or tending his flock; of the group, he is the most motivated to plumb Gloamhold's depths, for he believes some terrible, lurking evil skulks therein.
- **Valto Itkonen** (CG male human fighter 6) possesses immense strength and a wild temperament. In his early years, Valto was a disaster as a merchant. Travelling with his father between Ashlar's many villages, he lusted for more from life and chafed at the boredom of buying and selling. When bandits attacked their caravan, Valto discovered his true calling. Shortly thereafter, he abandoned the life of a merchant. Drawn to Languard, he met Ogan and fell in love.



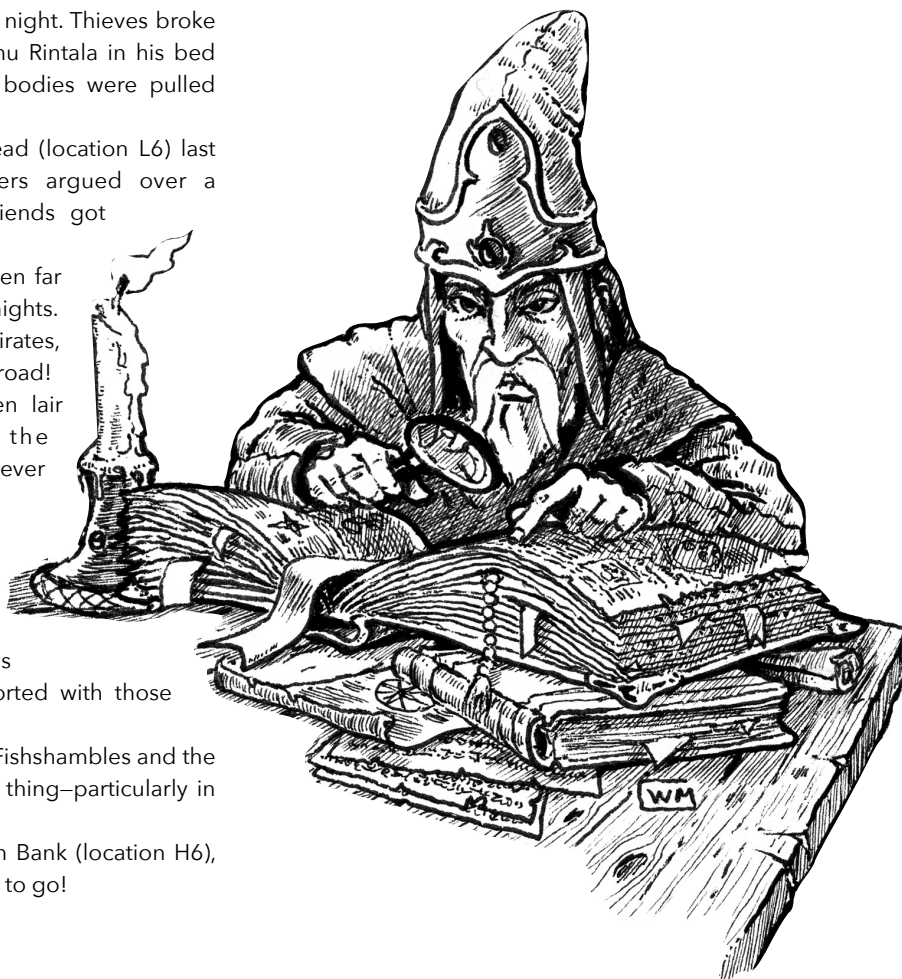
WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Languard, a character may hear one or more rumours. The character can learn this information in several ways: perhaps by overhearing two locals gossiping, chatting with regulars over a few drinks at the local taverns and so on.

Use this list to determine which rumours the character learns. (Some rumours are listed as false but determine the veracity of any rumour as you see fit.)

1. The winter storms this year will be worse than normal. My sister saw it in a dream!
2. Hooded and cloaked figures have been seen skulking about the Wrecks even more than normal. The Takolen are up to something!
3. The priests at the Great Forge (location T3) recently took delivery of a small quantity of adamantine.
4. One of the bodies hanging from Traitor's Gate (location G3) disappeared overnight! Did someone steal it for their own evil purposes, or did the remains escape under their own power?
5. More bodies than normal have been fished from the Svart's chill waters recently; some have been horribly mutilated. (False rumour.)
6. Thievery is on the rise. Some say the Shadow Masks seek something hidden in the city; others suggest a new thieves' guild is rising to challenge their control of Languard's underworld.
7. A body was found in the Shambles last night. Worryingly, both its eyes were gouged out.
8. The duke is getting increasingly angry about the lawlessness of the Shambles and its effect on how much tax is raised. He'll do something about it soon.
9. Have you noticed dark clouds seem to hang over the Mottled Spire more than usual recently? (False rumour.)
10. Lights have been seen moving among Greystone's cursed ruins in the dead of the night.
11. There's been a murder at the Watcher's Spire (location T4). The clergy are covering it up. (False rumour.)
12. Mira Karpannen—an adventurer newly arrived in Languard—is trying to form a band of heroes to search the Mottled Spire.
13. The Bloody Eagle (location S2) is a Shadow Mask front.
14. Strange goings on have again been reported on Vonya's Span (location L2). Some say the architect-dwarf's drunken spirit has awoken from its stupor.
15. Someone snuck into the Father's Hall (location T2) last night and daubed one of the statues with red paint! The priests are furious. (False rumour.)
16. A mad old beggar is spreading insane stories of great, dripping tentacles rising from the Svart.
17. Dricolen Nimblefinger is a terrible singer but beloved by the Scythe's (location L3) regulars.
18. If you need a sailor willing to take you across the bay, look for Laina Eronen (often found in location F2).
19. Panu Lankinen is one of the watchmen assigned to Low Gate (location G1); he's the person to see if you don't want your baggage inspected too carefully.
20. Raisa's Curios (location S1) is one of the best places in the city to find bargains or strange, one-of-a-kind objects. Sometimes, she even has magic items for sale!
21. Raisa Ojanen—proprietor of Raisa's Curios (location S1)—is in the Shadow Mask's pay. (False rumour.)
22. Several of the buildings on Water Lane in the Fishshambles are in danger of imminent collapse.
23. All of Ashlar's noble families have homes in High City; their houses make rich picking for brave thieves.
24. The Takolen of the Wrecks are a foul folk. Some worship blasphemous and evil elder powers.
25. High Priestess Hannele Auvuenen (location T2) is so beloved by the Father she can return the dead to life!
26. Vonya's Span (location L2) is in poor condition and needs repair, but no one wants to pay for the work. (False rumour.)
27. Family Pasanen owns High Market (location H2) and has the right to collect fees from those setting up stalls there. They are almost as wealthy as the Nenonens!
28. At night, the darkness around Gloamhold's ruins is almost palpable. Terrible things live in the darkness.
29. Don't go to Ashford; plague still lurks there.
30. Smuggler bands are again operating from Rivengate's lower levels.
31. Duke Nenonen wants to re-establish the village Greystone. (False rumour.)
32. Packs of wild dogs have been attacking lone travellers on the Great South Road.
33. Strange shapes have been seen moving in the water down by the Fane of the Waves Eternal (location T1). (False rumour.)
34. The Mistress of the Spires (location H4) is gravely ill. (False rumour.)
35. Secret passages run from Castle Languard (location H1) to all over High City.
36. Urmas Aalto (location H3) is a crotchety old sod, but few people are more knowledgeable about Gloamhold.
37. The guards at River Gate (location G2) are easily bribed. (False rumour.)
38. Low Market (location L1) is a den of thievery.
39. All manner of fine and expensive goods can be had in High Market (location H2) if you have the requisite coin.
40. Wisps of red smoke have been seen over the Shambles on the first day of every month this year.
41. Last week, all the beggars disappeared from Low Market (location L1). Two days later, they were back!
42. Duke Nenonen hates the colour red; he's planning to ban it from the city. (False rumour.)
43. A great treasure was found and then lost in the depths of the Murkwater. (The Murkwater is a tidal river that issues froth from Gloamhold.)
44. Aea Isin has been missing in Gloamhold for a year.
45. A sea witch lives in the Fishshambles.

46. Duke Nenonen is thinking of raising taxes again, and the poor will inevitably bear the brunt of his boundless greed. (False rumour.)
47. One of the oaks standing on Abbey Road is home to a hedonistic dryad. She sometimes goes about the city in disguise, seeking a lover.
48. Sometimes, the bric-a-brac sellers in Low Market (location L1) accidentally sell magical items of wondrous power or other things interesting to adventurers for a fraction of their true worth.
49. A great doom is gathering in Gloamhold; soon, it will spill forth to consume all of Ashlar!
50. The Boar's Head tavern (a minor locale somewhere in Low City) serves dog meat. (False rumour.)
51. Sometimes, Raisa's Curios (location S1) hosts exclusive auctions of rare or enchanted items; you have to be rich or well-known to Raisa to get an invitation.
52. Sometimes, adventurers sail across the bay to explore the cursed ruins of Greystone village; not all return. Something terrible dwells in the village's seaweed-choked harbour.
53. Only the foolish, the mad or the depraved visit the Wrecks. The Takolen are foul folk who'd just as soon murder you as talk to you.
54. Bandits have been seen on the Great South Road and in the foothills of the Ochels.
55. It was a violent night in the city last night. Thieves broke in and murdered the merchant Panu Rintala in his bed before looting his house; several bodies were pulled from the Svart this morning.
56. There was a brawl at the Orc's Head (location L6) last night. Apparently, two adventurers argued over a treasure map, and when their friends got involved, all hell broke loose!
57. Faint flickering lights have been seen far out on Hard Bay over the last few nights. Some folk blame smugglers or pirates, while others think a ghost ship is abroad!
58. The Shadow Masks have a hidden lair buried somewhere beneath the Shambles, where the watch will never find it.
59. Atro Ahokas, chancellor of the Worshipful Company of Freetraders, ever seeks to increase his own wealth and the influence of the company. Atro is rich and powerful—he rarely consorted with those below his station.
60. One good storm will flood most of Fishshambles and the Wrecks; some think that is a good thing—particularly in the case of the Wrecks!
61. If you have valuables to store, High Bank (location H6), with its thief-proof vault, is the place to go!
62. Several wondrous new weapons—cannons forged by the artificers at the Great Forge (location T3)—protect Castle Languard (location H1).
63. Adventurers who have spent too long in Gloamhold often end up at the Castoff's Sanctuary (location F3)—a wrecked freighter beached near the Fane of the Waves Eternal (location T1).
64. Several gangs in the Shambles and Fishshambles are getting too big for their boots—the Shadow Masks will soon crush them—their guildmaster tolerates no challenge to the guild's control of the city's underworld.
65. Languard's monthly Execution Day—held at Traitor's Gate (location G3)—is a great day out for all the family.
66. Worshipers of the Mother meet outside the city at the Mother's Garden (location OR1). Here they perform their ancient rites of worship and fertility; sometimes, these rites turn into orgies!
67. The power and influence of the Worshipful Company of Freetraders is growing in the city (and throughout Ashlar); the duke is unlikely to tolerate this challenge to his family's rule for long.
68. The catacombs below the Father's Hall (location T2) burrow ever deeper into the rock below the city, and the bodies of countless thousands lie within. The place is a thief's or necromancer's paradise!



69. The Screaming Halls (location H15), or the House of the Clouded Mind to give it its proper name, is Languard's insane asylum. Only the wealthy can afford to house a "troubled" friend or family member within.
70. Sailors have reported odd things moving in the Svart's waters and several times have reported rent fishing nets and the like. (False rumour—maybe.)
71. If an adventurer needs money quickly, the Spinning Coin (location S9) is a good pawnbroker to visit. If you want to buy something interesting, it's also a good place to visit.
72. Faint lights are sometimes seen at night out on the water near the Murkwater's mouth where it issues forth from Gloamhold's benighted depths. Are these the spirits of all those who have died within, or is there a more mundane explanation?
73. The duke—working through intermediaries—sometimes hires adventurers for specific, deniable purposes. In Languard, there are always wheels within wheels.
74. Darlen's faithful are ever vigilant—some say too vigilant—against evil's rise. While they are a force for good, some of the faithful see evil where it is not.
75. If you've got cheap, poor-quality gems to sell, visit Arlo's Stones (location L4); Arlo will buy practically anything—but be prepared for hard haggling and low prices.
76. There are caves, tunnels and sewers under High City—that's why it doesn't smell as much as the rest of the city! The Dark Wardens patrol them to keep it safe from thieves and worse.
77. The poor, desperate and stupid visit the Well of Dreams (location S12) believing it to be a wishing well—the fools!
78. If you want to find out what is going on in the city, visit Saren the Ear (location S14) in the Shambles. Beware, though, some people think he is one of the living dead! (Partially false rumour.)
79. The elder vampire Kaarlo Tenhunen and his servants have returned to the city after an absence of a century. (Partially false rumour.) The people are scared.
80. If you want spell components—components that the fainthearted would balk at handling—Ruusu's Rathole (location F7) is a good place to visit.
81. Old legends of doubtful veracity name the ruined chapel of Kingsfail (location F5) as the birthplace of the "Great King of the World."
82. Hard Bay's waters are treacherous and stormy; many wrecks litter the bay's floor—the holds of some of these sunken ships yet hold glittering treasures!
83. Something terrible—beyond the diseased beggars, stray dogs and ever-present rats—lives in or under the tenebrous Mongrel Alley (location S8).
84. The Twisted Wreath (location OR2) is cursed. It was once a hanging tree, but now the only thing that hangs from the lightning-riven tree are small and hideous doll effigies that sporadically appear for no apparent reason.
85. One of the best places to meet adventurers in the city is the Orc's Head (location L6). This inn is always busy and brawls there are not uncommon.
86. The Murkwater has a powerful tidal bore. Time it right and you can ride it deep into Gloamhold. Time it wrong and your ship will be smashed to pieces.
87. Dangerously unstable, the Shard—the great ruined tower looming above Greystone—will collapse anytime now—perhaps during the next savage winter storm.
88. When Varma Karmala led her doomed expedition to the Mottled Spire in 533 NR, she awoke a slumbering evil and released a swarm of monstrous vampire bats that still hunt throughout the hills.
89. Greystone's harbour is haunted, but not by ghosts. The crabs there have grown large and predatory on an unknown but plentiful diet. They live in huge swarms and can strip a body to the bone in minutes.
90. Storms often savage Hard Bay and the many settlements dotting the coast, but the storms have been getting stronger lately. Some suggest powerful magic is at work.
91. The ghosts of all those who drown in Hard Bay slumber in its depths. During violent storms, they swim to the surface to search for fellow mariners to drag down to their watery deaths.
92. Hard Bay is so unpredictable because Serat—Mistress of Storms—dwells in its briny depths. Her tempestuous moods affect its tides and currents. Woe to those who do not placate her before setting out on their voyage.
93. Years ago, the duke directed that a tunnel be dug under the Svart to connect High City to the rest of Languard. The project failed—the workings kept flooding—and the project was abandoned. Some say parts of the tunnel is still accessible and that foul things live therein.
94. Not all of Languard's folks are goodly and upstanding. Some worship dark powers and meet in secret in hidden cellars, buried fanes and forbidden chambers to practise their fell rites.
95. A hidden city of dripping stones and hideous ziggurats squats at the centre of benighted Gloamhold. It is called the Twilight City, and only the bravest and most skilled adventurers have any hope of reaching it.
96. The Knights of the Black Swan are an extinct order once extant in the city. Dedicated to Tuonetar, the Maiden of Death, they saved the city when the dead rose from their dismal graves during Languard's Haunted Years two centuries ago. Some believe the knighthood is not extinct—it is merely dormant.
97. The traitorous Bloodstained Prince—Ilasual Nenonen—is not dead! Rather, he lurks somewhere below the city, ceaselessly plotting to wrest dominion over all of Ashlar from his family!
98. Roll again on this list; the characters are linked to the rumour in some way. Re-roll any event that does not support their involvement.
99. Roll twice on this list and combine the results. Ignore any additional roll of 99 or 100.
100. Roll thrice on this list and combine the results. Ignore any additional roll of 99 or 100.

MAJOR EVENTS IN LANGUARD

Almost 8,000 souls call Languard home, and visitors to the city can vastly inflate this number. All have hopes, dreams, fears and goals. The city is rarely peaceful and does not exist in stasis, only coming to life when the characters are present. (Although the characters are at the centre of the campaign, the characters' doings are not the only events occurring in the city). Languard is Ashlar's busy, thrumming heart and many events, both minor and major, occur in the city.

- **Minor Events:** People die, babies are born, nonfatal accidents happen, rivalries large and small flare up or die, and more. Such events are unlikely to interest the characters; ad-lib such as necessary.
- **Major Events:** Merchants visit, adventurers carouse, fortunes are won and lost, fires break out, monsters prey on the populace and so on. The pirates of the Picaroon Peninsula may even sail close to the city in hopes of falling upon a merchant ship and carrying away valuable cargo! All such events are known throughout the city.

Some events are notable in one way or another—if only because they are a change from the norm—and may become so widely known that the characters hear of them. Some such events occur in the background—they add nothing to the campaign but verisimilitude and flavour. Others could introduce a notable NPC, lead to a memorable side quest or serve as a hook into the party's next adventure.

GENERATING RANDOM EVENTS

Every game week, there is a 50% chance that a major event occurs. Use the list below to determine what happens or design your own event. Use these events as a guide and starting point. If the characters seem uninterested in the event, move on., but if the characters are intrigued and get involved, flesh out the event to bring the setting alive in the players' imaginations. The characters might make new friends (or enemies) due to the event, or perhaps it may even lead to a short adventure.

1. **Bad Weather:** The weather is bad for the time of year. This period of bad weather lasts 1d10 days.
2. **Terrible Weather:** The weather is terrible, and a savage storm blows in from the Bitter Sea. Winds are high, the rain is torrential, and thunder and lightning rend the sky. Some low-lying parts of the Fishshambles may suffer minor flooding if the high winds coincide with high tide to push waves up the Svart. The storm lasts 2d12 hours, and no boats are put to sea until the storm abates.
3. **Good Weather:** Languard and its environs enjoy excellent weather appropriate for the time of year. This period of good weather lasts 1d10 days and provides a window of opportunity to sail across Hard Bay to Gloamhold with little fear of storm or shipwreck.

4. **Missing Adventurers:** Another band of adventurers is missing in Gloamhold. The group sailed across the bay a week ago and has not been heard from since. Most folk assume they are all dead.
5. **Pirates:** Pirate ships have been seen near the mouth of Hard Bay; such predators often lurk there in hopes of catching a heavily laden merchant ship.
6. **Failed Robbery:** Someone tried to break into High Bank (location H6) last night. Passersby report hearing screaming coming from inside the bank and the later presence of a patrol of the City Watch (who bore away the thief's broken corpse in a small wagon).
7. **Troublesome Tracks:** The Dark Wardens have reported discovering troublingly strange tracks in High City's sewers, and several of the group are missing. Chancellor Marja Pasanen (location H1) is considering calling on outside assistance to get to the bottom of matters.
8. **Spate of Drownings:** A spate of drownings besets the Fishshambles. Over the last week, eight bodies have been pulled from the Svart; the cause of the drownings—bad luck or another, darker reason—remains unknown.
9. **Found Treasure:** Just last week, an adventurer browsing the shelves at Raisa's Curios (location S1) found a magical scroll tucked into the back of an old travelogue. The book only cost a couple of silver—Raisa had no idea what was hidden inside!
10. **Shambles Murders:** More murders than normal are happening in the Shambles. The increase could be nothing more than random chance, or the local street gangs could be fighting for influence and territory.
11. **A Wondrous Auction:** Raisa of Raisa's Curios (location S1) is planning one of her famous auctions next week. Every now and then, she secures magic items to auction, and tickets to the event are always sought after by adventurers with spare gold.
12. **Fatal Brawl:** Brawls at the Orc's Head (location L6) are not uncommon, but deaths during a brawl at the infamous adventurers' haunt are rare. Last night, a brawl broke out—no one can agree on how or why—and afterwards, the inn's owner, Einar Salonen, discovered the body of a half-elf with a dagger buried deep in her back. The watch was summoned, but no one has admitted to seeing the fatal blow. Einar is incensed.
13. **Ghost Sighted:** The ghost of Vonya Madann has been seen on Vonya's Span (location L2) again! In life, Vonya was an alcoholic, and the pungent aroma of dwarven ale always heralds her appearance.
14. **Sinking Houses:** Several of the houses on Water Lane in the Fishshambles have begun to lean dangerously. The whole area is prone to flooding and subsidence, and the buildings will soon collapse.
15. **Bandits in the Ochels:** Bandits have been reported to again be lurking in the western fringes of the Ochels. No one has seen the bandits, but hunters have reported discovering several large campsites and the tracks of at least a score of armed warriors.

16. **Thunder and Lightning:** Although the weather has been calm recently, several travellers on the Ridgeway have reported nighttime thunder and lightning seeming to emanate from the general vicinity of the Black Tower! What are the wizards therein up to?
17. **Dead Inmates:** Several patients at the Screaming Halls (location H15) have died in recent months, and three are reported missing.
18. **Harpies' Attack:** The merchant ship *Marketta* limped into Languard's harbour yesterday. The much-reduced crew told of a storm that pushed them dangerously close to the Salt Mire and a flock of harpies that attacked the ship. Luckily, a bard was onboard and helped some of the crew resist the harpys' fell song. The survivors talk of mounting an expedition to save their mates from the harpys' terrible clutches.
19. **Smoke on the Water:** Out to sea, a spire of grey and black smoke rises above the horizon—something is burning. The smoke rises for much of the day. The next day, a rowboat arrives in Languard Harbour—these are the survivors of the merchant ship *Sun Chaser*. They tell of a savage attack by orc and human pirates and their desperate defence. They think the pirates took captives. Anyone sailing out to the site of the attack discovers nothing but a field of floating wreckage.
20. **Derelict Ship:** A fire-damaged ship has been spotted floating off the Shoalstone. Talk is rife about the ship, its fate and what treasures could lie in its hold. Several adventurers are thought to be planning a trip to the derelict, but they have yet to find a sailor brave enough to take them there. (For the characters, this could become an exciting race against time as they race to beat rival adventurers to the prize.)
21. **Good Catch:** The fisherfolk of Fishshambles are in a rare good mood—their daily catches have been great for a week. The district is abuzz with activity; at night, the nearby taverns are filled with celebrating fisherfolk.
22. **Bad Catch:** The daily catch has been bad for a week or so. A bad catch means the fisherfolks' income suffers and prices rise making it harder for the poor to eat. Tempers fray, and arguments become more frequent in Fishshambles. The local taverns are quiet. Adventurers seeking to hire a fishing boat are not short of options until the fish return.
23. **Fire:** A fire breaks out in Low City or the Shambles. The blaze leaps to several other buildings before it is brought under control. The fire's plume of smoke is visible all over the city.
24. **Murder:** A prominent merchant in High City is murdered during what appears to be a burglary gone wrong.
25. **Returned Adventurers:** A (depleted) band of adventurers returns from a foray into Gloamhold's benighted depths. The haggard survivors bring with them the corpses of their two fallen companions. They also carry bulging sacks, and the contents of said sacks are the subject of much conjecture.
26. **Merchant Hiring:** The merchant Ilja Tiera puts word about the city that he is looking to hire a half-dozen adventurers to guard him and his vessel on an upcoming trading expedition to Solonor Island, several hundred miles to the south and west. Many dangers lurk in the Bitter Sea, and the merchant is willing to pay the right folk well for their services.
27. **Blazing Greystone:** Last night, several folk reported seeing an explosion of fire and light amid Greystone's shunned ruins. The abandoned village is over five miles away across Hard Bay's turbulent waters, so the blaze must have been intense.
28. **Bad Dreams:** A rash of bad dreams sweeps the city. The people most affected are the poets and artists, although several wizards and priests also report having dreams of the most horrible sort. Some dreamers report merely a lurking fear of terror, while others have vague recollections of swimming deep underwater amid a ruined city of fearsome aspect. Other folk report feeling enmeshed in cloying darkness.
29. **Terrible Weather:** The weather is terrible, and a savage storm blows in from the Bitter Sea. Winds are high, the rain is torrential, and thunder and lightning rend the sky. Low-lying parts of the Fishshambles may suffer minor flooding as the high winds coincide with high tide to push waves up the Svart. The storm lasts 2d12 hours, and no boats are put to sea until the storm abates.
30. **Good Weather:** Languard and its environs enjoy excellent weather appropriate to the season. This period of good weather lasts 1d10 days and provides a window of opportunity to sail across Hard Bay to Gloamhold's crumbling ruin with little fear of storm or shipwreck.
31. **Shooting Vile Star:** A so-called Vile Star flashed across the night sky last night. Some folk say it crashed into the sea, while others believe it fell to earth somewhere in the Mottled Spire. Such otherworldly visitors often comprise fabulously rare and valuable metals much sought after by adventurers and artisans alike.
32. **Gloomy Clouds Gather:** Towering banks of dark clouds hang over the Mottled Spire, casting the peninsula into deep gloom. The clouds linger for almost a week and strangely resist the influence of the winds coming in from the Bitter Sea.
33. **The Duke Goes Hunting:** The duke has gone hunting in the Ochels. The procession of the duke, his companions, guards and servants processing out of the city via Market Street and Duke's Gate (location G4) is a spectacle much described in the days afterwards. No one seems to know if the duke is hunting boar or bandits...
34. **Loud Explosions:** The sound of several loud explosions rolls over the city from Castle Languard's (location H1) ramparts. The noise shocks many people and might cause panic among newcomers to the city. There is a mundane cause, however: the garrison is practising firing the duke's new wonder weapons—several huge cannons that command the city's approaches.

35. **Rash of Murders:** Over the period of a few weeks, a rash of gruesome murders sweeps the city. The murders are confined to Low City and the Shambles, and the city watch seems helpless to apprehend the murderer(s). After a week, small bands of armed citizens begin to roam the streets at night, and tensions climb. The killings cease after the ninth victim is found.
36. **Ship Fire:** One of the ships at anchor in the Svart's estuary catches fire late in the evening. The fire blazes for hours, and crowds gather to watch from the docks. None of the crew make it to shore, and by the time the fire dies, the ship is burnt down to the waterline.
37. **Plague:** A corpse riddled with plague is found in the depths of the Shambles in a ruined building. The priests at the Father's Hall (location T2) investigate and use divine magics to cure the two terrified beggars who found the body. The city holds its breath to see if the two beggars infected anyone before they sought help from Conn's faithful. Lurid stories of the plague outbreak of 304 NR circulate through the city.
38. **Pod of Whales:** A pod of whales is seen off the Mottled Spire's north coast. Several fisherfolk put to sea hoping to catch a straggler, but all return empty-handed. The pod remains in the area for a week before disappearing.
39. **Sudden Storm:** A sudden storm blows up overnight, and heavy winds and rain lash the city and its environs. The next morning, the weather returns to normal, and so the fisherfolk head out on the morning tide. When they return, some of the fisherfolk report discovering a floating patch of debris at Hard Bay's mouth. The debris seems to have come from a large ocean-going vessel that did not survive the storm.
40. **Audacious Theft:** News of an audacious theft at the Fane of the Waves Eternal (location T1) spreads quickly through the city. Rumours speak of a missing sacred trident and a baffled but outraged clergy. Characters visiting the temple discover the clergy are offering a handsome reward for the trident's safe return. The only clue to the weapon's whereabouts is the sighting of several odd shapes in the waters around the church during the night of the theft.
41. **Execution Day:** This month's execution day is fast approaching, and excitement grips the city—several murderers, a witch and a demonologist are all rumoured to be meeting their ends in a variety of terrible, painful ways. Their executions are certain to draw a large crowd.
42. **Visiting Noble:** Wido Gall—ruler of the town of Dulwich—is in the city. Rumourmongers suggest Wido is here to press his claim with the duke for the contested village of Longbridge. There is a 50% chance that Wido's rival, Hilduin Lorsch, is also in Languard. See #43.
43. **Visiting Noble:** Hilduin Lorsch—lord of the village of Woodridge—is in the city. Rumourmongers suggest Hilduin is here to press his claim with the duke for the contested village of Longbridge. There is a 50% chance that Hilduin's rival, Wido Gall, is also in the city. See #42.
44. **Masked Ball:** Duke Armas Nenonen is to hold another masked ball at Castle Languard (location H1) in a month's time, and all the great and good of Ashlar will attend. Other folk—wealthy merchants, famed adventurers and the like—are usually invited to the balls, and speculation is rife as to who is on this event's list.
45. **Escape:** The notorious bandit, Sipro Valta, has escaped from Castle Languard's (location H1) dungeons. He was scheduled for execution for a long list of heinous crimes, and his escape is a serious embarrassment for the duke. Anyone catching Sipro (preferably alive) will surely receive a large reward.
46. **Missing Adventurers:** Another band of adventurers is missing in Gloamhold. The group sailed across the bay two weeks ago and has not been heard from since.
47. **Good Catch:** The fisherfolk of Fishshambles are in a rare good mood—their daily catches have been bountiful for a week. The district is abuzz with activity; at night, the taverns are filled with celebrating fisherfolk. A fisherfolk even pulled up an oddly carved figurine with his catch. He shows the horribly misshapen figurine to several people and then promptly disappears.
48. **Bad Catch:** The daily catch has been bad for a week or so. A bad catch means the fisherfolks' income suffers and prices rise making it harder for the poor to eat. Tempers fray, and arguments become more frequent in Fishshambles. The local taverns are quiet. Adventurers seeking to hire a fishing boat are not short of options—at least until the fish return.
49. **Fire:** A fire breaks out in Low City or the Shambles and is not easily contained. The blaze leaps to several other buildings before it is brought under control. The fire's plume of smoke is visible from all over the city.
50. **Sinkhole:** Yesterday, a large sinkhole opened up under a road off Abbey Way in High City. The hole appeared overnight, so no one was hurt, but the event is being taken seriously. The Dark Wardens are preparing to investigate the hole and what lies below before labourers fill it in. Their investigation will likely not occur for several days, though, and several groups of adventurers are thought to be plotting their own unsanctioned explorations.
51. **Bandits in the Ochels:** A large group of bandits are seen in the western fringes of the Ochels. Travel on the Ridgeway between Languard and the Black Tower lessens as a result.
52. **Bandits on the Great South Road:** Reports of bandits preying on travellers on the Great South Road have got Ashlar's merchants nervous. Some hire extra guards for their caravans while all call for the duke to do something about this threat.
53. **Visiting Adventurers:** A new band of adventurers has arrived in the city. From a distant land, this group spends gold like water and immediately becomes popular in the city's taverns and inns. After a week, they abruptly head south to the Forest of Gray Spires.

54. **Pirates:** Pirate ships have been seen near the mouth of Hard Bay; such predators often lurk there in hopes of catching a slow, heavily laden merchant ship.
55. **Lightless Ship:** Several fisherfolk report seeing a ship in Hard Bay running without any lights. The sleek, oceangoing ship was seen two nights ago in the environs of Greystone and Gloamhold.
56. **Smugglers:** Smuggling is rife in Ashlar, and Languard is no exception. This state of affairs is said to have finally roused the duke to action. More city watch patrols are seen in the docks and Fishshambles, and customs and excise officials search more ships. Such a state of affairs could inconvenience the characters, who may have to prove they are not smugglers if they return from Gloamhold laden with booty.
57. **Lords' Council:** The duke has summoned Ashlar's nobles to a special conclave, and over the next week, the various lords and ladies of Ashlar's towns and villages trickle into the city. This influx of wealth and influence brings opportunities for the city's merchants and artisans. (One or more of the nobles could have other reasons for visiting Languard, and they may require the services of a group of adventurers.)
58. **Riot:** A riot breaks out in the Shambles for some reason and spreads into Low City. The watch attempts to constrain the rioters, but much property damage and theft result from the rioters' actions. The riot could be caused by over-taxation, the death of a popular citizen and so on. It could also be cover for an audacious theft by the Shadow Masks.
59. **A Wondrous Auction:** Raisa of Raisa's Curios (location S1) is planning one of her famous auctions next week. Every now and then, she secures magic items to auction, and tickets to the event are always sought after by adventurers with spare gold.
60. **Fire in Greystone:** Last night, night owls saw the light of a large fire coming from somewhere in Greystone's environs. The blaze lasted for hours, and news of it slowly makes its way through the city the next day. Speculation is intense: was the fire a signal from trapped adventurers—such has happened before—was it a smugglers' ship aflame, or is there another cause?
61. **Derelict Ship:** A derelict ship of curiously archaic design has been spotted floating a mile or so south of the Mottled Spire where the Murkwater flows out of Gloamhold. Talk is rife about the ship, its fate and what treasures could lie in its hold. Several adventurers are thought to be planning a trip out to the derelict, but they have yet to find a sailor brave enough to take them there. (This could become an exciting race against time for the characters as they race to get to the wreck first.)
62. **Captured Smugglers:** One of Ashlar's warships caught a smuggler's vessel two nights ago near the dismal village of Coldwater. After a brisk chase and short fight, the smugglers surrendered, and the ship was towed back to Languard to be inspected and searched.
63. **Gloomy Clouds Gather:** Towering banks of dark clouds hang over the Mottled Spire, casting the peninsula into deep gloom. The clouds linger for almost a week and strangely resist the influence of the winds coming in from the Bitter Sea. Some fisherfolk report seeing odd lights near the Murkwater's mouth.
64. **Cultists Captured:** Last night, through a strange but fortuitous series of events, the city watch stumbled on a cult in the midst of a terrible, sinister ritual in the cellar of a house in High City. Several cultists fled through a door that has so far resisted all attempts to open.
65. **Good Catch:** The fisherfolk of Fishshambles are in a rare good mood—their daily catches have been excellent for a week. The district is abuzz with activity, and at night, the nearby taverns are filled with celebrating fisherfolk.
66. **Bad Catch:** The daily catch has been bad for a week or so. A bad catch means the fisherfolks' income suffers and prices rise, making it harder for the poor to eat. Tempers fray, and arguments become more frequent in Fishshambles. The local taverns are quiet. Adventurers seeking to hire a fishing boat are not short of options—at least until the fish return.
67. **Bloody Sacrifice:** The naked body of a horribly mutilated man has been found on the edge of the Shambles. The man had clearly suffered terribly before he died, and the discovery has the folk of the Shambles on edge. The city watch has made no progress in bringing the guilty party or parties to justice.
68. **Dolphins in the Harbour:** Three dolphins have been spotted in the Svart's estuary near the Dreaming Spires. Several fisherfolk have tried to catch them but thus far have had no luck.
69. **Scaly Body Washed Up:** The torso and legs of a peculiarly scaled humanoid have been dragged from the Svart's foul waters near the Wrecks. This discovery has inevitably led to further mutterings about the Takolen and their foul practices.
70. **Shambles Murders:** More murders than normal have been happening in the Shambles over the last few weeks, and the city watch seems uninterested in stamping out the violence. The increase could be nothing more than random chance, or street gangs could be fighting for influence and territory. The city watch finally stirs itself to action when the violence leaches out of the Shambles and into Low City proper.
71. **Torrential Rains:** Torrential rain batters Languard and its surrounds for several days. In short order, Languard's unpaved streets turn into quagmires, and flooding is reported on the Great South Road where it skirts the southern fringe of the Ochels.
72. **Exceptional Charity:** For the last two days, a woman of obvious wealth and breeding has been giving away large sums of silver to the city's poor. Rumours of her sighting now whip the poor into a frenzy as they rush to her supposed location. In one instance, two old folk were trampled to death by the crowd.

73. **Swordsman Runs Amok:** Yesterday, a swordsman ran amok in High City. The man seemed to be nothing more than a merchant, but he killed almost a dozen folk before being brought down by a volley of crossbow bolts. The man was reported to be screaming and frothing at the mouth. Because the accident occurred in High City, the watch has launched a full investigation.
74. **Famed Bandit Captured:** The famed bandit Yllö Toivettu has been captured on the fringes of the Salt Mire by a band of adventurers pretending to be merchants. The adventurers have claimed the substantial reward put up by the guild of Freetraders, and Yllö is sure to play a prominent role in the next Execution Day.
75. **Arson:** A warehouse in the Fishshambles burnt down last night. Luckily, there was no wind, and the warehouse collapsed into the Svart, thus, the fire did not spread. Some say the fire was deliberate as the warehouse's collapse into the Svart seems exceptionally fortuitous.
76. **Found Treasure:** Last week, an adventurer browsing the shelves at Raisa's Curios (location S1) found a magic potion tucked into an old pouch. The pouch only cost a couple of silver—Raisa had no idea what was inside!
77. **Island Fires:** Many small, uninhabited islands, most nothing more than steep-sided chunks of wave-lashed rock, dot Hard Bay. Curiously, in recent weeks, blazing fires have been spotted on several of the islands. Rumours of powerful weather magics, nameless cults and so on have predictably followed each such sighting.
78. **Odd Sounds in the Catacombs:** In recent weeks, several mourners interring their deceased loved ones in the catacombs below the Father's Hall (location T2) report hearing odd sounds coming from inside the catacomb's walls. The first reports were dismissed as the imaginings of grief-stricken mourners, but the number of incidences steadily rises. (Soon, public calls for the clergy to investigate will be impossible to ignore.)
79. **Something Large in Hard Bay:** Several fisherfolk have recently reported seeing something large and indistinct moving beneath their boats in Hard Bay. Whatever it is, the creature is huge; several times, fisherfolk have pulled up the shredded remains of their nets after being dragged some considerable distance by the powerful aquatic creature.
80. **Taxes Rising:** The Nenonens are ever in need of money to finance their realm, and the duke's officials have just announced a new tax on wealth brought into the city by adventurers and the like. Full details have yet to be announced, but resentment and grumblings amongst the city's adventurers have already begun.
81. **Guards Wanted:** The Guild of Freetraders is advertising for skilled and trustworthy guards to protect a large merchant caravan leaving Languard in a few weeks. The caravan, designed to showcase the guild's offerings, will travel the length and breadth of Ashlar, visiting the towns of Dunstone and Dulwich and many of the duchy's villages.



82. **Escape:** The witch, Lyylikki Rasantaja, found guilty of trafficking with foul and dark powers, has disappeared from her cell under Castle Languard. She was scheduled for execution next month, and her disappearance has caused an uproar. The duke's officials have announced a large reward for her recapture.
83. **The Hideous Witch:** An ugly and terrible evil witch, the hunchbacked and hideous Old Toivottu Vilj, lives somewhere on or near Water Lane. She was thought long dead, but a spate of missing children in the area suggests she might still be alive. The locals are desperate for their children's safe return, but the city watch has thus far failed to help.
84. **Retiring Adventurer:** The adventurer Lastikka Pellervoinen is retiring after a decades-long career. Lastikka has no need of various possessions, including some magic items, and will shortly be selling them off. This news has garnered considerable attention from Languard's adventuring populace as Lastikka enjoyed considerable success over her long career.
85. **Good Catch:** The fisherfolk of Fishshambles are in a rare good mood—their daily catches have been excellent for a week. The district is abuzz with activity, and at night, the nearby taverns are filled with celebrating fisherfolk.
86. **Bad Catch:** The daily catch has been bad for a week or so. A bad catch means the fisherfolks' income suffers and prices rise, making it harder for the poor to eat. Tempers fray, and arguments become more frequent in Fishshambles. The local taverns are quiet. Adventurers seeking to hire a fishing boat are not short of options—at least until the fish return.
87. **Visiting Noble:** Members of one of Ashlar's noble families are in the city on business. They may be here to petition the duke, access services such as spellcasting, fine tailoring, and so on unavailable at home, or have a problem and need the services of an adventurer or two.
88. **Returned Adventurers:** Two adventurers have returned from a foray into Gloamhold's benighted depths. The two had to abandon the corpses of their companions in the dungeon's eternal dark but managed to bring forth four bulging sacks; the contents of said sacks are the subject of much conjecture.
89. **Rescue Needed:** An adventurer, Sakari Purho, needs help. Sakari is part of an adventuring group. His companions recently travelled to Greystone's cursed ruins without him—he was engaged in spell research at the time. His friends are overdue, and he is trying to assemble a rescue party; unfortunately, his funds are depleted, and he is reliant on strangers' goodwill.
90. **Grisly Doings:** Someone has been stealing body parts from the remains of the criminals hung from Traitor's Gate (location G3). Folk inevitably blame necromancers or ghoulish folk determined to steal a grisly souvenir. In a bid to stop this foul practice, the city watch has posted extra guards in Low Market (location L1) at night.
91. **The Duke in Disguise:** It has long been suspected that the duke and members of his family go about the city in disguise. Several folk swear they saw the duke in the Shambles last week, while another attests they saw him coming out of a dingy backstreet bookbinder and seller in Low City.
92. **Pirates in Languard:** A pirate ship, the *Bloody Wyvern*, is in Languard under a flag of truce! What this means is a matter of intense discussion. The ship is anchored in the Svart's estuary with one of the duke's warships—*Repulse*—in close attendance.
93. **Powerful Storm:** A powerful storm blows in from the north. It batters the coast, Hard Bay and Languard. Heavy waves and powerful winds assail the city. Setting sail is close to impossible, and the rigging of several ships is damaged. Low-lying areas in the Fishshambles flood. The storm lasts for 1d3 days. While it rages, only those in desperate need venture outside.
94. **Assassination Attempt:** Someone tries to slay Duke Armas Nenonen with a poisoned crossbow bolt. The attempt fails, but the assassin escapes. The duke orders the city to be sealed until the culprit is caught. This has immediate consequences for the city's fisherfolk, merchants and so on—all are trapped within the walls and cannot carry on their normal business. After a week or so, the tension throughout the city is palpable.
95. **Dragon Spotted:** The crews of several merchant ships report seeing a large, red-scaled dragon flying westwards early the day before yesterday. The dragon did not bother either vessel, and the crews believe this is because they immediately made large offerings to Serat by throwing cargo, a stowaway and treasure overboard.
96. **Bloodless Corpse:** A bloodless corpse was discovered yesterday morning near Abbey Road in High City. Commonfolk who saw the body are convinced a vampire is to blame. (Some openly fear that Kaarlo Tenhunen has returned to the city to wreak his terrible, bloody revenge after he was forced to flee a century ago.) If something is not done, panic may grip the city.
97. **Bravest of the Brave:** Sir Ozloc the Brave is reported to be in Languard! The peerless hero—the only survivor of several adventuring parties—is said to be in the city trying to gather support for the defence of Dunstone. A terrible dragon lairs west of the borderland town, and Sir Ozloc is the only one to have survived an encounter with the beast. His lurid tales of the dragon's size and power have entertained many but have resulted in few volunteers thus far heading west.
98. Roll again on this list; the characters are directly involved in the event in some way. Re-roll any event that does not support their involvement.
99. Roll twice more on this list and combine the results. Ignore any additional roll of 99 or 100.
100. Roll thrice more on this list and combine the results. Ignore any additional roll of 99 or 100.

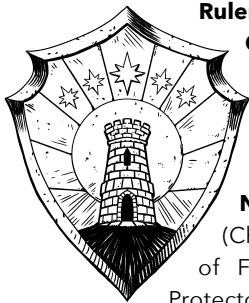
ADVENTURER'S GUIDE TO LANGUARD

LANGUARD AT A GLANCE

Storied Languard is a noisy, dirty place. Here, amid broad, muddy streets teeming with life and shadow-mantled, danger-filled alleyways, there is little beneath the sun that cannot be had somewhere—for a price.

Languard stands hard against Hard Bay's turbulent waters. To the north, across the bay, lies the Mottled Spire's brooding spray-drenched mass, the curse-haunted ruins of Greystone and Gloamhold's doom-wreathed halls.

Few Languardians overly concern themselves with the brooding terrors lurking within Gloamhold's halls. But for others, the legendary, benighted ruin draws them to Languard as a moth to a flame. For within Languard's stout walls live, plot and die an ever-changing hodgepodge of adventurers, freebooters and mercenaries lured here by the treasures said to lie but a scant few miles to the north.



Ruler: Duke Armas Nenonen

Government: Overlord

Population: 7,923 (6,614 humans, 287 dwarves, 189 elves, 236 half-elves, 264 half-orcs, 189 halflings, 144 gnomes)

Notable Folk: Atro Ahokas (Chancellor of the Worshipful Company of Freetraders), Elmo Rekunen (First Protector of Ashlar), Hannele Auvuinen (High Priestess of Conn), Heimo Karppanen (High Priest of Abarin), Marja Pasanen (Chancellor of Ashlar), Taneli Eronen (Serat's Stormlord), Taneli Laitnen (Guildmaster of the Shadow Masks), Varma Nikkonen (Lady Protector [High Priestess of Darlen]), Veli Nikkonen (Captain of the Watch)

Notable Religions: Abarin, Conn, Darlen, Serat

Alignments: LN, N, NG

Languages: Common (commoners), Elvish (nobles, high society, the courts and so on)

Resources & Industry: Fishing, commerce, general industry

Ashlar's capital is a busy, noisy place filled with opportunity and danger. As Ashlar's only city and largest port, it is the duchy's administrative and mercantile heart. Much wealth and power are concentrated in the city.

At some point or another, most adventurers in Ashlar visit Languard—if only to rest, relax and refit between adventures. However, Languard is the closest settlement to Gloamhold's benighted, doom-drenched depths. Many adventurers, sell-swords and mercenaries come to Languard. For such folk, this proximity offers the greatest opportunities for fame, gold and advancement in Ashlar. But for the careless or foolish, or the merely unlucky, Languard offers just as many opportunities for infamy, madness and death. For all its glittering lights and soft comforts, Languard is a place of lurking fear, grinding poverty and gradual decay.

LIE OF THE LAND

Sprawling over a series of rocky bluffs to the north of the River Svart and across the lower-lying land south of the river, Languard is a place of great wealth and profound poverty. The great and the good dwell to the north in High City—literally above the great stink of the rest of the city, where the poor live cheek to jowl with one another—often in conditions of terrible poverty and hardship.

Languard is heavily fortified and strongly garrisoned by the Nenonen's soldiers. Set in a commanding position at Hard Bay's narrow mouth, its ramparts, siege engines and ships of war defend Ashlar from seaborne assault. Meanwhile, its high walls, lofty towers and stout gates protect it from any invasion erupting from the south. If the ever-present darkness and chaos pressing close in upon the duchy should rise to flood Ashlar with horrors, Languard will be its sanctuary of last resort.

Visitors approaching Languard likely first spy Castle Languard's towers and battlements looming above the city. Then, the spires and lofty roofs of the city's great churches and abbeys, along with the city's impressive outer defences, come into view. If the winds are blowing in the right direction, visitors will smell the city long before they pass through one of its four great gates.

From each of Languard's gates, broad and often muddy streets lead into the city. The finest houses and inns of each ward flank these roads. Therein, merchants live above their shops, sea captains rest when not voyaging, and other folk—members of the clergy, adventurers (both retired and still active) and so on—enjoy life. Narrower roads lead away from these bustling thoroughfares; along these, the houses are narrower, taller and in worse repair.

In the worst parts of the city, a tenebrous warren of alleys and tiny lanes radiate outwards from the main streets. Perpetual gloom cloaks these alleys—the jetties of the ramshackle houses almost meeting those of the house opposite high above the street. This is the Shambles. Here, down shadowed alleys and in dilapidated inns and shops, much not available in the nicer (and safer) parts of the city is on offer. Respectable folk rarely visit the Shambles.

There are worse places to live, though, than the Shambles. Where the dilapidated houses run down toward the Svart's southern bank, the Shambles blur into the Fishshambles. Here, among the tangled, reeking labyrinth of narrow alleys, dwell the city's fisherfolk and other nautical ne'er-do-wells.

However, the basest folk—the degenerate and debased Takolen—dwell in the Wrecks, a swath of waterfront dominated by rotting wharves and fetid, half-sunken boats. The Wrecks form a confused mishmash of homes, warehouses, whorehouses, taverns and other unsavoury businesses. A cancerous evil lurks within the Takolens' hearts; one day, it may ooze forth to draw Languard and its folk into a terrible, ancient darkness.

CITY LORE

A character likely knows some basic facts about Languard, its history and its people:

- As the capital of the Duchy of Ashlar, Languard is its largest and wealthiest settlement. It is also the nearest settlement of note to Gloamhold's doom-shrouded halls. As a result, many adventurers visit Languard.
- Languard is the oldest settlement in modern Ashlar, founded almost 600 years ago by the first duke, Arndul Nenonen. Castle Languard is the city's oldest structure.
- Languard is the administrative and mercantile heart of the duchy.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Some news and rumours are so widespread that a character spending any time in Languard cannot fail to hear of them:

- Ruined Greystone is cursed; a miasma of evil lies over the abandoned village, whose ruins are still visible from Languard's seaward walls.
- While Duke Armas rules the city, the Shadow Masks are a power unto themselves; only the foolish risk their attention and ire. Guildmaster Taneli Laitnen's word is law in the baser parts of town.
- Languard is a place of many competing interests; it is wise to avoid the attention of the city's powerful folk, but it is also a place of opportunity for the bold, the quick and the cunning.

THE COST OF LIVING

Tracking the cost of your every minor expense is tedious and wastes time. Using the lifestyle table below enables you to gloss over such matters. The figures below include the cost of your accommodation, food and drink and the basic repair and maintenance of your equipment. It does not preclude the payment of Languard's taxes and tariffs and does not include the costs involved with carousing, entertaining, learning rumours, paying bribes and so on.

At the start of each day, week or month, choose a lifestyle and pay the requisite amount to fund your lifestyle.

Lifestyle	DAY	WEEK	MONTH
Wretched	–	–	–
Squalid	1 sp	7 sp	28 sp
Poor	2 sp	14 sp	56 sp
Modest	1 gp	7 gp	28 gp
Comfortable	2 gp	14 gp	56 gp
Wealthy	4 gp	28 gp	112 gp
Aristocratic	10 gp +	70 gp+	280 gp +

PLACES FOR ADVENTUROUS FOLK

Languard is the largest settlement in Ashlar, and innumerable homes, shops, and other businesses lie within and without its walls. Most such places are of no interest to adventurers. A few, however, are of note to such folk. A partial list of such locales appears below:

ADVENTURER'S SERVICES & HANGOUTS

NAME	NOTES
Castoff's Sanctuary	Adventurer's sanctuary
The Arches Bazaar	Market (oddities) ¹
Sandu's Grog and Grub	Tavern (seedy; adventurers, thieves)
Urmas Aalto's House	Sage (Gloamhold)
The Dreaming Spires	University, library
Miya's Stable	Stable (normal and exotic mounts)
Old Mother Grumm's	Pastries and potions ¹
The Dark Market	Market ²
Low Market	Market ¹
The Orc's Head	Inn (adventurers)
The White Tower	Minor wizard's guild
Raisa's Curios	Bric-a-brac shop ¹
Kardagg's Discount Emporium	Cheap adventuring gear ¹
The Spinning Coin	Pawnbroker
Saren the Ear	Information broker ²

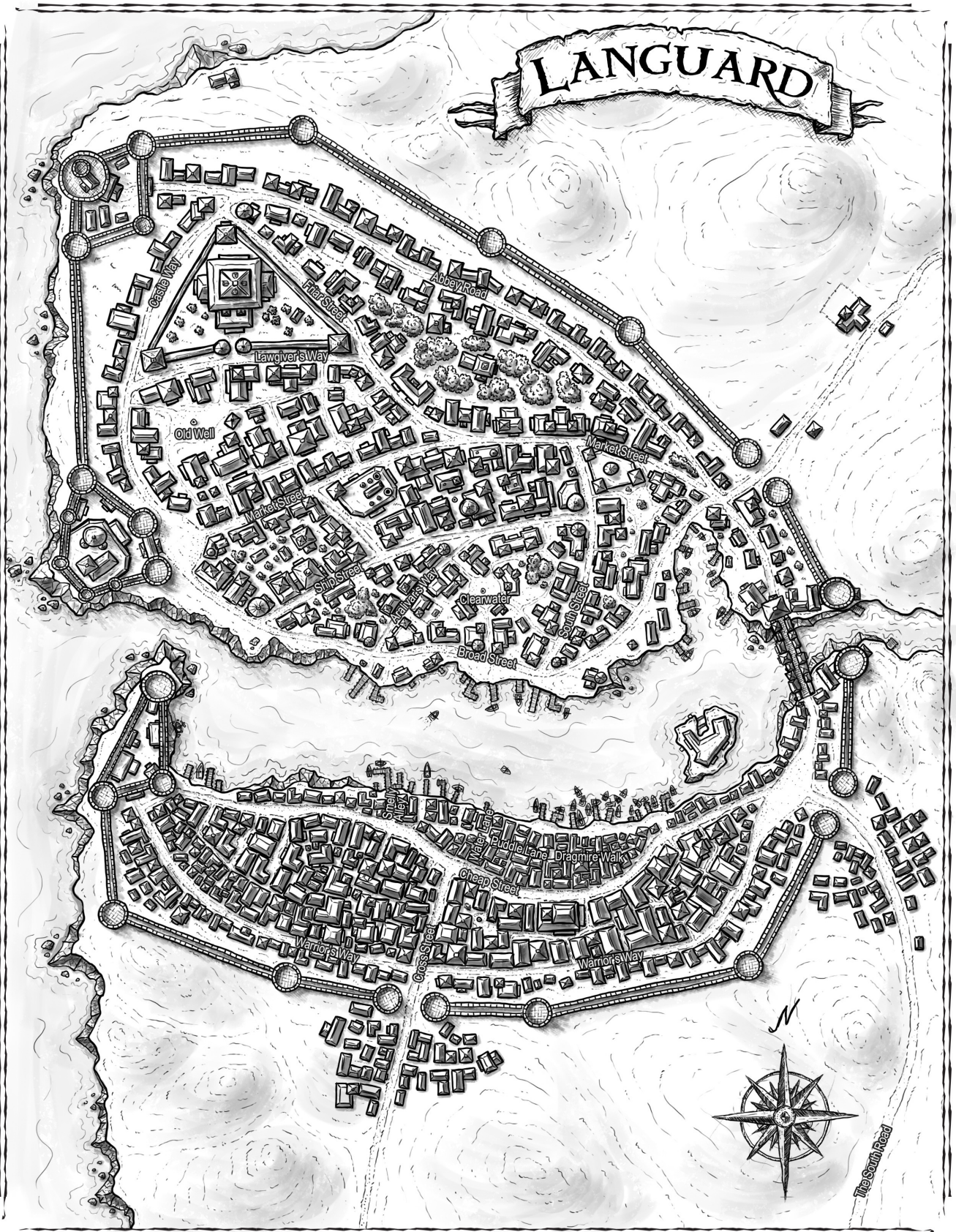
MAJOR CATHEDRALS, CHURCHES, & TEMPLES

NAME	NOTES
Shrine of the Underfolk	Church (dwarf pantheon) ^{2, 3}
The Mother's Garden	Temple (the Mother) ³
Fane of the Waves Eternal	Temple (Serat) ^{1, 3}
The Father's Hall	Cathedral (Conn) ^{1, 3}
The Great Forge	Church (Abarin) ^{1, 3}
Watcher's Spire	Temple (Darlen) ^{1, 3}

1. Magic items for sale can sometimes be found here.
2. Subterranean locale.
3. Offers healing services.

NOTABLE NEARBY ADVENTURING SITES

NAME	NOTES
Gloamhold	Benighted megadungeon of unknown extent; lies across Hard Bay
Greystone	Cursed, ruined village wreathed in rumours; lies across Hard Bay



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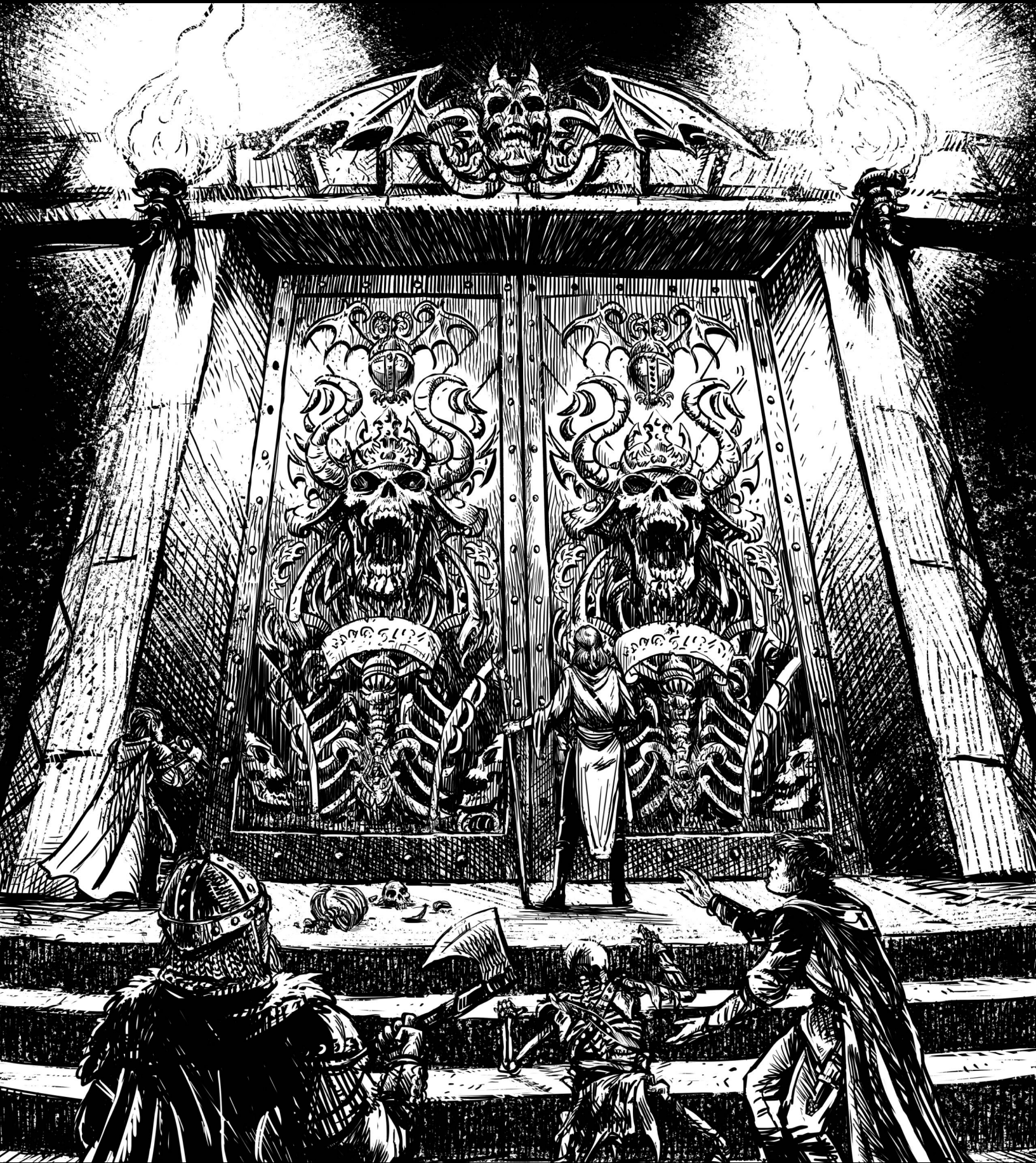
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