



VYNestra®



# DEVEROS

IN A NUTSHELL

GILES PENFOLD

## OVERVIEW

**Deveros, The Amethyst Crown** is a high fantasy 5th Edition city campaign setting publishing in 2023 after four years of development. This document, *Deveros in a Nutshell*, serves as an early insight into the world of Vynestra, the culture of the Aldarin Empire, and the metropolis of Deveros. The setting draws heavy inspiration from the culture of the Late Roman Republic; Deveros itself evokes a blend of ancient Rome and modern Venice.

Consider joining our mailing list to receive updates on when our Kickstarter goes live: [www.vynestra.com](http://www.vynestra.com).

### WHAT THIS PREVIEW DOCUMENT CONTAINS

- A brief introduction to the universe of Vynestra.
- An overview of how Vynestra works for both gamemasters and players.
- A cultural insight into the lives of the Aldarins, a fantasy group of humans inspired by the peoples of the Roman Republic.
- A preview into embers, an optional rule system for Vynestra, allowing both PCs and NPCs to ascend as demigods and attain powerful abilities.
- A select preview of spells, feats, and backgrounds from the main publications.
- A quick start guide to the city of Deveros including new rulesets, such as for bathing and making offerings to the gods.
- The full version of one of Deveros's twenty districts: Cruorse Isle, an island of gladiators, entertainment, and rife gang warfare.
- A full free adventure — “Late Shipments” — which takes PCs from level 1 to 3 while introducing them to the culture of Aldarin and the troublesome gangs of Cruorse Isle. Consider jumping right into the adventure on page 49.

### WHAT THE FULL DEVEROS BOOKS WILL CONTAIN

- A full overview of the universe of Vynestra and the Elosian continent, where the Aldarin Empire presides, with over 150 pieces of stunning art from our talented team of illustrators and cartographers.
- A deep dive into the culture of the Aldarin Empire, including extensive information on their military, religion, arcana, commerce, alliances, politics, and more.
- The entire city of Deveros, capital of the Aldarin Empire, with over 600 detailed locations and hundreds of diverse, LGBTQIA+ friendly NPCs spread across 20 districts.
- The starter adventure “Late Shipments” alongside a follow-up adventure set in Quor’s Crucible.
- Dozens of lore -rich organisations, guilds, and cults to explore alongside over 50 new monsters and humanoid enemies.
- Over 12 detailed story-driven encounters written by our talented narrative team alongside roll tables for minor encounters, district gossip, and plot hooks.
- A whole new pantheon containing 20 fully detailed deities plus numerous more minor deities.
- A number of new races/kinships, backgrounds, sub-classes, spells, feats, diseases, and magical items.
- Hundreds of unique abilities and upgrades to pre-existing spells within the ember system, allowing players to customise their characters like never before and begin on the path to become demigods.
- New optional rulesets for bathing, deific blessings, resting, death, renting and buying property, and downtime jobs.
- Culturally inspired food, drink, weapons, armour, illicit substances, potions, and much much more!



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## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of time, Fate drew upon the threads of the Void and formed wisps of elemental matter. Within the inky darkness, the Compass was formed — a four pronged mass joining the elements of fire, earth, wind, and water. At the central point of the Compass, where the four planes met in unity, came to be the Medial Plane. Upon this plane of balance is where we find ourselves, countless millennia on from the universe's formation. The first-born primordial deities have long abandoned the Compass and Fate itself has fallen silent.

A new age began just over a millenia ago, where young demigods stoked the flames of a dying world and rose as the new rulers of the Medial Plane. This event, this revival, was known as Duskfall. Now too do the flames of these demigods begin to falter as cracks in the Compass slowly develop. A collective of powerful nations stand at the helm of advancement in this waning age — the Anchor Nations — forever pushing technological advancements to the edges of known reasoning. One such nation is that of the Aldarin Empire; a deeply religious and militaristic nation whose constant expansion throughout the Medial Plane has been fueled by their heritage from Deos, The Divine Wayfarer (the most powerful deity to grace this age) and their unerring desire to rule. Deos, however, has not been sighted by his followers for over one hundred years and the Aldarins seek to claim as much territory as they can before the lingering magic of their withering forefather crumbles entirely.

<sup>cw</sup> It is here in the year 1028 PDS<sup>1</sup> that we join the Aldarins, locked in the midst of the bloody Fourth Renavic War against their age-old rivals of Jykstrav to the north. The Aldarin capital of Deveros stands strong in a tumultuous time of change for the Compass. Nations move against one another to grasp at the dwindling threads of power, each fighting over the attention of the gods. Not only has Deveros recently recovered from a devastating daimon invasion by the Verhlm Empire of the Inner Fire Plane, but it is now dividing its power to deal with pressure on multiple fronts. While Jykstrav lies on the northern border of the empire, there are threats from both the east and within, such as the ever-reaching tendrils of the Vampiric Order and the raiding armies of Menderin. The Aldarin legions are stretched thin and matters often fall to intrepid local heroes (or simply those who seek fame and fortune) to assist in a never-ending tide of internal problems.

## THE PLAYERS

Game Masters (GMs) who are new to the world of Vynestra may wish to place the player characters (PCs) upon the path of the introductory adventure: **Late Shipments**. This adventure slowly introduces the players to the culture of the Aldarins within one of the smaller districts of Deveros. The party finds themselves in Deveros during the mid-summer of 1028 PDS, dragged into a conflict between several criminal collectives. These include: the elusive spies of the empire, the Umbra Syndicate; the troublesome brigands who roam the Deveros Coast, the Brivane Pirates; and the devious collective of dhampir and vampires who pull the strings of Aldarin politics from the shadows, the Vampiric Order. Following the adventure, the PCs might eventually become mercyr — a type of imperially licensed adventurer — forming their own mercyr guild and becoming involved with the wider politics of the city. This PDF contains the Late Shipments adventure, leading the players up to 3rd Level.

At 2nd Level, the PCs unlock access to *embers*, a unique ability system within the Vynestran universe. Embers are formed of divine threads woven into the souls of sentient creatures. These embers manifest as markings upon the body, rousing from their dormant state in reaction to times of hardship experienced by the host. People who develop these abilities become known as *emberblood*. Ember markings tie the emberblood's soul to one or more deities from whom the wielder may draw extraordinary powers. Players are free to customise their ember's appearance and choose the deities it draws power from, setting them on the path to become demigods under one of their chosen gods' patronage. An emberblood is not necessarily a worshipper of a deity, however, simply someone whose soul contains the soul threads of one or more deities.

Embers are an entirely optional system with rulesets provided to allow GMs full customisation. This document will showcase an overview of embers using the default ember settings of Vynestra, as well as examples of embers granted by some of the gods of the Medial Pantheon which may be used during the preview adventure. The final publications will showcase hundreds of separate abilities, each of which may be upgraded through a process called *charring*, where one burns their own soul to give life to the ember within them.

1) Post Dusk Shroud. The format of counting years used in the Medial Plane.



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## READING NPC TAGS

There are hundreds of thousands of Non-Player Characters (NPCs) throughout the world of Vynestra, each with their own stories to tell. NPCs come from all different walks of life, with a bountiful spectrum of kinships and genders from the far corners of the Medial Plane and beyond. This section guides you through how NPCs are tagged in this book for simple recognition of their various attributes.

*“...the stoic, elderly prophet **Rameshi Tak’haal** (LG he/him high elf sacerdos [Koshka] 9), who served Koshka loyally...”*

The above snippet introduces an NPC called Rameshi Tak’haal of the **The Fallen Emerald** from the Sala Sel’Kildarak district of Deveros. The name of a NPC is always bolded when they are introduced in a section of the book, followed either by a number of tags describing who they are in brackets or a page reference to their main block of information. There are five types of tags: Alignment, Pronouns, Kin, Class, and Additional Tags.

**Alignment.** The first tag denotes the alignment of the NPC. There are nine main alignments in Vynestra, though many characters fall through the cracks of these and sometimes border upon one or more alignments. In the cases of NPCs, the predominant alignment is described by one the following: **CG** (Chaotic Good), **CN** (Chaotic Neutral), **CE** (Chaotic Evil), **NG** (Neutral Good), **TN** (True Neutral), **LN** (Lawful Neutral), **LG** (Lawful Good), **LN** (Lawful Neutral), **LE** (Lawful Evil).

**Pronouns.** The second tag represents the pronouns of the character, which vary from NPC to NPC. Pronouns are used when referring to the NPC in the third person. Some examples of pronouns used in this book are: **He/Him**, **She/Her**, **They/Them**, and **Name**. NPCs with the pronoun “Name” are referred to by their name alone. Some NPCs use a combination of pronouns such as **He/She/They**. In these cases, the GM should use all available pronouns for that NPC interchangeably and rotate them during conversation. There are many more pronouns beyond those listed above, such as neopronouns (xe/xir) for example. If a NPC has [GF] following their pronouns, it means they are genderfluid and may shift between gender, and sometimes pronouns, over time. A [T] tag indicates that a NPC is transgender and a [NB] tag indicates a non-binary NPC.

**Kin.** This third tag represents the NPC’s biological lineage, a kinship, also known as *races* in core materials. Kinships derive exclusively from biological lineages. There are dozens of kins and sub-kins spanning across many different planes of existence.

### CARDIN THE CARDINAL

*“Salve! I’m Cardin, and this ‘ere is my butterfly buddy, Al. We’re gonna be yer guides through this preview document, sittin’ on yer shoulder the whole way through. Deveros is a tricky place to get around and yer gonna want some eyes in the sky when findin’ yer way about. Look for me peekin’ out around the book and I’ll squawk some fun facts at ye about the folk ‘round the city.*

*Huh? Me armour? I’ve been around, y’know! Flown with some of the finest gryphon legions in the empire, would ya believe? Sat on the shoulder of plenty of good Aldarin folk, and some not so good folk too. There was this one gal, ye see, an Umbra crow. Well, she got wound up in some assassination plot or somethin’... Oh, sorry! Yer not here to hear me life story. Let’s get on with the book, eh? C’mon Al, let’s help this fine reader out.”*

The most common kins are covered in the Kinship Preview on page 24.

**Class.** The final tag represents the class the NPC has trained into or the monster stat block they use for their statistics. The NPC’s level in their respective class follows the class tag. The NPC’s level modifies how many hit dice they have. For example, a 12th level sellsword will have 12d8 instead of the usual 8d8, as well as any additional health from their Constitution modifier. Modifying the hit points and hit dice of an NPC is optional and may be disregarded if needing to quickly run an NPC in combat for the party.

**Square Brackets.** Some tags have a set of square brackets following them. This indicates their affiliation to an entity or collective. There are many of these used across the book, though the most common are for religious NPCs, such as sacerdots, where the square brackets indicate the deity they worship and for magi, with the square brackets indicating the school of magic they specialise in.

**Additional Tags.** There are some additional tags which may be used for special circumstances. The *dead* tag is used to denote an NPC who is no longer living, though their soul may still exist in some capacity within the universe.

Looking back at Rameshi’s tags we therefore know the following about him: Rameshi is Lawful Good with pronouns of “he/him”. He is a high elf who uses the sacerdos NPC class, dedicated to the deity Koshka, at 9th level. This should be enough information for a GM to roleplay a character using the surrounding information within the character’s location.





# THE ALDARINS

<sup>CW</sup> “We, Aldarins, stand as a gleaming beacon of prosperity in the deceitful storm of barbarism which surrounds us.”

- Primus Caesar Helios Aldarus giving a speech to his legion before the Battle of Fellen Gorge

The sprawling grasslands of the southwestern Elosian continent thrive under the warming sunlight of Deos’s ward, tended to by his devoted descendants of the Aldarins. Deep within the throes of deific lineage, Aldarin finds itself the teeming epicentre of modern technology, commerce, and military might. Its populace spans a troublesome societal structure from a bygone era, with private citizens perpetually jostling for power and influence.

<sup>CW</sup> Seen by its citizens as a gilded mountain of bountiful culture, by its allies as a stalwart nation of unerring strength, and by its enemies as a devastating war machine hellbent on expansion, Aldarin commands a powerful presence throughout the Medial Plane. Its legions tear through the lands of those deemed lesser than their own whilst its magi delve into the depths of ancient ruins, uncovering long-lost artefacts with which to further press its arcane research. Aldarin-born emberblood — those who wield the deific powers of embers — grow to become terrifying figures of awe, rising as immensely capable commanders, destructive magi, and skilled mercenaries.

## NOTE TO THE READER

Here we give a small insight into the bountiful culture of the Aldarins, extracted from the final publications. The final publications goes into much more detail around the culture of the Aldarin people, from their architecture, laws, and taxes to their modes of transport, religious cults, and theatrical performances. The content within this document is still a work in progress and subject to change.

## CULTURE

The Aldarins represent a rich culture derived from that of ancient Rome, melded heavily with the fantastical setting of Vynestra. Politics lies at the core of the Aldarin Empire alongside the three pillars of religious, military, and arcane pursuits. Aldarins are passionate about their heritage and are immensely opinionated, spouting a wide breadth of viewpoints centred on how they think their nation should operate. In this section, we cover the multiple formations of Aldarin culture alongside the societal structure of the people found within the empire.



LEGITOR LORENZO HELIOS  
JULIUS BOREALUS

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**INSPIRATION**

The cultural theme of Aldarin is derived heavily from the Late Republican and Early Empire eras of ancient Rome, melded with aspects of European culture found towards the tail end of the Age of Discovery. Alongside many of the Anchor Nations — a collective of advanced allied nations within the Medial Plane — Aldarin is on the brink of a technological revolution. Dusk crystals — an energy source tapped from the souls of phoenixes — are fuelling ever-more industrious uses throughout dusktech machinery, spurring advancements into crude yet powerful engines. Trains, airships, and sturdy seafaring vessels are beginning to see light in both commercial and military applications, similar to our own Pre-Industrial era with the usage of coal. While dusktech advancements are an aspect of Vynestra's present age, the setting has been designed in such a way that all dusktech objects and vehicles may easily be adapted to Classical era-friendly alternatives for a more authentic ancient-style campaign.

heritage alongside the Aldarins. These amicus are met on common terms with the Aldarins, seen as equals and granted consideration for alliance and citizenship. Folk who have no direct line to a primordial, at least one that may be proved by modern methods, are considered *barbarus* or “barbarian”. Barbarus have been widely perceived as outsiders to the empire throughout the majority of Aldarin history. However, some barbarus such as the Rymish, the Ravidanians, and the Lildorians have proven themselves worthy of respect in the eyes of the empire, attaining the status of *libertus* or “free person”. These free people are either regarded neutrally or similarly to the amicus depending on their people's relations with Aldarin. The Rymish, for example, are held in just as high regard as the Emondians, whereas the Ravidanians fall under a more neutral light.

Religious officials, known as sacerdotas, tend to shrines and temples across the nine provinces. These priests and priestesses are revered as the divine followers of the Medial Pantheon, with it forbidden to so much as touch a sacerdos without prior consent

**THE ALDARIN PEOPLE**

Aldarins have the same traits as humans, except their Languages trait which is replaced with the below trait.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write Common, Aldarin, and one extra language of your choice.

**BORN OF GODS**

Hailing from the direct lineage of Deos, the god-child of Daithar<sup>2</sup> and Meveril<sup>3</sup>, those born as Aldarins hold themselves to the lofty heights of the gods as sun-touched kin. As kindred of Deos, the Aldarins cannot resist flaunting their wealth and culture over those they encounter. While it is not always in their best interests to do so, this attitude prevails all the same, often plunging Aldarin diplomats and merchants into hot water with other well-established civilisations.

Religious connections are immensely important for social standing within the empire. Folk who show faith from the imperially aligned gods (Deos, Iora, Quor, and Gw'yth — the Quadrumvirate) find themselves elevated to much higher regard than those who do not. Kinships directly descended from the lineages of primordials, such as the high elven Emondians of Emondas, are considered *amicis* or “friends”, adjoined in extensive, millennia-long

**CULTS**

The term “clergy” does not truly exist in Aldarin. Instead, a group of organised followers of a deity (or a collective of deities) is called a *cult*. Cults tend to the temples of their devoted gods, prepare festivals on their behalf, and perform rites relating to their deities. The most common form of cult is that of a heavenly cult: a socially accepted cult, worshipped by those who contribute in a beneficial manner both to society and the balance of the universe. Such cults would be that of the Tredecima<sup>1</sup> and Quadrumvirate. Some cults, however, seek to undermine the wellbeing of society as well as the stability of the universe, delving into deeply dark magics such as that of Void. Such cults are called chthonic cults, those of the underground, with such cultists looked down upon or even ostracised by those in upstanding society. The border between heavenly and chthonic is perpetually blurred, with such deities as Kistra and Larveth treading the line between necessities of nature and wrongful destruction, such as plague and death.

1) The thirteen gods of the Medial Pantheon present at Duskfall.

2) The Primordial of Water

3) The Primordial of Fire



<sup>CW</sup> on threat of exile or imprisonment. These sacer-  
dotes perform ceremonial rites to the gods, such as  
enacting animal sacrifice and orchestrating festivals,  
so that the good will of the divine may be bestowed  
upon the Aldarin people. It is within the interests  
of the Aldarins to maintain the divine favour of as  
many gods as they can under a concept known as  
*Pax Deorum* or “peace of the gods”. *Pax Deorum*  
allows the Aldarins to call upon gods they have  
favour with, who help protect their empire against  
the hostile world which surrounds them. Certain  
regions within Aldarin are blessed by the gods to  
the point of becoming holy ground, such as the  
Sacrimum of Deveros, where special religious laws  
apply. These laws include the banishment of weapons  
and magic, as well as the restriction of spilling blood.  
The Aldarins observe omens in everything from  
the pecking of gryphons to the misalignment of  
animal entrails.

<sup>CW</sup>

### CITIZENSHIP OR NOTHING

Above all else, one’s social standing in the empire  
determines a lot about how one lives, both in quality  
of life and societal expectations. Obtaining citizen-  
ship is the prime focus of many migrants living in  
Aldarin, for without citizenship, a vast number of  
protections, rights, and laws are not granted. On  
top of this, a general air of caution is given around  
a person should they not be known to the wider  
Aldarin society.

Those who do obtain citizenship, however,  
find themselves on equal footing with those born  
Aldarin. As such, the empire sees a diverse spread  
of kins who each call themselves “Aldarin”, despite  
their ancestral kinships stemming from vastly dif-  
fering lineages. People on the lower end of the social  
ladder find it incredibly difficult to attain citizenship,  
becoming locked in a never-ending cycle of injustice  
and rejection from the upper echelons of Aldarin  
society. Foreign nationals with enough coinage to  
bribe their way through the system are observed  
with contempt in the eyes of common families  
who have been attempting to attain citizenship for  
decades, or even centuries.

Typically, citizenship is reinforced through  
word of mouth and social connections rather than  
official documents. One might find themselves  
eligible to become an Aldarin citizen should enough  
high-standing citizens claim they are worthy. The  
more influential the allies backing the claim, the  
more likely one is to be approved by the legal offices  
processing a citizenship application. Once one  
finds themselves granted status as a citizen, this too  
spreads to their immediate family, granting them all  
the rights of an Aldarin: the *Iusdecim* (see page 18).

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**LANGUAGES**

**"Cheep! Cheep cheep cheep. ...Oh! Sorry, I was just talking to my brother, Larken in Cardinese. Did you know there are a load of different languages spoken in Aldarin?"**

Before the First Medial War<sup>1</sup>, most nations used to speak their own individual language. The Jyrden spoke Jyrden, the Skaaldblud spoke Skaald, and the Aldarins spoke both Aldarin and Dalaskian. Dalaskian is now more commonly referred to as *Old Aldarin* and is inspired by real world Etruscan, with Aldarin serving as Latin. Old Common was spoken alongside these languages, mostly by folk from the Underworld, and has since morphed over time into Common.

Most people within Aldarin speak either Common or Aldarin on a daily basis. Educated individuals and patricians occasionally speak Old Aldarin when attempting to remain secretive or when discussing law, as all Aldarins laws are written in Old Aldarin. As such, establishments seeking to appear upmarket tend to write their shop names both in Aldarin and Old Aldarin, while those wishing to appeal to a wider audience will rebrand themselves into Common. Occasionally dialects of Elven and Draconic can be heard from Emondisian and Zygardian visitors to the empire, which are also learned by patricians so that they may formally greet their noble guests. Zygardian Draconic, for example, has been said to sound like the purring of a nasally dragon.

Below are some common phrases Aldarins say. To sound like a proper Aldarin, pronounce your "v"s like "w"s.

**Ave/Salve.** "Hail!". A common greeting by many throughout the empire.

**Vale.** "Farewell!". A polite way to say goodbye to someone.

**Res ad triarios venit.** "It's come to the triarii.". The triarii are the rearmost line of legionarii on the battlefield: the most experienced soldiers of the army. If it's come to the triarii, it means things aren't going too well.

**Ad astra per aspera.** "To the stars through hardships.". Often said when faced with a seemingly insurmountable task or some great burden to overcome.

**Talis qualis.** "Such as it is.". Said dismissively in response to something unfortunate. It can also mean "It is what it is."

**Facta, non verba.** "Deeds, not words.". Shouted at politicians by crowds or used when inferring that a person is being disingenuous.

1) An invasion of the Medial Plane by other major nations from across the Compass.

In recent years, citizenship for new members of society has been reinforced through the addition of a *gildum*, a small golden coin worn around the neck, stamped with the seal of the imperial family, the person's name, and dated with the year of citizenship being granted. This coin serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it proves one's standing as a citizen of the empire. Secondly, it pays for the costs of basic funeral rights should one die. Despite the usage of *gildum*, many patricians and prior citizens do not carry them, seeing them as the mark of a young lineage rather than one of a long ancestral line which can be traced back through Aldarin history. Due to this, some folk are able to claim false citizenship through forgeries or deception, though the punishment for doing so is that of death.

Later in this document, you will find a guide on how to determine social class, how to attain citizenship, and the rights of those who hold citizenship. This will be expanded upon in the final publications.

CW

**MILITARY MIGHT**

Aldarin didn't become an empire (and subsequently an oligarchic imperial republic) through peaceful negotiations and mercantile ventures — though these aspects have helped on occasion. The nation grew primarily off the back of its armies, expanding into the territories of those around them and staking claim to foreign lands under the ideals of rightful ownership. Aldarin is revered by some and feared



**DRAGONBORN LEGIONARIUS**





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by many more due to its legions, a collective of loyal, well-armed, well-trained soldiers who operate throughout both the imperial provinces and abroad. Almost all citizens are expected to serve some time in the Legions, whether it be for a single military campaign or a short stint in a provincial legion. In recent years, however, many of those born as citizens find themselves able to get away without serving any time at all, slipping under the net into other professions. This avoidance of military service is looked down upon by ardent imperialists, such as those from the Revitalist faction, as a sign of cowardice.

Aldarin's legions do not stay mobilised all year round. While some Aldarins do have full-time careers in the Legions, such as guarding key settlements or borders, most are simple farming folk who return to the fields after the campaigning season is over. Those who do stay in the Legions full time find faster progression through the ranks, typically ending their careers either leading a cohort or an entire legion — if they are lucky. Such leadership positions are usually exclusive to those of sancte or patrician social status; although with enough work, skill (and a bit of luck), a legionarius from the lower rungs of society may rise to become a prolific commander.

Aldarin diplomats are notoriously terse when dealing with foreign nations, especially those not

allied with Aldarin itself. There have been numerous occasions where a diplomat has walked fearlessly into the camp of a zealous opposing army to demand their surrender. Introductions such as “Our legions shall fill the baths of Quor’s realm with the blood of your people lest you fail to lay down arms by sundown!” are often declared shortly after their arrival. These diplomats are either executed on the spot or laughed out of the camp, though the resulting fate of these armies is almost always the same. They are cut down by the Aldarin legions without a second thought and, if the diplomat was killed, then none are spared. No adults, nor children, nor pack animals. As brutal as this methodology is, it is an effective form of diplomacy in its own right, showing the absolute power that Aldarin exerts. Regions which are quick to step out of line the moment the provincial governor’s back is turned tend to think twice about rebellion lest they bring the wrath of the Legions upon them. War hostages are regularly taken to ensure good behaviour from recently captured territories, with these hostages brought up within Aldarin society to later serve as diplomats to peoples of their birthplace.

In the final publications, there will be a detailed breakdown of the Aldarin legions, their command structure, and all the ranks found throughout the empire.

CW



**ATTUNED TO THE ARCANE**

Talents in the field of magic, whether it be inherent, gifted, or learned, are held as high blessings in the Aldarin Empire. Heads are tilted down in respect whenever a magus passes on the street. Resources for arcane learning are readily accessible to the public, funded by patrician families such as the Baradinus'. It is the desire of every family to have a child study to become a magus at the prestigious Deveros Arcane University, or one of its sibling universities throughout the Anchor Nations. Better still, joining the Legions to assist as a signaller or healing sacerdos places even more glory upon the social standing of an Aldarin family. Becoming not only a magus but also a legionarius is an extraordinary achievement and one which is readily celebrated. Those who rise as exceptional magi stream into the ranks of Aldarin's imperial arcane body, the Concilium Arcanus Altus, also known as CAA, furthering both the offensive and defensive strategies put in place to support Aldarin's military pursuits.

Magic seeps into all corners of life within Aldarin, be it idly enchanted glass ornaments hanging in taberna shop fronts, unstable dusktech engines powering light water craft (called rapida), or immense flows of arcane energy streaming through the plane's waylines. Whatever the root school of magic, the Aldarins have an interest in it. The nation observes not only the largest number of magi living within its borders out of any other on the Medial Plane, but it also has the most magical artefacts passing through its trade routes each year. Patricians hoard powerful enchanted relics in private collections,

purchased through auctions or black market deals. The Concilium Arcanus Altus imports vast quantities of spell components for the imperial magi so that research may be conducted into all manners of magic, perpetually pushing the bounds of knowledge in each of the arcane schools. Even areas such as Void magic, which is banned for study across the Anchor Nations, is researched in secret behind the walls of the Deverosian World Anchor by a collective of trusted, powerful magi.

In the final publications, you will find a detailed breakdown of the Deveros Arcane University, the Deverosian World Anchor, and the Concilium Arcanus Altus alongside an insight into the lives of its members.

**FOLK BELIEFS**

CW

*"There's a road up Fluminis way that, if I don't hop between the cracks of the stone, I always get a bad stomach afterwards. I now just avoid that road entirely!"*

Aldarins are a people who hold caution towards even the most mundane occurrences. From lightning strikes to comets, from counting gryphon pecks to ritualised blood letting, every Aldarin is attuned into the subtleties of the divine world. Any strange omen or prophetic vision must be observed and broken down, lest it spell the fall of the empire or some great planar tragedy. Gryphotes refuse to lead their legion into battle without the traditional sacrificial offering of a bull to Quor and magi dare not remove books from any library without first cleansing their hands with Ioran holy water. Should one not partake in a *dies festus* — a religious festival day — in some capacity they may expect to be spited by the festival's dedicated deity in the days following.



CW

## POLITICS, POLITICS, POLITICS

It is impossible to walk past a single taberna or shop front in any Aldarin settlement without overhearing the political gripes of a disgruntled citizen. Whether it be land reforms, grain doles, or legionarii movements, the public has an opinion on everything and will gladly share it with the world should the topic even be slightly hinted toward. For the casual Aldarin, these conversations over political matters form the pinnacle of culture. For those foreign to the concepts of institutionalised daily politics, however, they can very rapidly devolve into overwhelming boredom.

The local politics of a province and its regional governors are often dwarfed by the goings on of the capital, where Aldarin's two major political bodies operate: the Consentium and Consentium Minor. The Consentium represents the patrician and sancte social classes — the ruling oligarchs — while the Consentium Minor stands for all the other social classes, forming the wider public perspective. While both play a role in the flow of Aldarin law, the Consentium Minor has final say over any bills passed into law. That is unless a state of emergency, known as *Alerium Martius* or martial law, comes into effect. Should *Alerium Martius* occur, however, the passing of new laws is likely the last topic on the minds of the people for Aldarin itself would truly be teetering upon the brink of collapse.

Despite the term “empire” still lingering in Aldarin's title, the imperial family plays little importance in the running of the nation. It is simply the role of the emperor to stamp a seal of approval onto all bills to be passed into law. Aldarin is realistically ruled by the Consentium and Consentium Minor, with politicians falling into three distinct major factions: the Revivalists, the Reformists, and the Capitans. Where the Revivalists seek to reinstate the position of the emperor and restore imperial rule entirely, the Reformists instead strive to improve the systems of power available to the public people. These two factions clash on the regular, with their supporters commonly taking to the streets to fight out their differing opinions. The Capitans are considered by most Aldarins as somewhat of a joke, filled with patrician troublemakers and party-goers, despite their sometimes reasonable suggestions for improving welfare across the poorest regions of the empire.

The final publications goes into detail around the political machinations of the Consentium and Consentium Minor, the political parties, and their supporters throughout the city.

## ALDARIN NAMING CONVENTIONS

Aldarin names are formed of two to three components: The given name (the praenomen), the family or clan name (the nomen), and the personal name (the cognomen). The given and family names are always present, with one or more personal names usually present.

The praenomen is what you would be called by your family and close friends. The nomen is what would tie you to a particular family or clan. The cognomen is your public facing name, what you would introduce yourself as to those you meet. Aldarins often change their cognomen or add additional cognomen should they feel the desire to do so.

**Examples.** Caesar Helios Libenus Aldarus, Quinta Gordella Iulia, Meveris Silician Scipio, Primus Lupa Junio Maximus

In the above example “Caesar Helios Aldarus”: “Caesar” would be the praenomen, “Helios” would be the nomen, and “Libenus Aldarus” would be the cognomen.

In the full publications we expand on this, giving a deeper insight into Aldarin naming conventions along with a wide selection of possible names.

## EMBERBLOOD

Embers are a sign of powerful deity-born lineages, those who have inadvertently become blessed by the gods, or those who have worked hard enough to be granted a portion of the gods' divine souls. In a world in which the gods' influence is waning, such gifts are rare, well respected, and highly sought after. Aldarin is no exception in the plane-wide rat race to control as many prolific emberblood as possible before the powers of the weakening gods above falter. A strong nation needs emberblood to support it, lest it fall behind the influence of its enemies.

A sizable portion of Aldarin's emberblood are centralised around mercyr guilds and the Legions: those who face life threatening danger on a regular basis. Due to the path of scattered soul threads following Duskfall and the Aldarin's focal worship of the Quadrumvirate deities, the most common embers found within the empire are those associated with Deos, Iora, Meliam, and Quor; though only by a small majority. Emberblood tied to specific deities are headhunted by organisations seeking to utilise their talents for the benefit of the empire, or even to help undermine it. Xythian emberblood, for example, are regularly approached by the Umbra Syndicate who seek to acquire the skills of those more inclined towards shadow and darkness. The

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Ebyr'sol seek out powerful Deosian cultists to fall into their ranks, with those who they deem loyal enough sent back to Quthar to be gifted an ember by the corrupted Deosian demigods of the Xwar. Mantels — those who may act as vessels to the gods — are greater in number within Aldarin than in other nations, though are still few and far between, primarily contained to the Province of Deveros where the Concilium Arcanus Altus can keep a close eye on them.

The final publications contains the full rulesets for embers, as well as over a dozen ember abilities for each of the main twenty gods of the Medial Pantheon. It also contains guidance of running an ember-inclusive campaign giving information on how to setup new mercyr guilds involving the players and how to make contracts for them to undertake on behalf of the empire.

## FOOD AND DRINK

The food in Deveros is typically seen to be rich, tasteful, and readily available — a step above that of the rest of the empire due to its vast trade connections. While the typical dietary norms of the Aldarin people are present — pulsus, garum, nuts, salted fish, vegetables, and cheese — there are additionally imported delicacies from foreign nations, such as Ravidan and Quthar, which bring in various preserved meats, exotic fruits, and even sugars into the local diet. Herbs and spices too are easily accessible at any market, with some of the finest meals throughout the entire continent of Elos available to those who know which side streets to look down. Certain popular vegetables, such as potatoes, broccoli, and artichokes must be imported from across the continent at a premium.

Being a seaside city, Deveros is flush with a bounty of fish species which are brought into the fishing markets by both registered and illicit fishers alike each morning. Some fish are sold fresh, to be cooked and served as a part of a hearty meal. Others are salted and dried as a tasty snack for the road. The remains of these are blended into garum and left to ferment, adding a zingy garnish to any dish.

Food takes a back seat when it comes to wine, however. Above all else, wine flows as the lifeblood of the Aldarin people with entire trade links set up across the provinces to ensure a stable supply to its far corners. Wine is traditionally watered down from the barrel, allowing for greater quantities to be consumed and sold to the masses. Vineyards sell wine by the amphora (a form of clay flask), corked with a wax seal, or by the barrel. These are sold both to businesses, such as tabernae and guilds, and to private citizens, such as patricians and sanctes. Without

alcohol, Deveros would cease to function, serving as a social lubricant in all situations. Be it a political assembly, a mercantile deal, or simply during dinner, alcohol brings forth all manner of conversation. There are indeed ales and spirits too, and even the occasional cocktail for those who can afford such luxuries, with the majority of high proof alcohols imported from other nations across the oceans.

### FOOD AND DRINK PREVIEW

**Bulian Bread.** Rich, flaky bread made with butter and milk, mixed with regional spices, honey, nuts, and raisins. A popular, though slightly expensive, sweet treat.



BULIAN BREAD

**Conditum.** A form of watered-down wine blended with pepper and aromatics before being sweetened with honey. Slightly more expensive than posca, enjoyed widely by the artifex and praestae classes.

**Garum.** Sardines, fish scraps, and herbs left to ferment for several weeks in salt, water, and honey, creating a potent sauce. Frequently used to garnish other dishes or to add to wine to produce additional flavours.

**House Wine.** There are bountiful forms of house wine throughout Deveros, typically made by local tabernae and taverns, watered down, and served cheaply alongside meals. House wine is the most common drink within the empire, more so than ale.

**Pulsus.** Also known as puls, pulsus is a thick porridge of hulled wheat and salt mixed with either water or milk. Typically served with a variety of toppings ranging from garum to walnuts to sliced sausage. Common amongst all social classes, though patricians and sanctes are able to afford more expensive toppings such as figs, honey, and meats.

**Vagabond Ale.** A cheap ale made in the province of Caerula, exported across the empire to taverns and inns. Fairly tasteless and weak in alcohol content.

In the full publications, we provide an extensive list of food and drink which may be found served in tabernae and inns around Deveros, alongside the famed Ale Legion Twelve: twelve ales, each with a story to tell, which see limited supply throughout the city.





## CLOTHING

It is widely believed by Deverosians that a sense of innate fashion courses through the veins of every Aldarin, notably more so the higher up the social ladder one finds themselves. It is as if wealth and status themselves dictate an inherent eye for style. Hairstyles, jewellery, and makeup are pushed further into the extremes each decade by fashionable socialites from all walks of life, inspired by the cultures of tourists visiting the city. Generally, a greater variety of colour upon one's clothing denotes a wealthier individual, with much of Aldarin's social status relying on grand displays of wealth. The wealthier you can appear, the more others wish to socialise with you, and the higher status you are seen to be. Even the most basic forms of clothing, such as tunics and sandals, can be found adorned with small clasps, fabric patterns, or minor wood and metal trinkets as their owners try to seem more flush with coin than they actually are. As with most Aldarin fashion, however, this custom of having trinkets woven into one's clothes is stolen from that of another culture: Jykstrav. Similarly, countless fabric patterns and modern fashions trends are extracted directly from South Rymin and the famed tailors of Longbreach, with Aldarin tailors mimicking their iconic style. Shoulder capes, asymmetrical tunics, excessive shoulder decorations, and feather-bound jewellery are all assimilated from other civilisations. These styles are repackaged as avant-garde and worn by

those who can afford to keep up with the ever-shifting tide of the Deverosian vogue.

The only true piece of clothing which has survived unhindered by this warping tide of cultural theft is the toga — a long woollen sheet wrapped around the body of the wearer. From the *toga virilis*, a basic white-grey toga worn by citizens of the empire, to the *toga praetexta*, a toga with a coloured border signifying political allegiance, the toga stands as a cultural anchor of fashion for the Aldarins. The toga, along with tunics and stolas, are worn with leather-strapped sandals which provide support for the ankle when traversing treacherous terrain. While all these items of clothing provide the basis of fashion within Aldarin's rural regions, the Aldarins of the more populated, well-connected settlements find their clothing varying more and more into a blend of foreign cultures — especially in citizens whose ancestry has stemmed from another nation. Those of Jyrden ancestry, for example, tend towards wearing decorated torcs and sewn trousers, while those of Mistvellian origin more commonly wear darker shades of dyes which are mistaken as clothes of mourning by imperials.

In the full publications, we provide a number of new culturally-exclusive weapons, armour, and magical items which slot into the daily lives of the Aldarin people as well as some of the other cultures found mixed within the heart of Deveros.

## SOCIAL CLASSES OF ALDARIN

Social class in the Aldarin Empire defines everything about what you can do and how you are perceived by others. How you present yourself, how you speak, and with which individuals you socialise with takes centre stage when determining one's position within Aldarin.

<sup>CW</sup> While kinship might gauge some form of initial perspective, social status is what truly matters. This societal structure, whilst somewhat stable, has numerous flaws to it — notably the funnelling of wealth upwards to the upper classes and the difficulty of obtaining citizenship. Many find themselves stuck in the lower social classes, unable to ever break free from the shackles of societal oppression. As such, there has been a push to move away from the rigid structure laid down by Aldarin's ancestors, though many still cling fervently to the restrictions of social class.

## ALDARIN CITIZENSHIP

CW

Without the label of "Aldarin citizen" one is doomed to toil within the realms of mediocrity in the empire. Aldarin citizenship is beholden as an all-encompassing gift to inhabitants of the Aldarin Empire, with those born of Aldarin lineage, or simply a parent granted citizenship, blessed with its benefits. These are known as the *iusdecim* or the *ten rights*. With these rights, one can expect to be fully included and welcomed within Aldarin society, observed on equal footing as all others with citizenship of the same social class. It matters not what ancestral kinship one comes from as long as the status of citizen hovers above them.

This inclusivity is supported both through written documents, such as seals, writs, gildum (stamped coins), and official governmental letters, as well as word of mouth. If other Aldarin citizens call you a citizen, then you are perceived a citizen by those around you. In particular, one may be taken under

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the wing of another citizen, known as a patron, who gives guidance and work in exchange for food, money, loyalty, and eventual citizenship.

There have been accounts of folk from foreign nations wrangling their citizen status by carefully manipulating the social circles of Aldarin society, convincing increasingly higher status members of their rights until it became all but official in the eyes of the people. Such transgressions are heavily punished should they be unearthed, however, with culprits facing exile or even execution. In recent years, citizenship has been more readily supported through official documentation — though a number of patrician families see themselves above such menial obligations and choose to go without.

### THE IUSDECIM

**Vote.** The right to vote in the public assemblies and to elect new leaders for the Consentium Minor.

**Stand for Office.** The right to stand for public or civil office, such as in the Consentium Minor or in any of the imperial offices.

**Progression.** The right to be promoted in the ranks of the Legions beyond that of a principa and in the ranks of Concilium Arcanus Altus beyond that of a magus.

**Immunity.** The right of immunity from certain laws and rules.

**Property.** The right to own property and land within the empire.

**Legality.** The right to a fair trial in court, to sue, to be sued, to represent oneself in court, and to appeal decisions made by the magistrates of the court.

**Perpetuity.** The right to remain a citizen, even if one moves outside of the empire.

**Family.** The right to grant effective citizenship to one's immediate family and to legally marry within the empire.

**Humanity.** The right to be treated with respect and dignity.

**Death.** The right to a proper burial within ground consecrated by Estioc. Should one be sentenced to death for any reason other than treason, they hold the right to choose exile from the empire instead.

### OBTAINING CITIZENSHIP

To attain citizenship as a foreign national, as opposed to through inheritance, one must meet certain criteria. For many this is a stint of service in either the Legions or within Concilium Arcanus Altus (the arcane branch of Aldarin's military), or serving under a patron for a number of years. Service to the empire through clerical work in a temple, mercyr work in a mercyr guild, or other general services. These services may include working as a scribe, a lawyer, an actor, a bard, or a personal assistant. The stint of time required in these roles vastly depends on the nation one is coming from, with those from libertus (free) nations typically seeing a minimum of 5 years service, whilst those from barbarus (hostile) nations seeing up to 25 years of service. At the end of this period, an official writ must be signed by a progildor — a secretarial position in the Consentium — or higher rank to grant the person citizen status. This consensa — a member of the Consentium — is considered the citizen's patron for the next two years whilst they settle into the life of a citizen in the empire. Nobility, or those with vast swathes of wealth, are able to pay themselves into citizenship instead, skipping the required period of service. These tributes are paid directly into the Imperial Bank of Saleen in Deveros and must be observed by one of the gildors managing the empire's funds that year. New citizens beyond 1010 PDS are also granted a *gildum*, a small engraved coin used to prove identity and pay for funeral rights.

There are three other forms of social standing beyond citizenship: amicis, libertus, and barbarus.

**Amicis (pl. Amici).** Close friends or allies of the empire, usually related to the descendants of primordial deities. These folk are welcomed into the empire as equals to the Aldarins. The amicis are granted all rights of the Iusdecim, apart from voting and standing for office. Citizenship can typically be freely claimed with ease by the amicis. First generation amici may rise to the sancte social class, though may not actively partake in Aldarin politics without first obtaining citizenship.

**Amicis Nations:** Emondas, Zygarde, Kishradam (not Quthar)

**Libertus (pl. Liberti).** Ranging from strong allies to neutral parties, these folk are welcomed into the empire warmly. Depending on the disposition of the nation, varying rights are granted. For example, the Rymish are granted all rights bestowed to the amicis, whilst folk from Dane see only the rights of progression, property, humanity, and death. Citizenship can be claimed by the libertus through service to the empire. First generation liberti may not rise beyond the praestae social class.



**Libertus Nations:** Lildor, South Rymin, Jordveil Isle, Giraré, Vorien Empire, Mistveil, Qutharian Empire, Xhaolo, Tak'huut, Dane

<sup>cw</sup> **Barbarus (pl. Barbari).** These nations are seen as barbarians, folk whose cultures drastically differ from those of the Aldarins. Widely observed as unruly or troublesome due to their differing cultural mannerisms, barbarus can come across as strange to those born in the heart of Aldarin. These folk are typically not granted any of the Iusdecim, aside from the right to a proper burial, which is held more out

of superstition rather than honour. Some barbarus do see limited rights, such as a handful of sects belonging to the Fyndarians who are granted the rights of death, humanity, family, and sometimes property. Citizenship can occasionally be claimed by the barbarus through extended service to the empire. First generation barbari may not rise beyond the artifex social class.

**Barbarus Nations:** Menderin, Jykstrav, Halthos, Fyndar, Peliox, North Rymin

## THE SOCIAL CLASSES

### DETERMINING SOCIAL CLASS

While social classes are defined blocks of people within Aldarin, the lines between each class is somewhat blurred with many folk falling between the cracks of the system.

There are three main aspects of defining what social class a person falls into: wealth, ancestry, and social renown. Not all these requirements must be met to slip into a social class but provide good guidelines as to who may or may not reach a certain standing in society.

#### DETERMINING PC SOCIAL CLASS

To determine a PC's starting social class, look at their citizenship status, their starting wealth, starting class, and background.

A PC born Aldarin will automatically have citizenship and cannot dip lower than the artifex class unless they fall onto the wrong side of the law. Other kinships may have attained citizenship based on familial heritage or service to the empire, gaining the same benefits as those born Aldarin. A Jyrden travelling in from Jykstrav with no knowledge of the Aldarin language would be considered a vagnata. A cleric or paladin may not have a lot of wealth but will be respected within society with a high social renown as a religious figure, so might start within the praesta class. A rogue or warlock may be tied to criminal groups or chthonic cults, finding themselves shunned into the otium or even the vagnata classes. It is up to the GM to discuss with their players where they believe the starting social class is for a PC, which may shift over the course of a campaign. It is recommended that, for the first time playing in Deveros, all PCs start in the artifex class for a balanced experience.



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**SOCIAL OSTRACISM**

While Aldarin society has progressed further and further away from societal boundaries throughout the years, it is still fairly common to limit conversation with those beneath one's social class. Those of high social standing become terse and matter-of-fact to those they see as below them while those of low social standing avoid conversation with those deemed above them. When roleplaying NPCs in Deveros, consider where the conversant's social standing lies in comparison to an NPC and whether the NPC would speak to them any differently because of this.

**Important:** If any players may feel uncomfortable with this form of social bias, it is important to discuss this during a session zero and to not include this in your Vynestra unless all players at the table are happy for it to be included.

**SOCIAL CLASS SUMMARY**

**Patrician (pl. Patricians).** A noble of the Aldarin Empire stemming from one of the historic noble families, allowed to stand for political office on the Consentium. Patricians control the flow of the empire as a whole and are some of the wealthiest people within it. All patricians are citizens.

**Sancte (pl. Sanctes).** Elevated nobles who have recently been granted permit to stand for political office in the Consentium. These are typically high ranking legionarii and magi who are met with sizable sums of wealth. All sanctes are citizens.

**Praesta (pl. Praestae).** Citizens of high regard, praestae are wealthy merchants and families who own sizable businesses throughout the empire. Praestae stand as pillars of the communities they are part of and might be anything from famous actors to powerful magi. Almost all praestae are citizens.

**Artifex (pl. Artifex).** The largest social class in the empire, artifex are the skilled working people

undertaking artisanal crafts, trade, and all other manners of well paid work. Legionarii, merchants, and basic magi tend to fall into this class as well. Over half of artifex are citizens.

**Otium (pl. Otium).** The second largest social class, otium represents the unskilled labourers of Aldarin — those who crush the grapes, pull the wagons, and perform household chores for those of higher social standing. Otium are not usually citizens.

**Vagnata (pl. Vagnatae).** Wanderers and immigrants, vagnatae are those brushed under the rug by the other social classes. Briggands, thieves, and drug dealers too all fall into this class — those beyond the graces of courtesy. Vagnatae are not usually citizens.

**Servus (pl. Servus).** Despite slavery being outlawed since the 7th Century, some still find themselves wrongfully held in bondage. These folk have no names, known only as "servus". Prisoners serving time in Aldarin's prisons too fall under the class of a penal "servus".



DECIMA  
(10 GOLD PIECE)

**SOCIAL CLASS TABLE**

| Name      | Common Name | Individual Wealth  | Familial Wealth     | Monthly Living Costs | Social Renown |
|-----------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Patrician | Noble       | Over 50,000 gp     | Over 200,000 gp     | Over 1,000 gp        | Very High     |
| Sancte    | Knight      | 25,000 - 49,999 gp | 50,000 - 199,999 gp | 500 - 999 gp         | High          |
| Praesta   | Respected   | 1,000 - 24,999 gp  | 3,000 - 49,999 gp   | 50 - 499 gp          | Medium-High   |
| Artifex   | Worker      | 10 - 999 gp        | 50 - 2999 gp        | 5 - 49 gp            | Medium        |
| Otium     | Unskilled   | 1 - 9 gp           | 5 - 49 gp           | 1 - 4 gp             | Low           |
| Vagnata   | Vagrant     | Fewer than 1 gp    | Fewer than 5 gp     | Fewer than 1 gp      | Very Low      |
| Servus    | Slave       | None               | None                | None                 | Nonexistent   |

## EMBER PREVIEW

Below is a preview around embers, the unique abilities granted to PCs and NPCs within Vynestra. A full deep dive into embers alongside hundreds of new abilities will be included in the final publication.

### CONSTRUCTING YOUR EMBER

Upon reaching 2nd Level, your character's dormant ember manifests upon the skin as its power finally takes root. While embers exist in many throughout the Medial Plane, not everyone can immediately unlock these powers contained within their souls. It might be through high stress, trauma, or simply a call to a cause that triggers one's ember to manifest.

Your ember is not just an extra set of power—it is part of your soul and reflects your very essence. Your bond with your ember grows over time. As you feed it with greater portions of your soul, it rewards you. When your ember manifests, you influence which region of your body the ember appears upon, as well as the pattern and colouring of the ember. This design may represent the character's dominant personality traits, a deeper aspect of their being, or correlate to their desires and dreams. Embers are most commonly found manifesting upon the arms, though they may appear anywhere on the body. An ember grows in size as it becomes more powerful, spreading across the skin.

At any point as a free action, you can choose to either dull your ember, making it appear as a normal tattoo, or stoke your ember, causing it to surge with vibrant magical energy. This does not shed enough light to illuminate darkness.

### EMBER ABILITIES

Embers provide their wielder with powerful abilities both in and out of combat, dependent on which deity the ember stems from. When your character's ember manifests itself, you must first decide which threads of deific power reside within your own soul. Select up to three deities as the patrons for your ember. This choice will determine which abilities your character's ember can manifest over the course of their life.

#### DETACHMENT FROM THE DIVINE

Your character does not have to have a bond to these gods in any other way, they are simply the source of power from which their ember draws. For example, a character might have the soul threads of Xyth, a typically evil-aligned deity, bound to their own soul through their birth and ancestry but are of good



alignment. The character's only connection to Xyth is that Xyth's soul threads exist within them. When an ember is activated, it may elevate or dampen certain emotions within the emberblood for a period of time as the soul threads of the deity temporarily take a grasp upon their host.

There are four types of abilities which your ember can give you:

**Passive.** These are effects that your character gains without you having to think about them, such as additional skill proficiencies or permanent boons.

**Minor.** These are small sparks of magic that, in their base form, are similar in power to a 1st or 2nd-level spell. Some minor abilities act as passive boons or upgrade previous abilities instead of granting new active abilities.

**Major.** These are powerful flairs of divine energy that, in their base form, are similar in power to a 5th or 6th-level spell. Some major abilities act as passive boons or upgrade previous abilities instead of granting new active abilities.

**Devotion.** These immense powers form through recognition by a deity associated with your ember, granting you prowess equivalent to that of a demigod. Not all emberblood attain this level of power. Each devotion ability is different, though usually may only be used once every few weeks.

Once you have chosen your deities, you must choose the abilities indicated by the Ember Presence Level your GM has deemed appropriate for your Vynestra campaign. For the purposes of this preview, this is one passive ability and two minor abilities. You select these abilities from the ember abilities relating to your chosen gods, found on the deities' relevant pages in the World of Vynestra book. Some embers

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mimic or modify spells, whilst others grant unique abilities which come naturally to the emberblood.

Each deity has a spellcasting modifier and save DC associated with the ability scores governed by that deity. When using ember abilities from that deity, you must use that deity's spellcasting modifier and save DC unless otherwise specified.

### ACTIVATING EMBER ABILITIES

At 2nd Level you gain three Ember Points. You may expend Ember Points to activate your ember abilities with the Flare Ember action. You regain all Ember Points after finishing a long rest. Your total Ember Point count increases as you grow more powerful as per the *Ember Point Table*. Inspiration may be expended in place of two Ember Points when you Flare Ember. You may Flare Ember multiple times per turn as long as you have the Ember Points to do so, even those which activate similarly to spells. You may Flare Ember and cast a spell on the same turn if you have the actions to do so.

EMBER POINT TABLE

| Character Level | Ember Point Total | Character Level | Ember Point Total |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 2nd             | 2                 | 12th            | 5                 |
| 3rd             | 2                 | 13th            | 6                 |
| 4th             | 2                 | 14th            | 6                 |
| 5th             | 3                 | 15th            | 7                 |
| 6th             | 3                 | 16th            | 7                 |
| 7th             | 3                 | 17th            | 8                 |
| 8th             | 4                 | 18th            | 8                 |
| 9th             | 4                 | 19th            | 9                 |
| 10th            | 4                 | 20th            | 10                |
| 11th            | 5                 |                 |                   |

### FLARE AN EMBER

You activate an ember ability that you possess by expending a number of Ember Points equal to the level of the ember ability and using the action required by the ember ability. For example, an *Ember, Minor 2* ability costs 2 Ember Points and an *Ember, Major 3* ability costs 3 Ember Points.

**Disrupted and Lost Ember Abilities.** Some spells and ember abilities can disrupt an ember ability, causing it to have no effect and be lost. When you lose an ember ability, you've already spent the ability's action and Ember Points, and have used the Flare an Ember activity.

### GROWING YOUR EMBER

Your ember grows with you as you gain power, acting as an ally that is always by your side. As you become more familiar with your ember, you will find it unlocking more power for you to use, strengthening your bond with it even further. Embers increase in power at 6th level, 10th level, 14th level, and 18th level.

The world of Vynestra has a number of classifications for embers and their power levels which are used throughout various cultures and civilisations. Officials of the Anchor Treaty Nations use the "Anchor Rank System" for documents and research, whilst others from outside these nations choose to use the common names attributed to each ember found in the *Ember Classification Table* below.

EMBER CLASSIFICATION TABLE

| Character Level | Anchor Rank System | Common Name |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 2nd Level       | Rank 4             | Sparked     |
| 6th Level       | Rank 3             | Smouldered  |
| 10th Level      | Rank 2             | Kindled     |
| 14th Level      | Rank 1             | Scorched    |
| 18th Level      | Rank 0             | Engulfed    |

### CHARRING EMBERS

As your ember grows in strength, you may choose to offer part of your soul to it so that it may grow more powerful. In doing so, you sacrifice your own vitality in exchange for improved ember abilities. Each ability requires its own portion of your soul to expand into, with major abilities taking up vastly more soul power than minor abilities. The process of doing this is called "charring". This can be physically observed upon the arms as blackened skin which smoulders with ever-glowing cinders. Charring is a lasting change to an ember which permanently upgrades an ember ability.

For this preview document, we do not go into depth around charring as the PCs will not reach a level at which they will be able to char their embers from the introductory adventure. If you wish to read more into embers and charring, consider supporting the full publication.

Full rules on charring are available in World of Vynestra as part of The Vynestra Collection Kickstarter.

### FOLLOWING THE NARRATIVE

Charring is a painful process which is not undertaken lightly — a desecration of the body in exchange for power. It is encouraged that charring is woven into the narrative of a character and their progression through the world. Characters do not have to char



abilities, nor do they need to char abilities as soon as the option becomes available to them. Consider why your character is undergoing charring and how that may impact both their physical and mental health.

### EMBERS AS SPELLS

Some ember abilities grant the use of spells and cantrips. These spells are not treated as normal spells and are instead considered to be ember abilities. As such, they do not require material components (though verbal and somatic components are still necessary) and may be modified by charring. These spells otherwise use the original action cost, duration, concentration, and description of the spell unless specified otherwise by the ember ability. You may use one charge of your ember ability, which activates the spell.

These spells and cantrips follow the Ember Spell Table below to determine their casting level. For example, a spell used as major ember ability is cast at 5th level, if applicable. If charred, it would instead be cast at 7th level, if applicable. Cantrips grow stronger when charred, being cast as per a 5th level caster.

Regardless of the spell's original level, the ability is treated as if it has been used at the highest spell level defined in the Ember Spell Table for its rank. For example, a *fly* spell used as a non-charred minor ember ability is treated as if cast at 2nd-level instead of at 3rd-level for the purposes of ember-specific counterspelling and dispelling.

#### Counterspell

Ember abilities, including those derived from spells, may not be counterspelled through the normal *counterspell* spell. There are instead certain spells which can counterspell ember abilities, such as *Meliam's Ember Rebuff*.

When determining the comparative level of the ember ability against the casting spell level, refer to the Casting Level column of the Ember Spell Table below. For example, if *Meliam's Ember Rebuff* is cast at 5th-level, it would be able to counter a major ember ability, as the effective casting level of a major ember ability is a 5th Level spell.

### EMBER CONCENTRATION

Some embers require concentration. These concentration abilities function the same as concentration with spells, requiring concentration checks and with only one spell or ember ability allowed to be concentrated on at once, unless otherwise specified.

#### EMBER SPELL TABLE

| Ember Type      | Casting Level                     |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Passive         | Cantrip (as per 1st Level Caster) |
| Passive Charred | Cantrip (as per 5th Level Caster) |
| Minor           | 2nd-level spell                   |

#### EMBER SPELL TABLE

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Minor Charred | 4th-level spell |
| Major         | 5th-level spell |
| Major Charred | 7th-level spell |
| Devotion      | 9th-level spell |

## THE PATH TO DEVOTION

Upon reaching 18th Level, an emberblood might find themselves within the sights of a deity whose power thrives within them. Depending on how interactions occur between the emberblood and the deity, this might grow over time into a Devotion: some agreement becoming struck between the emberblood and the god. This bond is not dissimilar to the pact a warlock forms with their patron, carrying a certain gravitas on a universal scale. In doing so, the emberblood loses access to all ember abilities not granted by the bonded deity which are then replaced with ones granted by their bonded deity.

Once the agreement has been struck, the emberblood becomes a mantel of that deity: a potential vessel for their soul. Devotion should be a major narrative plot point in both a campaign and a character's personal growth. This may be something a character is working towards for a very long time, and might even fail in achieving. Few ever reach Devotion, but those who do often make their mark on history as legends, known by all across the Medial Plane as immensely powerful entities of potent arcane might.

### DEMIGOD STATUS

Some deities may grant their new mantels apotheosis as a demigod, providing them with a slew of demigod powers, immortality, and even legendary actions. The nature of such abilities is up to the GM to decide. The new demigod is granted ownership of a minor domain belonging to that god. For example, a god of war might grant a demigod domain over swords, rage, or blood. A god of nature may grant domain over trees, fungi, or a specific animal. Alongside this, a ritual must exist which allows for the mantel to be killed, due to their new immortal status. This ritual should be designed between the player and the GM, typically split into four stages. This is expanded on in the full publications.

## EMBER EXAMPLES

These are a number of ember examples from the full publication of World of Vynestra which may be used during the preview adventure. Players should select one passive ability and two minor abilities upon reaching 2nd Level, taking into consideration the type of demigod they might wish to become and which deities their soul is linked with.

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**DIVINE SHIELD (DEOS) PASSIVE 0**

Whilst in combat, at the start of your turn you gain 1 temporary hit point which stacks to a maximum of 4. These fade after combat ends. This ability does not activate if you already have temporary hit points.

**NOT TODAY (MELIAM) PASSIVE 0**

You gain the *spare the dying* cantrip as an ember ability. This is activated based on the Ember Spell Table.

**LASH OUT (SALEEN) PASSIVE 0**

You gain the *firebolt* cantrip as an ember ability. This is activated based on the Ember Spell Table.

**SEAFARING SOUL (RAEL) PASSIVE 0**

You gain the ability to breathe underwater, retaining your normal form of respiration.

**GW'YTH'S FOCUS (GW'YTH) PASSIVE 0**

After a long rest, you may choose one creature that you can see and is friendly towards you. For the next 8 hours, you know the general direction and distance of that creature to within a 100-foot accuracy.

**PLAGUE WARDEN (LARVETH) PASSIVE 0**

You have advantage on saving throws to resist against diseases.

**HUNTING EXPERT (VIKER) PASSIVE 0**

Your normal and long weapon ranges increase by 10 feet for thrown ranged weapons and 20 feet for non-thrown ranged weapons.

**REGENERATIVE (QUOR) PASSIVE 0**

You may re-roll one hit die when healing during a short rest, taking the new roll instead.

**WINGED FEET (AETHER) PASSIVE 0**

Your base movement speed increases by 5 feet.

**VOID SIGHT (XYTH) PASSIVE 0**

You gain Darkvision up to a range of 60 feet. If you already have Darkvision, it increases to a range of 90 feet.

**REFLEXIVE RETALIATION (QUOR) MINOR 1**

As a reaction to being struck by a melee weapon attack, you may make a single melee attack roll against the attacker. If the attack hits, it deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage.

**CLOSE THE GAP (LORITEL) MINOR 1**

As a bonus action, you may both disengage and dash.

**BIND SOULS (KISTRA) MINOR 2**

As a bonus action, you bind your soul to another creature that you can see within 30 feet. Target creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw of DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + either your Wisdom or Charisma modifier. On a failed save, the creature becomes bound to you for 1 minute as long as you remain within 60 feet

of each other. Any damage you take is also dealt to the target creature. Upon receiving damage through Bind Souls, the target creature may repeat its saving throw.

**SLY SHADOW (VYS) MINOR 1**

You gain use of *invisibility* as an ember ability which may be activated as a bonus action.

**SOUL REPAIR (DEOS) MINOR 1**

You gain use of *cure wounds* as an ember ability which may be activated as a bonus action. This is activated based on the Ember Spell Table.

**PRICKLY ARMOUR (CELIANTHRE) MINOR 1**

As a bonus action, you surround yourself with a dense nest of thorny vines for 1 minute. While surrounded by the vines, your AC cannot go lower than 14 and any creature attacking you with a melee attack must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw of DC 8 + your proficiency modifier + either your Wisdom or Constitution modifier, or else take 1d6 piercing damage.

**MONARCH OF ICE (SOVINGAR) MINOR 1**

As a bonus action, you gain a fly speed of 30 feet for the 1d4 rounds as a swirling blizzard appears under your feet. This ability immediately ends if you do not finish your turn on solid ground.

**EATER OF DREAMS (XITHRI) MINOR 1**

When you deal damage to a sleeping or otherwise unconscious creature, you may use your reaction to heal 2d6 hit points.

**SCALDING AURA (SALEEN) MINOR 2**

As a bonus action, you may activate an intense 5-foot-radius aura of blackened, ashy flame which ripples across your skin. Any creature that enters into the area the first time or starts its turn there must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, taking 1d6 fire damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. This aura lasts for 1 minute or until dismissed as a bonus action.

**LITTLE THIEF (VIKER) MINOR 1**

You gain *unseen servant* as an ember ability which may be activated as a bonus action. This is activated based on the Ember Spell Table. Your unseen servant learns to steal and pickpocket, using your sleight of hand skill in place of its own. The distance of control over your unseen servant however drops to 20 feet.

**ARCANE WARDING (MELIAM) MINOR 2**

*This ability requires concentration.* You touch a willing creature as a bonus action, protecting them from the arcane. For the next minute, as long as the creature remains within 30 feet of you, it has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.





## ADDITIONAL CONTENT

### KINSHIP OVERVIEW

Kinships are the Vynestran term for 5th Edition races, representing the predominant biological lineage of a character. For example, a character may have tiefling ancestry, though their predominant lineage, and hence their kinship, is that of a half orc. Where one might be observed as a member of a specific culture, one's kinship can differ wildly from those traditionally found within that culture. Below are all the kinships commonly found throughout the Aldarin Empire. In the final publications, these will be greatly expanded upon alongside unique abilities and names.

**Dhampir.** Descendents of vampires, dhampir find themselves locked into servitude to their undead parents — though some break free from the binds of blood to live free lives of their own.

**Dragonborn.** Those descended from the blood of dragons, dragonborn come in various colours and forms. Some dragonborn are able to reincubate themselves, changing their biological makeup entirely.

**Dragonborn, Skyfarer.** A unique kin of dragonborn from the lands of Zygarde to the northeast of the Elosian continent. These dragonborn have wings, granting them the ability to glide and fly.

**Dwarf, Delvar.** A proud kin of powerful dwarves, allegedly born from the earth primordial, Enor. These dwarves live in the chilly northern regions of Elos within their underground citadels.

**Dwarf, Earthbound.** Born of earth elementals, these dwarves believe themselves to be the true descendents of Enor. The Earthbound are locked into a troublesome class system under the heels of the Delvar, though some do escape to the southern realms of Elos.

**Dwarf, Hill.** Hill dwarves are found throughout the lowlands of southern and central Elos, typically within small

communities which integrate with those of other kins in the region.

**Elf, Ashensworn.** Ashensworn elves hail from the ash-choked lands of Mistveil in eastern Elos, born from the magmatic volcanoes within which the souls of long-dead phoenixes reside. Ashensworn undergo a unique form of reincarnation, taking on the same lava-like markings and features as their ancestors though retaining no memories of their past lives.

**Elf, High.** Within the tall fortresses of Emondas, the high elves live out their days, researching into the mysteries of the Compass's arcane waylines. Emondasians are closely allied with Aldarin as one of the Anchor Nations.

**Elf, Sand.** From across the Gilded Ocean in the lands of Sel'Kildar come the sand elven folk. These elves live in grand townships placed upon sleds, pulled through deserts by burrowing worms, which then bury the towns beneath the surface, away from the scalding sun.

**Elf, Snow.** Reclusive in nature, these elven folk linger in the blizzard-blighted forests to the north of Elos, co-existing alongside the Jyrden and wood elves. While the communities are small in number, their talents are exceptional, capable of resisting the harshest of climates.

**Elf, Wood.** Hailing from the snow-covered forests of northern Fyndar, the wood elves form complex societal structures of nobility, druids, and warriors. Locked in a century-long war against the Emondasians to the east, the Fyndarians defend their homeland from both Aldarin and Emondasian invaders.

**Farborn.** Those born beyond the confines of the Medial Plane, belonging to the expansive elemental and ring planes of the Compass. Farborn covers a wide range of kinships not typically found within Aldarin, nor even the Medial Plane itself.

**Gnome.** Gnomes appear throughout all of Elos, bringing excitement and curiosity wherever they tread. Gnomes are renowned for their positive attitude towards hard work, forever pushing the boundaries of what they are seen to be capable of.

**Gnome, Frost-Blistered.** From similar areas to the snow elves, frost-blistered gnomes are less sociable than their lowland cousins. These gnomes toil the fields of southern Fyndar, working



WOOD ELF

alongside the Fyndarian wood elves to protect their home of the Aluford Forest.

**Halfling.** Never quite content with settling down in one place or another, halflings are seen travelling through the land in search of some goal, some quest to fulfil. Jovial and friendly in nature, they are welcomed in any mercyr guild as a spark of sunshine.

**Half-Orc, Plains.** Roaming the central lowlands of Elos, plains orcs and half-orcs form communities with hill dwarves. While the hill dwarves build and mine, the half-orcs hunt and ride. Their communities have been known to lock in war with Aldarin legions along the empire's easternmost front, within the scrublands of Menderin.

**Half-Orc, Snow.** Born into northern rural communities, half snow orcs tend to either stick to their birthplace and help toil within the dense, snow-covered forests or roam southwards to experience the sunny Aldarin weather while searching for work.

**Human, Aldarin.** Those born from the lineage of Deos, the sun deity, and who govern the Aldarin Empire to the south west of Elos. Aldarins are heavily militaristic in nature, seeking to expand their nation outwards throughout the southern continent.

**Human, Jyrden.** The age-old enemies of the Aldarins, the Jyrden exist within the woodlands of Jykstrav in western Elos. Their society is formed of hundreds of clanships under one collective, known as the Gathering of the Many. These clans rarely see eye to eye, unless it be to ally against invading legions from the south.

**Human, Kishmaran.** A bountiful kin of humans from the sandy shores of Sel'Kildar to the far west, whose love for their own culture and that of others knows no bounds. Kishmarans settle within Aldarin coastal settlements after being driven from their homeland by the Qutharian Empire.

**Human, Qutharian.** An expansionist nation of humans within eastern Sel'Kildar, the Qutharians have a neutral standing with Aldarin, respecting their military might and religious ties to Deos — though Qutharians instead believe they are the true descendants of Deos. The religious teachings of Quthar's centralised religion, the Ebyr'sol, enforce this line of thinking, which has begun to spread to the shores of western Elos.

**Human, Ravidanian.** From the distant shores of Ravidan to the south east of Elos come the Ravidanians. There are many different sub-kinships within this general collective, ranging from the expansionist, seafaring Voriens of the Vorien Empire to the sage-like pirates of Axis.

**Human, Rymish.** With South Rymin serving as a vassal state of the Aldarin Empire, the Rymish are closely tied with the peoples of Aldarin. Their nation is locked in a devastating war against the necropolis

state of North Rymin after the turning of the Rymish princess into a lich nearly two decades prior.

**Human, Skaalblud.** From the western island of Jordveil Isle, a close ally with Aldarin, come the Skaalblud — descendants of Skaald, demigod of frost. Their tall stature and unrivalled strength sets them apart from their Jyrden cousins to the east.

**Human, Tak'huutan.** Wealthy merchants and seafarers from the luscious sea-facing cities of eastern Nul'Kildar, the Tak'huutans find themselves along the coastal settlements of Aldarin to share in both trade and culture.

**Tiefling.** While the planar borders of the Medial Plane are mostly closed off, there are still descendents of demons and devils to be found within — those who found their way through or became trapped here upon the creation of the World Border.

**Tiefling, Blood-Eclipse.** Born not from farborn entities but from the radiance of the Medial Plane's twinned moons, Adriosa and Atheana, under the rare event of a blood moon eclipse. Blood-eclipse tieflings find themselves with the gifts of either moon, dependent on which they were born under: martial prowess for Adriosa and arcane prowess for Atheana.

## SPELLS PREVIEW

### SOL'S SUNRAY

*Evocation cantrip*

**Classes:** Cleric, Druid

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 90ft

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Components:** V, S

A beam of intense solar radiance bursts from your hands shining towards a creature you can see within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target creature takes 1d4 radiant damage. Any creature caught within the beam's path who is not the original target gains 1 temporary hit point which lasts until the end of their next turn. No temporary hit points are given on a miss.

**At Higher Levels.** The spell creates more than one beam when you reach higher levels: two beams at 5th level, three beams at 11th level, and four beams at 17th level. You can direct the beams at the same target or at different ones, making a separate attack roll for each beam.



<sup>CW</sup> **PHANTOM LIMB**  
*1st Level Conjuration*

**Classes:** Bard, Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard, Warlock

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** 8 hours

**Components:** None

This spell may be cast using either verbal or somatic components. You conjure forth a spectral body part which takes the place of one that has been lost or to temporarily reinvigorate one that has been disabled. Select one body part from the list below. You regain functionality of the chosen body part, which functions as if it were a regular body part for the duration, serving all the utility it would usually have. You gain all the sensations, such as touch or sight, that would typically be felt from the limb and may take hit point damage through the body part. Ember markings, if any, appear on the phantom limb as they would normally.

**Arm.** You regain use of an arm or hand up to a maximum length of the shoulder.

**Leg.** You regain use of a leg or foot up to a maximum length of the hip.

**Eyes.** You regain use of up to two eyes granting sight typical of your race. This does not bypass the effects of magical blindness.

**Ears.** You regain use of up to two ears granting hearing typical of your race. This does not bypass the effects of magical deafness.

**Nose.** You regain use of a nose granting smell typical of your race.

**Mouth.** You regain use of a tongue and/or teeth, granting taste typical of your race.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can instead cast it with a range of “Touch”.

**WATER TO WINE**  
*1st Level Transmutation*

**Classes:** Bard, Cleric, Paladin, Sorcerer, Wizard

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 10 feet

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Components:** V, S, M (handful of grapes)

All non-magical water within a 5-foot-radius sphere within a point of your choosing turns into cheap wine.

**At Higher Levels.** For every spell slot past 1st that this spell is cast at, the radius of the sphere increases by 5 feet and the quality of the wine improves. For example, if cast at 5th Level, the wine is of equal quality to that produced by a respectable vintner. If cast at 9th Level, the wine’s quality transcends that drunk by the gods in the divine demiplanes.

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## FEATS PREVIEW

### DEFINE YOUR FATE

When you make an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw, you may choose to add +6 to the roll. You must make this choice before rolling. If you make this choice after rolling, you may only add a +3. You have three charges of this ability and regain all charges after finishing a long rest.

### RENDING STRIKES

You have mastered the ability to render opponents useless in combat, gaining the following abilities: Increase your Strength or Dexterity by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Once per turn when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can rend their movement. If the creature moves more than half their movement speed on their turn, they must make a Constitution saving throw of DC 8 + your proficiency + your Strength or Dexterity modifier or take additional damage equal to half your weapon's damage dice.

When you score a critical hit, if the target creature is of size Large or smaller, it is knocked prone.

## DISEASE PREVIEW

### BLOOD ROT

cw

A vile disease which slowly rots the blood, causing it to turn blackened and sludge-like. Vampires and dhampir are immune to the symptoms of the disease but may still carry it and pass it on to others.

**Contracted By.** Being bitten by a creature infected by blood rot. Spending over an hour in close proximity to an infected body. Drinking or coming into contact with contaminated blood

**Initial Saving Throw.** DC 12 Constitution

**Identification.** DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)

**Lethal.** Yes

Blood rot symptoms manifest after 2d4 hours. The skin of the infected turns purple and blotchy, with buboes of infected blood starting to appear across their body. These buboes increase in size and frequency as the disease progresses. After symptoms have manifested, the infected creature reduces their maximum hit points by an amount equal to their character level (or CR, if a monster) and gains disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws. The creature may make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw whenever the disease reduces their maximum hit points. On a successful save, the maximum hit point reduction for this step of the disease is halved (minimum of 1). After the

creature has their maximum hit points reduced by blood rot, roll 2d4 to determine how many hours until their maximum hit points are reduced again. If the creature reaches 0 maximum hit points, they die. 24 hours after death, the creature raises as a **bloodrot zombie** (see page 101). As such, bodies are typically burnt immediately after death from blood rot to prevent such occurrences.

Blood rot may be cured by magic, such as the *lesser restoration* or *heal* spells. It may also be cured by drinking the blood of a vampire (lesser or greater) blessed by a deity. Creatures who are cured of the disease slowly regain their lost maximum hit points at a rate of 1d4 + their Constitution modifier (minimum of 1) per hour after the cure has been administered. After they reach their original maximum hit point total, all symptoms fade.

## BACKGROUND PREVIEW

### PUBLUS

You were always drawn to the politics of your people and eventually saw a chance to represent the region you were born in within the capital. Maybe you were part of a legion and were elected to stand on their behalf. Maybe the small city you came from in the southern empire found nobody better to represent them. Either way, you served your time as a government official, speaking your mind and winning the hearts of the people. You blocked bills passing through the Consentium Minor which you disagreed with, making both friends and enemies along the way.

You finished your time as a publus, a public representative of the plebeians, but that history never left you. You feel strongly still about the way the empire is run and wish to see change still. Are you trying to run for office again? Maybe you have connections to the street gangs of your party and are lobbying for a cause? Do you care much about your political party or are they simply a means to an end?

When taking this background, you automatically gain Aldarin citizenship.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Persuasion, Insight

**Tool Proficiencies.** One type of gaming set

**Languages.** Aldarin and one of your choice

**Equipment.** A ring bearing the insignia of the Aldarin Empire, coloured wax, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### POLITICAL PARTY

Choose or randomly determine one of the three political parties in the Aldarin Empire to become aligned to.



## POLITICAL PARTIES

### d6 Political Party

1–2 Reformist (Blue)

3–4 Revivalist (Green)

5–6 The Capitans (Yellow)

### FEATURE: ALLY OF THE PEOPLE

You are familiar with other publi in your chosen political party as well as families living within the lower city who support your party's cause. They will be willing to help you out within reason if you ask for it. You personally know the leader of the street gang aligned to your cause and they might lend you a couple of thugs to cause trouble in return for a favour.

## PERSONALITY TRAITS

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 The people of my home region have a bleaker outlook on things compared to within the capital.
- 2 I've fought in the Legions and respond well to orders.
- 3 I take the initiative where others falter.
- 4 I can speak for hours about nothing in particular.
- 5 People tend to enjoy being around me because of my bouncy energy.
- 6 I start fights for fun and then slip away.
- 7 I will see reform in this empire. For the people!
- 8 I talk endlessly about how great the imperial family is.

## IDEALS

### d6 Ideal

- 1 Quality of Life. Everyone should live a comfortable life, regardless of who they are. (Good)
- 2 Desire. I wish for what I cannot have and strive to take it from others. (Evil)
- 3 Rebellion. I enjoy stirring up trouble for those around me. (Chaotic)
- 4 Refined. My status places me at the forefront of the law. (Lawful)
- 5 Tradition. The practices of our people must be kept in the highest regard. (Any)
- 6 Politics. I seek to engage in the betterment of the empire in any way I can. (Any)

## BONDS

### d6 Bond

- 1 My ring shows my standing as a visionary who once led the people
- 2 Deveros is my home, even if I did not grow up here.
- 3 The street gangs of my party have kept me safe all these years.
- 4 My purpose is to serve the people and the people alone.
- 5 I miss the people of my home region dearly.
- 6 I stole a pichera (a ceremonial dagger belonging to a consensa) and wish I could be one of the consensae.

## FLAWS

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I speak far too loudly about my political opinions.
- 2 I fail to see the problem with executing refugees from Jykstrav.
- 3 I can't help but cause trouble for people with differing views to my own.
- 4 Once I am set on doing something, I must achieve it before moving on.
- 5 The carnal pulls of the lower city tempt me daily.
- 6 I was destined for greatness and will stop at nothing to achieve fame.



JUNIA VA'AX,  
REVIVALIST PUBLIUS

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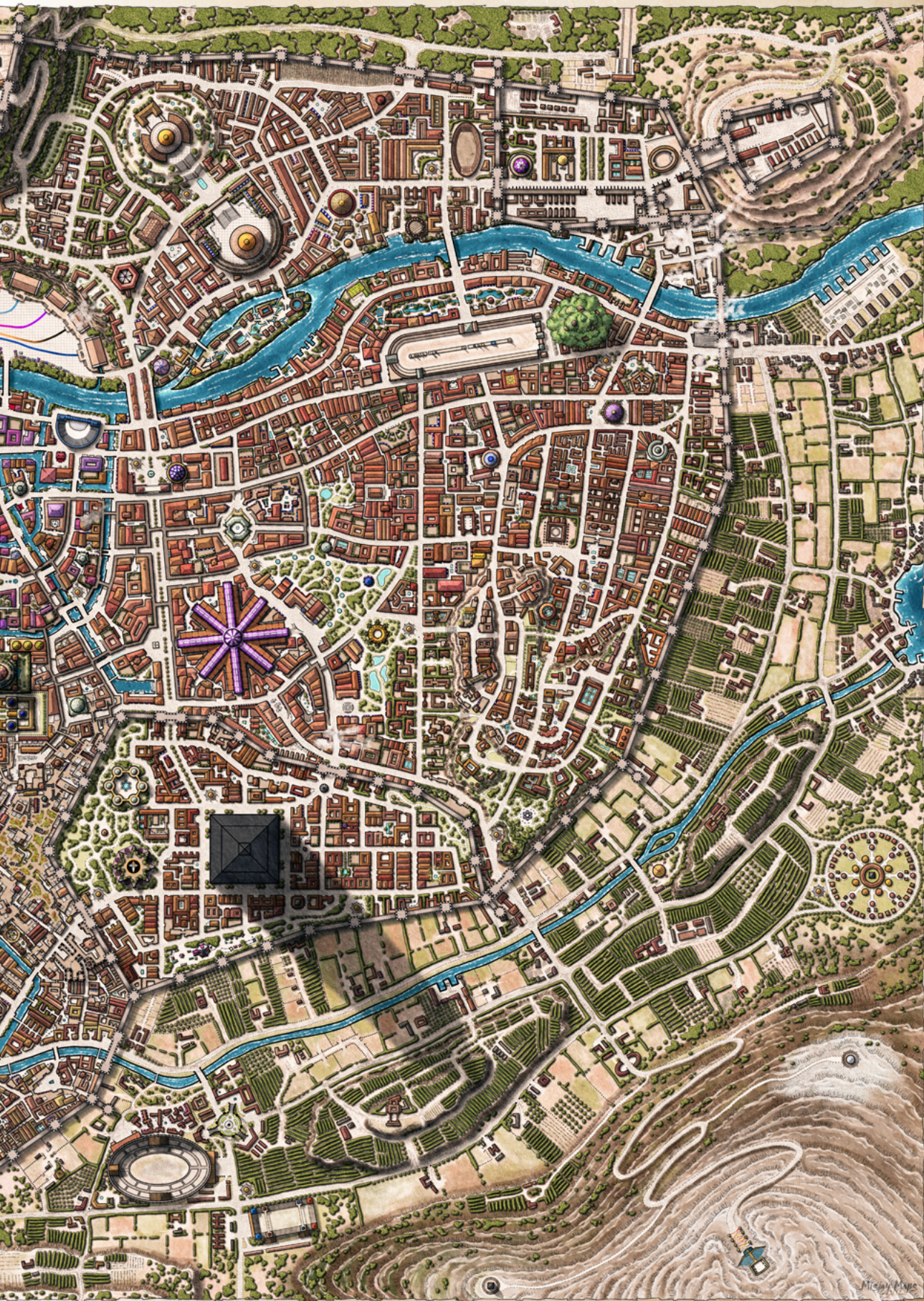
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## WELCOME TO DEVEROS

*“Our people have braved the harsh lands of this new world, and here we lay claim to our birthright, and the birthright of our ancestors of countless millennia prior. The holy light of Deos hath guided us unto this land, and here we maketh our own mark on history. Not as dwellers of the undercities but as denizens of a new era. Elais shall behold our radiance and the people of Aldarin shall shine as beacons of hope and prosperity in this new age of enlightenment. This is our land. Our home. Deos, father, witness me as I place this flag.”*

- King Loxis Regitorus Deveros I of Aldarin

### Deveros, NG Capital Metropolis

**Qualities.** Prosperous, academic, militaristic, strategic location, commercial hub

**Government.** Oligarchic Imperial Republic (symbolic emperor, acting officials)

**Population.** 62,442 (39,452 humans, 6,301 high elves, 3,909 half-elves, 3,005 dragonborn, 2,304 halflings, 2,115 gnomes, 1,007 ashensworn, 980 dhampir, 962 tieflings, 873 dwarves, 823 half-orcs, 711 other)

Upon the southwestern shores of Elos, where rolling hills of sun-kissed vineyards meet the Gilded Ocean, the gleaming River Ivora coils around Hastellian Hill, forging a path through the marble-rich rock.

Tales of this land are far flung beyond the outreaches of the continent: the burial place of flamines, the ascension grounds of Liberi, and home to the most prolific nation to grace this age. Upon the precipice of marble studded peaks, the Imperial Palace bolsters itself against the vivid ocean winds, keeping watch over both land and sea. The oldest existing Wonder of Reclamation in Elos, with spiralling peaks of pure gold and masterfully cut amethyst reaching over 400 feet high, the palace can be seen from miles away: a truly undeniable feat of architecture and unrivalled opulence. Legend speaks the fabled tale of the ancient blue dragon slain by the first inhabitants of these lands, who protected her realm atop Hastellian Hill. A dragon whose body turned to that of water, which now flows vivaciously through the hills, providing life and sustenance to the farmlands that boast such bountiful harvests. The River Ivora's mouth gapes towards the Gilded Ocean, said never to be satiated in her greed for gold, not even in death, and it is here where commerce akin to several dragon's hoards pass through daily. The bustling harbour of a thousand vessels, the blessed lands of Deos's firstborn, the enlightened bastion of the Aldarin Empire: Deveros, The Amethyst Crown.

## CONSENTIUM POPULUSQUE DEVEROSA

- *The Consentium and People of Deveros*

### DEVEROS OF TODAY

Almost a thousand years have passed since the founding of Deveros. Where rolling fields and a barren coast once stood, now sprawls an opulent, teeming metropolis of the Aldarin people. From the reaching spires of the Imperial Palace atop Hastellian Hill to the depths of the Sanguine Sanctum of the Vampiric Order deep beneath the paved slabs of Deveros's streets, the capital of the Aldarin Empire exudes intrigue from every crevice. Whether it be the toga-clad consensae orating politically-charged addresses to the public people or the dhampir kidnapers of Sanguesta dragging innocent tourists into the bowels of the city to be harvested of their blood, there is never a dull moment in the goings on of Deveros's populace.

The centre of rule for Aldarin and its provinces, Deveros is home to the historic reigning forum of the Consentium at the heart of the governmental district of Consentarius. Patricians and sanctes alike stream down from their extravagant cliff top villas of Marmaros, the crowds of the general public

swarming to listen to the words of these pseudo political celebrities. Peltor guards push away those who get too close while hawk-eyed legionarii from the walls of Prisada Legito look on from afar, keeping an eye out for trouble.

Standing as the busiest commercial harbour along Elos's southernmost shores, Deveros witnesses countless vessels passing along its bay each day. So much so that restrictions have been placed on which ships may enter the harbour itself. This has triggered a boom in the rapida industry, a collective of light watercraft which transport cargo from galleon-class ships outside the bay into The Channelways district. From here, street wagoneers unload the precious goods and rush them through the cramped side alleys enroute to various shops and warehouses, such as those of the bustling commercial district: Quintae Principalis. That is if they are not stopped first by the political street gangs which roam the residential district of Arbeia or pushed into a canalway by drunken amphitheatre-goers stumbling from the theatrical productions of Artisno.





Those seeking a more relaxing time might elect to bathe in the thermae of Fluminis after a stroll along the luscious public parks, kept in tip-top order by the imperial gardeners: The Cardinals. Others may take a riverboat to Cruorse Isle to partake in the light-hearted games of Epsoma Pier or to witness brutal gladiatorial battles within Quor's Crucible. Should the realm of the divine spark the interest, the Aedes Tredecima holds grand, towering temples to the thirteen leading deities of the Medial Pantheon. If religion is not one's cup of wine, those with arcane sensibilities may find themselves at home within the Prisada Arcana, home to the Deverosian World Anchor and the Deveros Arcane University. Failing all this, they may simply elect to head down into the tabernae of Solenta Major and knock back a few ales with the locals until the stars of Gw'yth domain shimmer before their eyes.

Beyond the fortified limestone brick walls of Deveros span dozens of vineyards, each owned by the vintners of long-running Aldarin lineages. The district of Agrizzo thrives with vineyard labourers and wagoners, each executing a crucial role in the never-ending industry of wine production. Stoic legionarii of the Legio Terra I Deverosa march rank and file outside the walls, singing marching songs as they ensure order is upheld throughout the busy thoroughfares of the surrounding region. Further southwards, wrapped around the external sail-clad walls of the Prisada Navilia, is the bustling district of Solenta Minor, a hive of illicit dealings and surreptitious business. Within this cobbled shanty town one may find such rogues as those of Laedemus or the Brivane Pirates, who perpetually war over territory within the secluded waterways.

How will you explore Deveros? Will you join a mercyr guild and reap the rewards of monster slaying? Will you devote yourself to a deity as a stalwart mantel? Or will you fall prey to the deceptive intrigue of the city's underworld?

It's time to make a name for yourself, emberblood. Deveros awaits.

### INSPIRATION FOR DEVEROS

Taking themes found within both ancient Rome and modern Venice, Deveros is inspired by a blend of these two deeply historic cities. While the social and political spheres of Deveros, alongside its individual buildings, adhere towards a more Roman aesthetic, its teeming canals, dense districts, and countless bridges are very much inspired by the geographical layout of Venice. Islands such as Crevana, Cometerium de Vista, and Cruorse Isle meld cultural touchstones of both cities, such as the Colosseum, the Isola di San Michele, and Burano.

Deveros saw its beginnings as a fantasy derivation of ancient Rome, taking inspiration from the turbulent times of the Late Roman Republic, but as time passed it became more and more of a love letter to Venice. Aspects of Venetian history, such as the Venetian Holy Inquisition, Venetian glass, and vaporetto also served to inspire certain districts and sub-cultures within the city.

Some aspects of the city lend themselves more heavily to a post-Classical era, such as galleons and dusktech engines. These elements may not suit all GMs wishing to run a pure classical themed setting, and as such have been designed in such a way that they may be easily replaced with era-specific equivalents such as galleys and mule-driven vehicles.

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## PLAYING THE DEVEROS PREVIEW

*“The mark of a Deverosian is to eat too much food, to drink too much wine, and to dictate the lives of those who they shall never meet.”*

- Acclesian Alventius on Aldarin politics

Deveros is a sprawling city themed on ancient Roman culture, featuring twenty districts, hundreds of NPCs, and even more shops, guilds, temples, bathhouses, and organisations. There is a bounty of content to explore in the final publications.

For this preview, we’ve included one fully-realised district out of the twenty: the northern island of Cruorse Isle. We have also included a number of quick reference tables and information to obtain an insight into life in the city. This information will be expanded upon in the final publications with deep dives into each of the gods, districts, and cultural focal points. Everything in this preview document represents a work in progress and is subject to change in the final publications.

### PLAYER INFORMATION

This information is readily available to your players. Not all information included below is necessarily relevant to Cruorse Isle but helps provide an overview of the culture within Deveros.

#### DISTRICT QUICK GUIDE

| District        | Key Words   |
|-----------------|---|
| Aedes Tredecima | Religious, Temples  |
| Agrizzo         | Agricultural, Vineyards, Industrial                         |
| Arbeia          | Residential, Middle Class, Street Gangs, Taverns            |
| Artisno         | Cultural, Theatre, Art, Canals                              |
| Consentiarus    | Political, Upper Class, Busy, Riverside, No Weapons Allowed |
| Crevana         | Island, Prison, Graveyard                                   |
| Cruorse Isle    | Island, Arena, Minor Settlement, Entertainment, Fishing     |
| Fluminis        | Residential, Middle Class, Riverside, Arena, Bathhouses     |
| Marmaros        | Residential, Upper Class, Cliffside, Elevated               |
| Prisada Arcana  | Walled, Arcane, Research, Students, Rowdy                   |
| Prisada Legito  | Walled, Legionary, Curfew, Industrial, Historic             |
| Prisada Navilia | Walled, Legionary, Curfew, Industrial, Naval                |

#### DISTRICT QUICK GUIDE

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Prospector District | Industrial, Commercial, Mines, Naval, Canals  |
| Quintae Principalis | Commercial, Wealthy, Busy, Historic, Taverns  |
| Sala Sel’Kildarak   | Residential, Minor Settlement, Self Contained, Historic                                     |
| Solenta Major       | Residential, Lower Class, Taverns, Busy, Markets, Criminal                                  |
| Solenta Minor       | Residential, Shanty Town, Minor Settlement, Lower Class, Fishing, Canals, Criminal          |
| The Amethyst Acre   | Imperial, Restricted, No Weapons  |
| The Channelways     | Residential, Commercial, Lower Class, Taverns, Brothels, Busy, Canals, Warehouses, Criminal |
| Underground         | Sparse, Sewers, Criminal  |

### DEIFIC WORSHIP

There are plenty of ways to pay homage to the gods, though the most common is through offerings made at shrines and temples. Doing so will grant special blessings for a short period of time. Below is a quick guide to the major gods of the Medial Pantheon.

You can attain two types of blessing: **Minor** and **Major**. Minors typically last for 24 hours, majors last between a week and a year, depending on the blessing. See more about blessings on page 87.

#### DEITY QUICK GUIDE

This is an overview of the major deities of the Medial Pantheon including the Tredecima, the core thirteen gods, and seven of the Liberi, the free gods.

#### DEITY QUICK GUIDE

| Deity      | Oversees                       | Cleric Domains          |
|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aether     | Travel, Clouds, Sky            | Revelry, Tempest, Light |
| Celianthre | Nature, Glades, Trees          | Nature, Life            |
| Deos       | Healing, the Sun, the Divine   | Light, Life             |
| Gw’yth     | Stars, the Astral, the Arcane  | Arcana, Twilight        |
| Hargrum    | Forges, Architecture, Creation | Forge, Life             |
| Iora       | Knowledge, Scripture, Law      | Knowledge, Order        |
| Kistra     | Harvests, Souls, the Dead      | Nature, Death           |
| Kylera     | Growth, Birth, Reincarnation   | Grave, Life             |
| Larveth    | Disease, Insects, Decay        | Nature, Grave, Death    |



## DEITY QUICK GUIDE

|          |                                |                           |
|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Loritel  | Strategy, Rivers, Serenity     | War, Order, Peace         |
| Meliam   | Protection, Warding, Curses    | War, Arcana               |
| Mornfel  | Moons, Prophecies, the Night   | Nature, Twilight, Arcana  |
| Quor     | Love, Passion, War             | War, Life                 |
| Rael     | Seas, Oceans, Storms           | Nature, Tempest           |
| Saleen   | Trade, Prosperity, Greed       | Knowledge, Trickery       |
| Sovingar | Winter, Hearths, Shelter       | Nature, Tempest, Peace    |
| Viker    | Thieves, Hunting, the Wilds    | Nature, Trickery, Revelry |
| Vys      | Illusion, Curiosity, Mischief  | Arcana, Trickery          |
| Xithri   | Emotions, Theatre, Dreams      | Emotion, Trickey, Arcana  |
| Xyth     | Shadows, Deception, Corruption | Trickery                  |

## CALENDAR

While the Compass hosts numerous planar calendars, the Medial Calendar is used to track the passage of time upon the Medial Plane. One full rotation of the plane marks the passing of one year. Each year is divided into four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The seasons are then divided further into three months each, except for winter, which has four months. This is due to Sovingar's strong governance over the domain of winter, who believes that an additional month of frost is required to balance out the growth seen in the other three seasons. Together, this collates to thirteen months in the calendar year, with each month lasting exactly twenty eight days.

Furthermore, the months are split into weeks and the weeks into days, with the passage of one day being a single rotation of the sun around the plane, which is pulled by Meveril's abandoned chariot, Heliosus. The number of days within a week varies from nation to nation, but the most widely recognised standard for the weeks, the Anchor Week, is kept by the Anchor Treaty Nations and is split into seven days.

**Anchor Week.** Sul, Mul, Zol, Wir, Zor, Far, Sar.

**Months of the Year.** Winter's Wane, Winter's Dusk, Spring's Dawn, Spring's Crest, Spring's Dusk, Summer's Dawn, Summer's Crest, Summer's Dusk, Autumn's Dawn, Autumn's Crest, Autumn's Dusk, Winter's Dawn, Winter's Wax.

## LAWS AND RULES

There are a number of unique laws and cultural quirks of the Aldarin Empire that it's good for everyone to know. The last thing you want is to end up in **Carcer Opero**<sup>4</sup>, one of the city's prisons.

### Do's

- **Take baths.** You can take Thermae Rests to gain temporary benefits for you and your party and to wash off the grime of all the chthonic cultists you've been beating up.
- **Worship the gods.** Give some of your hard earned gold in offering at a temple and you might be rewarded with a powerful boon.
- **Respect the Vintari.** They are trained legionarii and do not have time for nonsense. Stay on their good side and you'll find life in the city a lot simpler.
- **Get to know your local taberna owners.** They're good sources of information and know about goings on in the city.
- **Drink wine.** Wine is abundant throughout the empire, even if watered down, and is a common alcoholic drink alongside ale.

### Don'ts

- **Roam the streets alone at night.** There are countless gangs and criminal groups waiting to mug or kidnap unsuspecting travellers.
- **Touch sacerdots.** No, really. Don't touch religious officials belonging to the Aedes Tredecima or any other major temple without permission while they're conducting religious rites. It's illegal.
- **Obstruct justice.** If the Vintari, the Legions, or imperial magi get involved, step away. It's not worth getting dragged into imperial affairs lest you end up imprisoned or exiled.
- **Swim in the canals.** It's not illegal but you'll likely get run over by a rapida or river barge. Best to avoid the clerical fees.
- **Disrespect political figures.** They have ties all across the city and can make your life a living hell. From aligned street gangs to control over mercyr guilds, politicians of the Consentium have their tendrils wrapped around many different groups.

4) Deveros's largest prison.

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## QUICK REFERENCE TERMS

### Misc Terms

**Ember.** Powerful innate abilities akin to those of demigods, tied to one's soul.

**Rapida.** A light water craft used to transport people and goods along canals. A driver of a rapida is called a rapidari.

### Universe Terms

**The Compass.** All planes of existence in the known universe forming the shape of a four pointed compass.

**Primordial.** An ancient entity belonging to one of the four core elements: Fire, Water, Earth, Wind. These entities created the Compass.

**Dusk.** A corrupting form of old magic stemming from the Primordial of Fire's decaying soul. It is known to destroy the souls of those who encounter it.

**Dusk Shroud.** The cataclysmic phenomenon triggered upon the death of the Primordial of Fire.

**Duskfall.** The destruction of the Dusk Shroud by thirteen demigods. A major event in history.

**Dusktech.** The utilisation of dusk combined with technology to create advancements such as airships, trains, and rapida.

### Religious Terms

**Medial Pantheon.** The pantheon which governs the Medial Plane, sometimes known as the Material Plane.

**Tredecima.** The thirteen major gods of the Medial Pantheon.

**Liberi.** Minor gods of the Medial Pantheon not within the Tredecima.

**Pontifex.** A religious leader under one of the Tredecima deities.

**Sovigal.** High priests or priestesses of a clergy ranking under a pontifex.

**Sacerdos.** Priests, priestesses, clerics, or paladins ranking under a sovigal.

### Terms for People

**Emberblood.** Someone who possesses an ember and whose soul is woven with that of one or more gods.

**Mercyr.** An imperially licensed mercenary who slays monsters and fixes (or causes) problems outside the remit of the Legions.

**Consensa.** A politician of noble lineage serving in the Consentium.

**Primus.** The primi are the two elected leaders of the empire, who run for two year terms.

**Publus.** A plebeian politician serving in the Consentium Minor.

**Peltor.** Special guards who protect the consensae and the publi.

**Magus.** Magi are trained mages, typically belonging to an official institution or college.

### Groups

**Vintari.** The legionarii guard collective which regulates justice and order throughout the empire. A guard is called a vintarus.

**Laedemus.** A collective of thugs known for kidnapping and ransoming.

**Blueglades.** A group of thieves and burglars operating in the southern city.

**Umbra Syndicate.** Assassins, thugs, and informants working for the empire. A member of the syndicate is called an umbra crow.

**Yataal.** A criminal smuggling group operating in the Sala Sel'Kildarak district.

**Ebyr'sol.** A Deos-centric religious group who operate within the Sala Sel'Kildarak district.

### Political Parties

**Reformist.** A left-wing, pro-people political group known for supporting veterans and farmers.

**Revitalist.** A right-wing, pro-imperial family political group known for supporting merchants and patricians.

**The Capitans.** A left-wing, liberal political group known for causing chaos in the Consentium and supporting all the known vices of the body.

### Buildings

**Consentium.** The forum of Aldarin's consensae who govern over the empire.

**Consentium Minor.** The forum of Aldarin's elected publi who may vote on behalf of the people.

**Thermae.** A bathhouse, typically with hot baths, cold baths, and an area to play sports.

**Insula.** An apartment or apartment building.

**Domus.** A residential, standalone home belonging to a family.

**Taberna.** A single floor tavern facing out onto street level, serving food and drink.

**Popina.** A small food bar or illicit gambling hall.





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## GM INFORMATION

Everything beyond this point is for use by the GM. This gives information on the district of Cruorse Isle as well as the first part of the Late Shipments introductory adventure.

### CRUORSE ISLE ORGANISATIONS

Below is a handful of organisations who operate on Cruorse Isle. While this is not an extensive list, it provides an insight to a handful of guilds which exist around Deveros.

#### AURMERCE

Alignment: CG



The Aldarins have never been well known for their naval prowess, with only a handful of naval legions manning the sturdy vessels built within the shipyards of Crevana. In times of need, the empire has resorted to commissioning the multitudes of mercenary ships that frequent the Gilded Ocean and Deveros Coast, who commonly sail alongside merchant vessels for protection against pirates. These naval freelancers are known as the Aurmerce and are granted a form of pseudo-citizenship as thanks for their efforts throughout the empire. Feared across the seas, these steel-clad privateers are fiercely aligned with the Aldarin Empire, seeking to protect her trade routes and coastal villages against such nebulous entities as the **Brivane Pirates** and Jyrden navies through any means necessary.

#### BRIVANE PIRATES

Alignment: CN

A notable collective of coastal corsairs, the Brivane Pirates operate from **Dawnbreak Cove** and are renowned for targeting Aurmerce-protected merchant vessels coming across from the Kildars. They are led by the daring debonair **Dató Brivane** (CN he/him Aldarin mercyr 11), an ex-legionarii sailor from Gordistra, whose elusive smuggling and raiding have landed him as one of Deveros's most wanted criminals. Dató was brought up in a troubled fishing community and empathises with the plight of fishers seeking to make a living, pledging to protect them in exchange for a small share of the fish caught. The original fleet of the Brivane Pirates was formed of rogue Aurmerce and illicit crabbing vessels around the Deverosian coast, opposing the restrictive fishing laws laid down by the Consentium. These laws were set in place to protect the coasts of the province from rampant, unregulated fishing which had gone unmonitored for decades. Eventually the Aurmerce were brought in to deal with the problem, with the Brivane Pirates rising up to oppose them. Illicit fishing guilds sprung up as a direct result of these restrictions, opposed to the favouritism given to the imperially-sanctioned fishing guild of **Pisceria**. Despite the general benevolence of the Brivane Pirates for these fishing communities, there are a handful of downsides, such as their tendency to keep the fishers locked into protection through hefty taxes on their goods and active fighting against rival groups seeking to muscle in on their territory.

Whilst many of the illicit fishing guilds function peacefully, a number of overzealous Brivane Pirates led by the terrifying brigand **Astridr Froekbern** (CN she/her Jyrden sellsword 11) have flipped the tables and taken the fight to the source, sinking numerous Aurmerce ships and burning warehouses belonging to Pisceria with workers still inside. Astridr is currently hiding out at **Fortissumus** in Solenta Minor after the recent execution of Pisceria guild leader **Zala Trivesti Paenula's** eldest daughter, **Bella Trivesti Pulla**. Pulla had begun bribing members of Astridr's crew to incite a mutiny aboard her ship, which Astridr did not take kindly to. The crew members, alongside Pulla, were executed in full view of the Deveros Bay. Astridr's galleon, *The Night Drifter*, was sunk by the Legio Navilia I Deverosia shortly after, with Astridr somehow surviving to live another day. This barbarous act by the ashensworn captain has led to divided opinions and a fracturing of the Brivane Pirate's operations within the city over the past year. Most of Astridr's lingering crew now operate around the newer district of Solenta Minor, led by Astridr's first mate **Attica Hess II** (NG she/her ashensworn mercyr 7), seeking to pick up the scraps



of their old captain's over-the-top actions. A splinter group led by one of Astridr's rivals, **Hobek Fraus** (See Gang Leaders of Raela), operates a protection racket within the fish markets of Raela on Cruorse Isle out of the **Nos Nox** (see Q17 on page 42) popina.

### QUOR'S CHAMPIONS

**Alignment:** CN

Bloodsoaked heroes of the people, Quor's Champions form the collective of paid gladiators of Quor's Crucible who fight for the entertainment of the masses. One must battle through the ranks of the grand colosseum to be crowned with the title of Champion of Quor, winning at least 50 fights. Not all losses result in death, though the whims of the masses might look less favourably upon poor display of skill and charisma, sending many a gladiator to an early grave. The title of champion comes with a vast plethora of perks, such as free housing within Fluminis, endless use of the city's teleportation service, invites to feasts at some of Deveros's most prestigious private clubs, such as Capitola, and select choice of specialty wines from the vineyards of Agrizzo. The current leader of the guild is **Remus Vyk'hym Jordveila** (see Current Quor's Champions on Page 43), a proud Skaaldic gladiator from Jordveil Isle.

#### LIFE OF A GLADIATOR

*"Don't think I could do all that swishin' and stabbin'. It'd get me feathers real puffed up, never mind how hard it'd be to get rid of the bloodstains!"*

Gladiators in Aldarin typically sit within the lower classes, as with most entertainers. That isn't to say there are no high profile gladiators, however. Quite the contrary. When they are not spending their time training, eating, or entertaining, popular gladiators will be seen flaunting themselves on the streets, seeking to garner as much attention from their fans as possible. Particularly enamoured fans might seek out amorous relations with their favourite gladiators and pay handsomely for the time spent together, forming an extra source of income for the muscular entertainers. One such famous case is that of **Lucius "Bright-Eyed" Nasius Pello** (CN he/they Jyrden gladiator), who is well loved for their tall stature and blue eyes — marking their Jyrden heritage. Pello has engaged in countless affairs with his fans, with a select number paying exorbitant amounts of gold to "wrestle" with the gladiator in his private chambers.



### SANGUESTA

**Alignment:** LE



Dhampir bound in servitude to their vampiric masters are called *sanguesta* or "blood-locked", often finding themselves enslaved to toil within the criminally-charged collective of the same name. This organisation of pale-skinned half vampires is commanded by the assertive sovigal of Quor, **Deacon Isetti** (LE he/him dhampir sovigal [Quor] 11), who in turn answers to the infamously cruel **Publius Siccia Estio** (page 51). These dhampir are tasked with collecting fresh blood from **The Bloodkiln** or through kidnapping denizens of the city. Upon the fall of night, this freshly sourced blood is transported in ice-covered waterskins to vampires across Deveros through a complex network of Sanguesta wagoneers, rapidari, and sewer runners.

Deacon, alongside a number of his closest followers, are unhappy with the meagre supply of blood rationed to them by their vampiric overseers. These blood hungry dhampir have taken to draining the blood of desha addicts within The Channelways, whom they perceive as easy targets. This has had the unfortunate consequence of these Sanguesta sacerdots developing an addiction to desha as well, or rather to the drugged blood of the addicts, leading to erratic decision making and outbursts of rage directed at subordinate members of the organisation. When supplies run low, Sanguesta workers have been known to kidnap unsuspecting travellers or vagnatae in efforts to supplement the sacrificial basin of The Bloodkiln. These victims are dragged to the **Sanguine Sanctum** where they are bled dry like cattle. This has led to Sanguesta drawing the unwanted eye of the **Transfodium** mercyr guild in recent months with several missing persons cases pointing towards unearthing their nefarious activities. The corruption of the Siccia family runs deep throughout the Vintari and Aldarin politics however, with any nosey troublemaker drawing too close to the covert operations of the organisation either disappearing without a trace or blackmailed into keeping their mouths shut.

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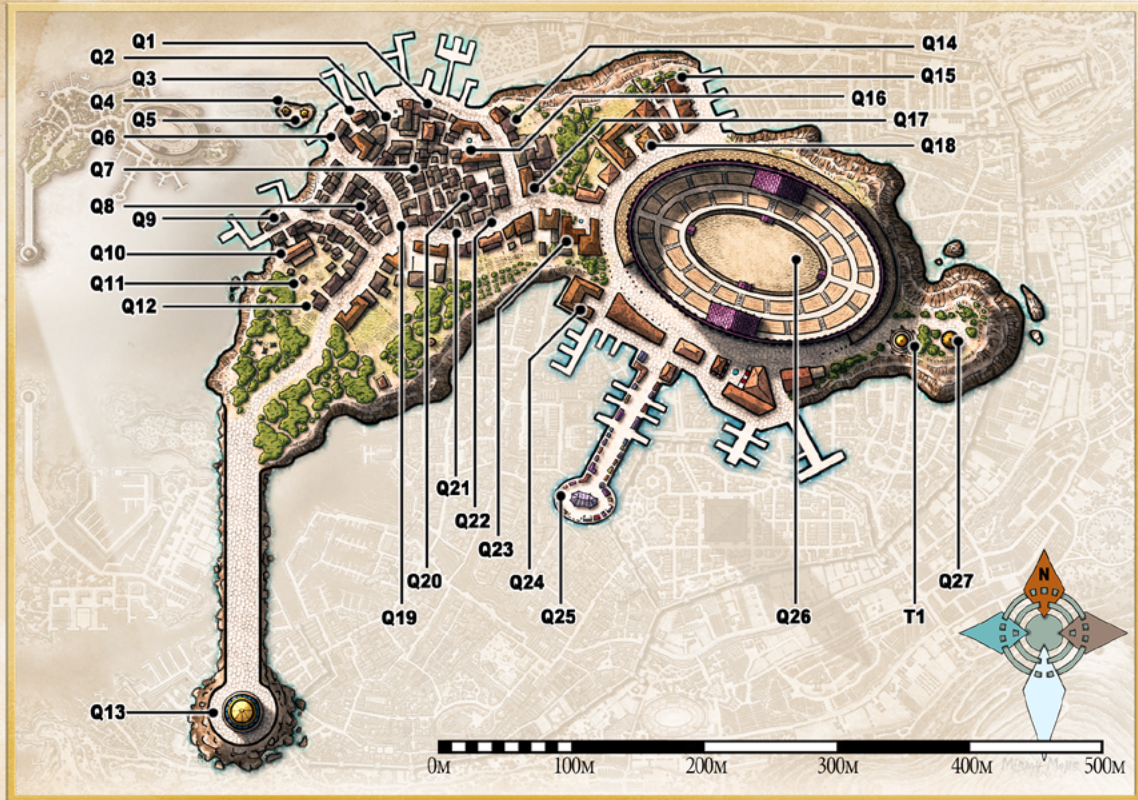
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## CRUORSE ISLE

### Quor's Crucible, Raela Markets, Epsoma Pier

**Qualities.** Island, touristy, poor, industrious

**Population.** 1,919 residents

**Residences.** Basic townhouses, insulae and shacks; Derelict insulae and shacks.

**Social Presence.** Artifex living in the townhouses; Praestae and otium living in the insulae and shacks, working as fishers and pearl hunters.

**Guard Presence.** None. Outside the remit of the Vintari. Small Brivane Pirate collective protecting Raela. Gang activity from Emperor's Lot and Sanguesta gangs.

**Curfew.** None.

### Main Locations

#### Artisan

**Liliana's** (fishing supply crafter); **The Final Thread** (clothier)

#### Criminal

**Pilot's Shipping and Imports** (stolen smuggled goods from Ravidan)

#### Cultural

**Damicles** (statue of a famed gladiator); **Epsoma Pier** (bustling pier teeming with games and food stalls); **Quor's Crucible** (illustrious arena used for theatre, fighting, and sport)

#### Governmental

**Castrum Borea** (old naval fort guarding the Deverosian Bay)

### Guildhall

**Gladius** (guildhall of Quor's Champions); **Heart of the Sea** (illicit fishing guild); **Wavewalkers** (guild of pearl hunters)

### Hospitality

**Nos Nox** (seedy popina within Raela; hangout for Brivane Pirates); **Ragged Sturgeon** (rundown inn frequented by fishers); **Saltwash** (rowdy taberna; base of operations for Emperor's Lot gang); **Sobren's Bar** (cosy taberna owned by a wayward fireborn; gathering place for powerful emberblood); **Tattered Tackle** (Umbra Syndicate nest keeping watch over Raela); **The Latecomer** (bustling taberna; popular with fishers from Raela)

### Religious

**Lowshrine** (minor shrine to Rael); **Shrine of Quor** (minor shrine to Quor)

### Residence

**Breven** (collective of seaside insulae); **The Sea Pits** (crumbling insulae populated by gladiators)

### Service

**Dosi** (potion seller from Ravidan); **Felix's Fishing Adventures** (rental fishing sloops run by an enthusiastic dwarven sailor); **Raela Markets** (fishing market with links to the Slipways); **Rael's Washhouse** (grubby thermae popular with crab fishers); **Uvenkos** (atheistic soothsayer); **Zenith** (collection of warehouses used for underground schemes)

### Smith

**Black Hammer** (grandmaster weaponsmith)





Just across from the mainland, over the glimmering waters of the bustling Deverosian Bay, lies one of the capital city's two island districts: Cruorse Isle. Whilst this region of luscious land went mostly uninhabited for centuries, aside from the old naval fort of Castrum Borea, it has since grown into a thriving island of fanfare, entertainment, and criminal activity. The empire's largest arena, that of Quor's Crucible, stands proud upon the cusp of the isle, beckoning forth brave gladiators to rise and fight in the name of the excitable war god. Cheers from excited spectators ripple across the open waters at all hours of the day, for the entertainment of Quor's Crucible never truly ends. Bloody bouts of brutal gladiatorial combat are met with ferocious chanting from the crowds whilst fast-paced jova matches and pitched miniature naval battles seek to draw in visitors from all across Aldarin. If not visiting for the crucible, instead one might seek to venture onto the waves of the Deveros Coast in a rental fishing boat, or to sample the finest street food the city has to offer along the bustling Epsoma Pier. With such excitement abound along the south-eastern shores of this stunning isle, it is hard to believe anything untoward occurs upon Cruorse Isle. The north-western front, however, tells a different tale.

Ramshackle huts and crumbling insulae brace against the ocean winds tumbling in from the Gilded Ocean — the illegal fishing settlement of Raela. Mirroring its cousin of Solenta Minor across the southern stretches of the Deveros Coast, Raela began its life as a legitimate sub-settlement designed to support the Crucible and to house its non-penal gladiators. As the years passed, however, the once industrious settlement became filled with licence-lacking fishers who have travelled from throughout the empire and beyond with desires to build up a stable living for themselves in the capital. These fishers, unable to attain official permits to trade along the Deveros Coast, have resorted to the protection of the Brivane Pirates who fiercely oppose the maritime laws mandated by Pisceria and the Consentium. These fishing folk have found themselves outcast from Aldarin society simply for practising their trade. Despite this outlook, Raela finds itself to be mostly self-sufficient, aside from the gladiatorial insulae along its outreaches, distantly separated from the joy-filled southern shores of Cruorse Isle. Illicit trade is now abundant within the sea-facing village, its location encouraging the transportation of illegally imported goods to pass through its docks, heading into the Slipways or one of the other secluded black markets under nightfall.

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## LOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

### Q1. BREVEN, RESIDENCE (INSULAE)

Cheap, seaside insulae which are barely holding themselves together. Patched wooden frames and supports protrude from the sides with various crudely constructed balconies giving views over the Deverosian bay.

### Q2. SOBREN'S BAR, HOSPITALITY (TABERNA)

Within the depths of Raela is a hidden popina. This den of oddity serves as a far-flung meeting ground for miscreants and outlaws who find themselves cast from "regular" society. Sobren's Bar is nothing but a few simple tables, chairs, and racks of liquor to the casual eye but serves a far greater meaning to many wayward wanderers of the plane. A lone purple-furred satyr singing a jaunty melody. A pair of lunar-blessed tieflings touched by the stars. A meditating monk whose ember tells tales of countless lost battles. All these folk, and countless more outcasts, can be found lounging around the dusty barspace: drinking, eating, and sharing tales of their misfortune. For it is here that they are accepted, not looked down upon for being different, but accepted

into the folds of Sobren's warming taberna for who they are. The fire-haired **Sobren** (NG he/they [GF] fireborn orator 5) leans upon the counter, listening in on conversations with a curious gaze and writing down the tales told within the confines of the bar's barren walls. These tales shall not be lost to time, for Sobren keeps them safe in his vast tomes of history behind the counter. Upon the passing of a regular patron into the afterlife, Sobren orates their story to all who sit within the bar, holding a drink high in their memory as another wanderer is lost unto the Void. Gone, but not forgotten.

### Q3. BLACK HAMMER, SMITH (WEAPONSMITH)

Famed across the continent for the masterwork craftsmanship produced in his tiny forge, The Black Hammer, also known as **Trevyn Tailwind** (LG he/him high elf labourer 4), tirelessly hammers away at privately commissioned weapons throughout day and night. Starting his career as the blacksmith of **Quor's Crucible** (Q26), Trevyn quickly gained fame for his skill with the hammer. As more and more gladiators emerged victorious wielding his weapons, the steel bearing a distinctive dark, wave-like appearance in what is now known as "The Tailwind



Temper”, Trevyn eventually outgrew the smoke-choked forges of the Crucible’s pits. He set up shop within Raela, now offering his wares to hundreds of clients from the far reaches of the Medial Plane.

<sup>cw</sup> Trevyn is grouchy at the best of times, with his blunt rudeness and callous tongue lashing out at any seeking to disturb his process, of which he must have absolute focus. Despite his abrasive exterior, the master smith sees an endless cascade of requests to do business arriving at his door each week, with commissions ranging anywhere from 2,000 gold for a masterwork dagger to over 50,000 gold for an arcane-tempered greatsword. Trevyn’s finest work is *Onisa*, a legendary gladius forged of fallen meteorite, melded with the blood of Quor and tempered with The Obsidian Prince’s hammer. *Onisa* was wielded by Deos’s flamen, Estia, during the Second Medial War and is now handed down between each new Primus Legatus until such a time that the flamines are summoned again.

#### Q4. RAEL’S WASHHOUSE, SERVICE (BATHHOUSE)

**Thermae Quality:** Derelict

Operated by the chatty Raelan sacerdos **Miricus Alerius Pontar** (CG he/him Aldarin sacerdos [Rael] 3), Rael’s Washhouse is a rundown establishment situated across from the **Lowshrine** (Q5). The pungent smell of saltwater and seaweed clings to the air around the structure with the bathwater itself shimmering a murky green colour. Pontar persistently runs into issues with banniks<sup>5</sup> stinking up the baths, though has too much on his plate to deal with the tricky gremlins.

#### Q5. LOWSHRINE, RELIGIOUS (SHRINE, RAEL)<sup>6</sup>

The Lowshrine sees offerings of copper and silver pieces each morning by the residents of Raela, which are dragged away into the deep by the currents of high tide. In exchange, the shrine may be found filled with vibrant sea shells and pearls once the tides pull away. **Miricus Alerius Pontar** (Q4) operates the Lowshrine when not tending to **Rael’s Washhouse**. During low tide it’s possible to walk over to the isle, though at high tide one must take a rowing boat. There are always a handful of fishers around the docks offering to take folk over for a copper piece or two.

#### Q6. HEART OF THE SEA, GUILDHALL (ILLEGAL FISHING)

One of several scattered fishing guilds operating outside of legal remit, Heart of the Sea was the first of its kind to be formed in Raela. Led by the dogged ex-Pisceria fisher, **Caula Vestis Hera** (NG she/her

Aldarin commoner 3), whose fishing licence was revoked after she was unable to meet the heightened annual fee, Heart of the Sea offers a safe haven for fishers seeking to trawl along the Deveros Coast in order to feed themselves and their families. After listening to Hera’s plight one night in the **Nos Nox taberna** (Q17), Dató Brivane, leader of the Brivane Pirates, was moved by the unfortunate fisher’s words and sought to protect her and her crew. This eventually evolved to form a collective of fishing vessels operating together under this protection, guarded by a single Brivane ship who would signal for the vessels to scatter at the first sign of trouble from the Aurmerce hunters. To this day, Dató has kept his word and continues his ongoing war against the Aurmerce in the name of the fishers of Raela and Solenta Minor. The kind-hearted Hera rarely fishes herself anymore, instead working with the other fishers to plan safe fishing routes for the guild’s ships and overseeing the monumental task of operating the **Raela Market’s** (Q8) less-than-legal affairs under the cover of night.

#### Q7. THE LATECOMER, HOSPITALITY (TABERNA)

Open well into the early hours of the morning, where no fisher would ever find themselves turned away at the door, is the bustling watering hole of The Latecomer — the taberna that never sleeps. Supporting the alcohol-fueled desires of many a Raelan fisher, The Latecomer serves the basic needs of countless tradesfolk and labourers across the isle. There is always a hot stew and cup of house wine awaiting its guests upon entry. Dare to criticise the cooking, though, and the short-tempered cook, **Irena Lofer** (CN she/her half snow elf magus [evocation] 3), might throw a pot of boiling stew at you before kicking you out onto the street (much to the glee of the other patrons). When not manning the stove of The Latecomer, Irena can be seen serving her stews within the street food stalls of **Epsoma Pier** (Q25), earning as much coin as she can to send her younger brother, **Ten Lofer** (NG he/him half snow elf premagus [evocation] 1), to one of the arcane colleges on the mainland.

#### Q8. RAELA MARKETS, SERVICE (MARKETS, FISH)

The rapid growth of Raela around the cusp of Cruorse Isle has sparked an influx of traders arriving into the cramped Raela Markets at the heart of the fishing community, seeking to barter and trade with incoming fishing vessels. Due to the far-flung location of Raela and its distance from the mainland, it has become a tough area for the Vintari to regularly police, with the **Pisceria**<sup>7</sup> fishing guild

5) Stink-riddled creatures who make bath water run foul.

6) A number of fishing boats lie around the isle to allow access across during high tide.

7) Deveros’s regulatory guild around fishing and crabbing.



angrily demanding a tightened grip of the “lawless, unlicensed thieves of the sea” which operate from the community. Whilst some fishing vessels from the settlement are licensed with the guild, the vast majority are not, allowing their owners to greatly undercut the prices of the **Trivera Fish Market**<sup>8</sup> in Solenta Major due to lack of licensing fees. This has led to a series of underground fish smuggling rings emerging, all operating around Raela and its traders.

Walking through the markets, one would see a mishmash of stalls run by local families, primarily licensed fishers running above board operations. If one was to delve a little further along the eastern edge of the dockside, however, they would find crates and barrels laden with illicitly caught fish and crab ready to be transported into the city via the **Slipways**<sup>9</sup>. Due to the popular thoroughfare coming from Raela, the Slipways has opened a new entrypoint into the black market tucked within a dilapidated wooden enclosure to the west of the isle. A clustering of umbra crows belonging to the **Tattered Tackle** (Q12) guards the entrance at all hours of the day. The Umbra Syndicate holds a vested interest in this new entrypoint due to the ease of access to the sea and ability to readily load outbound cargo onto vessels without the watchful eye of the Vintari overhead. Due to the highly secretive nature of the black market, only those under membership of the illicit fishing guilds know of its existence.

### Q9. WAVEWALKERS, GUILDHALL (PEARL HUNTERS)

Just beyond the shores of Cruorse Isle, plentiful sprawling reefs can be found upon the seabed, host to hundreds of thousands of blue-lipped oysters. These oysters, whilst a delicacy amongst tabernae in the city, also serve as a source of pearls for both jewellery and spell components. The distinctive turquoise-green pearls salvaged from the blue-lipped oysters are amongst one of the most popular types for local spellcasters to use in making foci, granting their magic a distinctive sea-like flair.

Members of Wavewalkers go to great lengths to acquire these pearls, utilising enchanted water-breathing equipment to traverse the deadly reefs below, avoiding aggressive discthreader eels and black-finned tiger lobsters. The tactful **Ruxi Geryun** (NG she/they dragonborn [blue] sailor 5) leads the guild and its ventures into the expansive, colourful deep. Alongside her crew, Ruxi meticulously plans routes throughout the seabed to optimise both time and profit for the guild. The guild has only lost three members to the deadly tides this year: a record compared to previous years, which often hit double digits.

8) Deveros's largest mainland fish market.

9) Demiplanar black market run by the Umbra Syndicate.

### Q10. RAGGED STURGEON, HOSPITALITY (INN)

Standing as Raela's only inn, the Ragged Sturgeon is a grubby stopover for visiting travellers and merchants without the coin to stay in Deveros proper. The world-weary owner of the inn, **Isola Veritus Alba** (TN she/her Aldarin commoner 2), greets guests with a beleaguered smile, one hand placed upon a gladius under the desk just in case any wayward pirate deems it funny to rob the place. A sign stating “No Gutting” hangs behind the counter. Alba became annoyed with patrons sitting in the lower area of the inn gutting fish so has banned the activity within the establishment. Alba's eight-year-old brother, **Vestus Veritus Havel** (CG he/him Aldarin commoner 1), runs around the inn while playing with his wicker legionarius toys.

### Q11. UVENKOS, SERVICE (SOOTHSAYER)

The soothsayer **Uvenkos III** (NG she/her ashensworn druid 4) rejects the worship of the gods, preferring instead to rely on the methodologies of nature itself to cure her clients. Uvenkos is somewhat shunned by a large portion of the Raelan community, who cannot align with her atheistic views.

### Q12. TATTERED TACKLE, HOSPITALITY (TABERNA)

**Crow's Call:** “The nets cast down”

This quiet popina is avoided by a large number of Raelans due to the presence of an Umbra Syndicate nest within it. The crows of this nest guard the not-so-secret **Slipways** entrance in the woodland to the west of the isle, ensuring the Vintari don't stray too close. The popina itself serves basic food such as puls and unleavened bread as well as cheap house wine, prepared by local singer and dancer **Lucina Grimellus Gobina** (NG she/her Aldarin commoner 3).

### Q13. CASTRUM BOREA, GOVERNMENTAL (LEGIONARY FORT)

One of the twinned naval forts built into Deveros's sea walls, Castrum Borea overlooks the northern side of the bay, positioned opposite Castrum Meridia. Connected through an extensive underground tunnel network of barracks and armouries, the two naval forts have a long history of collapse, repair, and reinforcement over the past millennia. Each fort has fallen twice in the history of Aldarin, once during the occupation of Deveros by Salenti forces during the 3rd Century and again during the Second Medial War after a destructive assault orchestrated by a subset of the Wysterwood's Wyld deities. Today, the fort stands proud against the Gilded Ocean, marking the entrance to the Deverosian Bay. Heavily armed promethean turrets scan the waters below, poised to unleash hell upon any vessel seeking to make

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trouble. The *Legio Navilia I Deverosia* operate the lighthouse which rests atop the fort, guiding ships into the bay.

**Q14. LILIANA’S, ARTISAN (FISHING SUPPLIES)**

**Liliana Demore** (LN she/they [GF] tiefling labourer 3) works through the night to supply Raela’s fishers with nets, sails, and twine for use in their excursions. Anything one might need to fish in the waters of the Deveros Coast, one can undoubtedly find at Liliana’s.

**Q15. ZENITH, SERVICE (WAREHOUSE)**

A clustering of warehouses along Cruorse Isle’s northernmost front. The northernmost warehouse is owned by **Hobek Fraus** (page 53). This warehouse hosts storage for a number of merchants who frequent the Gilded Ocean’s trade routes as well as for imports into **Quor’s Crucible** (Q26). At night, however, **Sanguesta** (See Factions of Raela) uses the warehouse to smuggle prisoners into the city as fresh offerings to the vampires of the **Sanguine Sanctum**<sup>10</sup>. The three other warehouses are owned by **Remi “The Emperor” Killgrin** (Q20), who uses them for the Emperor’s Lot’s desha smuggling operations and general imports from the Kildars.

**Q16. DAMICLES, CULTURAL (STATUE)**

A secluded plaza within the heart of Raela dedicated to **Damicles** (CG he/him Aldarin dead), one of Quor’s Champions from the 7th Century. Damicles was widely regarded to have been the best gladiator **Quor’s Crucible** (Q26) ever saw. A statue of Damicles stands at the centre of the plaza atop a rundown fountain, trident poised to the skies.

**Q17. NOS NOX, HOSPITALITY (TABERNA)**

One of the few safe havens for the Brivane Pirates in Deveros, Nos Nox serves a dual purpose. First, as a base of operations for **Hobek Fraus** (see page 53), the prolific Brivane sea captain who acts as Raela’s unofficial governor outside of the remit of Deveros’s rule. Second, as a lucrative gambling hall streaming coins into the pockets of the pirate group. The secluded, flower-covered popina is nestled away in the heart of Raela, operated by Hobek’s handful of crewmates when they’re not out protecting fishing vessels from Aurmerce ships. Hobek has a habit of collecting flowers from foreign lands and cultivating them within their chambers on the uppermost floor of the structure. Hobek regularly sends out crew to forage for flowers whenever they set foot upon a new location.

Hobek himself is consistently at loggerheads with fellow Brivane pirate captain Astridr Froekbern, disagreeing with her disruptive (and sometimes downright evil) actions against the empire. The kind-hearted Captain Fraus instead seeks to

build a relationship for parley with **Pisceria** and the Consentium rather than attacking them, only entering into naval conflict out of self defence alone. Due to this, Hobek is seen by some as a local hero of Raela, greeted warmly wherever they step within the small settlement. Others have a less than favourable outlook of Hobek, however, due to their tendency to tax fishers for protection, making it hard for them to leave the pirates’ sphere of influence. Despite their ambiguous stance with the empire, the Vintari have set the ball rolling in attempts to contact Hobek with an offer. A proposed exchange: Astridr’s head for fishing permits to all Raelan fishers. While no deal has been struck yet, it is only a matter of time before Hobek caves to Vintari pressure and hands Astridr over, either dead or alive. Such a move would undermine the operations of the Brivane Pirates in Solenta Minor, however, which the Vintari are planning on.

**Q18. GLADIUS, GUILDHALL (GLADIATORS)**

Situated alongside the grand arena of **Quor’s Crucible** (Q26) rises the historic guildhall of Quor’s Champions. The red-painted guildhall of Gladius shines of bravery in the face of adversity, a symbol of every gladiator, no matter how celebrated or unknown. A limestone base provides three storeys of private training grounds, smithies, armouries, and a sweeping dining hall for all the paid gladiators of Quor’s Crucible, regardless of standing. Each new non-penal gladiator to fight within the arena is brought to the south wall of the building before their first fight, and given a chisel. Here, they carve their name into the brickwork, making their mark on history, as they speak the Old Aldarin motto of the guild: *Per angusta ad augusta* — “Through difficulties to honour”. Should a gladiator ascend the ranks and achieve the coveted title of Quor’s Champion, their name is brushed with gold dust so that it may glimmer in the sunlight as the same motto is uttered again. Gladiators who die before climbing to the heights of becoming champion have their name instead brushed with silver, which reflects the moonlight of the twin moons vibrantly, as the words *victoria in mors* are spoken: “Victory in death”.

**Q19. DOSI, SERVICE (POTION SELLER)**

An Axian potion seller by the name of **Charaxos Venkoi** (NG they/them [NB] Ravidanian commoner 3) who imports various potions and poisons in bulk across from Axis in Ravidan. With these they create blends of cheap, yet potent, brews. Charaxos also operates a small needle-felting craft on the side, creating thimble-sized animals which they commonly attach to the corks of their potion bottles.

10) An underground fortress deep beneath Deveros belonging to the Vampiric Order.



### CURRENT QUOR'S CHAMPIONS

**Remus Vyk'hym Jordveila** (CG she/they [GF] skaaldblud murmillo 12). Jordveila is a fan favourite, widely renowned for her gilded bear hide cloak and amethyst-encrusted helmet. Jordveila presently leads Quor's Champions and has been running a recruitment drive to attain new gladiators.

**Caldus Rosina Feroces** (NE he/xim Aldarin *essadarius* 10). Known to play with xis prey, Feroces uses xis ember to slip into the shadows before striking from a secluded corner of the arena. Feroces never fails to put on a good show for the crowd, even if his methods are somewhat cruel.

**Fer'wyn Taliceé** (CN she/her wood elf *magus [illusion]* 9). A highly talented magus, Fer'wyn confuses her foes by distorting the landscape around them. Die hard fans of Fer'wyn collect the pink leaves which grow from the magus's shoulders, weaving them into vibrant wreaths to show their support.

### Q20. SALTWASH, HOSPITALITY (TABERNA)

A bustling popina serving salted snacks to sailors and fishers stopping by after a long day out at sea. Usually those heading out on long voyages stock up on food from Saltwash, knowing that it'll last them the entire journey and back again. The owner of Saltwash, **Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin** (see page 53), is famed for his extravagant headwear — a chitinous crown-like helmet made of the shell of an amethyst-cloaked crab shell. The helmet looks so much like the Crown of Deveros that Raela's residents jokingly call Remi "The Emperor". A title which has gone to Remi's head, now demanding all call him by this proper title. Remi runs a desha-smuggling operation around Raela's docks, leading a small gang of dwarven smugglers called *Emperor's Lot*. In recent months, Remi has started to encroach on the territory of the Brivane Pirates, offering cheaper protection rates for fishers in the region. Remi seeks to undermine **Hobek Fraus** (page 53), having come from a fishing family himself and knowing the pain of being locked in service to a controlling organisation for many years.

### Q21. PILOT'S SHIPPING AND IMPORTS, CRIMINAL (SMUGGLER)

Operated by the money-grubbing **Kranus Piso Pilot** (NE he/him Aldarin sailor 4), Pilot's Shipping and Imports handles a sizable number of shipping crates

from Ravidan each week, many of which contain weaponry, armour, and dusktech stolen from the Vorien navy. Pilot's front is that of a Commis<sup>11</sup> seller, as he is fairly invested in the popular war game and holds a small collection of statuettes himself.

### Q22. THE FINAL THREAD, ARTISAN (CLOTH)

Weaving together woollen cloaks and tunics for the inhabitants of Raela, alongside linen sheets and hastily stitched sandals, **Brine Everspring** (CG he/they [T] halfling labourer 2) supports the livelihoods of countless residents of Cruorse Isle. Brine is especially well known for creating the red cloaks used by gladiators in the Crucible, as well as for supplying dyed wools received in shipments from the Raelan docks across to prolific tailors within the mainland, such as **Halle's**<sup>12</sup>.

### Q23. THE SEA PITS, RESIDENCE (INSULAE)

A series of rundown insulae housing numerous non-penal gladiators and workers for **Quor's Crucible** (Q26). Gladiators argue over whether the scent of sweat or sea salt is stronger around the cramped insulae.

### Q24. FELIX'S FISHING ADVENTURES, SERVICE (FISHING EXPERIENCES)

Many come to Cruorse Isle to witness spectacular gladiatorial battles and fast-paced sports. Others arrive in search of pier-side games and delectable street food. One entrepreneurial dwarf, however, has grander plans for the island and surrounding waters. **Triza "Felix" Falgren** (CN he/him earthbound sailor 5) is the hyperactive founder of the popular sloop rides "*Felix's Fishing Adventures*", which operate from the westernmost pier of the Cruorse Isle's southern dock.

Felix's boisterous smile and



11) Commis is a war game played with whittled statuettes. It has a large cult following throughout the Aldarin Empire with people paying huge sums for special amethyst-carved statuettes.

12) A famed tailors within the heart of Deveros which tends to the clothes of Aldarin's patrician elite.

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charming personality never fails to lure in customers to the jam-packed pier, even upon the most quiet of arena days. Felix can be found strolling along the pier, making idle chit chat with his customers whilst dressed in his lime green tuxedo and yellow bowtie, encouraging them to spend more money at his shop. The rides that the guild offers come in varying formats. There are short, one hour adventures around the caves north of the city, where the tiny boats are beset upon by actors in sea monster garb and must defend themselves as they escape the dank, dark depths. These are by far the most popular of the rides, drawing in folk from far and wide across the province, with Felix crafting new “adventures” for customers to embark upon every few months. Longer rides are typically led by Felix himself, where the jovial dwarf guides a clustered fleet of sloops along the Deveros Coast into various caves, several of which have well-stocked stopping points with alcohol and fresh food prepared for the guests. These coastal adventures are popular days out for the praesta and artifex classes of Deverosian society, with luxurious food and alcohol an appealing endeavour in supporting a jovial afternoon along the sunny shores of Aldarin.

Despite the name of the company, the only adventures to actually involve fishing are the day-long trips, which take fully geared fishing sloops out into the Gilded Ocean for a relaxing communal fishing trip. In recent years, however, there has been a decline in the availability of fish due to overfishing by the illicit fishing guilds of Raela and Solenta Minor. Claims of illegal baiting have been brought against Felix by the fishing guild of **Pisceria** (see page 40), who state that the sailor has been utilising *crimson dewrock* — a highly illegal bait which causes nerve damage to fish — to lure in schools, causing a shift in local fish behaviour and damaging the city’s piscine economy further. Felix has refuted these claims, stating that the fishers of the guild are “pickle-toed miscreants” who are merely envious of his successful business. Pisceria are all too aware of Felix’s protection agreements with the Brivane Pirates, from which a sizable portion of the pirate’s funding is sourced, and wish to nip his income streams at the source.

“Here at Felix’s Fishin’ Adventures we offer ye the best fishin’ quests in the Deveros Coast. And if ye didn’t enjoy yer adventure with us today, ye have the right to stick a strigil up yer ass and stop wastin’ me feckin’ time.” — Triza “Felix” Falgren onboarding new customers to Felix’s Fishing Adventures.

### Q25. EPSOMA PIER, CULTURAL (PIER)

There are a handful of bustling piers built into the shorefront of Cruorse Isle, mostly serving as mooring points for the dozens of barges carrying passengers to and from the mainland. Epsoma Pier lies at the heart of the never-ending commotion, featuring as a prime tourist point to entertain the guests of Quor’s Crucible before the next event takes place. The expansive pier stretches outwards to sea, twice as far as the others, hugged on both sides by garish stalls and carnival games designed to lure and entrap the coin of whoever dares attempt them. While the pier acts as a void for the coin pouches of its visitors, it provides in return exceptional amounts of entertainment and glamour in the form of bizarre trials and displays of curiosity. The rich smell of Deverosian street food encompasses the air: deep fried moss-shell crabcake, sugar-dusted bulian bread, chargrilled seabream, and sickly-sweet toffee twists filled with berries to name but a few. The lively sounds of the pier can be heard whilst enroute to the island, the plinking of bardic lyres and raucous song accompanying the dastardly games of chance, enticing all to come and try their hand at attaining glory.

#### EXCITING ADVENTURES OF EPSOMA PIER

Salve, friend! Fancy seeing you here. Exploring the wonders of Cruorse Isle or just taking in the salty sea air? Oh, me? I’m just pinching seeds from the seed cake stall over there... Al keeps distracting the owner then I swoop in and BAM! Free seeds. ...Ahem. Anyway! Have ya seen the games on the pier yet? Give ‘em a whirl!

#### Hoop-ball

Wooden tubes are arranged in concentric rings upon a podium. The central-most tubes are gold, then purple, then red, then green, then blue. The tubes are layered so that the central tube is highest with each ring moving lower down, forming a slope. Players score prizes by throwing balls into the tubes, winning a prize for each ball they successfully get in. The awkward angle of the tubes and the slanted nature of the stand makes it incredibly difficult to win.

A character throws a ball into a tube by making a Dexterity check in an attempt to beat the DC of the tube. If they fail, the ball bounces down to the next ring of tubes. The character rolls a d20 against the DC of the next colour. This repeats until the ball either hits the floor or goes into a tube. If any roll fails a DC by 5 or more, the ball instead bounces off the tube at an angle and falls to the floor.



A ball can be bought for 4 cp, with three balls bought together costing 1 sp. If the PCs score the gold or purple tubes more than twice, the person running the stall refuses to sell them any more balls, stating they have won enough.

| Tube Colour | DC | Prize                           |
|-------------|----|---------------------------------|
| Gold        | 22 | 1 gold piece                    |
| Purple      | 20 | A plush gryphon toy.            |
| Red         | 18 | A goldfish in a potion bottle.  |
| Green       | 16 | A fresh slice of bullian bread. |
| Blue        | 14 | A free ball for another throw.  |

### Miniature Rapida Racing

Characters control miniature rapidae which race around a circular circuit against three other contestants, with an entry fee of 3 cp. These rapidae are controlled by swishing dubiously enchanted wands in the air with various movements. The rapida that is the furthest along the race track after three rounds wins the contestant 6 cp.

Contestants roll a d20 to determine their initiative order at the start of each round. A contestant may use one action from the list below during a round:

**Move.** The rapida moves one space forwards.

**Surge.** The contestant rolls a d4. On a 1 or 2, the rapida moves one space forwards and then burns out, losing their next action. On a 3 or 4, the rapida moves two spaces forwards.

**Burn Out.** The contestant rolls a d4. On a 1-3, the rapida moves one space forwards and burns out, losing their next action. On a 4, the rapida moves three spaces forwards and burns out.

**Ram.** The rapida rams another within one space of it. Each contestant rolls a d6. If the defending contestant rolls lower than the ramming contestant, their rapida is halted and the contestant loses their next action.

When a contestant uses their wand to control the rapida, there is a chance the wand does not select the correct action. Contestants roll a d4 when making their action and on a 1, the rapida randomly performs an action from the list.

### Q26. QUOR'S CRUCIBLE, CULTURAL (ARENA)

The gigantic limestone structure stands proud against the horizon, towering to a lofty height of over 300 feet and covering over 10 acres. At maximum capacity, Quor's Crucible can contain almost 110,000 guests, who gather to watch the most thrilling live entertainment available to the Deverosian masses. Bloody gladiatorial tournaments, staged land and naval battles, dramatic plays, raucous comedies, fast-paced chariot racing, competitive sports, and epic battles against dangerous monsters; there is never a dull moment within the crowded stadium with performances trailing on late into the night. Entry to the arena ranges from a mere three copper for lower standing space to a hundred gold for exclusive private balcony viewings and food service. The colossal structure features multiple tiered entrances for ease of access. Two sets of grand carved oak doors provide entry for the masses at the lower levels, the vast crowds marshalled by the Sanguesta guards belonging to **Ambrose Popularis** (see Minor NPCs), the devious warden of the gladiator pits. For those willing to pay a little extra, twisting ramps circle upwards outside the structure, leading towards the spacious, comfy seating higher up the arena.

Quor's Crucible is typically packed to the brim with visitors during the summer months, where the weather allows for the almost perpetual running of entertainment. Betting booths operate at all levels of seating within the arena, opened solely on festival days, with flush onlookers seeking to win big on their favourite gladiator's performance. Life-size statues of gladiatorial champions, known as **Quor's Champions**, are placed in covered inlays surrounding the arena, facing outwards across Cruorse Isle for all to bask in their glory. The life of a gladiator has little glory attached to it, however, with victors either retiring into obscurity or dying an embarrassing death upon the blood-soaked sand of the arena. The audience of the Crucible is found to be less than savoury when watching their deadly entertainment. Chants of "End them!" and "Quor wants blood!" echo out across the waters around the isle, as food and rubbish is thrown at those who go against the wishes of the masses. Multiple instances of fighting have historically broken out in the stalls, which can occasionally be more interesting to watch than whatever is going on in the arena below.

The Crucible itself is an impressive feat of engineering and architecture. A complex system of structures lie beneath the sandy arena, with fresh water and plumbed sewerage connecting out to the sea. Preparation rooms for professional gladiators span underground to the eastern side, linking with dimly lit corridors to the animal and prisoner pits in the west. These are flanked by smithies and armouries,

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as well as a cluster of dank training rooms, known as the Bloodpits, often filled with young fighters seeking to earn their keep in the sands above. The choking scent of thick smoke and decaying viscera linger in the hallways stemming from the fire pits, which face outwards to the north, where those slain within the Crucible are thrown to be cremated. These pits can be sighted from the private jetty at the rear of the arena, which provides an access point for famous

gladiators, actors, and creatures to arrive without having to deal with the bustling crowds. Ambrose Popularis is responsible for sourcing a sizable chunk of the crucible's non-gladiatorial entertainment, relying on slaving links to the **Slipways** (see page 41), the prisoners of **Carcer Opero** (see page 34), and his network of Sanguesta kidnappers to drag in unwilling captives or monsters into the Crucible for a good show.

*"Look. I'm not expecting you to perfectly execute a double backflip while he's stabbing your heart. Just try to add some pzazz to your death, like a spin, or a scream of 'Oh Deos, why me?'. It's not complicated, my little meat pies."*

— Ambrose Popularis giving a pep talk to a fresh batch of penal gladiators.

### WHAT'S ON AT QUOR'S CRUCIBLE

There are a number of events which arenas in Aldarin put on. These are commonly funded by patrician families, organisations, or the arena itself. Quor's Crucible is no exception, hosting plentiful events each day of the week.

**Sul.** The week starts off with the fledgling gladiatorial bracket, showing off the best upcoming gladiators from the locality. Penal slaves also fight on this day for the amusement of the crowds.

**Mul.** Jova takes over the arena every Mul, with the local jova teams playing against each other. In the evening, the arena opens its doors for free for any to take part in competitive sports such as discus, javelin, and running.

**Zol.** Zol marks a return to regular scheduling with gladiatorial brackets proceeding throughout the day.

**Wir.** Wir continues with the previous day's gladiatorial bouts, with Ambrose bringing out his newest pet monster to fight against penal slaves in the evening. Failing this, there is always **Gallus Maximus**, the crowd-pleasing giant cockatrice who is ready to turn

its enemies to stone. The inside of the arena is lined with statues of fallen foes who dared face Gallus.

**Zor.** The arena takes a break from fighting to put on local theatre, with upcoming bardic troupes and playwrights showing their acts for all to see. Prices are discounted on Zor due to the theatrics pulling in fewer crowds than the rest of the week.

**Far.** The famed gladiators of **Gladius** (Q18) put on a spectacle for the people, enacting scripted fights or daring mock battles to astonish the crowds. These fights are all for show, though a few penal slaves are occasionally thrown in to be killed to keep the bloodthirsty audience on the edge of their seats.

**Sar.** The busiest day of the arena, with lines streaming out of the front doors by dawn. Patricians usually choose this day to put on a truly spectacular show for all in Deveros to bolster their own personal renown. This can range from thousand-person-strong mock battles to flooding the arena for naval fights to highly exotic and dangerous monsters being made to fight one another.

### Q27. SHRINE OF QUOR, RELIGIOUS (SHRINE)

This sizable shrine dedicated to The Bladesheen is a regular stopping point of world-weary gladiators before entering into the crucible, who commonly weave the feathers of the peacocks which roam the shrine into their armour. The shrine is tended to by ex-gladiator **Crust Averstan** (NG he/they halfling sacerdos [Quor] 5) who frequently passes through the Bloodpits of **Quor's Crucible** (Q26) giving out blessings to the fighters training there. Crust is also responsible for performing the rites of opening ceremonies for major events within Quor's Crucible, making sacrifices to the blood-loving deity.

A prayer to Quor and an offering of blood is sure to grant a boon of bravery from the deity, who looks favourably upon those willing to fight and die for

the things they love. It is not uncommon for those seeking to find love to pray at the shrine as well, wishing to find the comfort and strength to speak with those they are so enchanted by.

## SHRINES OF GW'YTH

### T1. CRUORSE SHRINE

For those with enough coin to pay for teleportation, the Cruorse Shrine allows a quick and simple method of visiting **Quor's Crucible** (Q26) without needing to set foot upon a rapida or barge.







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## PLOT HOOKS

### WHO TOUCHED MY COCKATRICE?

**Gallus Maximus**, the famed giant cockatrice of **Quor's Crucible**, has gone missing. **Ambrose Popularis** (see page 51) has issued a sizable reward for whoever brings the headstrong cockatrice back to the arena. The gladiators of the arena suspect someone at odds with Ambrose is pulling a prank on them with a mind to swindle the vile pitmaster out of his gold.

### FLAMING FISH

**Triza "Felix" Falgren** (Q24) has issued a contract to investigate "which feckin' whoreson has been settin' fire to me feckin' ships", or so the contract says. Felix has no idea why anyone would want to set fire to his ships, apart from the countless enemies he's made within the **Pisceria** fishing guild, and is offering a large reward if anyone can find out who is behind the arson attacks.

### BAD TIDINGS

The **Lowshrine** (Q5) has begun churning out warped pearls covered in a viscous orange sludge. Unsure of what is happening and worried of ominous omens, the people of Raela have pooled together a sum of coin for a group of mercys to investigate into the issue.

## EVENT TABLE

### d12 Event

- 1 A fishing vessel pulls back into the Raelan docks looking battered and worn. A fisher collapses from the boat onto the pier without even mooring. The ship has been attacked by a **discthreader spawn**.
- 2 A giant golden carp is processed through the streets upon a florally decorated wagon. Singing and dancing is performed by the Raelan locals around the carp. When asked, the locals state that it is "The Prince of Raela", a blessed fish that shall lead them to ancient treasures after being thrown into the sea.
- 3 **2d4 gladiators** train outside of **Gladius** (Q18), swishing their swords in unison. The PCs are invited over to join the training session by **Remus Vyk'hym Jordveila** who is leading the session.
- 4 **Triza "Felix" Falgren** (Q24) shouts crude advertisements for his fishing adventures on a street corner, offering a discount to the first customers of the day.
- 5 A collective of **2d4 merfolk** have appeared around the western Raelan docks and are pretending to be emissaries of Rael. The locals throw the merfolk coins and offer up their belongings in exchange for false blessings.



**EVENT TABLE**

- 6 An ancient docile **dragon turtle** swims along the shoreline, passing the isle. All the ships in Deveros Bay stop to watch the legendary entity pass by with sailors looking on in awe.
- 7 There is a scuffle down a side alley. **1d4+1 street thugs** are scraping with a **legionarius** who had caught them in the act of stealing from a potion stall.
- 8 Screams are heard from a wooded clustering nearby. Upon arrival the PCs find a man and woman laying dead with bite marks and slashes all over their body. The scent of rotten blood lingers in the air. The pair appear to be penal gladiators. They were killed by **1d4 khlyni** at the command of **Ambrose Popularis** (See: Minor NPCs) after escaping **Quor's Crucible** (Q26).
- 9 **Miricus Alerius Pontar** of **Rael's Washhouse** (Q4) can be seen dangling a struggling **bannik** by the leg as he beats it with a reed. Pontar caught the bannik peeing in the baths for the fifth time this week.
- 10 **Trevyn Tailwind** (Q3), also known as *The Black Hammer*, is lugging a cart of smithing supplies from the docks to his smithy. The cart's wheel breaks in a pothole and supplies fly everywhere. If the PCs spend an hour helping Trevyn repair the wagon, he will offer to forge them a masterwork blade in thanks.
- 11 Huge cheers rise up from **Quor's Crucible** (Q26) as the famed jova teams of the Arbeia Angels and Solenta Sunbirds face off. The match is midway and tickets are being offered at a discounted rate to fill the remaining stalls.
- 12 A **sanguesta kidnapper** and **sanguesta transporter** are sighted dragging a young fisher into a wagon before throwing a sack over them and heading towards **Zenith** (Q15).

**GOSSIP TABLE**

**d8 Gossip**

- 1 **Isola Veritus Alba** of the **Ragged Sturgeon** (Q10) is engaged in amorous relations with an Umbra Syndicate crow known as **Flavius Vi Valentino** (See Gang Leaders of Raela). (True)
- 2 **Miricus Alerius Pontar** of **Rael's Washhouse** (Q4) is breeding amethyst-cloaked crabs in the basement and selling them to patricians for consumption. (False)
- 3 The famed **Trevyn Tailwind** of **Black Hammer** (Q3) mixes the blood of minotaurs into his weaponry, which improves the strength of the weapons. (True)
- 4 **Fer'wyn Taliceé** of **Gladius** (Q18) has been sleeping with **Lucina Grimellus Gobina** of the **Tattered Tackle** (Q12) and has caught *The White Plague* from her. (False)
- 5 Stray cats have been roaming around the northern piers of Raela. The other week they pulled a severed hand from the waters with a strange ring upon the middle finger. (True)
- 6 **Sobren** of **Sobren's Bar** (Q2) has a bounty of 1,000 gold on his head by the Concilium Arcanus Altus for illegally crossing the World Border into the Medial Plane. (False)
- 7 **Triza "Felix" Falgren** (Q24) personally funds the games of chance on **Epsoma Pier** (Q25) and has paid for them to be rigged in some way in exchange for a cut of the profits. (True)
- 8 **Brine Everspring** of **The Final Thread** (Q22) is secretly a vampire's thrall. (False)

CW



# LATE SHIPMENTS

## SYNOPSIS

<sup>CW</sup> For a number of years, **Publius Siccia Estio** (see Minor NPCs), one of the infamous masterminds of Deveros's criminal underworld, has been importing fresh prisoners from seaside towns and merchant vessels along the Deveros Coast. These prisoners are used to satiate the ever-hungry entities of the Vampiric Order throughout the capital and the local region, transported by Estio's gang of dhampir thugs: Sanguesta. Originally these shipments passed through The Slipways black market, which is owned by the Umbra Syndicate — an underground collective of imperial-aligned spies and assassins. Due to the exorbitant fees of utilising this protected demiplanar market, however, Estio has recently pulled out of his arrangement with the Umbra Syndicate in favour of cheaper alternatives upon Cruorse Isle. His chosen alternative is that of the Brivane Pirates, a collective of ragtag smugglers who operate around the Deveros Coast. Estio has bought out a warehouse to receive these shipments, which is heavily guarded by a number of armed Brivane pirates and Sanguesta thugs. The warehouse runs on a tight schedule, strictly managed by Estio's ruthless right hand advisor, **Cassia De'Tinea** (see Gang Leaders of Raela). Cassia does not take prisoners when it comes to interference with Sanguesta's business, with common folk turning up dead in the canalways for daring to step on the organisation's toes.

The Umbra Syndicate is unhappy with Estio's decision to leave their business partnership and wish to teach him a lesson. **Julianus Frivello Marius** (see Gang Leaders of Raela), an umbra crow who holds tenuous leadership over the Syndicate's nest on Cruorse Isle, has been tasked with dismantling Cassia's operations. This is Marius's opportunity to prove himself to his higher ups and to become a true nestwarden — a nest leader. While most umbra crows are highly trained in the ways of sabotage and infiltration, Marius is very much not, instead preferring to bluff his way through existence. As such, he has realised that he cannot take down Cassia's warehouse alone and does not hold enough power within the Syndicate to send other crows on the mission. Instead, Marius has been scouting out the local tabernae, inns, and temples on the lookout for folk who he thinks might be up to the job. If he thinks someone is suitable, he leaves a letter in their coin pouch requesting to meet about a mutually beneficial job.

The Umbra Syndicate are not the only actors operating within Raela with a vested interest in the

warehouse, however. The Brivane Pirates themselves want to get rid of their ties to Sanguesta and are more than happy to see the place burn, able to claim insurance on the fire. They were not informed of why Sanguesta wanted use of the warehouse and are concerned about their reputation on the island should news get out of their involvement with the prisoner smuggling. Emperor's Lot — a gang of dwarven desha smugglers — however, want Sanguesta kicked out of Raela and the warehouse to fall into their hands. Will the players choose to follow through with their original agreement with Marius? Or will they side with Emperor's Lot instead? Maybe they'll try and play the organisations off each other, gaining rewards from each while subverting information.

## PREPARATION

**Recommended Party Size.** 4 players

**Expected Playtime.** 15–25 hours

**Content Warnings.** Death, violence, alcohol, blood, swearing, casual drug use, drug trafficking, gang violence, drowning, vampirism, decay, social ostracism, incarceration, deep sea monsters.

**Ember Encounters.** It is up to the GM whether they wish to run Late Shipments using embers or not. If embers are used, some encounters have been balanced with both ember and non-ember enemy lists, which helps keep combat interesting for PCs who are using the deific abilities.

### HANDLING BLOOD ROT

Some of the lesser vampires in this adventure can inflict the *blood rot* disease. This can be removed through the *lesser restoration* spell, which may be purchased from a sacerdos at most shrines for 25 gp. Such sacerdots on Cruorse Isle are **Miricus Alerius Pontar** of **Rael's Washhouse** (Q4) and **Crust Averstan** of the **Shrine of Quor** (Q27). These sacerdots would be willing to accept delayed payment for their services as long as the PCs promise to return with the gold within a week.

If the PCs succeed a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** check, they can identify the disease. If they succeed this check by 5 or more, they would know that drinking the blood of a lesser vampire (such as a vespitas or khlyni) blessed by a god can also cure the disease. Such small blessings require a monetary contribution of at least 10 gp at a shrine or temple. Blood rot can be deadly to an unprepared party but is easily curable through the right means with a bit of coin.

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**RUNNING DHAMPIR**

<sup>cw</sup> Dhampir in Vynestra are bound to their vampiric parents by blood. Should they encounter their vampiric parent, they must follow their orders as if under the *geas* spell. These orders only end once they have been completed and may last for years, or even decades. Dhampir may try to find loopholes in their orders to get around having to complete them. A number of the *sanguesti* in this adventure are under the orders of vampires and are not necessarily willingly in the positions they find themselves. These *sanguesti* fall into one of two sets of orders:

**Bound to Cassia.** These dhampir have been told by their vampiric parent, be it Estio, Krell, or otherwise, to follow the orders of Cassia until further notice. Cassia has ordered the dhampir to assist around the warehouse with guarding and working, and has also forbade them from speaking about Sanguesta or anything to do with the operation. Should Cassia die, these dhampir will be freed of their orders. Fifty percent of these dhampir will attempt to flee once freed while the others stay out of a duty to serve the Vampiric Order.

**Bound to Sulla.** Some dhampir have been bound to Sulla instead of Cassia. They have been told to follow the orders of Sulla. Sulla has ordered them to help him source the blood for Cassia, to kidnap victims, and to not speak of the operations of Sulla or the warehouse. If Sulla dies, these dhampir are no longer bound to Sulla and will try to flee. Cassia does not hold any influence over these dhampir or Sulla as Sulla's gang acts as a semi-independent group within Raela. There is a 50 percent chance the dhampir freed from Sulla will seek out Cassia to inform her of what has happened.

**SESSION ZERO**

It is important to discuss various topics during session zero with your players, especially regarding the content warnings above. If players are uncomfortable with any topics mentioned, consider veiling, adapting, or removing them from the adventure. Discuss the social classes with your players and figure out which social class their characters might fall into. This can influence how PCs and NPCs interact.

**FACTIONS OF RAELA**

There are a number of gang-like factions who seek to maintain control over Raela. Not all factions are actively hostile with one another, though they all have their disagreements.

**Brivane Pirates.** Led by famed pirate captain **Hobek Fraus** (see Gang Leaders of Raela), the Brivane Pirates of Raela are the largest of the four gangs which oversee the micro settlement. They are predominantly liked by the Raelan populace, offering cheap protection for the illicit vessels operating around the Deveros Coast. The pirates, however, also lock these fishers into lifelong service through hefty protection taxes. Hobek soon wishes to hike taxes in Raela following a need for more expensive repairs to be made to the pirate's ships. This has many Raelans worried that the Brivane Pirates will become no better than the imperial regulators of **Pisceria**<sup>1</sup> they were seeking to bypass in the first place. Hobek is interested in gaining control over *desha* (see Appendix D: Items) imports into Raela to curb the rising problem of *desha* addicts on its street, as they believe the drug is stifling productivity of the fishers.

**Sanguesta.** Led by **Cassia De'Tinea**, Sanguesta imports vast quantities of prisoners, frozen blood, and drugs, such as *desha*, into Deveros through nighttime shipping operations. These operations directly benefit the Vampiric Order, who Sanguesta operate under. Sanguesta's numbers are small but their members are more than capable in a fight. They are currently partnered with the Brivane Pirates, who are not-so-willingly allowing Sanguesta use of their

northern warehouse. The Brivane Pirates want out of the deal but are too scared of Sanguesta, or rather the Vampiric Order, to attempt it.

**Emperor's Lot.** Led by **Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin** (see Gang Leaders of Raela), Emperor's Lot is a dwarven drug smuggling gang who primarily deal in *desha* imports. Remi used to hold an iron grip on *desha* imports coming into Raela, though this has slipped recently after Sanguesta muscled in on the business. Remi is aware that the Brivane Pirates are seeking to stamp out imports entirely and has begun lashing out at any who step on his toes. His gang can often be found scrapping with the Brivane Pirates on the streets and is the only true force on the island acting as their competitor.

**Umbra Syndicate.** The **Tattered Tackle** (Q12), the syndicate's base of operations on Cruorse Isle, serves less as a gang-like entity and more as a facilitator of illicit trade. **Julianus Frivello Marius** (known on the mainland by his real name of **Flavius Vi Valentino**) leads this collective, though is not enough of a power player within the Syndicate to exert any true control. He instead reports to **Jibril Appian Leonus** (LN he/him Aldarin umbra nestwarden), overseer of the Slipways, the Syndicate's demiplanar black market. The other gangs may pay a premium to gain access to the Slipways, bypassing the potential of being caught by regulatory guilds. That being said, the Syndicate has a vested interest in keeping the other gangs using their services and have been known to get their hands dirty to keep the money flowing.

1) Deveros's regulatory guild around fishing and crabbing.



## NPCs OF RAEA

### MINOR NPCs

This is a quick reference of minor yet important recurring NPCs the players may encounter during the course of the adventure.

**Ambrose Popularis** (NE he/him tiefling vampire [arbiter]). The warden of Quor's Crucible, greater vampire, and a good friend of Estio.

**Flavia Caso Prima** (CN they/them dhampir street thug). Sanguesta desha smuggler.

**Gisel Romero** (NG she/her Rymish dead). The old daytime foreman of the warehouse, killed by Cassia De'Tinea. See Drowned Dissident for more information.

**Publius Siccia Estio** (LE he/they [NB] gnome vampire [arbiter]). A powerful greater vampire in charge of the Vampiric Order's operations in northern Deveros.

**Isola Veritus Alba** (TN she/her Aldarin commoner 2). Proprietor of the Ragged Sturgeon inn.

**Krell Noxen** (LE he/him half snow orc vampire [assimilated]). A loyal vampire under the command of Estio who handles all of his dirty work.

**Lucullus Tacitus Nero** (TN he/him dhampir street thug). Sanguesta desha smuggler.

**Maximus Pontus Sulla** (NE he/him dhampir). Notorious Sanguesta street thug working for Cassia. For Sulla's stat block, see Appendix C: Stat Blocks.

**Meveria Ionis Agrippa** (NG she/her Aldarin sailor 3). Owner of The Crooked Rowan crabbing vessel and famed fisher around Raela who simply goes by "Agrippa". Agrippa is a friend of Marius and owes the scrappy umbra crow a favour or two.

**Rivello De'Sain** (CN he/him dhampir sanguesta wretch). Sanguesta desha smuggler.

**Tulius Agravo Remus** (NE he/him [T] dhampir). The new daytime foreman of the warehouse, acting under Hobek Fraus. Remus is ex-Sanguesta and is sympathetic to Cassia's position.

**Xel Viso IV** (LN he/they [NB] ashensworn street thug). Umbra Syndicate informant who the PCs are tasked with rescuing from the warehouse.

**Yesk Hammerhorn** (NG he/him delvar dwarf commoner 2). Barkeep and gambling manager at Nos Nox.

### GANG LEADERS OF RAEA

There are four major players in the ever-shifting street politics of Raela who are perpetually wrestling for control over the fishing village's docks.

See the next page for more information.

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**Julianus Frivello Marius**

**Name.** Julianus Frivello Marius (real name: Flavius Vi Valentino) (NG he/they Aldarin)

**Age.** 34

**Profession.** Umbra Crow

**Aldarin Citizen.** Yes

**Roleplaying Marius.** Marius speaks formally, claiming to be a local sancte of Cruorse Isle. While he is putting on an act as a sancte of high standing, elements of Flavius's own biases come through in the guise of Marius. He is particularly terse with those of low social standing (see Social Ostracism on page 20) and holds Aldarins, particularly those of a higher social standing, in a more reasonable regard. Marius infers that he has wider knowledge through informants around the empire but is very much a passive entity, not electing to get his own hands dirty and instead paying to have it done on his behalf.

**Goals.** Marius's goals are to see Sanguesta removed from Cruorse Isle, which he claims are due to their blight on Raela, its trade, and its people. This is, however, only partly the truth. Flavius himself has been put up to this task by the Umbra Syndicate, his organisation. While Flavius is technically in charge of the **Tattered Tackle** nest (see Q12), he still needs to see this job compete for his role as nestwarden to be made official. As such, the persona of Marius will be willing to extend limited help to the PCs over the course of the adventure. He also holds the desire to see his close friend **Icilla Lucina Felicitus** (see Side Quest: Avenging Felicitus) avenged from her alleged death and wishes to track down information pertaining to this.

**Inventory.** A dagger, a studded leather, a maiming gladius (see Appendix D: Items), a toga with a dark blue trim, a quill, a vial of ink, two scrolls, three rations, 28 gp, 4 sp, 5 cp.



**Cassia De'Tinea**

**Name.** Cassia De'Tinea (LE she/her dhampir)

**Age.** 39

**Profession.** Sanguesta Gang Leader

**Aldarin Citizen.** Yes

**Roleplaying Cassia.** Cassia is terse and cold-mannered.

She cuts straight to the point and has little time for fools. Anyone who dares cross her is just as likely to end up thrown from the end of a pier with weights around their ankles as they are to be fed to her pet khlyni, Ripper and Bahe. Cassia is overly cautious, questioning all that comes her way and taking extra precautions should anything suspicious take place around the warehouse. It is well within her remit to bring in additional guards or to send out Sanguesta thugs into the streets to hunt down anyone who poses a threat to her operation.

**Goals.** Cassia's goal is to wrangle her way into the inner circle of **Publius Siccia Estio** (see Minor NPCs) by loyally performing her duties in securing live food for her vampiric masters. It is her hope that by securing this supply line with the Brivane Pirates, she will impress Estio enough to be invited to handle more exciting matters on the mainland. Cassia has a distaste for Raela and instead spends most of her time within **Quor's Crucible** (see Q26) alongside another friend of Estio, **Ambrose Popularis** (see Minor NPCs).

**Inventory.** A mournful rapier (see Appendix D: Items), scale mail, a potion of greater healing, a keychain with keys to the warehouse, Cassia's office door, window, and chest, 32 gp, 13 sp, 7 cp.





### Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin

**Name.** Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin (NE he/him hill dwarf)

**Age.** 78

**Profession.** Gang Leader

**Aldarin Citizen.** No

**Roleplaying Remi.** Remi speaks with a gruff voice and might slur his words slightly if he is drunk (there is a 50% chance Remi is drunk whenever the PCs meet him). He has a very short temper and little time for fools or stupid questions. Remi holds himself in very high regard, seeing himself as the ruler of northern Raela. Remi will not hesitate to antagonise the PCs or have them kicked from his establishment of **Saltwash** (see Q20). Depending on how the PCs interact with Remi, he may warm to them over time, especially if they succeed in completing his side quest.

**Goals.** Remi has two main goals: Reclaiming power over the desha imports into the city and kicking the Brivane Pirates out of Raela. Remi's main income stream is from desha and without it, he loses influence and power around Raela. Sanguesta has started to shoulder in on the desha trade, which is costing Remi a lot of gold. He also knows that local fishers rely on recreational desha use to mellow out and understands the importance of providing this outlet for them. Remi sees the Brivane Pirates as a restrictive blight on Raela, wishing to free the fish markets from the binds of the pirate's tax. Remi was born a fisher and knows the troubles of earning a living around the Deveros Coast as a non-citizen. He sees the Brivane Pirate tax as overly harsh and wishes to dismantle their power over the island, taking charge himself.

**Inventory.** A dagger, a set of chainmail, a greathammer, a sling, a helmet carved from an amethyst-cloaked crab, two flasks of fine wine (worth 10 gp each), 22 gp, 7 sp, 2 cp.



### Hobek Fraus

**Name.** Hobek Fraus (NG they/them Jyrden)

**Age.** 45

**Profession.** Brivane Pirate Captain

**Aldarin Citizen.** No

**Roleplaying Hobek.** Hobek speaks softly, with a gentle and caring attitude for those around them. Hobek is cautious of newcomers to Raela, but if the party can prove themselves to be of no threat to the Brivane Pirates, Hobek welcomes them with open arms. They are always fiddling with flowers or their druidcraft cantrip, forming new flora between their fingers which they then twirl around. Hobek has a sense of authority about them and knows when to withhold information from people so that they might be convinced into doing something for Hobek in exchange.

**Goals.** Hobek has the interests of the Brivane Pirates first. They plan to increase the local taxes to compensate for the increased costs of maintaining the pirate fleet. Without working ships, the pirates cannot protect the fishers. Despite this, Hobek cares deeply for the people of Raela and is trying their best to avoid taxing them more, hence taking on work with Sanguesta. Hobek despises Sanguesta, especially after their thugs killed Hobek's last foreman, and would give anything to see them removed from the island — even if it involves destroying the warehouse in the process. To this end, Hobek is willing to help anyone who can get rid of Sanguesta, as long as Sanguesta are unable to trace it back to the Brivane Pirates.

**Inventory.** A gladius, a shortbow, a net, a chain shirt, a shield, a holy symbol of Celianthre, a captain's logbook, a potion of healing, a potion of waterbreathing, 8 gp, 1 sp, 9 cp.

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## ACT 1: A MYSTERIOUS NOTE

This scrawled note is left in the pockets of those Marius deems worthy of taking up a job with the Umbra Syndicate. Marius signs the note with a love heart — their personal signature — and the note is scented with lavender.

Salve.

*I happened to notice upon your passing through Deveros and, as you are in receipt of this letter, have deemed you veritable to undertake a rather dangerous task. I cannot presently state what this task is, nor can I imply its nature. However, I assure that you shall be well compensated for your time and shall be bettering the fortuitous reputation of our most prosperous nation.*

*Should this prospect be of interest, I invite you to travel to the westmost pier of the Raela docks upon Cruorse Isle at sundown on 14th Summer's Crest. Speak the word "brandeum".*

*The nets cast down. ♡*

For this introductory adventure, it is assumed that all PCs begin the adventure on Cruorse Isle after having received the letter from Marius. The PCs should each have a reason for following through with the mysterious letter's request. Maybe they need money and see the job as a means of attaining it. Maybe they agree with the vague ideals of 'bettering the fortuitous reputation of our most prosperous nation', whatever that might mean. Or maybe they are simply curious as to what this secretive business is all about. Whatever the reason, the PCs find themselves arriving in dribs and drabs at Raela's westernmost pier as the sun begins to set across the Deveros Coast.

When the PCs gather, read the following:

*Glimmers of amber hued sunlight twinkle upon the calm waters surrounding the Bay of Deveros. All is quiet along the northern shore aside from a handful of fishing vessels which idly bob upon the sea, trawling the depths for tasty crustaceans. Raela itself is oddly quiet too, the typical bustling of fish-laden wagons and hollering merchants seemingly absent on this warm summer evening.*

The PCs may arrive one by one, or in small groups. They might even know each other already. Describe how each PC makes their way to the pier. The pier itself is barren, with only a few coils of rope and empty crates placed to one side. PCs who are familiar with Raela will know that it is indeed curiously quiet around the docks for this time of the day. The locals know all too well the schedules of the Sanguesta shipments and have no desire to be

seen around the docks as they come in, lest they be dragged into Cassia's warehouse as an added bonus to the vampires' haul.

## AN ARRIVAL

As the sun dips below the horizon and civil twilight takes its grasp upon the Deveros Coast, PCs with a **12 Passive Perception** or higher will notice that one of the fishing vessels has split off from the group and is slowly sailing towards the pier. After about 10 minutes, the vessel finally reaches the pier as a gruff-looking muscular fisher in her mid-thirties steps from the tiny sloop, called "*The Crooked Rowan*". She has ruffled black hair with seashells woven into it and wears a basic red tunic with a carved wooden holy symbol of Rael, Goddess of the Seas, resting atop it. This is **Meveria Ionis Agrippa** (see Minor NPCs).

### The Crooked Rowan

**Type:** Sloop, fishing

**Length:** 35 feet

**Width:** 15 feet

**Masts:** 1

**Decks:** Main deck, hold

**Crew:** 3

The Crooked Rowan is a coastal fishing sloop outfitted for crabbing. It is captained by **Meveria Ionis Agrippa**, an esteemed fisher within the Raela community, alongside her two apprentices **Gaius Aurelius Posca** (NG he/him Aldarin sailor 1) and **Nova Pelita Crispus** (NG she/they Aldarin sailor 1). Posca and Crispus are both trainee fishers in their late teens who have been taken under the wing of Agrippa after they were unable to attain fishing licences from **Pisceria**, the imperial fishing guild. The sloop operates illegally without a licence along the northern stretch of the coast but is protected from the law by the complacency of the Vintari, the city guard, and by an agreement struck with the Brivane Pirates.

## AGRIPPA'S RESTOCK

Agrippa gives the PCs a cursory glance before unloading a number of crab-laden crates onto the pier. Her two apprentices, Crispus and Posca, assist her before heading back onto the ship. After they are done, Agrippa rings the ship's bell three times and sits down on a crate by the pier. She takes out a small wooden pot with a brownish substance inside and smears some on the inside of her gums. This is a drug known as vrekit (see Appendix D: Items), which helps





fend off exhaustion from hard labour. After a couple of minutes Agrippa's half brother, a scrappy young half elf called **Viko "Dris" Ionis** (CG he/they half high elf commoner 2), pulls a small street wagon from a side alley and parks it by the pier before loading the crates of crab onto it. After loading the wagon, Viko will pull the wagon to the **Raela Markets** (Q8) where they will restock the family's stall.

## ENGAGING AGRIPPA

Agrippa will make light conversation with the PCs should they engage with her, though will not register interest unless they state the code word of 'brandeum'. If they do, she will claim to recognise them as her new fishing apprentices. Agrippa will then pick up an empty crate and place it into the closest PCs' arms, before gesturing to the sloop and telling them to place it into the storage hold — gesturing to a cabin near the rear of the ship. She will follow this up with a sly wink.

## STORAGE HOLD

*The rancid smell of fish guts hits the senses as the cabin opens. A crude set of steep wooden stairs leads down into the hold of the sloop. A dim, flickering light can be seen from the deck.*

Through the cabin is the storage hold of the central ship, as well as Marius, who sits hidden behind a stack of crabbing cages alongside a dimly flickering oil lantern. The scent of lavender perfume lingers in the air around Marius. Marius will silently gesture to the PCs to join him in sitting around the lantern as they enter into the hold before placing their finger over his lips to signal for the PCs to remain quiet. Should any of the PCs speak, Marius will whisper to them to remain silent until they are at sea for he knows not who might be listening.

## SEA-CRET MEETING

After the PCs are inside the storage hold and Agrippa has offloaded all the crabs, The Crooked Rowan will set sail back out to sea. Once the sloop has reached the cluster of fishing vessels, after about another 10 minutes, Marius will finally speak up and introduce himself as **Julianus Frivello Marius**, a concerned benefactor of the empire. He will continue by thanking the PCs for responding to their letter before explaining that there is a vile rot whose tendrils wrap around Cruorse Isle like an ever-tightening noose. This rot is that of Sanguesta. The PCs may make a **DC**

13) Rapidae are light watercraft powered by dusk crystal engines, a recent invention shared throughout the Anchor Nations. Should one wish to run a more authentic Classical-era adventure, these vessels would instead have sails and travel a fair amount slower.

## CULTURAL POINT — INHERENT BIAS

The Vi Valentino family is originally of Rymish descent, though has since married into Aldarin society. As such, Marius is considered to be Aldarin and holds Aldarin citizenship. They were raised in such a manner as to be accepting to all peoples, regardless of citizenship, though during his time within the Umbra Syndicate Marius has grown to foster an air of resentment for those of a lower social standing. As such, Marius will subconsciously direct his conversation more towards PCs who speak firmly, intelligently, and with purpose — distinctly Aldarin traits associated with those raised into a higher social class. PCs with a **13 Passive Perception** or higher will pick up on this and may call Marius out on his conversational bias. If Marius is called out, he will apologise and proceed to direct his speech to all in the present group. See Social Ostracism on page 20 for more info.

**12 Intelligence (History)** check to recall knowledge about the general operations of Sanguesta that they might have read about in the Deveros Chronicle newspaper. PCs with a **12 Passive Perception** or higher will be able to recall similar information they overheard in a local taberna or temple. If the PCs do not know, Marius will give a general overview of what function Sanguesta performs without going into too much detail about the specifics.

## SHOW, DON'T TELL

After mentioning Sanguesta, Marius will state that it is simpler to observe the issue than to outright explain it. He will snuff out the clay oil lantern before gesturing for the party to follow him onto the deck. As the PCs get to the deck, they will see that nautical twilight has set in and the shores around the Deveros Bay are growing dark. PCs with a **13 Passive Perception** or higher will be able to spot a series of three rapidae<sup>13</sup> in the distance zipping across the sea around the edge of the northern cliffs. Marius will hand a spyglass to one of the PCs and gesture towards the rapidae. Any PC who looks through the spyglass sees three armed guards on each rapida alongside 1d4+1 shackled individuals who appear to be prisoners. The rapidae head towards Cruorse Isle before eventually docking along the northernmost clustering of piers, near **Quor's Crucible** (Q26). If they continue to watch, they will see the prisoners offloaded and dragged into the westernmost warehouse of a collection of

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warehouses near the arena. This warehouse is part of a clustering of warehouses called **Zenith** (Q15).

After the PCs have seen the rapidae, Marius will explain the following, omitting any details involving the Umbra Syndicate:

- **Sanguesta.** Sanguesta's present operation involving **Publius Siccia Estio** and **Cassia De'Tinea**. Marius will talk about the prisoners — captured by sanguesta hunters from seafaring vessels and coastal villages — being brought in as food for the vampires but will not mention that his organisation used to originally supply these prisoners.
- **Brivane Pirates.** The involvement of the Brivane Pirates in this operation, motioning towards the warehouse and Raela. Marius will paint the Brivane Pirates in a negative light, slandering them as thieves and corrupted sailors.
- **Hobek Fraus.** He will mention that **Hobek Fraus** (page 53) is behind all Brivane Pirate operations on Cruorse Isle and that it would be worth seeing what the Brivane Pirates are getting out of the deal. He recommends talking with **Yesk Hammerhorn** (see Minor NPCs), the barkeep at **Nos Nox** (Q17) which is the Brivane Pirate gambling hall. PCs with a **12 Passive Insight** or higher will immediately pick up the sense that there is some lingering personal spite driving Marius' distaste for the Brivane Pirates. The PCs can attempt to convince Marius to open up regarding the Brivane Pirates and Hobek (see Side Quest: Avenging Felicitus). It isn't hard to get Marius talking around this topic, requiring a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)** check.
- **Emperor's Lot.** Marius will mention that **Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin of Saltwash** (Q20) would be worth talking to for some additional information as he owns the next warehouse along on the northern pier, though cautions angering him as he is a highly dangerous man.
- **Vampires.** Marius will make it clear that if they encounter a vampire, be it Estio or any others, they are to run and not look back. They can kill with a look and are not beings to be taken lightly.
- **Reward.** Marius will pay a reward of 80 gp to each PC for rescuing a specific prisoner, a weapons merchant by the name of **Xel Viso IV** (see Minor NPCs), on the night of the 17th Summer's Crest (in four days' time on the night of the Aestus festival) and for burning the warehouse down. The PCs may be able to persuade Marius to give up to 100 gp per PC should they succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. If Xel dies or if the PCs fail to rescue him, this reward will be cut in half. The PCs get no reward from Marius if they do not burn the warehouse.

### XEL VISO IV

Xel, in fact, is not a weapons merchant at all. They are a black market smuggler belonging to the Umbra Syndicate, who Marius knows Sanguesta will be transporting that evening. Marius has been instructed to rescue Xel and burn the warehouse without Sanguesta knowing the Umbra Syndicate were involved, hence hiring the PCs.

## DISCTHREADER ATTACK!

After Marius has finished explaining the mission to the PCs, he will begin to climb back down into the hold, signalling for Agrippa to return them to shore. At this moment, the sloop shakes violently, throwing Marius down into the hold and knocking them unconscious as they hit their head against the stairs. Agrippa, Crispus, and Posca hold fast to the sides of the sloop.

The PCs must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw or else be thrown 10 feet towards the port of the sloop, falling prone. PCs who are above the deck who fail their save are thrown into the water. Unbeknownst to the PCs and fishers, the sloop has come under attack by a discthreader eel spawn.

### Encounter: Exhausted Discthreader Spawn

**Enemies.** 2x Exhausted Discthreader Spawn

**CR.** 2

#### Introduction

Discthreader eels are highly dangerous creatures at the best of times and their young spawn are no different. These spawn have not eaten for days and have been drawn close to shore after picking up the scent of blood following the sinking of a galleon by their parent. As such, these discthreader spawn have a limited stat block compared to a normal discthreader spawn.

#### Tactics — Discthreader

The spawn will attack the closest creature that is currently bleeding, able to pick up on the scent of blood in the water. If no creatures are bleeding, they will instead attack the closest creature to it.

When they attack, the discthreader spawn will bite on their first turn, grappling the target creature. They will then spin on the second turn, attempting to shred the creature apart. Once a spawn has killed one creature, it will devour it and retreat back to the depths of the sea. If no creatures are in the water, the discthreader spawn will attack the sloop instead, attempting to knock creatures into the water from the deck, causing all creatures on deck to repeat the saving throws to prevent being knocked into the water. After five attacks on the sloop, the sloop suffers too much damage and begins to sink. In the event of the sloop sinking, Marius awakens just in time and is able to save himself by swimming to shore.



### Tactics — Fishers

The crew of the Crooked Rowan will do their best to stay on the sloop while throwing harpoons down at the discthreader spawn, using the same statistics as a spear. If anyone falls into the water, the fishers will rush to grab a rope to help them climb back aboard the sloop. They will prioritise any of the other fishers over the PCs in doing so, however, for the PCs are strangers.

### Ending the Encounter

The PCs can end the encounter in two main ways:

1. The first is by slaying the discthreader spawn. This is a challenging task, even with the discthreaders being weakened, for a single strike from the creatures could spell death for any low level PC.
2. The second is by placating the eels with the juicy crabs Agrippa and her crew have been catching while the PCs were talking to Marius. A PC may make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Nature)** check to figure out that the eels are hungry and have been drawn by the smell of crab. As an action, PCs may push pots of crabs into the water from the deck of the sloop by making a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check. On a success, the closest discthreader spawn spends its next turn devouring the crabs. If a PC fails the check, they mistime the throw and the discthreader spawn does not see the tasty crustaceans falling past it. There are ten pots of crabs on the sloop, with the discthreader spawn requiring two potfulls each to become satisfied enough to leave the sloop alone.

**Note:** PCs in the water may make a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check as part of their movement to pull themselves up back onto the sloop. There are ropes on the sloop that may be used to help pull struggling creatures onto the deck.

After the encounter, Marius will awaken and ask about what has transpired. He will thank them for dealing with the situation, as will Agrippa. If the PCs used the crab pots to distract the discthreader, Agrippa will be annoyed at the loss of her haul but will be grateful that they got out of it alive. The fishing crew will quickly repair the sloop before sailing them back to shore.

## DEPARTURE

Marius will thank the PCs for their time and request that they meet here again once they have completed their task. Marius has matters to attend to but if the party wish to be in contact, they can leave a message for him with **Lucina Grimellus Gobina** of **Tattered Tackle** (Q12). Marius will mention that he's booked them rooms to sleep in at the **Ragged Sturgeon** (Q10), Raela's only inn, for four nights. He will give them directions to find the inn before bidding them farewell.

By this point it is getting late and the PCs are unlikely to unearth any useful information until Raela awakes again in the early morning. As the PCs depart the pier, they will hear Agrippa berating Marius for upsetting her fishing trip and demanding that he compensate her for the lost profits.

## RAGGED STURGEON

*The stench of rotting fish slices through the air as you enter the Ragged Sturgeon. A cluttered counter sits opposite the front door, behind which a tired-looking, wispy-haired Aldarin slumps over. A sign hangs behind her reading "No Gutting", which seems to have little effect on the patrons. A cluster of fishers sit on stools around a fireplace to the right side of the inn, knives and fish in hand as they work away with the innkeep looking on in frustration.*

**Isola Veritus Alba** (see Minor NPCs) stands behind the desk, welcoming in customers with a weary grin and half-hearted "Salve". Alba runs the inn on her own after inheriting it from her father, **Vestus Veritus Leo** (LN he/they Aldarin dead), who passed away last year. Despite being in her early twenties, Alba looks like she has the world on her shoulders. She regularly has to deal with rowdy fishers, pirates, and local gangs using the Ragged Sturgeon's dining area as their hangout. Alba keeps a worn gladius under the counter just in case she has to threaten anyone causing too much trouble. Alba one day wishes to join the Vintari, like her father, and bring some semblance of order to Raela. But for now, she has duties to uphold with the inn and looking after her eight-year-old brother, **Vestus Veritus Havel** (CG he/him Aldarin commoner 1). Marius is a friend of Alba and lends her his support when he can, often rallying a few umbra crows from the **Tattered Tackle** (Q12) to oust unwanted miscreants from the inn.

Alba shows the PCs to their rooms and tells them to be careful and to not stay out past sundown, lest they encounter The Ashen Woman (see Side Quest: The Ashen Woman). If the PCs enquire about this, Alba will tell the tale of The Ashen Woman and beware offering gifts to her.

## WRAPPING UP ACT 1

The PCs are now open to explore Cruorse Isle and the small fishing village of Raela. Should they head to the southern pier to attempt to gain passage to the mainland, they will be told by a legionarius guarding the docks that an adult discthreader eel has sunk a galleon just south of the city along with a number of other attacks along the Deveros Coast. As a precaution, the *Legio Navilia I Deverosa* has put a halt on all seaborne travel in or around the Deveros

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Bay until the eels roaming the region have been slain. While the legions generally don't get involved with business on Raela, the entire city has been put on alert, including the isle. Only two dozen legionarii have been sent to the isle to enforce the lockdown, who are already butting heads with the Brivane Pirates. Despite this, the pirates don't want to see any of their ships attacked so are abiding the lockdown for now. The PCs will be informed by the legionarii that an expert mercyr group called **Phoenix** has been dispatched to take care of the eels and they expect the waters to be safe again within the next few days.

To make matters worse, the **Cruorse Shrine** (T1) — a shrine of Gw'yth used for teleporting to and from the mainland — is currently down for repairs following damage to the teleportation circle. This means that the PCs, and everyone else on Cruorse Isle (or at least those operating inside the bounds of the law), are currently stuck on the island until further notice. As the days drag on, supplies begin to run low on the island. Prices for items such as potions, food, and wine increase by between 25 and 50 percent each day. By the 17th, stocks are running low and there is a lot of panic on the streets around when the lockdown on the bay will end.

### Quick NPCs

There are a number of other people stuck on the island who very much do not wish to be here. Here are some quick NPCs you can add for flavouring around the island that the PCs might encounter.

**Chiraxen Lysella** (NG she/her Ravidanian commoner 2). A textile merchant from the city of Axis on the continent of Ravidan, who has come to Deveros to make an import arrangement with the famed tailors, **Halle's**.

**Bruge Rivikien** (TN he/they half plains orc sailor 1). A fisher from the village of Apperinus about 10 miles to the north of Deveros. Bruge was visiting Quor's Crucible to celebrate his birthday.

**Daznuk Rumbelly** (CG he/him hill dwarf sacerdos [Brimshaw] 2). A sacerdos of Brimshaw visiting Raela from the mainland. Daznuk wishes to get drunk at every taberna in Deveros and is presently drinking his way through those on Cruorse Isle.

## ACT 1 OUTCOMES

If you are not using XP to track progression, the PCs should reach Level 2.

**Killed Discthreader Spawn.** If the PCs slew the discthreader spawn and the crew of *The Crooked Rowan* survived, the crew will report the slaying to the *Legio Navilia I Deverosa*. In this case, 1d2 days following the event, the PCs will be handed a scroll by a messenger signed by the Hydrophos Altus of the *Legio Navilia I Deverosa* — the Aldarin equivalent of a Roman *Primus Pilus* — thanking them for their efforts, alongside a notice for payment from the Imperial Bank of Saleen for 100 gold pieces. This notice can be turned into the Imperial Bank of Saleen on the mainland after the restrictions around the Deveros Bay are lifted.

**Won Discthreader Spawn Encounter.** Regardless of whether the PCs killed the spawn or not, news of the discthreader spawn attack on Agrippa's crabbing vessel will spread the next day. As long as Agrippa survived the attack, the denizens of Raela will hail the PCs as local heroes for saving Agrippa, who is a pillar of the local fishing community. The PCs will be granted free meals and house wine at any of Raela's tabernae for the next week along with a nod of respect from residents around the isle.

**Any Fishers Died.** If Agrippa, Crispus, or Posca died during the discthreader spawn attack, the mood throughout Raela is dour over the next few days. The PCs may witness a funeral held for the deceased fisher by the locals at the **Lowshrine** (Q5), where a collection of their belongings — plus whatever remained of their body — is loaded into a carved canoe and cast out to sea. With the island currently cut off from the mainland, there is no sacerdos of Kistra present to perform the final funeral rites. As such, a sacerdos from the nearby **Shrine of Quor** (Q27) steps in to enact a battlefield burial rite upon the remains instead. If Agrippa specifically died, *The Crooked Rowan* will be inherited by her half brother Viko.

**Marius Died.** If Marius somehow dies during the discthreader encounter, the PCs will have nobody to pay their reward. If they choose to continue looking into the matter, they will find that **Hobek Fraus** will be able to offer them some reward (see *Cut of your Jib*), though nowhere near as much as Marius was offering.



## ACT 2: ROT AND RUIN

When the PCs awaken the next morning, news of the discthreader attacks has rippled throughout the island. If the PCs have not heard it already, they will find out that a bireme south of the city called *Coral Clipper* was sunk by an adult discthreader yesterday evening. The crew of *The Crooked Rowan* have ensured that all of Raela knows the heroics of the party (as long as they survived).

If you are running XP instead of milestone progression, consider adding in a handful of random encounters on the streets. The PCs should aim to reach Level 3 before they deal with the warehouse.

### EXPLORING RAELA

The PCs are now free to explore Raela and Cruorse Isle as they see fit. There are a few things to keep in mind as the GM and to inform the players of as they explore the island:

- The PCs may make offerings to the **Lowshrine** (Q5) and **Shrine of Quor** (Q27) to obtain blessings from either Rael or Quor. They may also bathe in bathhouses, known as *thermae*. Here they may make offerings to Sulia, Goddess of Bathing, to receive boons while taking a *thermae* rest, a special form of short rest. They may purchase oils and salts to bathe with, granting additional benefits. See Appendix B: Bathing and Blessings for more information.
- When walking around Raela, the PCs will notice a number of gangs roaming the streets. During the day, the Brivane Pirates dressed in lilac-blue tunics operate around central and western Raela and Emperor's Lot in purple tunics operate around northern Raela. During the night, Sanguesta operates throughout central and northern Raela.
- There are numerous clusters of people reclining in side alleys or on the piers inhaling incense. A **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals this to be *desha* (see *Desha* on page 102).
- The PCs will witness the Brivane Pirates placing plant pots or hanging floral baskets around Raela. This is the result of Hobek Fraus attempting to make the village look nice in preparation for the *Aestus* festival on the 17th Summer's Crest, which the PCs can learn through listening to rumours (see *Rumours*).
- **Quor's Crucible** (Q26) is currently closed due to the island being shut down. A fair few hundred

stranded visitors are sitting in the shade in front of the arena waiting for either the harbour to open up again or for the arena to open its doors. Quor's Crucible itself is a heavily defended fortress under the watch of Ambrose Popularis (see *Minor NPCs*), with a small army of Sanguesta minions protecting it.

#### Aestus

**Date.** 17th Summer's Crest

**Holiday Type.** Dies festus

**Associated Deities.** Rael

A sea-bound festival widely celebrated by sailors, fishers, and dock workers wishing to appease the wrath of Rael. Amongst events such as *rapida* racing and the sharing of seared fish aboard sailing vessels, forty nine cows are sacrificed to Rael upon the precipice of **Pharos**<sup>14</sup> in Deveros by the devout sect of the Eridotes belonging to the **Aedes Rael**<sup>15</sup>. This number is symbolic of how many ships Rael allegedly sunk during her first naval battle as a sea captain many millennia ago before her ascension as a deity. The meat is seared upon the divine fire of Pharos and served as a feast to the seafaring members of the Deverosian community as thanks for their work. This ritual is intended to appease the waves of the Gilded Ocean, calming the waters around the Deverosian coast and bringing her sacerdotess closer to the nautical community.

On the day of *Aestus*, Raela shuts down entirely. Although the Deveros Bay is closed off, this does not stop fishers sitting along the piers and filling out the local *tabernae* to celebrate. The entire village has been decorated with floral decor by Hobek and the Brivane Pirates, as out of all festivals in the year, this is one of the largest of this small community. Drinks and food are served at reduced rates in the local *tabernae* and markets while sacrifices of crustaceans are held at the **Lowshrine** (Q5).

#### LEADS

The PCs have a number of leads they can follow, such as scouting out the warehouse (see *Warehouse Stakeout*) or tracking down the Brivane Pirate captain **Hobek Fraus** (see *Cut of Your Jib*). They can also simply start walking around the island asking questions, though doing so might get them into trouble.

14) A great lighthouse upon the shore of Deveros, dedicated to Rael.

15) One of the *Tredecima Aedes*, a central temple dedicated to the worship of Rael and her demigods.

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## MAJOR LEADS

There are two major leads the PCs are able to follow: the Warehouse and the Brivane Pirates.

### WAREHOUSE STAKEOUT

The PCs can learn a lot through simply observing the warehouse (see Q15). When the PCs uncover information through observation, refer to the *Warehouse Schedule* section (page 70). They may also gain access to the warehouse during the day through the Brivane Pirates (see Meeting Hobek and Side Quest: Missing Pirates).

#### WAREHOUSE STAKEOUT

| Time of Day Observed | Time Spent Observing | Information Learned                                       |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Dawn                 | 1 hour               | <i>Observable Exchange, Dawn</i> (page 72)                |
| Daytime              | 2 hours              | <i>Daytime Pier and Interior under Guards</i> (page 70)   |
| Dusk                 | 1 hour               | <i>Observable Exchange, Dusk</i> (page 72)                |
| Nighttime            | 2 hours              | <i>Nighttime Pier and Interior under Guards</i> (page 71) |

The PCs might wish to directly storm the warehouse without gathering information, a fool's errand, but a possible one nonetheless. In this case, skip straight to Act 3. The warehouse itself is heavily guarded and it is unwise to attempt to take it by force.

#### ALERTING THE WAREHOUSE

It is possible that the PCs may alert the warehouse in the days prior to the infiltration. This can be done through evident sneaking around or trying to break in, though they might be able to bluff their way out of being seen as suspicious. Should suspicions arise, the Brivane Pirates will post an additional **2d4+2 Brivane Pirates** on guard during the day and Cassia will reinforce Sanguesta's numbers with **1d2 Sanguesta Wretches** and **1d4+1 Sanguesta Minions**, making it harder to simply storm the warehouse. Cassia will also swap out two of the Sanguesta minions travelling with her from Quor's Crucible with a **Sanguesta Bloodsearer** and a **Sanguesta Wretch**.

*Spotted by Vespitas.* If the PCs alert the warehouse of their presence during the night, the *vespitas* from *W2. Loading Bay* will be sent after them. Should a PC become infected with *bloodrot* from the vespitas, as soon as symptoms manifest, Ripper and Bane will be sent out to track them down, along with a group

of *sanguesti* (see Encounter: Sanguesta Tracking Party). If the PCs have already been identified by the warehouse as a problem, such as if Sulla's gang has been taken out, then they will increase this hunting party's strength by sending two additional **Sanguesta Wretches**.

#### Encounter: Sanguesta Tracking Party

**Enemies.** 1x Ripper, 1x Bane, 1x Sanguesta Wretch, 4x Minion [Sanguesta]

**CR.** 3

#### Introduction

The tracking party will be sent out to locate any creatures who get too close to the warehouse at night. The party will only be sent out at nighttime and will wait until the following night before heading out if the *khlyni* cannot pick up a scent.

#### Tactics

The *sanguesti* will let loose Ripper and Bane from a distance, who will close in and attack whoever is infected with blood rot. Ripper and Bane fight to the death or until called off. The *sanguesti* will fight from a distance, using ranged weapons to attack and ganging up on any PCs who break away from the party. If Ripper or Bane drop below a third hit points they will get called back by the group.

#### Ending the Encounter

If Ripper and Bane are killed, the group will flee back to the warehouse. They will otherwise try to take the party as prisoners, not inflicting lethal damage, so that they may be interrogated by Cassia. If Ripper or Bane die, Cassia will upturn her office in a rage.

#### Treasure

All gang members have 5 (2d4) silver pieces, a truncheon, a sling, 10 rocks for ammunition, and a *sanguesta* pendant.

#### REMI'S WAREHOUSES

Remi owns the other three warehouses next to the Brivane Pirate warehouse. These each have a perpetual guard of 7 street thugs, 1 street thug leader, and 7 workers (sailor stat block). The guards will keep an eye on anyone who walks nearby and move them along if they linger too long. They will not get involved with any fighting with the Brivane Pirates or Sanguesta and mostly mind their own business. During the Aestus festival, these guards will celebrate on the pier in front of the warehouses and drink long into the night.

### CUT OF YOUR JIB

The PCs can find Brivane pirates hanging out around both the northern and western piers of Cruorse Isle, preparing for the upcoming Aestus festival. The pirates are generally wary of the PCs, especially if



they are newcomers to Raela, and refuse to offer information about Hobek, believing the PCs might be working for Pisceria or Remi of Emperor's Lot. Through a successful DC 12 **Persuasion (Charisma)** or **Intimidation (Charisma)** check, the PCs can convince some of the pirates to pass on information around the **Nos Nox** (Q17) gambling hall, stating that if they gamble enough on the lower floors, Hobek might be interested in talking to them. The PCs can instead spend 1d4 hours querying the locals of Raela regarding Hobek's location, and will eventually be pointed towards Nos Nox.

### NOS NOX, DEN OF INIQUITY

As the PCs reach Nos Nox, read this description:

*Set back from the main street, Nos Nox stands out as a floral cornucopia of vibrance from the otherwise dull tones of Raela's buildings. Multiple balconies span upwards into the insula complex, each with vine-bound flowers hanging from them. Rough-looking pirates and gamblers can be seen leaning on the railings, smoking and drinking wine.*

As the PCs enter, read the following:

*Dice clatter across tables made of old driftwood as shouts of joy and frustration ring throughout the gambling hall. Azure geraniums curl up along the supporting beams of the room, blending with an array of heliotropic iris flowers which weave a web along the ceiling.*

The PCs might have an easy time locating Nos Nox, though they will find it far more difficult to reach Hobek, who presides in the uppermost floor of the popina. Hobek has little reason to interact with the locals, despite their welcoming manner, and prefers to shelter away from visitors to Nos Nox in the privacy of their own quarters. The PCs will have to find a way of securing an audience with Hobek (see Getting to Hobek).

### EXPLORING NOS NOX

The ground floor and first floor of the establishment are open for the PCs to explore freely. If the players wish to gamble, they can exchange coins for roundels, which are small stone tokens with the house icon on them used for gambling — in this case, an iris flower. Roundels are used to circumvent the restrictive gambling laws in the empire. One copper piece can be exchanged for one roundel.

On the ground floor there are six tables, each with four seats, running a simple, popular dice game called *Tali*. To the right side is a well-stocked bar which supplies the tables with basic food and jugs of wine for a few coppers. This is run by the elderly barkeep **Yesk Hammerhorn** (see Minor NPCs). Yesk crafts his own house wine, called the Nox Nipper, a cheap yet tasty wine with a rich, lavender-infused flavour popular with the locals.

### PLAYING TALI

Tali is a popular game played with four, four-sided dice made from the ankle bones of sheep. This game was played in ancient Greece and Rome. Each side represents a different value: 1, 3, 4, and 6. For our version of this ancient game, however, the players will instead use a d4 for simplicity.

**Goal.** The objective of the game is to roll a "Quor", where all four dice are separate values.

Players start off by putting one roundel each into a pot in the middle of the table. They then take turns each rolling 4d4. As the game progresses, the pot grows in size. The first player to roll a Quor wins the game and takes all the coins in the pot. There are a number of special rolls that can be made:

**Quor.** The God of Love. All dice values are different, the winning roll.

**Senio.** The Old Man. A four and any other combination of dice values. The player puts one roundel into the pot.

**Vultur.** The Vulture. All dice values are the same, apart from if they are all ones. The player puts two roundels into the pot.

**Canis.** The Dog. All dice values are one. The player puts three roundels into the pot.

The first floor has eight tables with two seats each, running another popular dice game called *Tesserae*. The stairs leading upwards to the second floor are guarded by two Brivane pirates, **Resken De'Longbreach** (TN he/him Rymish brivane pirate) and **Teressa Ufina Gaeloa** (NG she/her half high-elf brivane pirate).

While within Nos Nox, the PCs will overhear a conversation about **Gisel Romero** (see Minor NPCs). This could be between Yesk and a brivane pirate, or between Rasken and Gaeloa upstairs. Someone will ask where Gisel is, and they'll say that Gisel passed away recently following an accident in the warehouse, and that Hobek is furious about what happened. This conversation may help the PCs feel more confident about approaching Hobek around the warehouse.

### GETTING TO HOBEK

Resken and Gaeloa will not let anyone who isn't part of the Brivane Pirates pass onto the upper floors of the popina unless they've been given permission by **Yesk**. If the PCs approach them about talking to Hobek, the two guards will tell them that Hobek is very busy preparing for Aestus and isn't seeing visitors. Even if the PCs mention the warehouse, they won't care enough to let them through. The

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### PLAYING TESSERAE

Tesseræ is a very simple game played between two people involving three six-sided dice and involves a small amount of bluffing to win. The game is played quickly with multiple consecutive rounds, with the pot carrying over between rounds.

**Goal.** The objective of the game is to roll higher than the other player or to roll all of the same value.

Each player puts one roundel into the pot. Players roll 3d6 and keep their rolls hidden from the other player. The player may state one of three words: **subsisto**, meaning they stand with their current roll, **tendo**, allowing them to add up to three roundels into the pot and to reroll a number of dice equal to the number of roundels placed, or **praepando**, meaning that all their dice values are the same value. When stating praepando, a player may choose to bluff. It is tradition for the player who won the last round to speak their choice first.

- If a player stated tendo, they must then state one of the other two words after rerolling their chosen dice.
- If both players state subsisto, both players reveal their dice. Whoever has the highest total value wins the pot.
- When one player states praepando, the other player must decide whether or not to call their bluff. If the deciding player believes their opponent is bluffing, they may state Mendax, meaning "liar." The following scenarios may then occur:
  - If mendax is called and their opponent was bluffing, the player who called mendax wins the pot.
  - If mendax is called and their opponent was not bluffing, the bluffing player wins the pot.
  - If mendax is not called and their opponent was bluffing, the bluffing player takes one roundel from the pot.
- If both players stated praepando, they both reveal their dice. If both players were bluffing, they both take one roundel from the pot. If one player was bluffing, the other player wins the pot. If both players were telling the truth, whoever has the highest total value wins the pot.
- In the event that both players have the same values, they both take one roundel from the pot.

guards, however, are apt enough to see that the PCs have weapons and might be of some use to the pirates. Resken will tell them to head downstairs and talk to Yesk.

Yesk knows better than to talk about the warehouse and suggests they chat with Hobek. If they want to talk to Hobek, however, they need to give Hobek a reason to talk to them. Yesk has a job for the PCs and agrees to grant them an audience with Hobek should they complete it. He hands them a small scroll which gives instructions on collecting a debt from a troublesome local gang leader. What Yesk does not tell them is that the gang leader belongs to Sanguesta. Hobek doesn't wish to directly send their own people to deal with the gang leader due to their current relationship with Sanguesta, so sees the PCs as a useful tool to resolve the issue.

### DEBT COLLECTION

The target of the debt collection is **Maximus Pontus Sulla** (see Minor NPCs), whose gang of sanguesti street thugs operates out of a shack along the very northern edge of Raela (see Sulla's Shack on page 67). The scroll states that Sulla owes the pirates 110 gold pieces in gambling debts. Hobek does not have a preference for how the debt is resolved, be it through violence or diplomacy. As long as the gold is returned, the PCs can handle the situation however they see fit. The scroll mentions that Sulla's gang roams the streets at night.

### MEETING HOBEK

After the PCs return payment of 110 gp to Resken and Gaeloa, they will permit them access to the upper floor of Nos Nox to meet with Hobek Fraus. As the PCs head upstairs to the upper floor, read this description:

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*Fresh, flora twists along the walls of this luscious room. The soothing trickling of water can be heard from an impressive marble water feature dedicated to Celianthre, which sparkles with a mossy aura at the heart of the chamber. Various tables lie to the sides, some hosting Brivane pirates gambling and drinking, others with wooden pots filled with vibrant plantlife. At the far wall is a beautifully decorated bronze bathtub with trails of ivy crawling up the side.*

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Depending on the time of day, the PCs will find Hobek either relaxing in the heated bathtub while drinking wine during the evening or potting plants around the chamber during the day. For information on how to roleplay Hobek, see their NPC Information block.

**Important.** If Hobek finds out that the PCs have been working for Remi, Hobek will refuse to offer them any helpful information.

Should the PCs bring up the topic of the warehouse, **Hobek Fraus** will admit that the Brivane Pirates want rid of Sanguesta as it is placing them





in hot water with the Vintari. While the Vintari are happy to turn a blind eye to the Brivane Pirates in Raela, the daily import of vampiric prisoners is not something they can overlook. Hobek is also frustrated as a number of expensive paintings were stolen by some *sanguesti* a little while ago and they would very much like them back, as they were personal favourites of Hobeks.

Hobek is concerned about retaliation from Sanguesta should their partnership end and is seeking to shut the operation down through alternative methods. Marius's plan to burn down the warehouse is the perfect one, as long as suspicion doesn't fall onto Hobek and their crew. Hobek will offer the party an ingot of silver (worth 50gp) for each of Remi's warehouses that the "fire spreads to", helping put an end to his *desha* business on Cruorse Isle. If Sanguesta finds out about the Brivane Pirates' involvement, any rewards promised will not be given.

If the PCs are not working with Remi or Hobek is not aware of their involvement with Remi, they inform the PCs of the following:

- All the information around *Warehouse Schedule: Daytime* (see page 70).
- Cassia is the only person with keys to the warehouse. Gisel, the old foreman, had a set but she was drowned by Cassia (see *W1. Pier: Drowned Dissident*). Hobek is incredibly angry at Cassia for this but their hands are tied. Hobek isn't even allowed to retrieve the body from the end of the warehouse pier, as Cassia has stated Gisel will remain there as a reminder of what happens to dissidents.
- As long as the PCs are not seen by any *sanguesti*, Hobek will permit them to look around the warehouse during the day. However, they must not break any locks or disturb anything around the cellar. This is on the condition that the PCs help find the two missing pirates (see Side Quest: Missing Pirates).
- The Brivane Pirate schedule on the 17th Summer's Crest during the Aestus festival (see Warehouse Schedule: Aestus Festival).

## MINOR LEADS

There are a number of minor leads that the PCs may also follow. These have the chance to grant them useful pieces of information, items, and recurring allies they can use to their benefit when it comes to infiltrating the warehouse.

## RUMOURS

If the PCs ask around about Sanguesta, the warehouse, or strange goings on, they will unearth a variety of rumours from the locals. It is encouraged to roleplay the reactions of various denizens of the island, most of whom will not have heard of Sanguesta or will provide potentially misleading rumours about them.

To uncover rumours, the PCs spend half an hour of their time investigating and must succeed a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. On a success, the PCs learn two rumours from the Raela Rumour table below, one of which must be true. If the PCs fail this check, they learn one random rumour. If the PCs fail this check by 5 or more, they learn nothing and will find themselves ambushed by a handful of Sanguesta thugs who have caught wind of the PCs' prying. If the PCs have killed **Maximus Pontus Sulla** (see Debt Collection), do not run the ambush encounter.

### RUMOURS

#### d10 Raela Rumour Table

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Remi, the leader of Emperor's Lot, has a bad temper. He had two <i>desha</i> dealers flogged in the streets a few weeks ago for failing to deliver his stock on time. (True)                                      |
| 2 | The Sanguesta shackled the old foreman of the northern <b>Zenith</b> (Q15) warehouse and drowned them by throwing them from the northern pier. (True)   |
| 3 | The puls served at <b>The Latecomer</b> (Q7) is laced with a sedative which the Sanguesta use to knock out their victims. (False)   |
| 4 | Dhampir <i>desha</i> smugglers hang around the wooded area north of <b>Gladus</b> (Q18) in the early evening and offer lower prices than Emperor's Lot. (True)  |
| 5 | Sanguesta have control over the discthreader eels and are using them to strike fear into the people of Raela. (False)   |
| 6 | You can become inducted into Sanguesta by offering your blood to the <b>Shrine of Quor</b> (Q27) while swearing an oath to the "Vampire Queen.". They will come for you the night after the oath is made. (False) |
| 7 | If someone is charmed by a dhampir, placing a leech on their skin will break the charm. (False)   |

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**RUMOURS**

- 8 Hobek Fraus, leader of the local Brivane Pirates crew, is behind the flowers everywhere. They are trying to make it look nice for the upcoming Aestus festival. (True)
- 9 The PCs will hear the tale of The Ashen Woman (see Side Quest: The Ashen Woman) and will be told that one may summon her by burying a silver piece upon the shore of Raela at dusk. (True)
- 10 A local dock worker went missing recently around the northern side of Raela. She only showed up on the island recently and all locals know is her name: Ly'weyn (see Sulla's Shack). (True)

**Encounter: Sanguesta Ambush**

**Enemies (Non-Ember).** 1x Maximus Pontus Sulla, 1x Street Thug, 3x Minion [Sanguesta]

**Enemies (Ember).** 1x Maximus Pontus Sulla, 2x Street Thug, 5x Minion [Sanguesta]

**CR.** 2

**Introduction**

If Sanguesta catches wind of the PCs snooping around, they will send a couple of dhampir servants after them to bring them in. This group is led by **Maximus Pontus Sulla**, a rough-and-tumble thug who works directly for Cassia De'Tinea (see Debt Collection).

If the PCs have already met with Sulla, Sulla will recognise them and be keen to capture the PCs, especially if they have robbed his shack.

**Tactics**

The minions will ambush the PCs in a side alley. Sulla and some minions will block off one exit with a handful of thugs and minions blocking off the rear exit behind the PCs. Sulla will initiate conversation, using his Alluring Gaze to cast the *command* spell on the closest PC and will tell them to grovel. If they do, Sulla will tell a minion to restrain them.

During combat, the minions will attempt to knock out the PCs. Their goal here is not to kill them but to take them to the warehouse so that they can be used as blood donors for their vampiric overlords.

**Ending the Encounter**

The thugs and minions will flee if Sulla is killed or knocked unconscious. Sulla fights until he is below one third of his total hit points before ordering a retreat. When the gang retreats, they will twist randomly through the streets to throw off the PCs before heading back to the warehouse. The PCs may interrogate Sulla about the warehouse (see Debt Collection).

**Treasure**

All gang members have 5 (2d4) silver pieces, a truncheon, a sling, 10 rocks for ammunition, and a sanguesta pendant.

**SALTWASH**

Marius would have mentioned on *The Crooked Rowan* that Remi “**The Emperor**” Killgrin is a good person to talk to about Sanguesta. Marius believes that Remi might hold some key information in helping take down the warehouse. He doesn't, but the PCs don't know this. Remi owns Saltwash and can be found in his office here during the daytime and evenings.

When the PCs reach Saltwash, read the following:

*Half a dozen stools sit outside an open hatch window through which wine and puls are being served. Inside are numerous benches and tables, currently pushed to one wall. Several dwarven thugs wearing purple tunics are shouting around a makeshift ring, egging on two fighting cockatrices as coin and wine are passed between hands.*

The PCs can join in the gambling on the cockatrice fighting, easily finding a thug from Emperor's Lot to bet against. Succeeding a **DC 13 Wisdom (Nature)** check would allow a PC to discern which of the two cockatrices is the better fighter: the heavily scarred one called Stonejaw. There is a 70 percent chance that Stonejaw will win the fight.

In the event of a fight with the PCs, there is a 50 percent chance that the makeshift fighting ring gets knocked over and the two cockatrices are set free, who attack anyone who comes near them (see Encounter: Saltwash).

At the back of the taberna is a set of stairs leading up to Remi's Office. The PCs can arrange a meeting with Remi at any point during the day by talking to the thugs downstairs. They would raise an eyebrow and infer that The Emperor doesn't like being disturbed without good reason. At night, Remi's office is locked with a DC 15 padlock.

**REMI'S OFFICE**

*A heavy desk dominates the centre of the chamber holding a mess of scrolls and amphorae — clay wine jugs. Dozens of stab marks scour the surface and the stench of vinegar permeates the air. Various different weapons line the walls, mounted for show. A single window faces off over the street below, which has had the shutters smashed in.*

Remi spends more time drinking than he does at his desk, hence the pile up of scrolls waiting for his attention. When Remi gets angry he throws everything from his desk onto the floor before stabbing at his desk with a dagger to let out his rage. The wine from smashed jugs has seeped into the rug which gives off a lingering acidic smell.

Remi is guarded by two street thugs from Emperor's Lot at all times, whether he is in his office, drinking in the popina, or sleeping in his bed. While Remi is at his desk, one thug stands in front of the door and another by the shuttered window, blocking all possible escape routes.



**Broken Window.** If the PCs enquire about the broken window, they will learn that Remi's office was broken into two nights ago by some thugs from a local gang of dhampir. Remi is furious as they stole his favourite pugio. He dares not get involved, however, as the gang belongs to Sanguesta and he doesn't want to tread on their toes. He will, however, happily offer the PCs a reward for taking out the gang on his behalf in the form of 20 gp and two amphorae of Cambrius Solar Reserve wine (worth 15 gp each). Remi will give the PCs directions to **Sulla's Shack** (page 67) to take out the thugs.

### Chatting with Remi

**Important.** Remi refuses to work with the PCs if they are also working with the Brivane Pirates. Remi may ask the PCs to stop doing any work for Hobek so that he knows he can trust them.

If the PCs begin talking to Remi about Sanguesta, he'll quickly be brought a cup of wine by one of the thugs to calm him down. Remi will angrily explain how Sanguesta has wormed their way into his desha importing business and that he wants their smuggling ring taken out (see Side Quest: Desha Wars). He'll also mention the break in (see Broken Window above).

If Remi finds out the PCs plan to burn the warehouse, he'll grow very angry. Remi will tell the PCs that if they don't burn the warehouse, just remove Sanguesta from it, he'll match whatever their original contractor is paying. Remi wants to take over the warehouse once Sanguesta has been kicked out. He'll even sweeten the deal, offering to send three of his thugs to help them clear the warehouse. If the PCs refuse, Remi will threaten them, saying that they'll hang from the pier by their necks if he catches even a whiff of smoke near his warehouse. If Remi finds out Marius is behind the original contract, he'll go on a wine-fuelled rant about the Umbra Syndicate and their increasing involvement in the island's affairs.

**Don't Annoy Remi.** If the PCs at any point anger Remi enough, either through mentioning that they are working with the Brivane Pirates, not referring to him as his title of "The Emperor", or attempting to intimidate him, he'll shout at them. If they keep annoying him, he'll order his thugs to remove them from his office. The thugs from downstairs will join in the fight if combat starts.

### Treasure

In and around Remi's desk, there are:

- 18 gold pieces
- 20 decima gold coins (worth 10 gp each)
- A pouch of gemstones (worth 10 gp)
- Two jugs of rare Cambrius Solar Reserve red wine (worth 15 gp)

If the PCs have been rewarded by Remi for any reason, remove the relevant rewards from his desk.

### Encounter: Saltwash

**Enemies (Non-Ember).** 1x Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin, 5x Street Thug, 6x Minion [Street Thug], (Optional) 2x Cockatrice

**Enemies (Ember).** 1x Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin, 6x Street Thug, 8x Minion [Street Thug], (Optional) 2x Cockatrice

**CR.** 4

### Introduction

If the PCs pick a fight with the Emperor's Lot gang, against the suggestion of Marius, then the entire taberna will turn against them. This is a deadly encounter should it occur.

### Tactics

The street thugs will upturn the tables and use them as cover against ranged attacks. Remi will bark orders at his thugs, telling them to focus on a specific enemy (whoever is causing the most damage). The cockatrices will attack whoever is closest to them. The thugs will not try to kill the PCs, only knock them out.

### Ending the Encounter

The street thugs and minions will flee when reduced to a third health or lower. Remi fights to the death in his rage. If Remi is killed, there is a 50 percent chance each remaining street thug and minion will flee the taberna. The cockatrices will fight until reduced to a third health or lower, at which point they will only attack creatures who go within 5 feet of them.

If the PCs are knocked out, they'll eventually awaken tied upside down to one of the piers in Raela. All their coin pouches will be missing, apart from one which solely contains a scrawled note stating "Don't come back to Saltwash if you know what's best for you."

### Loot

All gang members have 1d4 silver pieces, a truncheon, a sling, and some rocks for ammunition. See Remi's NPC block for loot information on Remi.

## WOODED HANGOUT

A number of desha smugglers can be found in a small forested area just northwest of **Gladius** (Q18). These three dhampir are a group of off duty Sanguesta warehouse workers, meeting up before their shift and looking to relax together by smoking desha. The PCs can approach the dhampir in a number of ways after learning about their whereabouts from asking around Raela (see Side Quest: Desha Wars) or through exploring around the northern side of the warehouse.

The smugglers blackmailed a visiting magus into putting up an illusion over the wooded area, making it seem as if it is just a dense wood with nothing of interest inside. Anyone who comes within 30 feet of the camp can attempt a **DC 13 Intelligence**

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**(Investigation)** check to discover that the central portion of the woods is illusory. The illusion can be dispelled with *dispel magic* (DC 13). A PC with a **14 Passive Perception** or higher will notice wagon tracks heading from the direction of the warehouse which stop abruptly as the illusion begins. The smugglers use a small street wagon to transport their desha stock from the warehouse pier to their camp.

The smugglers have commandeered the supply brought in by Remi of **Saltwash** (Q20) and are selling the desha at a reduced rate. The smugglers retire to the clearing in the early evening and remain there between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., chatting, smoking, and counting their gold. They then return to work for the night shift at 8 p.m. The smugglers are **Rivello De'Sain, Flavia Caso Prima, and Lucullus Tacitus Nero** (see Minor NPCs), renowned within Sanguesta for their lazy attitude towards warehouse work and unwillingness to cooperate with Cassia's whims.

#### HANDLING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs bypass the illusion and enter into the central clearing of the wooded area, read the following:

*Four stools are pulled up around a dull campfire upon which staked fish are slowly being cooked. A pitched tent is placed to one side of the campfire alongside a handful of small crates. Upon two of the stools sit dhampir, who pass a pipe between each other, chatting idly. The head of a third can be seen sticking out of the tent, their body facing away from the fire as they are lying down, staring at the clouds as they drift past.*

The dhampir have a collective **11 Passive Perception** so the PCs should have no trouble sneaking up on them. There are however a number of bells strung in the trees nearby attached to ropes, which may be spotted with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check. If the bells are rung, the dhampir are alerted. If they ring at night, the vespitas from the warehouse will hear the bells and fly out to investigate. If the dhampir are aware of the bells ringing in the camp, they will pack up their camp's operations for 1d4 days and move it into the warehouse for safety.

The dhampir are not inherently aggressive thanks to the effects of the desha. The PCs could take the diplomatic approach and simply chat with the dhampir, even join them in smoking some desha. They could spy on the dhampir and listen in to their conversations in the hopes of picking up information. Or they could accost the dhampir and potentially start a fight.

#### TALK IT OUT

Should the PCs enter the clearing in a friendly manner the dhampir will be confused about how the PCs found them. Since the PCs are not part of

Emperor's Lot, the smugglers will greet the PCs with a hesitant yet warm welcome to their humble hideaway, offering for the PCs to join them. Here they can drink some wine and purchase some desha for a reduced cost of 3 gp per dose. If the PCs are caught sneaking around, however, the dhampir will draw their weapons to defend the camp.

If the PCs spend an hour of their time chatting with the dhampir, they can learn that Rivellia, Prima, and Nero used to have a solid friendship with the old Brivane Pirate foreman of the warehouse. This was **Gisel Romero** (see Minor NPCs), who was killed by Cassia. Gisel was aware of their smuggling operation but never ratted them out to Hobek. They'll mention that Gisel had stone shackles attached to her ankles and was dropped off the pier to drown. Cassia flew into a rage afterwards since she forgot to get the keys from Gisel before she had her killed, so had to have spare keys made for all the locks. A **12 Passive Insight** or higher allows a PC to pick up on the sense that these dhampir have a strong distaste for Cassia and her way of running things.

#### Desha Smuggling

The dhampir are tight lipped about their desha smuggling operation. Any mention of Remi and the Emperor's Lot will put them on edge as they air a disdain for the dwarf and his gang. If pressed, they'll mention that Remi used to supply them before he hiked prices and they found a means of getting their own desha. They eventually decided to open up business in Raela, undercutting Remi's 5 gp cost and offering the original lower rates of 3 gp doses to the locals.

#### Help from Within

If the PCs bring up their plan to burn the warehouse, the dhampir will open up a little more as long as the PCs agree to help them in return. The dhampir wish for protection from Estio, as they are still bound to their vampiric master by blood. If the PCs can secure a means of protection for the dhampir against Estio (see Side Quest: Desha Wars), they will offer up information regarding the *Guards* and *Desha Shipments* sections under *Warehouse Schedule: Nighttime* (page 71). They will also let the PCs know that at 1 a.m. Cassia heads down into the cellar, and they believe that the prisoner exchange happens around 2 a.m., though they caution about going to the cellar during this time as they have regularly seen Estio, Ambrose, and other vampires around at this time of the night. The dhampir do not have much knowledge of what goes on within the warehouse cellar as they work in the outdoors area shifting cargo. They just hear the screams every evening and are too afraid to ask questions.



The dhampir additionally express a desire to help take down Cassia and the warehouse. This is as long as suitable protection is found for them against Estio and that they can continue their desha smuggling. The dhampir will offer to hide the PCs inside of crates and carry them into the warehouse, leaving the crates by the top of the cellar stairs. They'll mention that there is a storage room in the cellar but they are too nervous to go down there. With a bit of convincing through a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, the dhampir will agree to carry them all the way down into *W9. Storage Room*. If the PCs succeed this roll by 5 or more, the dhampir will also agree to join the PCs against Cassia when combat starts.

### EAVESDROP

Should the PCs succeed on a stealth check to avoid detection by the dhampir, they may lie in the shrubs nearby and listen for a while. After about ten minutes, the following conversation is brought up between the dhampir. Feel free to adapt this conversation to better fit the tone of your adventure or to include additional details you might wish to add.

**Rivello:** *Ahh shite, me back is killin' me. Give it a rub would ye, Prima?*

**Prima:** *Oh aye, Emperor Rivello, anything else for ye while I'm at it? Maybe polish ye sandals? Cook ye dinner?*

**Rivello:** *Oh feck off, Prima ya daft tit, I just need it rubbed for a minute. Shoulder's killin' me after Cassia stuck me on repair duty all mornin'.*

**Nero:** *Repair duty? Fer what? Her twisted ego?*

**Rivello:** *Nah, I'm a feekin' carpenter not a miracle worker. That hole Rufio's mimika made a week back. Bloody ripped right through the back wall, didn't it.*

**Nero:** *Ahhh aye, that bits been a bit draughty while doin' patrols. Got it fixed then?*

**Rivello:** *Like feck I have. That's gonna take 'least another week o' work to patch up. Just stuck some crates in front of it for now, nobody'll know 'less they're lookin' real hard like.*

**Prima:** *Fair. Better hope Cassia don't know yer slackin' or ye'll end up thrown to the khlyni.*

**Rivello:** *Ahh she don't know shite. It'll be done by next week and she'll be none the wiser. Won't go endin' up like Gisel, that's fer sure.*

### FIGHT

If the PCs act hostile towards the dhampir, they will defend themselves.

#### Encounter: Wooded Hangout

**Enemies.** 1x Rivello De'Sain (sanguesta wretch), 1x Flavia Caso Prima (street thug), 1x Lucullus Tacitus Nero (street thug)

**CR.** 1

### Introduction

If the dhampir sense hostility from the PCs, they will reach for their truncheons to defend themselves.

### Tactics

The dhampir know they won't be able to win a fight while outnumbered so will attempt to flee at the first opportunity they get. They run back to the warehouse and will barricade the entryways, alerting the entire warehouse to the PCs' presence.

### Ending the Encounter

Should the PCs kill the dhampir, a search party will be sent out for them when they don't show up to their night shift, just past 8 p.m. the next day. If the dhampir's bodies are left in the wooded area, they will be found by the search party and Cassia will increase the guard on the warehouse, adding two Sanguesta minions to each patrol. If they are not found, it will be assumed that they either quit without telling Cassia or ran off, causing Cassia to fly into a rage. If this happens, Cassia will wreak havoc on her office, leaving it a complete wreck upon the PCs arrival.

### Loot

The dhampir each have 5 (2d4) silver on their persons, a truncheon, a sling, 10 rocks for ammunition, and a sanguesta pendant.

Prima wears a second pendant, a holy symbol to Quor with a golden peacock feather hanging from it — a wedding charm indicating their marriage to another person — worth about 10 gold. Their partner is **Rufius Caso Kelio** (TN he/they Aldarin commoner 2), a wagoner in mainland Deveros.

There are 10 pouches of desha in the crates near the tent, worth 5 gp each. If the PCs partook in desha with the dhampir, reduce the number of pouches found by the number of PCs who took desha. Remi will offer to buy the pouches for 3 gp each from the PCs.

## SULLA'S SHACK

If asking around about missing peoples, the party might learn of a dock worker called "Ly'weyn" who had gone missing recently (see Minor Rumours). With additional investigation, the party will eventually find themselves pointed towards the northern end of Raela where a suspicious gang of dhampir seems to roam the streets at night. It is possible that the PCs might even witness Sulla's gang kidnapping a victim should they be on the streets at night.

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Sulla's shack can be found on the northern side of Cruorse Isle, just north of Q14 on the map. The PCs might have come here following up on requests from either Hobek or Remi, or through simply wandering through the streets. As the PCs approach, read the following:

*A dilapidated shack braces against the harsh sea winds, as if it is ready to fall over at any second. Boarded up windows and cracked terracotta tiles show an unloved residence.*

Sulla's pet pseudogryphon, **Snap**, can be found chained to a 15 ft chain outside the shack with a hefty bronze collar around his neck. When the PCs approach, Snap will get low to the ground, his feathers puffing up as he emits a deep growling gurgle, attempting to scare off the intruders with a display of courage. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check can calm Snap down. Snap will chirp like a parakeet when he realises that the PCs aren't a threat to him.

During the day, Sulla stays inside with his gang of sanguesti, sleeping, eating, drinking, and gambling. At night, Sulla's gang goes on the prowl. If Sulla hears Snap's gurgling from outside, he'll come to the door of the shack flanked by two of his gang. Sulla is a nasty piece of work, best known for shaking down travellers in Raela's side alleys, or kidnapping them for Cassia should they not have enough coin to satisfy him. Occasionally Sulla takes a victim for himself, as he enjoys the taste of mixing their blood with his wine. In this instance, Sulla and his gang of cronies were in the middle of draining the blood from a recent victim and the drunken dhampir is annoyed at the disturbance to his meal.

Sulla will rudely tell the PCs that he's busy and they're to leave his property. Observant PCs with a **14 Passive Perception** will notice Sulla wiping blood from his hand against his tunic. Sulla will be dismissive of this should it be brought up. If the PCs refuse to leave, Sulla will look around the street before ordering his thugs to capture the PCs.

If the PCs instead leave, they can come back later that evening while Sulla is out and attempt to loot the shack. Snap will still be there to defend the front door, though the PCs can break a side window (DC 13 Strength check). If the PCs mentioned the warehouse in any way, however, Sulla will follow them into Raela and ambush them in a side alley (see Encounter: Sanguesta Ambush in Minor Leads: Rumours).

#### Encounter: Sulla's Shack

**Enemies (Non-Ember).** 1x Maximus Pontus Sulla, 1x Street Thug, 3x Minion [Sanguesta], 1x Pseudogryphon

**Enemies (Ember).** 1x Maximus Pontus Sulla, 2x Street Thug, 4x Minion [Sanguesta], 1x Pseudogryphon

**CR. 2**

#### Introduction

Sulla and his gang will attack the PCs should they refuse to leave his property or should they be caught snooping around the shack.

#### Tactics

Sulla will order his thugs to knock out the PCs. The street thugs and two minions will attempt to flank the PCs, focusing down one target at a time alongside Sulla. The two minions inside the shack will take cover on either side of the door, using their slings to fire at spellcasters and ranged weapon users. Snap will always attack the closest PC and attempt to claw at them wildly, though cannot move beyond his 15ft chain. Snap has no concept of knocking out creatures and will instead attack to kill to defend his master.

#### Ending the Encounter

If Sulla is killed or knocked unconscious, the gang will attempt to flee into Raela. Sulla fights until he is below a third health before ordering a retreat into the shack, which they will then barricade using the table at the back to block off the door. The gang will continue to attack the PCs from the shack with ranged weapons, breaking holes in the boarded up windows to shoot through.

#### Loot

All gang members have 5 (2d4) silver pieces, a truncheon, a sling, 10 rocks for ammunition, and a sanguesta pendant.

If the PCs do not kill Sulla they may interrogate him about the warehouse. Sulla attempts to remain tight-lipped about the Sanguesta operation, knowing all too well his fate at the hands of Cassia should he say anything. If the PCs push Sulla hard enough, succeeding a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** check, he will crack and tell them limited information about the Guards section of the Nighttime schedule (see Warehouse Schedule in Act 3) and first half of Cassia's Schedule (up until 1 a.m.). He will also lie to them, inflating the numbers of Sanguesta and Brivane Pirate thugs in the warehouse to put the PCs off getting involved. Sulla will hint the PCs may find more than they bargained for in the warehouse. He is referring to the khlyni that the Sanguesta sometimes throw prisoners to for sport, though won't outright state what the danger is.



### SHACK INTERIOR

Inside the shack, the PCs will find the following:

*A few basic straw beds line the walls around the shack with a fire pit at the centre. Refined paintings hang from the walls, looking oddly out of place in this dilapidated hovel. The stench of gore hangs in the air. At the far end is a table, upon which a corpse lies. It appears pale and gaunt. Amphorae rest against the table, propped with metal brackets, into which the blood drains.*

A **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check will reveal that the body has been drained of blood, with multiple puncture wounds along the neck and torso. This is the corpse of **Ly'weyn Venni** (NG she/her wood elf dead), a local dock worker who went missing a few days prior. If the PCs ask around, they'll find out that Ly'weyn has no family in Raela and moved there recently to earn money, which she planned to send back to her family in Fyndar so that they could move to join her in Aldarin. The PCs will find a letter in Ly'weyn's belt pouch from her mother wishing her a happy Sola Luna — a festival of the sun and moon celebrated in the northern nations of the continent — and speaking of her excitement to come visit Deveros in a few months time. The PCs may use this letter to find out Ly'weyn's identity as it is addressed to her.

### TREASURE

The PCs may quickly search the shack by succeeding a **DC 12 Wisdom (Investigation)** check, or thoroughly search by spending 2d10 minutes upturning the entire shack. PCs with a **13 Passive Perception** may pick up on the shifting of soil around the base of one of the beds. In both cases they will find an oak lockbox stashed in a hole under one of the beds (DC 15 lock). Sulla has the key to this on his person. This lockbox contains:

- 17 gold pieces
- 34 silver pieces
- Three gold mediceuta (worth 50 gp each)
- A handful of stolen jewellery robbed from Sulla's victims worth a total of 10 gp
- A fine amethyst-studded silver pugio (dagger) with "Remi" engraved in the handle worth 30 gp. The pugio belonged to **Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin** before it was stolen from his office by one of Sulla's thugs. The PCs can return it to Remi for a 50 gp reward along with an invitation to join Remi in drinking some fine Aldarin wine. This pugio gives the PCs a reason to meet with Remi if they have not yet done so already.
- A *Potion of Poison*
- A leatherbound journal. The journal itself contains some interesting information on **Cassia De'Tinea** (see Sulla's Journal below).

### Sulla's Journal

The PCs find out through Sulla's bitter complaints that:

- Cassia has a very specific taste for conditum — a type of watered-down wine mixed with pepper, aromatics, and honey — spiked with blood.
- Sulla appears to be the supplier of this wine for Cassia, tasked with handing an amphora of the mixture to Cassia's henchmen as she arrives at the warehouse.
- Sulla rarely does the delivery himself, often sending one of his minions to do it for him through the forested region to the north of the island.
- Cassia tends to drink the wine in her office as soon as she arrives.
- Sulla's gang collects a body from the warehouse every morning around 4 a.m., or, if no body is available, must hunt on the streets to find someone to drain.

The PCs may get the idea to spike the conditum with poison of some kind to gain an advantage over Cassia. Aside from the *potion of poison* found alongside the journal, various low grade poisons can be bought from **Charaxos Venkoi of Dosi** (Q19), such as a sleeping draught (puts creature to sleep for 1 hour, DC 13 Constitution saving throw, 50 gp), or a rat poison (deals 4d4 poison damage, halved on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, 15 gp). Feel free to create your own poisons as well. The journal also contains information about Sulla's gang raiding the warehouse's secret room of goods (see Stolen Paintings below).

### Stolen Paintings

This haul was part of what was stolen from the Brivane Pirates' secret chamber, *W10. Hidden Room* in the warehouse. The paintings around the room were also stolen from this chamber, each worth around 15 gp each, with five in total. The PCs can later return the paintings to Hobek, who will reward them with an amphora of fine Rymish wine worth 10 gp for each painting returned.

## ACT 2 OUTCOMES

If you are not using XP to track progression, the PCs should reach 3rd Level before they move in to deal with the warehouse as long as they have completed at least one of the following: Dealt with Sulla's gang, allied with either the Brivane Pirates or Emperor's Lot, protected or killed the Sanguesta desha smugglers.

**Allied with Brivane Pirates.** The PCs were able to talk with Hobek and strike some agreement. They

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can gain rewards from Hobek for not harming any Brivane Pirates during the course of the warehouse raid. This places the PCs in good standing with the Brivane Pirates for the next adventure, though if the pirates find the PCs have been working for Emperor's Lot, they lose this standing.

**Allied with Emperor's Lot.** The PCs were able to talk to Remi and helped him with Side Quest: Desha Wars. They would have either turned in the sanguesti smugglers to Remi, killed them on his behalf, or found them employment with Emperor's Lot. This places the PCs in good standing with Emperor's Lot for the next adventure, though if they find the PCs have been working for the Brivane Pirates, they lose this standing.

**Helped the Sanguesti Smugglers.** The PCs were able to help the sanguesti smugglers escape from the grips of Cassia by securing either protection or transport with an allied NPC.

**Dealt with Sulla.** The PCs likely encountered Sulla and have either interrogated or killed him. If Sulla survived, he harbours a grudge against the PCs and may return in Act 3 to foil the PCs' plans. He may tail the PCs and attempt to kill them in their sleep, or to make things inconvenient for them when they choose to deal with the warehouse.

**Warehouse Schedule.** The PCs should have been able to pick up some information around the *Warehouse Schedule* (page 70) and have figured out some plan of how they wish to approach dealing with the warehouse.

## ACT 3: FIRE UPON RAELA

The PCs by this point will have, hopefully, acquired some useful information surrounding the warehouse. The totality of this information is summarised below:

- Shipments into the warehouse occur just after dusk each evening without fail.
- The prior foreman of the warehouse, **Gisel Romero**, was drowned following disagreements with **Cassia De'Tinea**. Gisel's body contains a veilglobe with a map of the warehouse and keys to doors within the warehouse.
- Cassia chooses one prisoner each evening to be the night's entertainment. This prisoner is thrown to her pet khlyni, Ripper and Bane, for sport.
- **Hobek Fraus**, captain of Raela's Brivane Pirate crew, wishes to end their agreement with Sanguesta but fears the backlash. Hobek supports the idea of burning the warehouse, as they can claim on their insurance, but does not wish for any of the Brivane Pirates to be involved.
- Several dhampir warehouse workers are fearful of Cassia and bound to **Publius Siccia Estio**. They are willing to help the PCs betray Cassia in exchange for their safe passage off the island.
- There is an open hole in the rear of the warehouse which has been covered by some crates.
- There are *vespitas*, a type of vampiric creature, which watches over the warehouse at night. They use echolocation but cannot define individual creatures.
- The Brivane Pirates have full use of the warehouse during the day, led by the new Brivane Pirate foreman **Tulius Agravo Remus**. Sanguesta then take over the warehouse during the evening. Cassia has an office on the top floor, which is locked during the day.

### WAREHOUSE SCHEDULE

The warehouse has a daily schedule it adheres to every day of the week, without fail. Cassia keeps a tight control over the schedule and any lapses in order are punished harshly, such as with Gisel Romero (see Minor NPCs).

#### DAYTIME

**Duration.** 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Guards.** 2x Brivane Pirates, 8x Minions [Brivane Pirate], 2x Mastiffs, Tulius Agravo Remus

**Workers.** 12x day workers (labourer)

#### GUARDS

**Pier.** Two minions patrol the pier alongside two mastiffs. They stand on watch at the end of the pier for 30 minutes before heading back to the warehouse main entrance. They spend a couple of minutes at the warehouse doors chatting with the two other patrols from inside before returning to the pier. The patrol swaps out with another pair from *W4. Upper Mess Hall* every four hours.

**Interior.** One brivane pirate and two minions patrol the interior of the warehouse in 30 minute loops. The pirate patrols the upper floor and one minion patrols the lower floor. The second minion overlooks the workers by *W2. Loading Bay*. They all meet by the main warehouse doors at the end of each patrol loop to chat with the pier patrol. These guards swap out with another group from *W4. Upper Mess Hall* every four hours.

**Upstairs.** Remus, alongside the remaining brivane pirate and four minions, rest upstairs in *W4 Upper Mess Hall*. Every two hours, Remus walks down





from the upper mess hall to gather information from the patrols before walking along the pier to smoke his pipe for 10 minutes.

**Cellar.** The cellar door is locked during the daytime.

## NIGHTTIME

**Duration.** 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

**Guards.** 4x Sanguesta wretches, 3x Sanguesta Bloodsearers, 7x Minions [Sanguesta], 2x khlyni (Ripper and Bane), 6x vespitas, Cassia De'Tinea

**Workers.** 6x night workers (labourer), Rivello De'Sain, Flavia Caso Prima, and Lucullus Tacitus Nero

### GUARDS

**Pier.** One Sanguesta wretch, a bloodsearer, and a minion patrol along the pier. They spend 15 minutes walking along the pier before returning to the warehouse entrance to talk with the interior patrols.

**Loading Bay.** A number of *vespitas* hang from the edges of the warehouse, keeping watch over the exterior road and loading area. If they spot an intruder (Passive Perception 13), the vespitas will swarm them in an attempt to kill them. The vespitas use echolocation to track their targets. If observed for 10 minutes or longer, the PCs will see the vespitas leaving the warehouse to investigate noises made nearby, eventually returning to their roost above the loading bay after 2d4 rounds. It should be noted that *blindsight* does not penetrate through cover and the PCs can attempt to sneak past the vespitas, distract them, or sneak into the warehouse from the south.

**Interior.** Two Sanguesta wretches, a bloodsearer, and three minions patrol the interior of the warehouse in 15 minute loops. The bloodsearer and three minions patrol the upper floor and the two wretches patrol the lower floor, meeting by the main doors to talk with the pier patrol every 15 minutes. Every hour, the bloodsearer on the upper floor knocks on Cassia's door and updates her on anything going on. Once Cassia has moved into the cellar area, she remains there until dawn and is not disturbed by the patrols unless it is something urgent.

**Cellar.** One Sanguesta wretch guards the prisoners in the W8. *Holding Cells* alongside Ripper. Three Sanguesta minions and a bloodsearer relax in the W7. *Lower Mess Hall*. If the alarm is raised upstairs, the minions barricade the cellar entrance with furniture from the lower mess hall and take up defensive positions around the room.

**Smugglers.** Rivello, Prima, and Nero work the warehouse in W4. *Loading Bay*. Every week a new shipment of desha arrives which they hide in the

crates outside the warehouse and then take to their hideaway after their shift (see *Wooded Hangout*).

### CASSIA'S SCHEDULE

**Arrival, 8 p.m.- 9 p.m.** Cassia arrives during the *Dusk Overservable Exchange* (see below) in a carriage. She could use the underground tunnel from Quor's Crucible but she likes to make a show of her arrival. She takes the report from Remus and heads to her office. A Sanguesta wretch carries her prepared amphora of blood and conditum to her office, leaving it next to her desk. This wretch then stands guard outside of her office door. The amphora is delivered to this wretch just before dusk by one of Sulla's gang (see Sulla's Shack). Cassia reads the report while drinking from the amphora. One of her khlyni, Ripper, is taken downstairs to watch over the prisoners. The second khlyni, Bane, stays with her in her office.

**Paperwork, 9 p.m.-1 a.m.** Cassia completes various pieces of paperwork for Ambrose and Estio, her two vampiric patrons, as well as ensuring that the warehouse's other operations are turning a profit. She divides the payments between Sanguesta and the Brivane Pirates, taking a small cut on the side for herself.

**Entertainment, 1 a.m.-2 a.m.** Cassia heads down into the cellar with Bane. She chooses a prisoner to be the night's entertainment, who is then dragged from their cell and thrown into the fight pit in W7. *Lower Mess Hall*. The prisoner is given a wicker shield before Ripper and Bane are set loose on them. The sanguesti in the mess hall place bets on how long they think the prisoner will survive. After the prisoner is dead, they are left to be toyed with by Ripper and Bane.

**Hand Over, 2 a.m.-2.10 a.m.** **Krell Noxen** (see Minor NPCs) arrives from through W11. *Secret Tunnel*, connecting to Quor's Crucible, to collect the prisoners. Cassia hands over the prisoners to Krell as well as any financial reports required for Estio and Ambrose. Krell returns through the tunnel with the prisoners in tow.

**Relaxation, 2.10 a.m.-6 a.m.** Cassia eats, drinks, and gambles with the rest of the sanguesti, enjoying some downtime before she heads back to Quor's Crucible to deal with the politics there. Just before 6 p.m., Cassia locks all the doors that need to be locked before heading out through the secret tunnel with the Sanguesta thug guarding her office, Ripper, and Bane.

### DESHA SHIPMENTS

The three sanguesti desha smugglers (Rivello De'Sain, Flavia Caso Prima, and Lucullus Tacitus Nero, see *Wooded Hideout*) receive regular desha

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shipments into the warehouse. If the PCs have allied with the smugglers, they may be snuck into the warehouse inside barrels and left in *W9. Storage Room* (see *Wooded Hideout: Help from Within*).

#### OBSERVABLE EXCHANGE, DUSK

At 8 p.m. each day, the operations of the warehouse change over from the Brivane Pirates to Sanguesta. Three *rapidae* arrive from the north at the pier promptly at 8 p.m., just after dusk. They keep close to the cliffs under the Marmaros district so as not to be spotted by the legionary blockade. Contained within each boat is a Sanguesta wretch, a Sanguesta bloodsearer, a Sanguesta minion, and 1d4+1 prisoners who are being transported by the criminal organisation. Cassia De'Tinea, a servant, a Sanguesta wretch, four Sanguesta minions, and Cassia's two pet *khlyni*, Ripper and Bane arrive in an opulent covered carriage from Quor's Crucible. As Sanguesta arrives, all the day workers leave the warehouse and head into Raela, either going home or to a taberna, as the night workers and minions belonging to Sanguesta arrive to pick up the night shift.

Remus meets Cassia on the docks and gives her a written report of all information surrounding what happened during the day. A thug from Sulla's gang (see Sulla's Shack) arrives midway during this exchange to give Cassia an amphora of conditum and blood, before leaving back to the shack. Cassia then heads inside to her office to read the report. The Sanguesta wretches take the prisoners inside. Remus, his pirates, and the mastiffs board the *rapidae* and head northwards. The now empty wagon is taken back to Quor's Crucible by Cassia's servant.

#### GM ONLY INFORMATION

The prisoners are taken downstairs into the cellar and placed in the holding cells in *W8. Holding Cells*.

Remus and the pirates are heading towards Dawnbreak Cove, the main Brivane Pirate hideout, about 12 miles north along the Deveros Coast. The next day, Sanguesta pick up the *rapidae* from Dawnbreak Cove and take them off to Frisus, a fishing village 5 miles north of Deveros where they base their operations from. Here they pick up a new supply of prisoners who get brought in during the day.

#### OBSERVABLE EXCHANGE, DAWN

At 4am, two thugs from Sulla's gang (see Sulla's Shack) arrive. There is a 75 percent chance that there is a body ready for them, loaded into a street wagon by the workers and covered in sackcloth. This is taken back to Sulla's Shack to be drained of blood into Cassia's next amphora of conditum.

At 6 a.m. each day, just before dawn, ownership of the warehouse changes back from Sanguesta to the Brivane Pirates. Remus and his crew return with the *rapidae* to the pier. One Sanguesta wretch and one Sanguesta street thug board each of the three *rapidae* and sail them off northwards along the coast. The night workers and minions leave back into Raela as the day workers arrive to work their shift at the warehouse. Cassia's carriage arrives to pick her up, alongside Ripper, Bane, and two *sanguesta* wretches.

#### AESTUS FESTIVAL

The Aestus festival begins on the 17th day of Summer's Crest, the day Marius has asked the PCs to rescue **Xel Viso IV**. The Brivane Pirates will not be present at the warehouse, as they will be celebrating in Raela. The doors to the warehouse will be locked by Cassia the morning before and unlocked again when Sanguesta arrives during the evening.

#### THE WAREHOUSE

There are a multitude of ways the PCs can deal with the warehouse depending on who they side with in Raela and what objectives they wish to complete. They could just burn the warehouse during the day and call it quits or they could fully infiltrate the place, taking out Cassia and Sanguesta entirely. The warehouse itself is made mostly of wood and any small fire can quickly spread into a full blown blaze. **Liliana's** (Q14) also sells lantern oil and pitch, which may be used to spread fire quicker.

#### W1. PIER

*A rickety pier stretches from the shore, stacked with crates. An oaken crane rests at the end, ready to lift any cargo arriving by sea.*

The pier is patrolled at all hours of the day. See *Warehouse Schedule* for more information. If the PCs have struck an agreement with Hobek, the pirates will not have their mastiffs with them on the day of the infiltration. See *Encounter: Warehouse Pier* for more information.

#### Encounter: Warehouse Pier

**Enemies.** *Daytime:* 2x Minion [Brivane Pirate], 2x Mastiff. *Nighttime:* 1x Sanguesta Wretch, 1x Sanguesta Bloodsearer, 1x Minion [Sanguesta]

**CR.** 1 or 2

#### Introduction

The PCs may arouse the attention of a patrol on the pier, potentially raising the alarm of infiltrators around the docks.



## Tactics

**Daytime.** If spotted by the Brivane pirate minions, one will stay on the pier to shout at the PCs, asking what they are doing, while the other runs to the warehouse to get backup. If the PCs act hostile or are otherwise suspicious, the minion on the pier will keep their distance until backup arrives. When the group from *W3. Central Warehouse arrives*, they will continue to make ranged attacks at the PCs from the pier and retreat into the warehouse if the PCs get too close. The pirates will aim to kill the PCs.

**Nighttime.** If spotted by one of the *sanguesti*, they will run to the warehouse to inform Cassia of intruders. As they do this, they will order the two patrolling *Sanguesta* wretches to head outside and capture the PCs. These transporters will enact the same tactics as the pirates, though will aim to knock out the PCs if possible so that they may be taken prisoner. The minions will attack the PCs with ranged attacks. If the PCs get close, the minions will disengage and retreat into the warehouse until backup arrives.

## Ending the Encounter

If forced to fight, the Brivane pirates and *Sanguesta* will fight until below a third health, before retreating to the warehouse and barricading the front door.

### DROWNED DISSIDENT

The PCs might pick up on what happened to the old Brivane Pirate foreman of the warehouse, **Gisel Romero** (see Minor NPCs). Gisel was cast from the warehouse pier with stone shackles attached around her ankles for repeatedly going against Cassia's orders following the *Sanguesta* takeover of the warehouse. The final straw came after Gisel was caught attempting to free **icilla Lucina Felicitus** (see Side Quest: *Avenging Felicitus*).

Gisel's body lies 20 feet beneath the surface in the coral reefs below the pier, and has been picked clean by reef sharks. A handful of reef sharks swim around the reef, waiting for meat to be thrown in by the pirates on the pier, which happens every evening (see *Encounter: Beneath The Pier*). On Gisel's body, the PCs can find a keychain attached to her belt with keys to the warehouse main doors, back door, the door to *W5. Cassia's Office*, and to a lockbox kept within the wolf's head in *W10. Hidden Room*. They will also find a pouch containing 6 gp, 4 sp, some sodden rations, a golden holy symbol to Quor featuring three splayed peacock feathers, and a *veilglobe* (see *Unlocking the Veilglobe*).

### Encounter: Beneath The Pier

**Enemies (Non-Ember).** 2x Reef Sharks

**Enemies (Ember).** 3x Reef Sharks

**CR.** 1

## Introduction

If the PCs swim under the pier at the warehouse, they will encounter Gisel's body within the coral reef which is guarded by two hungry reef sharks.

## Tactics

The reef sharks are hungry and can smell the PCs from a mile away. They will attack the nearest PC to them, or any PC which is openly bleeding into the water.

## Ending the Encounter

The reef sharks will fight to the death or until they have killed one humanoid creature, which they will then focus on ripping at as long as no other creatures attack them.

## Unlocking the Veilglobe

The *veilglobe* (see Appendix D: Items) holds an interior map of the warehouse: the cellar, the ground floor, and the upper floor. Four notes are made on the map noting where supplies, such as fishing tackle, weapons, food, and lumber are located as well as their quantities. The cellar map also shows the *W10. Hidden Room* with a note upon it which reads "Clear out before *Sanguesta* get their grubby hands on our precious goods". This is followed by a crude drawing of a wolf's head. When the PCs get the *veilglobe*, they will find that it is locked with a passcode and are unable to access the knowledge held inside.

To find out the passcode, the PCs will need to investigate Gisel's other items, specifically the holy symbol of Quor. With a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Investigation)** check, they will find that one of the peacock feathers from the holy symbol detaches, revealing a secret compartment inside the holy symbol. Inside this compartment is a tiny scroll with the word "Ruvenia" inside, the name of Gisel's favourite wine. This passcode will unlock the *veilglobe*. The PCs may also gain insight from the dhampir smugglers in the *Wooded Hangout* (page 65), who could be bribed with gold to hand over the passcode.

After the PCs unlock the *veilglobe*, show them the upper, ground, and cellar maps of the warehouse from Appendix E: Maps. The cellar map does not reveal *W11. Secret Tunnel*.

## W2. LOADING BAY

*A cluster of carts sit next to an elevated platform leading out from the warehouse. Two double doors face out onto the platform. A dirt track leads from the loading bay around the rear of the warehouse.*

A staircase leads to the upper floor of *W3. Central Warehouse*. There is a wooden door at the top of the staircase, which is kept open during the day to let air into the warehouse. This is locked at night with a DC 10 lock.

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PCs who succeed on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to explore the back of the warehouse will find the covered up hole leading into *W3. Central Warehouse*.

**Daytime.** Brivane Pirate workers offload cargo from the warehouse into carts, which are then taken into Raela. These are mainly fishing supplies, sails, and other locally crafted goods from along the Deveros Coast. These workers flee at the first sight of danger. One minion watches over the loading bay, alerting those inside *W3. Central Warehouse* at the first sign of trouble.

**Nighttime.** Sanguesta workers perform the same duties as their daytime counterparts. **Rivello De'Sain, Flavia Caso Prima, and Lucullus Tacitus Nero** (see *Wooded Hangout*) oversee this work and also handle their own desha imports. These workers flee into the warehouse during combat while the three smugglers will fight off any intruders. If the PCs have allied with the smugglers, they will let them pass or join them, depending on how discussions went. A number of vespitas keep watch for intruders from the rafters over the loading bay (Passive Perception 13).

#### Encounter: Vespitas

**Enemies (Non-Ember).** 3x Vespitas

**Enemies (Ember).** 5x Vespitas

**CR.** 1

#### Introduction

Vespitas are horrid, bat-like lookouts belonging to the Vampiric Order. They keep watch for those prying into the affairs of the vampires, as well as to spread the blood rot disease so that prey may more easily be tracked by creatures such as khlyni.

#### Tactics

If the vespitas spot the PCs near the warehouse or loading bay, they will swarm them. The vespitas attack whoever is closest to them. The vespitas fight to the death, as commanded by their owner, Cassia. It does not matter if the vespitas die in the eyes of the vampires as their sacrifice allows the tracking of their enemies by the Order's khlyni.

### W3. CENTRAL WAREHOUSE

*This expansive room hosts numerous tall stacks of crates and barrels. Pieces of fishing equipment are dotted around with nets hanging from the walls. A table rests at the centre with some scraps of food upon it. Above, two giant cranes hang from upper balcony areas which hold more storage space.*

The central warehouse is split into two areas. The lower floor, which serves as a flat warehouse space, and the upper balcony, which circles above the lower

floor. Two sets of stairs lead from the lower floor to the upper balcony. There are a number of cranes which can be operated. It is an action to raise or lower a crane, which moves the platform attached to the crane up to the upper balcony or down to the lower floor. The platforms can carry up to four medium sized creatures.

There is a large hole in the far side of the warehouse, which has been made by one of Estio's **mimika**. This hole was hastily covered up by the sanguesti workers and has yet to be properly fixed.

A hub of operations for the Brivane Pirates, this warehouse stocks a number of pirate-supported fishers in the area with cheap fishing equipment. In the central area, workers mill around packing and preparing crates for shipment. The warehouse workers do not get involved in combat and will flee at the first sign of trouble. The warehouse is filled with fishing supplies, such as netting, sails, pitch, wood, paint, harpoons, and crabbing pots. The pitch can be used to help set fire to the warehouse.

#### Encounter: Central Warehouse

**Enemies.** *Daytime:* 1x Brivane Pirate, 2x Minion [Brivane Pirate]. *Nighttime:* 2x Sanguesta Wretches, 1x Sanguesta Bloodsearer, 3x Minion [Sanguesta]

**CR.** 1 or 3

#### Introduction

This area is patrolled at all hours, making it a tricky area to sneak through without knowledge of various entryways and exits.

#### Tactics

*Daytime.* If spotted by the Brivane pirates inside the warehouse, the upstairs pirate will run to *W4. Upper Mess Hall* to inform Remus of intruders. The others will keep their distance and tell the PCs to leave until backup arrives. If a fight breaks out, the pirates will make ranged attacks against the PCs and try to keep their distance, using the crates and doors for cover. The pirates will flee if below a third of their maximum hit points, heading into Raela to get backup from Nos Nox.

*Nighttime.* If they spot the PCs, the two Sanguesta wretches within the warehouse will both run to different places. The wretch on the upper balcony will run to knock on the window to *W5. Cassia's Office*, if she is still in there. If she is not, they will instead run to the *W1. Pier* to alert the guards there. The downstairs wretch will run to get backup from the *W7. Lower Mess Hall*. These sanguesti do not directly engage in combat unless they are cornered or until they have called for backup.



### Loot

*Daytime.* The pirates each have a Brivane Pirate brooch, a gladius, a net, a shortbow, leather armour, and 10 (4d4) silver pieces.

*Nighttime.* The wretches each have a Sanguesta pendant, a truncheon, a sling, 8 stones for their sling, plus 5 (2d4) silver coins.

## W4. UPPER MESS HALL

*Rugged tables lay strewn around the room, holding the plates and cups of half-finished meals. A few copper pieces and dice lay scattered nearby. A door sits to the far left of the room.*

There are a total of 12cp strewn across the tables alongside enough food to feed four people. The food however is a bit stale.

**Daytime.** Remus and one pirate can be found planning fishing routes at the far end of the hall. The remaining four minions eat, drink, and gamble at a nearby desk.

**Nighttime.** The room is empty apart from a single Sanguesta street thug, who keeps guard at Cassia's door.

### Encounter: Upper Mess Hall

**Enemies.** *Daytime:* 1x Tulus Agravo Remus, 1x Brivane Pirate, 4x Minion [Brivane Pirate]. *Nighttime:* 1x Street Thug

**CR.** 2 or 1/2

### Introduction

This area is quite cramped, with plenty of furniture which can either impede movement or be turned over to serve as half cover.

### Tactics

*Daytime.* Remus and the other pirates will flip the tables they are sitting at and take cover behind them. They will make ranged attacks from their cover. If the PCs approach into melee range, the pirates will try to flank a single PC and focus them down. They will not leave the room, knowing that they can defend themselves better using the tables than by chasing the PCs outside.

*Nighttime.* The street thug will alert Cassia by opening her office door, then follow Cassia's orders, attempting to kill any who are close to them. If Cassia retreats, the street thug will also try to retreat into the cellar. If Cassia has gone downstairs, they will immediately attempt to flee or surrender.

### Loot

*Nighttime.* The street thug has a Sanguesta pendant, a truncheon, a sling, 8 stones for their sling, plus 5 (2d4) silver coins.

*Daytime.* The pirates each have a Brivane Pirate brooch, a gladius, a net, a shortbow, leather armour, and 10 (4d4) silver pieces.

## W5. CASSIA'S OFFICE

*A sturdy desk sits at the centre of the room, neatly organised with scroll holders, ink pots, and a quill. Two chairs rest on either side of it. A partially filled bookshelf lies to one side, holding many scrolls, with a locked chest tucked into the bottom shelf.*

**Daytime.** The office is empty. The office door is locked (DC 20) as is the window (DC 15).

**Nighttime.** Cassia is within the office between the hours of 9 p.m. and 1 a.m. alongside Bane, her pet khlyni (see Cassia's Schedule). Cassia keeps the window open, so will hear any disturbances going on inside the warehouse. Once she leaves, she locks both the door and window.

### Encounter: Cassia's Office

**Enemies.** 1x Cassia De'Tinea, 1x Bane (khlyni)

**CR.** 3

### Introduction

Cassia works in her office during the early hours of the night. She will act surprised that someone has gotten past the lookouts in the warehouse.

### Tactics

Cassia is a skilled duelist though she is not capable of taking on multiple people at once by herself. If there are two or fewer intruders that she knows of, she will fight alongside Bane. Cassia will use her *Reflexive Retaliation* against anyone who strikes her with a melee weapon attack. If she is outnumbered, she will sick Bane on the intruders and attempt to flee out of the window while calling for help. Cassia will attempt to retreat into the cellar if she reaches a third of her total hit points while using a greater healing potion from her pouch.

Bane will follow Cassia's commands, attacking whoever he can and fighting to the bitter end.

### Treasure

There is a locked chest on the bookshelf (Lock DC 13). The chest contains the following items:

- Two daggers
- A map of Cruorse Isle with various shipping routes marked around it
- A potion of healing
- A scroll of *disguise self*
- A silver strigil, used for scraping oils off the body during bathing (worth 5 gp)
- A pot of *light herbal blend* bath salts

## W6. CELLAR STAIRWELL

*A set of rickety stairs lead down into the depths of the warehouse below.*

These stairs connect the ground floor with the basement level of the warehouse. At the base of the stairs is a hefty oaken door that slowly swings closed after being opened, making an audible creaking

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noise if not closed quickly. The door is locked (DC 10) during the day and is unlocked, but closed, during the night.

## W7. LOWER MESS HALL

*Scattered tables sit around this dimly lit room, with only a handful of musty tapestries to decorate the walls. Several wooden posts have been staked into the ground at the far end, forming a makeshift fight pit. Numerous beheaded skeletal bodies lie at the edge of the fight pit. Two doors lead off to the right side, with a third to the left.*

These are the bodies of the prisoners who perform the nighttime entertainment for Cassia, being fed to Ripper and Bane alive. If a body is left in good condition by Ripper and Bane after being mauled in the fight pit, it is handed over to Sulla's gang to be drained of blood for consumption by Cassia and the sanguesti. The sanguesti have picked everything clean from the bodies already. They have also decapitated the bodies to prevent them from raising as bloodrot zombies.

With a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, the PCs discover the tapestry along the far wall leading into *W10. Hidden Room*. PCs with a **Passive Perception of 14** or higher will notice the tapestry fluttering slightly as the breeze from the tunnel behind moves it.

**Daytime.** This chamber is empty.

**Nighttime.** This is the main chamber that some sanguesti hang out in during the night, gambling, drinking, and eating. These minions have a **Passive Perception of 10**, making them very easy to sneak up on, though if they hear the cellar door creaking one will walk over to investigate the noise.

At 1 a.m., Cassia comes down from her office (see Cassia's Schedule). On the night of the 17th Summer's Crest, **Xel Viso IV** (see Minor NPCs) is selected by Cassia to be fed to Ripper and Bane in the fight pit. Xel fights valiantly but, if the PCs have not already dealt with Cassia by this point, he will die just before 1.30 a.m..

At 2 a.m., either **Krell Noxen** (see Minor NPCs) or a **Sanguesta bloodsearer** appears through the *W11. Secret Tunnel* to collect the prisoners. If Krell chooses to collect the prisoners that night and the PCs are still around, they are in for a bad time. Krell is a tall, rugged snow half-orc with deathly white skin. At this point, Krell is an almost insurmountable foe for the PCs, and they should avoid fighting at all costs. Should Krell see the party, he will demand the PCs surrender if they wish to live. In this case, the PCs are taken prisoner by Krell and the sanguesti and brought to Quor's Crucible. The adventure ends and will be continued in one of the final publications

where the PCs might fight for freedom in the arena. Regardless of if the PCs are captured at this point or not, Krell eventually tracks the PCs down after the adventure and makes his capture then, taking them to Quor's Crucible.

### Encounter: Lower Mess Halls

**Enemies.** *Nighttime, Pre-1 a.m.:* 2x Minion [Sanguesta], 1x Sanguesta Wretch, 1x Sanguesta Bloodsearer, 1x Ripper (khlyni). *Nighttime, Post-1 a.m.:* 1x Cassia De'Tinea, 3x Minions [Sanguesta], 1x Sanguesta Wretch, 1x Sanguesta Bloodsearer, 1x Ripper (khlyni), 1x Bane (khlyni), 1x Krell Noxen (Optional)

**CR.** 2 or 5 (13 with Krell)

### Introduction

The ideal time to deal with the cellar is while **Cassia** is upstairs, splitting the encounters and making each easier to handle. If the PCs end up dragging **Krell** into the fight, then their only choice is to flee or to surrender, as fighting spells certain death. The **Sanguesta wretch** in *W8. Holding Cells* will hear any fight going on and immediately join in alongside Ripper.

### Tactics

The **minions** will flip the tables and take cover behind them, using ranged attacks while supporting each other in melee range if necessary. The **Sanguesta transporter** joins them, commanding **Ripper** to attack and supporting the minions. If they feel that they are being overwhelmed through two or more deaths, the minions and the **Sanguesta transporter** will retreat into *W9. Storage Room* and attempt to barricade the door.

**Cassia** uses the same tactics as she does in Encounter: Cassia's Office, though if she needs to retreat, she will do so by heading into *W10. Hidden Room* and then into *W11. Secret Tunnel*. The **mimika** will not attack **Cassia** or anyone with her, though it will attack anyone else entering into the tunnel, even the sanguesti.

**Bane** and **Ripper** follow Cassia's commands or the commands of the **Sanguesta transporter**, attacking whoever they can and fighting to the death.

If the PCs do engage **Krell** in combat, he will use his *Manifest Fear* ability on them before ordering the sanguesti to capture them. He will then shapeshift into a cloud of mist and return to Quor's Crucible to report the intruders. Krell will deliberately make his route of escape obvious to the PCs, heading back through the secret tunnel, knowing full well that if the sanguesti fail to kill them, then the mimika in the next chamber surely will.

### Loot

Each of the sanguesti have Sanguesta pendants on them, alongside their equipment from their stat blocks and 2d4 silver pieces.



## W8. HOLDING CELLS

*A series of wooden-barred cells line the edge of this dark chamber. The rest of the room is barren aside from a small table and chair.*

**Daytime.** The cells are empty.

**Nighttime.** These cells are filled with the prisoners transported in during the evening. Roll for the number of prisoners kept here each night. Each prisoner has full body manacles connected to their neck, wrists, and ankles. On the 17th Summer's Crest, **Xel Viso IV** (see Minor NPCs) is held here as well. The keys for the cells (DC 15) and the manacles (DC 10) are held on the **Sanguesta transporter** who guards the cells, alongside the **khlyni Ripper**. The wooden cells can be broken open using a heavy slashing weapon, such as an axe or battleaxe, or bludgeoning weapon, such as a hammer or warhammer. The door has an AC of 14 and 7 hit points per wooden beam. Only two beams need to be broken to give the prisoners enough room to squeeze through.

If the prisoners are freed, they immediately attempt to escape upstairs and out of the warehouse. There is a 25 percent chance each prisoner will remain to help the PCs, and may be armed using the equipment in *W9. Storage Room*. These prisoners use the **Minion** stat block with no additional benefits.

Here are a number of names and pronouns to use for prisoners:

- **Pompa Icilla Gaia** (NG she/her Aldarin minion)
- **Tun Alkai II** (LG they/them ashensworn minion)
- **Corsa D'Ivalai** (NG she/her Rymish minion)
- **Rasko Brasshaul** (CN he/him hill dwarf minion)
- **Philinos Raxim** (CG he/him halfling minion)
- **Callesté Ver'whyn** (LN she/they wood elf minion)
- **Aster Vox** (LG he/she/they [GF] dragonborn [blue] minion)
- **Ravius Illicus Borealus** (LN he/him Aldarin minion)

Xel will stick with the PCs until they meet with Marius, keeping his head down. If asked, he will pretend that he is an Aldarin-aligned weapons merchant whose ship was ambushed by the Brivane Pirates. This is the cover which he has been fed by Marius, and he is sticking to it.

## W9. STORAGE ROOM

*This musty room holds numerous crates of dried food and crates filled with sacks of grain. A small weapon cache of truncheons and spears lies in the corner.*

This is Sanguesta's emergency stockpile which is used to arm new recruits and to feed their members should they get stuck on Cruorse Isle. These are mostly truncheons, spears, and a few slings.

## W10. HIDDEN ROOM

*A hidden chamber lies behind the tapestry. Opened chests and ransacked lockboxes lie strewn across the floor. Dusty prints of where paintings once hung mark the walls. A few lone coins sit between the cracks of the cobbled floor along with a half-broken taxidermied wolf's head, which appears to have fallen from its mount.*

This was once the Brivane Pirate's treasure chamber before it was ransacked by Sanguesta, who discovered it after kicking the pirates out of the cellar. 2d8 sp strewn across the floor, is all that remains from the treasure.

**Trap: Rocks Fall.** There is a thin tripwire placed across the entrance to the room behind the tapestry. The sanguesti did not want anyone entering into this room who shouldn't be allowed in. All the sanguesti and Krell are aware of the trap, which gets temporarily disarmed during the prisoner exchange. PCs can identify the trap with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check around the entryway and disarm it with a **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check. If the trap triggers, tell the PCs they hear a click and ask them what they are doing. Succeeding a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a crate full of rocks precariously suspended above the entryway. PCs may attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw to dodge out of the way taking 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save and, if in combat, they are stunned until the start of their next turn. If a PC spots the rocks before the rocks fall, they gain advantage on their saving throw.

### SECRET WALL

If the PCs walk within 10 feet of the hidden entrance to *W11. Secret Tunnel* they will pick up on the scent of decay coming from nearby. If the PCs are not sneaking when entering the room, after a few moments they will hear the cries of a young woman coming from the direction of the wall. With a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check, a PC can determine that the cries are fake. These come from the **mimika** trapped in the tunnel.

After succeeding on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check, the PCs discover a swing-away wall based on scuff marks along the flooring. A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals a torch bracket which rotates clockwise, opening up the secret passageway into the tunnel. The door closes by itself 1 minute after being opened and may be pulled open from the tunnel side by twisting a handle on the opposite side of the wall. They can also attempt a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** check to force open the wall. Doing so breaks the mechanism meaning the door no longer closes by itself.

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**WOLF HEAD**

The PCs can search the wolf’s head, easily finding a small metal lockbox inside with a padlock (DC 15). Inside the lockbox is a set of gemstones worth 35 gp, a potion of healing, and Gisel Romero’s journal (see Side Quest: Avenging Felicitus).

**W11. SECRET TUNNEL**

*A gloomy, stone passageway expands out into darkness. The smell of decay is rife in the air.*

Leading off from W10. *Hidden Room* is a secret passageway connecting to the Bloodpits of **Quor’s Crucible** (Q26).

<sup>cw</sup> The first section of this passageway is 5 feet wide and 20 feet long. Halfway down this passageway are two bodies slumped against the wall. These are the remains of the two missing Brivane pirates, **Alyssia Vinto Licena** and **Lucinus Fernesti Primus** (see Side Quest: Missing Pirates). They appear to have been shredded badly. If a PC gets within 5 feet of the bodies, they begin to move and shamble to their feet.

**Encounter: Bloodrot Zombies**

**Enemies.** 2x Bloodrot Zombie  
**CR.** 1

**Introduction**

These pirates discovered the secret tunnel a few weeks ago and fell afoul of the mimika’s trap. They were able to escape into the narrower tunnel but died from their injuries before reaching the exit, succumbing to blood rot.

**Tactics**

The zombies will blindly attack the nearest enemy with no concept of self preservation.

**Loot**

The zombies each have a Brivane Pirate brooch, a gladius, a net, a shortbow, leather armour, and 10 (4d4) silver pieces.

A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that both pirates are infected with *blood rot* and likely died from their wounds. If the PCs become infected by blood rot, it is a ticking clock until they die from the disease.

The second section of the passageway opens up into a 20 feet wide and 40 feet long chamber:

*The scent of decay grows stronger. A dark chamber opens up, revealing half a dozen torn bodies slumped to the sides, barely resembling their original forms. Dozens of old amphorae are stacked against the walls, many of which have been smashed. A shimmering, heavy iron door is built into the wall at the far side.*

This section is guarded by a **mimika** at all hours of the day — one of Estio’s minions — who attempts to lure potential victims into the tunnel to sate its unending hunger. This is the same mimika which ripped a hole in the wall upstairs after Estio temporarily let it out as a show of power over the *sanguesti* in the warehouse. Fighting the mimika spells certain death for the PCs at this point, though thankfully it cannot leave the tunnel due to its size. However, it will attempt to spit poison at the PCs should it see them.

**Encounter: Secret Tunnel**

**Enemies.** 1x Mimika  
**CR.** 5

**Introduction**

The PCs discover a secret tunnel deep within the cellar of the warehouse. Cries of help can be heard echoing from within. A **mimika** has been locked here as punishment for destroying part of the warehouse above. Its teeth have been removed as part of this punishment, meaning that it cannot eat what it kills until they have fully regrown.

**Tactics**

The **mimika** attempts to lure in the PCs with mimicked cries of a human begging for help. The lesser vampire clings to the ceiling out of sight of the entryway and pounces upon the first creature to step into the centre of the chamber. Creatures who have a **14 Passive Perception** or higher will notice the **mimika** clinging above the doorway as they enter.

The **mimika** attacks wildly at the nearest creature, attempting to kill them so that it can devour their body. This **mimika** is starved (more so than the usual mimika) and hence attacks with disadvantage. The mimika keeps attacking a creature, even if it has fallen unconscious. If the **mimika** cannot reach a creature, it will spit poison at it. If the **mimika** is unable to attack any creature at all, it will climb onto the ceiling out of sight, ready to pounce should another creature enter into the room.

**Ending the Encounter**

The **mimika** will fight to the death. The PCs have little hope of defeating the **mimika** at this point in time. Their best bet is to retreat from the room, though if they do choose to fight it, using ranged weapons and spells is the better option here.

A reinforced iron door sits at the end of this section, which is barricaded from the other side and warded against magical means of passage, such as ethereal travel or ember shadow gliding. The door has an AC of 19 and 28 hit points, with immunity to all forms of damage apart from bludgeoning and fire, which it has resistance to. This door blocks passage





through to the rest of the tunnel unless opened from the other side by Ambrose Popularis (see Minor NPCs). The Vampiric Order does not wish for intruders into their private sanctums and this door is a means to prevent such events occurring.

A number of crushed skeletal piles can be found within the room as well. These are gladiators who were fed to the mimika by Ambrose after failing to impress in the arena. One body has a set of scale mail and a shield, one has a set of torn studded leather, and another has an ornate, silver *Quickstrike Dagger* (see Appendix D: Items) attached to their belt.

## WRAPPING THE ADVENTURE

After clearing out the warehouse, the PCs may meet Marius in the evening following the burning of the warehouse to collect their reward. They will not head onto *The Crooked Rowan* but meet on the pier, indicating that Raela is safer now thanks to the PCs and their help. Xel will hug Marius as thanks for having him rescued, if he survived. If the PCs did not hand Marius Gisel's journal, Marius will assure the PCs that, if they wish for more work, he can be in touch in the future. He will then head off with Xel in tow, leaving the PCs to their own devices, but not before handing them a scroll: a paid journey back to the mainland in a private rapida. The travel ban within the Deveros Bay has been lifted and the party is free to head back to the mainland.

If the PCs have not yet reached 3rd Level by the end of the adventure, they should now be levelled to 3rd Level.

**But Wait...** If you wish to run the next adventure, found in the full publication of Deveros, *The Amethyst Crown*, then you might wish to run one final encounter to set up for when the party rejoins Deveros. Otherwise, you may end the adventure here.

### Encounter: You're Not Getting Away That Easily

**Enemies.** 1x Krell Noxen, 4x Mimika, 4x Sanguesta Wretches

**CR.** 21

#### Introduction

As the PCs head back into Raela, there is a chill in the air. They feel like they are being watched. As they turn down a side alley, they find the tall figure of **Krell Noxen** blocking their path, flanked by two **mimika** and four **Sanguesta wretches**. Two **mimika** swirl from the shadows behind them, trapping them. **Krell** informs the PCs that their meddling has not gone unnoticed and that they have a great debt to pay to the Vampiric Order for their actions at the warehouse. He gives them the option to come quietly or to come painfully.

#### Tactics

If they choose to come quietly, the sanguesti lock the PCs in *deadweight manacles*, which prevent the use of both embers and spells. If the PCs choose to fight, **Krell** swoops in to knock the PCs unconscious alongside the mimika. **Krell** does not take any nonsense and will not hesitate to reveal his true form, using his Manifest Fear ability to frighten the PCs. He holds back from killing them, though only because he has been ordered to bring them in alive.

#### Ending the Encounter

The PCs will be taken off to Quor's Crucible for the start of the next adventure. If a PC manages to escape, consider having sanguesti or even **Krell** himself hunt them down to bring them in.

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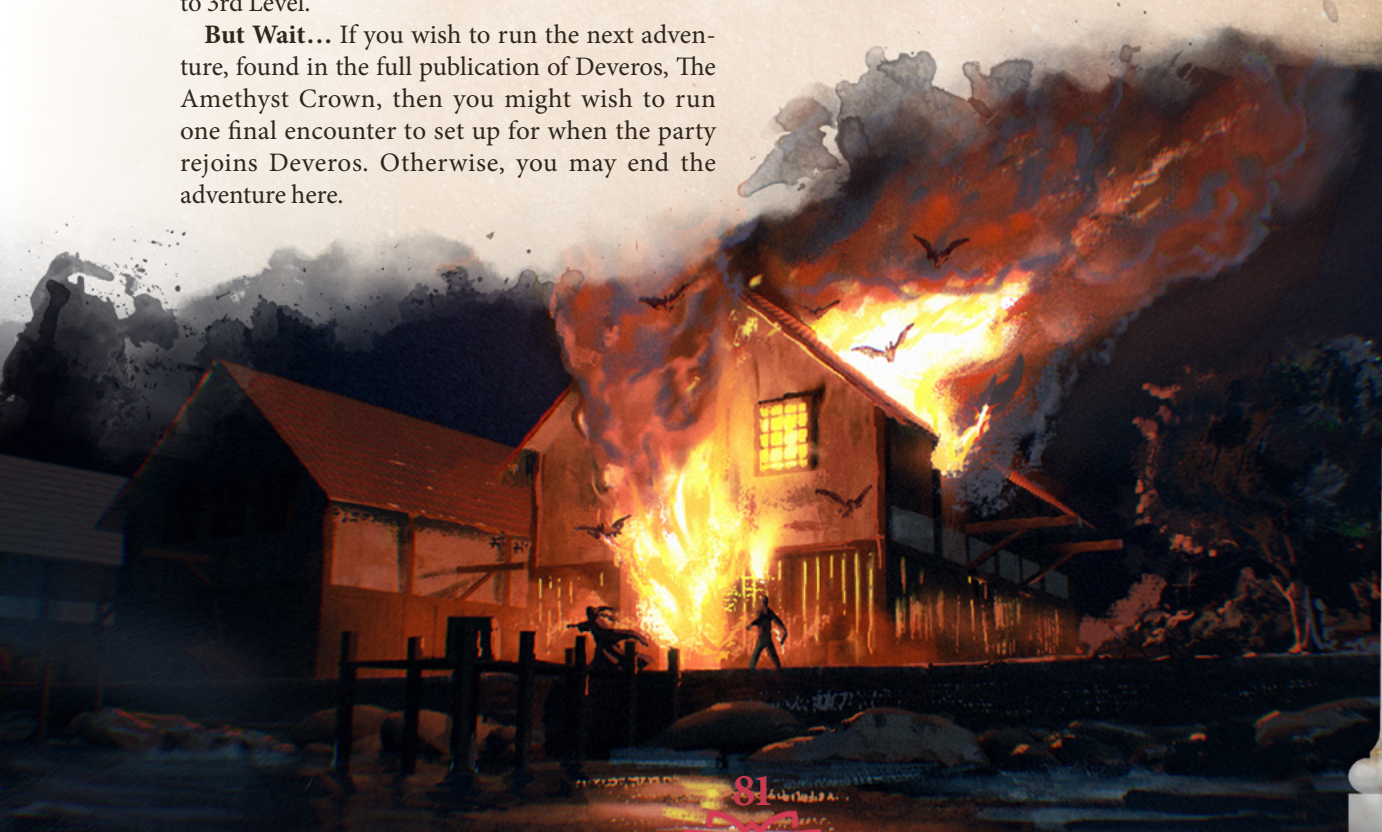
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## APPENDIX A — SIDE QUESTS

### SIDE QUEST: AVENGING FELICITUS

**Prerequisites.** Get Marius to open up around his disdain for Hobek Fraus and the Brivane Pirates. The PCs might miss this first interaction and discover Gisel's journal later on during the adventure, allowing them to hand it in to Marius and attain the reward of his gladius.

#### INTRODUCTION

Marius will reveal that their close friend, **Icilla Lucina Felicitus** (NG she/her Aldarin dead) was killed on Hobek's orders and that he wishes for revenge against them for her death. He does not know why she was killed, only that it was on Hobek's command. Marius wishes for the PCs to uncover why Felicitus was killed, if they have time, and can unearth information from the involved parties.

**CW GM Information.** Felicitus worked for the Umbra Syndicate as an informant. She was imprisoned by Sanguesta after deliberately providing wrongful information around the identity of a saboteur who sunk two of their ships. This saboteur was in fact Marius. This bad information was given to protect Marius, who Felicitus knew would be targeted by Sanguesta should they find out about his involvement.

#### GATHERING INFORMATION

There are a number of sources the PCs can tap into to find out about Felicitus' death.

**Hobek Fraus.** Hobek allegedly issued the order for Felicitus to be sold off to Sanguesta. The PCs may pry into the topic when they meet Hobek, who remains tight lipped around the situation. Hobek will open up about Felicitus if the PCs complete their side quest (see Side Quest: Missing Pirates). Once the PCs have completed this quest, they learn that Hobek had nothing to do with Felicitus' handover and does not know why she was killed. It was all Cassia and Sanguesta's doing. Hobek will tell the PCs that **Gisel Romero** (see Minor NPCs), the old foreman of the warehouse, attempted to get Felicitus out of the holding cell but was caught by a Sanguesta guard and promptly executed by Cassia.

**Gisel's Journal.** The PCs may stumble onto a lockbox in *W10. Hidden Room* of the warehouse which belonged to Gisel, the old warehouse foreman. Inside is Gisel's private journal. This journal details

her increasing frustration with Sanguesta's takeover of her warehouse. She'll mention that Felicitus was brought in for lying to Sanguesta. They now intend to give her over to Publius Siccia Estio as a thrall. Gisel was able to talk to Felicitus before she was dragged off to serve Estio, and discover why she was captured (see GM Information above). If the PCs give the journal to Marius, it will send him into a spiral of depression, blaming himself for the death of Felicitus.

#### OUTCOME

If the PCs give Marius the journal, he will disappear for several days into a spiral of drink and depression, before eventually resurfacing to request the PCs' help in freeing Felicitus from Estio's grasp. If the PCs relied on Marius to save the dhampir smugglers (see Side Quest: Desha Wars), this pushes him deeper into questioning his purpose with the Umbra Syndicate, causing him to leave the Syndicate entirely. This limits the information Marius has access to and makes him more of a loose cannon later down the line.

#### REWARDS

**XP.** Award the PCs 50 XP each for completing this side quest.

**Gold.** Marius harbours a seething hatred for the Brivane Pirates and will offer 5 gold for each Brivane Pirate brooch given to him, showing that a pirate has been killed at the hands of the PCs. These brooches are worn by all Brivane Pirates. The PCs don't necessarily have to kill the pirates to attain the brooches, they can just knock them out, but Marius would infer that he wishes for them to be slain.

**Maiming Gladius.** As an extra reward to sweeten the deal, if the PCs bring Marius the journal of Gisel Romero, he will reward them with a silvered *Maiming Gladius* (see Appendix D: Items) engraved with dancing boars along the blade — his own sword. This journal contains information that Marius needs to know surrounding the death of Felicitus.

### SIDE QUEST: DESHA WARS

**Prerequisites.** The PCs should have spoken with **Remi "The Emperor" Killgrin at Saltwash** (Q20) and made a good first impression. If the PCs find the Sanguesta smugglers on their own, skip to the Protection section of this side quest.



## INTRODUCTION

<sup>CW</sup> Remi seeks to capitalise on the desha imports coming into Raela. Sanguesta is stepping on his toes and the Brivane Pirates are helping Sanguesta, so both are seen as enemies in Remi's eyes. Some Sanguesta workers at the warehouse have set up a new desha smuggling operation and are undercutting his prices, both on the streets and within Quor's Crucible. Remi wants the PCs to track down the smugglers, eliminate them, and bring him their stock of desha. Remi will raise his voice when saying this as he looks to his guards, emphasising their failure in finding the whereabouts of this stock so far, as he knows it is not in the warehouse.

Remi will also state that the smugglers have killed a number of fishers to stop them leaking information about their location. This is a lie told to Remi by his gang when they had nothing else to give him from their investigation. Remi believes their lie and now sees the smugglers as deadly threats to the local fishing community. In reality, the smugglers themselves are harmless and are seeking to escape the clutches of Cassia and Estio. The PCs could side with the smugglers and help seek to attain protection for them.

## TRACKING THE DESHA SMUGGLERS

**Disloyal Minion.** Finding the Sanguesta desha smugglers can lead the PCs down a number of routes. Between the hours of 6 p.m. and 4 a.m., there is a 25 percent chance the PCs might run into a Sanguesta minion on the street selling desha. The PCs can interrogate this minion with a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation)** check to reveal the location of the Wooded Hangout.

**Street Knowledge.** The PCs can hear about the Wooded Hangout while listening out for rumours of the street.

**Taberna Insight.** A number of taberna owners may be willing to point the PCs in the direction of the Wooded Hangout if bribed with some gold.

**Tailing.** The PCs can tail the three Sanguesta smugglers from the warehouse to the Wooded Hangout following the dawn exchange of hands of the warehouse. There is a 50 percent chance the smugglers will head to the Wooded Hangout for an hour after their shift. The smugglers have a combined **11 Passive Perception** to notice they are being followed.

Once the PCs have found the Sanguesta smugglers in the Wooded Hangout, they can open up a dialogue with them around the desha shipments and the warehouse. This will eventually lead to the dhampir asking for protection from Estio (see Wooded Hangout).

## PROTECTION

There are a handful of NPCs who would be able to offer the dhampir smugglers protection. The PCs will gain varying benefits from approaching different NPCs around the problem. Some NPCs might offer better rewards or be easier to convince, but also have downsides attached to working with them.

### MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

Listed below are the most likely places the PCs might find protection, though there are many more people on Cruorse Isle who would be willing to help for a price.

For example, the PCs might be able to convince the dhampir to hand over their Sanguesta pendants, which they can hand to Remi and pretend they have dealt with the problem. They could then find another form of protection without worrying that Remi would confirm the deaths and potentially go after them.

**Remi.** If the PCs are working for Remi, they can chat with him and try to convince him to protect the dhampir smugglers. Remi is tough to win over as he sees these smugglers as enemies. He responds well to ideals of gold and control over desha supplies, but reacts poorly to any form of intimidation. Remi also sees this as a chance to gain control over the northern docks, stealing it away from the Brivane Pirates. With increased income, Remi can protect more fishers and open up the waters around Raela for free fishing outside of the Brivane Pirate tax.

If the PCs successfully convince Remi, he will agree to join forces with the dhampir as long as they agree to become part of his gang and to work for him. In this case, the PCs gain advantage on any Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the dhampir to help them infiltrate the warehouse.

If the PCs are unconvincing, Remi will demand for the dhampirs' heads to roll and tell the PCs to kill them. In this instance, if the PCs do not secure any other form of protection for the dhampir and mention the Wooded Hangout to Remi, he will send his thugs to find and burn the hangout and to kill the dhampir.

If Remi finds out the PCs contacted any of the other major NPCs for protection, he will fly into a rage and become convinced that the PCs are working with the Sanguesta smugglers to backstab him. There is a 50 percent chance Remi finds out through word of mouth, which reduces to a 25 percent chance if the PCs convinced Remi they had killed the smugglers. This will prevent the PCs from turning in any more Sanguesta pendants to Remi for gold and will cause Remi to send a group of thugs after the PCs to get rid of them that night. Before the thugs are sent after

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them, PCs with a **13 Passive Perception** can pick up chatter on the street that Remi is after their throats. If they are able to talk to Remi before the thugs attack them, they can attempt to make him see reason. If they succeed, this reopens his rewards for turning in Sanguesta pendants. If they fail, Remi deals with them himself.

#### Encounter: Remi's Thugs

**Enemies.** 2x Street Thug, 4x Minion [Street Thug]

**CR.** 2

#### Introduction

If the PCs go with a different NPC for protection over the Sanguesta smugglers and Remi finds out, they will find themselves awoken in the early hours of the morning by Emperor's Lot thugs who have smashed down the door to their room.

#### Tactics

The thugs plan to take the PCs by surprise in their beds. These thugs will open combat by smashing down the bedroom door while shouting "This is what ye get for backstabbin' The Emperor." They will then fan out into the room and attack the PCs with a mind to kill them.

#### Ending the Encounter

These thugs will not fight to the death. A thug on less than half health will attempt to flee out of the door. If the PCs either knock out or kill more than three, the remaining thugs will surrender. They don't need much convincing to explain that Remi thought the PCs had betrayed him and sent them to get rid of the traitors.

#### Loot

The thugs each have 7 (3d4) silver pieces, a truncheon, a sling, a pack of rations, and leather armour.

**Hobek.** While Hobek is hesitant to hire ex-Sanguesta into their pirate crew, they will not turn down the benefit of snatching Sanguesta's desha smuggling ring from under their noses and the nose of Emperor's Lot. This gives the Brivane Pirates a chance to clamp down on those using Emperor's Lot as protection for fishing and leverage the absence of Remi's gang to enact heavier tax onto the fishing trade coming into Raela. Hobek will agree to protect the dhampir if they hand over their desha supply to the Brivane Pirates, which will then be burnt. The dhampir will be reluctant to hand over their entire stock, especially if they are told that it is to be destroyed, but may be convinced or intimidated by the PCs into doing so. If the PCs successfully secure Hobek's protection, they gain advantage on any Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the dhampir to help them infiltrate the warehouse and Hobek gives them a total of 30 gp as thanks for tracking down the smugglers.

**Marius.** The PCs may leave a message for Marius asking if he would help the dhampir. Marius agrees to help them escape from Estio's grasp on the condition that the dhampir assist the PCs with the infiltration. He also assures that they can continue to import their desha supply into Raela, though will need to lay low elsewhere for a while. In this case, the PCs do not need to succeed the Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince the dhampir to help with the warehouse infiltration. Unknown to the PCs, however, is that the Umbra Syndicate intends to kill off the dhampir after the job is done as the Syndicate does not like leaving loose threads. CW

**Agrippa.** Agrippa cannot directly offer the dhampir protection but can offer to transport them to the mainland once the waters are cleared for travel again. She will ask for 15 gp for each of the dhampir to make it worth her while. The dhampir will begrudgingly accept this offer and hand the PCs the gold to pay for the transport.

## OUTCOME

Depending on who the PCs went to for protection, different outcomes can occur. If no protection was found or if the dhampir were killed, then the outcome of Remi's ending takes place.

**Remi.** Remi regains control of the desha trade on Cruorse Isle. Over the next few weeks, the PCs will see more desha addicts on the streets and will find that Emperor's Lot has gained control from the Brivane Pirates around the northern and western docks. More of Remi's thugs patrol around the north-western side of Raela and may help the PCs in combat. While there are more addicts, the general populace seems calmer and restrictions on fishing in the local areas have relaxed, allowing more profit to flow through the Raela markets. The dhampir smugglers, if alive, may be found wearing the purple tunics of Remi's gang and helping shift cargo at the docks. They are thankful to be free from Sanguesta's immediate grasp with Remi protecting them.

**Hobek.** The PCs will find fewer desha addicts on the streets in the weeks following the event. There will be fewer thugs from Emperor's Lot around the streets as Remi struggles to keep a hold on the dwindling desha imports. The Brivane Pirates will maintain control over the western docks and take control of the northern docks from Sanguesta and Emperor's Lot. In the wake of the tightened control, fewer fishers than ever are heading out into the local areas as the Brivane Pirates clamp down on those fishing without an agreement with themselves, essentially turning into the same organisation they swore to protect the fishers from. The dhampir smugglers, if alive, can be found working in Nos



Nox as bar staff and are enjoying the work a lot more than the warehouse.

<sup>cw</sup> **Marius.** After the warehouse burns, Marius will pass on to the PCs that the dhampir smugglers left southwards to a fishing village called Rumelia, about 12 miles south of Deveros. Marius believes this to be true and does not know of his higher up's plan to kill the dhampir. The dhampirs' bodies will be found dumped in barrels, which eventually wash up along the southern shore of Cruorse Isle 2d4 days following the warehouse infiltration. The news of bodies being found quickly spreads through Raela and the PCs might be able to piece the information together. If the PCs find out about the bodies and apprehend Marius, he will grow concerned and promise the PCs he will look into it, though will be told to stop asking questions by his nestwarden.

**Agrippa.** The dhampir will be taken to Deveros in the days following the lifting of the travel ban. Agrippa will pass on information that they have left eastwards to the city of Briveka to take up work in the marble quarries.

**Other.** If any other form of protection is found, the dhampir will make it to the mainland and leave to Briveka, as with Agrippa's ending. The PCs, however, will not find out about this unless they actively search for what happened.

## REWARDS

**XP.** Award the PCs 50XP each for completing this side quest.

**Gold.** Remi will pay the PCs 3 gp for each dose of desha recovered, though can be convinced to pay up to 4 gp. He will give the party a bag of gemstones worth 30 gp if they tell him the location of where the Sanguesta smugglers are hiding their stock. He will also pay them 10 gp for each Sanguesta pendant returned to him as proof of killing their members.

**Support.** In the next adventure, the PCs find themselves captured and taken to Quor's Crucible to fight for Estio's amusement. If the PCs sided with Remi, they will be able to gain the help of his contacts while within the arena.

## SIDE QUEST: MISSING PIRATES

**Prerequisites.** Gained access to the upper floor of **Nos Nox** (Q17) and spoke with Hobek Fraus about plans to oust Sanguesta.

## INTRODUCTION

Two of Hobek's pirates, **Alyssia Vinto Licena** (NG she/her Aldarin dead) and **Lucinus Fernesti Primus** (CN he/they Aldarin dead), went missing a few days ago after working a shift in the warehouse. Nobody has seen or heard from them since. Hobek wishes for the PCs to investigate what happened to the pirates and to return with information, the pirates, or their bodies. They will also give the PCs a stamped and sealed letter to hand to **Tulius Agravo Remus** (see Minor NPCs), the new foreman of the warehouse, allowing them permission to search during the day. Remus will be unhappy about letting the PCs snoop around but will let them inside the warehouse. After this letter has been handed to Remus, the Brivane Pirates around the warehouse will be non-hostile to the PCs for the time they are investigating and may offer up information on the two missing pirates.

## FINDING THE PIRATES

**Talking with the Pirates.** After gaining access to the warehouse during the day, the PCs can chat with Remus and the other pirates. They discover that the two pirates went missing on the 11th of Summer's Crest after going on a patrol together, which led them around the warehouse and through the cellar area. The two were known to have an amorous relationship and had often been caught by Remus sneaking off mid-patrol.

**Death Tunnel.** The two pirates can be found turned into **bloodrot zombies** in *W10. Secret Tunnel*, slain by a **mimika**. <sup>cw</sup>

## OUTCOME

If the PCs inform Hobek of the outcome of the missing pirates, they will be met with sincere sorrow by Hobek, who will thank them deeply for their service. Hobek will ask for directions to the tunnel and order some of their crew to extract the bodies later that day for a proper burial. If the PCs do not inform Hobek of the blood rot, or simply do not know about it, then a number of Brivane pirates contract the disease following extraction of the bodies. Reduce the number of Brivane pirates patrolling the warehouse by **1d4**, which may lead to reduced numbers on patrols.

## REWARDS

**XP.** Award the PCs 50 XP each for completing this side quest.

**Gold.** Hobek will pay the PCs 20 gp for discovering what happened to the pirates plus a pouch of *Dust of Sneezing and Choking*. If the PCs were somehow able to recover the bodies from the mimika, Hobek will pay them an additional 20 gp.

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**Information.** If asked, Hobek will now trust the PCs enough to open up around the circumstances around the death of **Icilla Lucina Felicitus** (see Side Quest: Avenging Felicitus).

**Reputation.** Whenever the PCs encounter any Brivane pirates, they will get a nod of respect. If they are in a taberna in Raela with Brivane pirates around, their first round of drinks will be bought for them.

**Support.** Additionally, in the next adventure, the PCs find themselves captured and taken to Quor's Crucible to fight for Estio's amusement. While Hobek is unable to free the PCs from the arena, they can provide them support in the ways of smuggled supplies.

## SIDE QUEST: THE ASHEN WOMAN

**Prerequisites.** None.

### INTRODUCTION

The Ashen Woman is an age-old urban myth of Cruorse Isle, which may be heard about from Alba at the Ragged Sturgeon, the Rumours table, or within any of the local tabernae:

*"Centuries ago, as the Age of Disparity tore asunder the fabric of the Compass, demigods rose to defend the Medial Plane. One such demigod was Yinsel, the Demigod of Barter. She fought valiantly but was eventually slain by Inislet, the Blackened Flame of the Inner Fire Plane. Yinsel's soul was corrupted by Inislet's blade and cursed to forever walk the place of her demise: Cruorse Isle. On nights when the Ethereal Plane's borders are thinnest, Yinsel's ashen form can be seen dragging her blade behind her, a gaping hole of searing, black fire upon her chest. Those brave enough to barter with the deceased demigod may place an item into the hole and make payment of blood. In exchange, they may receive gifts from lands unknown. Beware, though, not to anger The Ashen Woman with your offerings, lest she smite your soul with the Blackened Flame's Curse."*

If the PCs hear about The Ashen Woman but are not told the tale, a PC can perform a **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** check to recall the story from previous tellings.

There is a 5 percent chance that, if the PCs are walking around Cruorse Isle after the sun has gone down, they will encounter The Ashen Woman. Only roll this check once per night. The PCs can also summon The Ashen Woman by burying a silver piece within the sands of Raela's shores at dusk, though they may only do so once per month.

## THE ASHEN WOMAN

The Ashen Woman appears as a gaunt, almost skeletal figure standing 8 feet tall. Behind her she drags her longsword, which is chipped and singed with ash. Her eyes are hollow, her face expressionless. A skull-sized hole adorns her chest, burnt through with blackened fire. Beyond the hole is an inky expanse which glimmers slightly with starlight. She does not talk, nor does she acknowledge the presence of those around her. She shambles for a few minutes around Raela each night, treading through the streets, before disappearing in a fading shadow of dark flame. If The Ashen Woman is attacked, targeted by a spell, or otherwise threatened, the instigating creature must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. Additionally, if the creature fails its save, it becomes afflicted with the Blackened Flame's Curse. After this effect has triggered, The Ashen Woman then fades into the night, unaffected by the initial action.

If a PC reaches into her chest and places an item within, they will feel their arm gripped by clammy, scalding hands. These hands sear at the skin as it tears the object from their grasp. The PC takes 2 (1d4) fire damage. Depending on the item offered, the PC will feel another item placed into their palm. Look at what has been offered and roll a random item from the Barter Table below from the relevant reward row. If a PC barter more than once with The Ashen Woman, there is a 50 percent chance they will receive the Blackened Flame's Curse. Creatures with the Blackened Flame's Curse find the hole resisting them should they attempt to place another item within it.

Feel free to come up with your own items that The Ashen Woman might give. The rewards should be unusual and slightly eerie.

### ASHEN WOMAN REWARDS

| Item Offered | Potential Rewards (d4)  |
|--------------|---|
| Weapon       | (1) The same weapon wreathed in black fire, dealing an additional 1d2 fire damage on a hit. (2) A charred dragon claw with nails driven through it, which acts as a dagger, dealing an additional 1d2 necrotic damage on a hit. (3) A barbed arrow with a curled finger wrapped around it. The finger clings to the target creature it hits, dealing 1d2 necrotic damage at the start of the creature's turn until it is removed (DC 12 Strength check). The finger can be recovered. (4) A tarnished shield with claw marks dragged down it. When a creature successfully blocks a melee weapon attack with the shield, they may use their reaction to deal 1d2 fire damage to the attacker. |



## ASHEN WOMAN REWARDS

**Food or Drink** (1) A dried clump of dragon meat. (2) Three black rose petals. A petal may be eaten to remove one point of exhaustion. (3) A loaf of stale bread. Whispers of lost souls can be heard speaking from within. If broken, the whispers stop. (4) 1d4 flesh-like grapes. Eating a grape allows one to see into the Ethereal Plane for 1 minute.

**Mundane Object or Coins** (1) A torn fragment of elven cloth which perpetually burns with a dark, black flame. (2) 2d4 pickled eyes of random creatures. The eyes always look towards those whose current hit point total is the greatest that they can see. (3) A clump of rock from an ancient ruin. Twisting serpents move along the surface. (4) Blackened Flame's Curse.

**Magical Object or Armour** (1) A crystal containing the soul of a cursed king of ash. If a creature smashes the crystal, each creature within 20 feet must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d8 fire damage, or half as much on a successful save. (2) The horn of a tiefling, hollowed and filled with blood-soaked sand. The sand may be thrown into the air and glimmers crimson in the presence of illusion magic. There are four handfuls of sand within the horn. (3) A pot filled with pearly white ash, which may be poured on a non-magical lock to immediately open it. The ash is consumed in the process. (4) A brand of a crossed circle on the back of the PC's hand. The brand burns with a dark flame in the presence of a demigod.

**cw Living Creature** (1) A rat with red, flaming eyes. The rat does not eat and simply stares at the creature it was gifted to. (2) A blackened serpent with barbed scales. If the serpent is ever taken from the creature it was gifted to, it appears again on their shoulder, shedding its skin in the process. (3) 1d4 tiny crimson tarantulas with sixteen legs. These tarantulas follow the creature they were gifted to loyally, bringing them dead insects each morning as offerings. (4) The same creature, but dead.

**Other or Nothing** Blackened Flame's Curse.

**Blackened Flame's Curse.** After the affected creature finishes a rest, it immediately takes fire damage equal to its character level. This curse can be removed with a *remove curse* spell.

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## APPENDIX B — BATHING AND BLESSINGS

### BLESSINGS

The gods may choose to bestow blessings upon the PCs should offerings be made unto them. Offerings must be made at a shrine or temple dedicated to that deity, though making an offering does not guarantee a blessing. A particularly snooty deity, whose history with a PC is somewhat troubled, might choose to ignore an offering unless it is something worthy enough to catch their attention. Conversely, a minor deity who wants to become more widely worshipped might freely award blessings to those who pay them even the slightest tribute. If a PC goes against the mantras of a deity's cult, that deity might see fit to revoke a blessing previously gifted to that PC regardless of the offering made.

**Minor.** Minor blessings typically last for 24 hours and often require some form of minor monetary tribute alongside items of interest to the deity. It is up to the GM to decide what amount of coinage is deemed reasonable by the deity, but somewhere between 25 and 200 gold pieces is a good starting point.

**Major.** Major blessings typically last for a month or more, offering either repeated access to minor blessings or some immense power. Major blessings must be administered by a pontifex or sovigal maximus of the relevant deity due to their potent nature. These blessings also require a substantially larger offering compared to the minor blessings, including a hefty monetary tribute which can range anywhere from 1,000 gold to upwards of 5,000 gold. Again, the amount of coinage needed to reach these blessings varies on both the deity and GM discretion.

### BLESSINGS PREVIEW

#### QUOR THE GOD OF LOVE, PASSION, AND WAR



*"For if we are to not have courage, then who is? Stand tall, stand proud, and fight for what you believe in."*

**Alignment:** CN, CG, CE, TN

**Pronouns:** They/Them [NB, GF]

**Symbol:** A peacock feather

**Other Names:** The Bladesheen, Blooddrinker, The Heart of Creation, Our Embracer

**Offerings:** Blood, weapons, flowers

**Worshipped By:** Warriors, courtesans, vampires, lovers

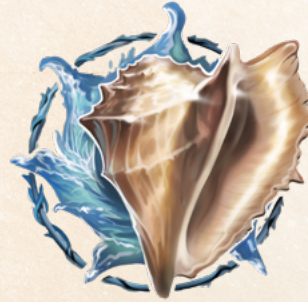
#### Quor's Augmenting Blessing, Minor

**Requirement:** Small offering of monetary worth and a half a quart of fresh blood of a sentient creature.

Your eyes turn red as your blood vessels pulsate, and your body prepares for battle. For the next 24 hours, when you make an attack roll you gain advantage on your roll. You retain this blessing until the 24 hours are over or until you make a successful roll using this blessing.

This blessing may be attained during Late Shipments at the **Shrine of Quor** (Q27).

#### RAEL THE GODDESS OF SEAS, OCEANS, AND STORMS



*"Those who venture with reckless abandon into my domain shall greet Kistra from the depths of the ocean."*

**Alignment:** CN, CG, CE

**Pronouns:** She/Her

**Symbol:** A conch shell

**Other Names:** Stormbringer, Call of The Sea, Thunderqueen

**Offerings:** Sea shells, sail cloth, maps, ships, gold.

**Worshipped By:** Sailors, shipwrights, sea fishers, pirates

#### Rael's Stormbringer Blessing, Minor

**Requirement:** Small offering of monetary worth and a handful of sea shells.

Your skin crackles with static energy as you feel empowered with the rage of a brewing storm. For the next 24 hours, when you succeed an attack roll the weapon deals an additional 1d4 lightning damage.

This blessing may be attained during Late Shipments at the **Lowshrine** (Q5).







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## BATHING

Bathing is a popular way that Aldarins choose to relax, heading to heated baths to soak their muscles after a long day. Aldarins keep themselves clean, with most electing to bathe daily.

### THERMAE REST

A *thermae rest* is a form of short rest that lasts between 1 and 4 hours, during which a character spends time relaxing in a bathhouse. The character gains the benefits of a short rest after 1 hour plus additional hit dice, called *Thermae Dice*. *Thermae Dice* are rolled at the end of both their first and fourth hours of rest. The number of *Thermae Dice* rolled are determined by one's dedication to **Sulia, God of Bathing** during the *thermae rest*. By making an offering of gold and bath oil to this shrine, one may attain additional healing from the baths while taking a *thermae rest*, called a *Blessing of Sulia* (see *Offering to Sulia* below). The quantity of *Thermae Dice* rolled during a *thermae rest* is determined by how generous the offering made to Sulia is (see *Table: Blessings of Sulia*).

If the character leaves the *thermae* at any point, the rest ends. If the character receives benefits at the end of a short rest, they may instead choose to gain them either at the end of the first or fourth hour of the *thermae rest*.

### THERMAE BOONS

Player characters may receive additional benefits after taking a *thermae rest*, called "*thermae boons*", by using unique consumable items within the baths such as oils and salts during their rest. These items may only be used in a *thermae*. A creature may only benefit from one *thermae boon* per *thermae rest* and may only have a single *thermae boon* active at one time.

### OFFERING TO SULIA

Sulia is the deity who oversees bathing and self cleansing. Bathhouses throughout the Aldarin Empire are dedicated to Sulia in some minor way, typically through the presence of a statuette or mural in a corner of the structure. Offerings are made to these icons.

The quality of a bathhouse determines the maximum blessing which may be granted, regardless of how much gold and oil is offered to Sulia. For example, a decrepit *therma* with dirty bathwater might only grant a diminished blessing of Sulia, while an illustrious, gilded *therma* would allow for much grander blessings to be imparted. A bathhouse can, however, grant all blessings equal to and below its quality level.



**BLESSINGS OF SULIA**

| Therma Quality | Offering Required | Thermae Dice Granted | Rarity of Bathhouse Items Sold |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| No Shrine      | None              | None                 | None                           |
| Derelict       | 1 gp              | 1d4                  | Common                         |
| Basic          | 5 gp              | 2d4                  | Uncommon                       |
| Comfortable    | 20 gp             | 3d4                  | Rare                           |
| Refined        | 50 gp             | 4d4                  | Very Rare                      |
| Luxurious      | 100 gp            | 5d4                  | Legendary                      |

**BATH OILS PREVIEW**

Oils are commonly applied to the body before bathing and scraped off using a strigil. These oils are made of a base of olive oil which may be infused with various ingredients to either bring forth pleasing fragrances or to provide benefits to health. There are numerous types of oils, each providing their own unique effects, with Rymish oil being the most expensive. Application and removal of oil may be performed for 1 hour during a thermae rest, to be done before taking a bath using a strigil. Certain oils will not impart their thermae boons unless a strigil of a specific metal is used.

**BASIC OIL**

**Rarity.** *Common*

A jug of basic olive oil with no added ingredients. Used by the masses as a cheap oil for cleaning themselves.

**Thermae Boon:** None.

**OLIVE BLEND**

**Rarity.** *Common*

A clear yellow-gold oil made of various different olive types.

**Thermae Boon:** You gain 1d4+1 temporary hit points which last for 8 hours.

**BATH SALTS PREVIEW**

A cultural phenomenon brought across from the Kildars, where salt gathered from the shores are crushed with varying substances providing an aromatic blend which may be mixed with bath water. This gives the baths a pleasant fragrance as well as assisting in soothing the muscles. Salts may be added to a bath during a thermae rest with up to four creatures gaining the benefits of the salts after 1 hour spent within the baths.

**LIGHT HERBAL BLEND**

**Rarity.** *Common*

Silky green salts mixed with a handful of gentle medicinal herbs.

**Thermae Boon:** You regain 2d6+2 hit points at the end of your thermae rest.



## APPENDIX C — STAT BLOCKS

### NAMED NPCs

#### JULIANUS FRIVELLO MARIUS / FLAVIUS VI VALENTINO

Medium humanoid (Aldarin), NG

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 44 (8d8 + 8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Wis +3, Cha +4

**Skills** Deception +4, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Aldarin, Thieves' Cant, Umbra Cant, Draconic, Elvish

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Marius deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Marius that isn't incapacitated and Marius doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Nightstrider.** When in dim light or darkness, Marius gains advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Marius attacks twice with their gladius.

**Gladius. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

#### BONUS ACTIONS

**Flutter.** As a bonus action, Marius may either take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Shadow Glide (2/Day) (Ember).** As a bonus action, Marius temporarily enters into the Ethereal Expanse for 3 rounds. While Shadow Gliding, Marius's movement speed is 60 ft. At the start of Marius's turn, he may choose to end Shadow Glide, returning to the Medial Plane on a free space within 30 feet. If no space is available, Marius takes 11 (2d10) force damage and teleports 30 feet in a random direction. This process repeats until Marius dies or until a free space is found. Marius may make a single melee weapon attack against a target creature on either the Ethereal Expanse or Medial Plane while in Shadow Glide. This attack is made with advantage and ends the Shadow Glide ability after the attack is made, regardless of if it hits.

**Xyth's Umbral Strike (2/Day) (Ember).** Marius may use his bonus action to empower his weapon with wispy, obsidian energy. For the next minute, the first time Marius makes a successful melee weapon attack it deals an additional 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 2 (1d4) rounds.

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## CASSIA DE'TINEA (STREET THUG LEADER)

Medium humanoid (dhampir), LE

**Armor Class** 16 (scale mail)  
**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +4  
**Senses** passive Perception 14  
**Languages** Common, Aldarin, Elvish  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Cassia has at least two other allies within 10 feet of her, and the allies are not incapacitated, she gains advantage on her weapon attack rolls.

**Sapping Strikes.** When Cassia deals necrotic damage with a weapon, she regains the amount of damage dealt as hit points.

**Alluring Gaze (1/Day).** Cassia may cast the command spell (Save DC 11).

**Reflexive Retaliation (2/Day) (Ember).** As a reaction to being struck by a melee weapon attack, Cassia may make a single melee attack roll against the attacker. If the attack hits, it deals an additional 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Cassia attacks twice with her rapier or shortbow.

**Sapping Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Vile Lies (Ember).** As an action Cassia may cast vicious mockery (DC 13 Wisdom Save).

**Draining Bite (3/Day).** Cassia makes a melee weapon attack against a creature who is grappled by it or incapacitated. The bite deals 3 (1d6) necrotic damage which Cassia regains as hit points. Additionally, a creature who is conscious when bitten must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or else become frightened of Cassia until the end of their next turn. This ability has no effect on undead and constructs.

## REMI "THE EMPEROR" KILLGRIN

Medium humanoid (hill dwarf), NE

**Armor Class** 16 (chainmail)  
**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +4  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common, Dwarvish  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Remi has at least two other allied street thugs within 10 feet of him, and the allies are not incapacitated, he gains advantage on his weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Remi attacks twice with his greathammer.

**Greathammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, two-handed.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Break A Leg (2/Day) (Ember).** As a bonus action, Remi may imbue his weapon with Loritel's resonating power. For the next minute, when Remi makes a successful melee weapon attack against a creature, the attack deals an additional 5 (2d4) force damage and reduces the creature's movement by 10 feet, which lasts until the start of Remi's next turn. After making a successful melee weapon attack, the ability ends.



## HOBEEK FRAUS (BRIVANE PIRATE LEADER)

*Medium humanoid (Jyrden), NG*

**Armor Class** 17 (chain shirt, shield)  
**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Perception +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 13  
**Languages** Common, Jyrden, Aldarin  
**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Hobek has at least two allies within 10 feet of them, and the allies are not incapacitated, they gain advantage on their weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Hobek attacks twice with their gladius or shortbow.

**Gladius.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Net.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target creature is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free itself or another creature in the net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

**Green Thumb (Ember Charred).** As an action, Hobek may cast druidcraft. When casting the cantrip, they may instead choose to spend an hour accelerating the growth of flora within a 5-foot cube.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Dirty Fighter.** As a bonus action, Hobek can kick up dirt from the ground at a creature within 5 feet of it. The target creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become blinded until the end of their next turn.

**Leeching Ivy (2/Day) (Ember).** As a bonus action, Hobek casts out twisting red vines of ivy onto a creature they can see within 30 feet. The creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage, which Hobek gains as temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for 10 minutes.

## TULIUS AGRAVO REMUS (BRIVANE PIRATE LEADER)

*Medium humanoid (any), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 14 (chain shirt)  
**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Perception +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 13  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Remus has at least two other allied brivane pirates within 10 feet of them, and the allies are not incapacitated, he gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Remus attacks twice with his gladius or shortbow.

**Gladius.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Net.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target creature is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free itself or another creature in the net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Dirty Fighter.** As a bonus action, Remus can kick up dirt from the ground at a creature within 5 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become blinded until the end of their next turn.

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## MAXIMUS PONTUS SULLA (STREET THUG LEADER)

*Medium humanoid (any), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)  
**Hit Points** 20 (3d8 + 6)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +4  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Sulla has at least two other allied street thugs within 10 feet of him, and the allies are not incapacitated, Sulla gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Break A Leg (2/Day) (Ember).** As a bonus action, Sulla may imbue his weapon with Loritel's resonating power. For the next minute, when Sulla makes a successful melee weapon attack against a creature, the attack deals an additional 5 (2d4) force damage and reduces the creature's movement by 10 feet, which lasts until the start of Sulla's next turn. After making a successful melee weapon attack, the ability ends.

## NPC CLASSES

### SAILOR

*Medium humanoid (any), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 11 (none)  
**Hit Points** 8 (2d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Str +3  
**Skills** Athletics +3, Acrobatics +3, Survival +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** any one language (usually Common)  
**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When Sulla has at least two other allied street thugs within 10 feet of him, and the allies are not incapacitated, Sulla gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Gladius.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

**Sailors** are capable of manning rigging, providing guidance in navigation, loading siege weapons, and operating all aspects of a seafaring vessel. Sailors are typically hired as collective crews. The size of the crew depends vastly on the task required, with many crews offering discounts if hired on longer voyages.



## MINIONS

Minions are very low CR humanoids used to form large groups of easy-to-kill creatures. They are little more than your average commoner, with maybe one or two fights under their belt, with a loose understanding of their organisation's tactics in combat. They wear cheap, basic armour and do little damage, though when together can begin to overwhelm an opponent. The minion stat block can be modified with the Minion Ability Table below based on which group, if any, the minion belongs to.

### MINION

*Medium humanoid (any), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 11 (leather)  
**Hit Points** 4 (1d8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Athletics +2, Intimidation +2  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

#### ACTIONS

**Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

#### MINION ABILITY TABLE

| Organisation | Ability  |
|--------------|--|
| Sanguesta    | <b>Wrangler.</b> While the minion is grappling a creature, the creature has disadvantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks to escape the grapple.      |
| Street Thug  | <b>Gang Member.</b> When the minion has an allied street thug leader within 10 feet of them, and the ally is not incapacitated, it gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls. |

## THUGS

### STREET THUG

*Medium humanoid (any), any alignment*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather)  
**Hit Points** 6 (1d8 + 1)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Athletics +4, Intimidation +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 10  
**Languages** Common  
**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Member.** When a street thug has an allied street thug leader within 10 feet of them, and the ally is not incapacitated, it gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

#### ACTIONS

**Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

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## STREET THUG LEADER

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 20 (3d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Intimidation +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Leader.** When a street thug leader has at least two other allied street thugs within 10 feet of them, and the allies are not incapacitated, it gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

**Break A Leg (2/Day) (Ember).** As a bonus action, the street thug leader may imbue its weapon with Loritel's resonating power. For the next minute, when the street thug leader makes a successful melee weapon attack against a creature, the attack deals an additional 5 (2d4) force damage and reduces the creature's movement by 10 feet, which lasts until the start of the street thug leader's next turn. After making a successful melee weapon attack, the ability ends.

### ACTIONS

**Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.



## SANGUESTA WRETCH

Medium humanoid (dhampir), any alignment

CW

**Armor Class** 11 (leather)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS    | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 9 (-1) | 10 (+0) |

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (50 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Alluring Gaze (1/Day).** The wretch may cast the charm person spell (Save DC 10).

### ACTIONS

**Barbed Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands. On a hit, the target creature becomes grappled (Escape DC 11).

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

**Draining Bite (3/Day).** The wretch makes a melee weapon attack against a creature who is grappled by it or incapacitated. The bite deals 3 (1d6) necrotic damage which the wretch regains as hit points. Additionally, a creature who is conscious when bitten must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or else become frightened of the wretch until the end of their next turn. This ability has no effect on undead and constructs.





## SANGUESTA BLOODSEARER

Medium humanoid (dhampir), any alignment

**Armor Class** 16 (scale mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 19 (3d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +5, Religion +5

**Senses** Darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Aldarin

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Alluring Gaze (1/Day).** The bloodsearer may cast the command spell (Save DC 11).

**Boil Blood.** At the start of its turn, the bloodsearer may choose to empower itself with the boiling blood of Quor. If it does so, the bloodsearer takes 5 (2d4) necrotic damage and makes all attack rolls with advantage until the end of its turn. If an attack hits, the attack deals an additional 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

**Spellcasting.** The bloodsearer is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The bloodsearer has the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, hellish rebuke*

2nd level (2 slots): *blindness/deafness, spiritual weapon*

### ACTIONS

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft. or range 20/60ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

**Draining Bite (3/Day).** The bloodsearer makes a melee weapon attack against a creature who is grappled by it or incapacitated. The bite deals 3 (1d6) necrotic damage which the bloodsearer regains as hit points. Additionally, a creature who is conscious whilst struck by the bite must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or else become frightened of the bloodsearer until the end of their next turn. This ability has no effect on undead and constructs.

## BRIVANE PIRATE

Medium humanoid (any), any alignment

**Armor Class** 13 (leather)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Intimidation +3, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Gang Member.** When a pirate has an allied pirate leader within 10 feet of them, and the ally is not incapacitated, it gains advantage on its weapon attack rolls.

### ACTIONS

**Gladius.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Net.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target creature is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free itself or another creature in the net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Dirty Fighter.** As a bonus action, the pirate can kick up dirt from the ground at a creature within 5 feet of it. The target creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become blinded until the end of their next turn.

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## MONSTROSITIES

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### EXHAUSTED DISCTHREADER SPAWN

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 15 (2d10 + 4)

**Speed** swim 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 1 (-5) | 11 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

**Skills** Athletics +4, Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** poison

**Senses** Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Sea Dweller.** The discthreader spawn can only breathe underwater.

#### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing and 1 poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it becomes grappled (escape DC 12) by the discthreader spawn.

**Spin.** The discthreader spawn spins rapidly while grappling a creature, attempting to both disorient it and tear it apart. The grappled creature must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or else take 7 (2d6) piercing damage and become incapacitated until the end of their next turn.



EXHAUSTED DISCTHREADER SPAWN



## SNAP THE PSEUDOGRYPHON

*Small monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 9 (2d6 + 2)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 6 (-2) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 2 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 13 (+1) |

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Keen Sight.** Snap has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Snap makes one beak attack and one claws attack.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.



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## LESSER VAMPIRES

### VESPITAS

*Tiny undead beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 3 (-4) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 2 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 8 (-1) |

**Skills** Perception +3, Survival +3

**Damage Immunities** Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** Blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Lookout.** The vespitas has advantage on hearing-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.

**Tracking Scent.** The vespitas has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track a creature infected with *blood rot*.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the vespitas has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

#### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage. A creature bitten by a vespitas must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else become infected with *blood rot*.



VESPITAS

### KHLYNI

*Medium undead beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8+6)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 3 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 6 (-2) |

**Skills** Perception +3

**Damage Immunities** Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)    **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Tracking Scent.** The khlyni has advantage on scent-based Wisdom (Survival) checks to track a creature infected with *blood rot* and can pick up the scent of *blood rot* within 1 mile after symptoms have developed in an infected creature.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the khlyni has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The khlyni attacks twice with its bite and once with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. A creature bitten by a khlyni must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else become infected with *blood rot*.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.



KHLYNI





MIMIKA

## MIMIKA

Large undead aberration, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 85 (10d10+30)  
**Speed** 40 ft., fly 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 19 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 17 (+3) | 6 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 6 (-2) |

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Dex +6  
**Skills** Athletics +7, Perception +4, Stealth +6  
**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical attacks not made with silvered weapons  
**Damage Immunities** Poison  
**Condition Immunities** Poisoned  
**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14  
**Languages** any languages it spoke in life (single, basic words only)  
**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Tracking Scent.** The mimika has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track a creature infected with *blood rot*.

**Spider Climb.** The mimika can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the mimika has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

**Mimic.** The mimika is able to perfectly replicate the sounds or voice of a creature it has heard. The mimika may only replicate the words or sounds it has heard, it cannot use words it has not heard spoken by the voice it is replicating. A creature may make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to discern the true nature of the sounds made by the mimika.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mimika attacks once with its bite and once with its claws. If the mimika has a target grappled, it may instead replace the bite attack with a drain attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) poison damage. A creature bitten by a mimika must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or else become grappled by the mimika (Escape DC 15). The creature must additionally succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or else become infected with blood rot and become poisoned until the end of their next turn.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Spit.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) poison damage.

**Drain.** The mimika may drain blood from a creature it is currently grappling. The target must succeed a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 15 (4d8) necrotic damage and 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save as well as becoming poisoned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and is not poisoned. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the mimika regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

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## GREATER VAMPIRES

### KRELL NOXEN

*Medium undead (shapechanger) humanoid (any),  
any alignment*

CW

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 136 (16d8+64)  
**Speed** 30 ft. (40 ft. In True Form), climb 30ft.  
(True Form Only).

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 18 (+4) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +8, Wis +6, Cha +6  
**Skills** Deception +6, Insight +6, Perception +6,  
Persuasion +6, Stealth +8  
**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning,  
piercing, and slashing from non-magical  
attacks not made with silvered weapons  
**Condition Immunities** charmed, fatigued,  
exhausted  
**Senses** Blindsight 60 ft. (true form only),  
darkvision 120 ft. (human form only), passive  
Perception 16  
**Languages** the languages it knew in life  
**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

**Shapechanger.** If Krell is not in sunlight, he may use his action to polymorph into a medium cloud of mist, into a vespitas, into his true form or into his human form. The mist still retains the benefits of Krell's abilities, but he can only move. He moves with a fly speed of 60ft, can occupy spaces belonging to others, and fit through small holes. While in vespitas form, he retains his hit point total and mental statistics.

**Regeneration.** Krell regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point remaining and is conscious. If he has taken radiant damage, this ability does not function at the start of Krell's next turn.

**Fear of the Sacred.** Krell takes 13 (2d12) radiant damage for every round spent upon hallowed ground unless permitted entry by the deity governing the hallowed ground.

**Flawed Immortality.** If Krell drops to 0 hit points, he falls unconscious and regains 2 (1d4) hit points each day at sunset until he reaches maximum health, wherein he regains consciousness. Should the body be destroyed, it slowly reforms at its resting place at a rate of 1 hit point per day. If its resting place has been destroyed, it instead reforms at the nearest lunar altar at a rate of 1 hit point per day. Krell may be permanently killed only through the piercing of the heart by another greater vampire, by a deity, or by a *wish* spell.

**Spider Climb.** Krell can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Krell has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** In his true form, Krell attacks once with his bite and three times with his claws. He may replace any of these attacks with a Manifest Fear attack. He otherwise attacks three times with his truncheon.

**Bite (True Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage + 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Krell regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Claws (True Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Truncheon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

**Manifest Fear (True Form Only).** Krell gazes at a creature within 60 feet that he can see, wracking it with terrible pain and psychic terror. The target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and becomes frightened of Krell until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and isn't frightened.

**Charm.** Krell targets one humanoid he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see Krell, it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Krell. The charmed target regards Krell as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Krell's control, it takes Krell's requests or actions in the most favourable way it can, and it is a willing target for Krell's bite attack. Each time Krell or Krell's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Krell is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.



## UNDEAD

### BLOODROT ZOMBIE

Medium undead humanoid (any), any alignment

**Armor Class** 8 (none)

**Hit Points** 15 (2d8 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 13 (+1) | 7 (-2) | 15 (+2) | 3 (-4) | 5 (-3) | 5 (-3) |

**Saving Throws** Wis -1

**Damage Immunities** Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** Passive Perception 7

**Languages** Understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the bloodrot zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the bloodrot zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Blood Rot.** Upon death, the bloodrot zombie explodes in a haze of viscera. All creatures within 10 feet of the bloodrot zombie must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. Bloodrot zombies automatically fail this saving throw. If a creature failed its saving throw, it must succeed an additional DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become infected with *blood rot*.

#### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



KRELL NOXEN

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## APPENDIX D — ITEMS

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### DRUGS

#### DESHA

**Illegal.** *Yes*

**Cost.** *5 gp / dose*

Formed from the sweet pollen of blossoming desha cacti flowers, found deep within the Zhurak-a-Baz desert of Sel’Kildar, desha is a potent hallucinogenic known to induce states of prolonged lethargy and relaxation. The drug is typically inhaled directly or mixed with incense and colourful, crushed petals before being burnt, forming a lingering, effervescent haze to sit within. Varying strengths and colours of desha exist, stemming from both the most common and highly elusive species of the desha cacti.

While perfectly legal within the Kildars, desha is outlawed throughout the Aldarin Empire, slated as an “unassuming drug which encourages self-destructive behaviour” by the Revitalists. In recent years, the empire has contracted The Crimson Daggers mercyrs to combat the ever-lingering presence of the drug, busting numerous Yataal-operated smuggling rings in the process. This perpetual war against the hallucinogenic has caused a steady decline in its presence throughout the empire, though it can still be found should meld with the right social circles.

Creatures inhaling desha must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature gains one point of exhaustion which remains for 1d4 hours. For the duration, the creature bears witness to cavorting hallucinations which morph and twist the world around them. The nature of these hallucinations may be decided by the GM or through a roll on the *Hallucinations Table*. A creature who succeeds their saving throw hallucinates for 1d2 hours but does not gain a point of exhaustion.



DESHA

#### HALLUCINATIONS TABLE

##### d8 Hallucination

- 1 Calming apparitions of natural entities and critters.
- 2 Recollections of significant events in the creature’s life.
- 3 Terrifying visages which stalk the creature around every bend.
- 4 Euphoric colours and vibrant lights which dazzle and amaze.
- 5 Visions of past memories, either truthful or fake, which the creature believes to be true.
- 6 The world swims and sways, nothing stays still for longer than a second.
- 7 Faces... Faces everywhere. Always staring. Always watching.
- 8 A purple pseudogryphon prances around the creature wherever they go.

#### VREKIT

**Illegal.** *No*

**Cost.** *3sp / dose*

The earthy taste of the roots of the vrekit’nh ash tree, which grows within the dense, snow-blighted forests of Jykstrav’s Frökelande, is one largely enjoyed by Jyrden and wood elves alike. The gum-like texture combined with the pleasurable kick of energy following the chewing of vrekit makes it a popular drug amongst labourers, especially so due to the relative ease of acquiring the substance in Aldarin’s open markets. Small pots of vrekit are served after meals at Jyrden-run establishments, a common palette cleanser after a hearty feast to be rubbed along the gums. The umber remnants of the chewed root can be found littering the side-alleys of almost all major settlements, spat out by uncaring enjoyers of the drug.

For 1 hour after chewing vrekit, the user gains a +1 to Constitution saving throws to resist exhaustion from exhaustion-triggering effects such as hard labour, difficult travel, or harsh weather.





## MAGICAL ITEMS

### CASSIA'S MOURNFUL RAPIER +1

**Properties.** *Finesse, Light.*

**Rarity.** *Uncommon.*

**Attunement.** *No.*

**Damage.** *1d6 +1 piercing*

<sup>CW</sup> When you attack a creature with this weapon, you deal an additional 1d6 necrotic damage. The handle of this rapier is engraved with tendrils of twisting iron which glow a dark red when the blade comes into contact with blood.

### FLAVIUS'S MAIMING GLADIUS

**Properties.** *Finesse, Light.*

**Rarity.** *Uncommon.*

**Attunement.** *No.*

**Damage.** *1d6 piercing*

When you attack a creature with this weapon and roll a natural 20 on the attack roll, you deal an additional damage die of the weapon's base damage type. Until the end of the target creature's next turn, if the creature moves further than half its speed it takes an additional 2d6 necrotic damage. This blade is silvered and is engraved with a pattern of dancing boars.

### QUICKSTRIKE DAGGER

**Rarity.** *Uncommon.*

**Attunement.** *No.*

This is a magical dagger. When you take a bonus action to make an off-hand attack with this magic weapon while dual wielding, you may attack twice with the dagger instead of once.



### VEILGLOBE

**Rarity.** *Varies.*

**Attunement.** *No.*

This palm-sized spherical orb is internally shrouded with a glimmering, spectral fog which secludes a magical map within. The map contained within is a set area, defined upon creation of the veilglobe, and can range from a local regional map to a planar map of the universe. The rarity of the veilglobe is determined by the scale of this map: 5km or fewer squared region (Common), 25km squared region (Uncommon), 100km squared region (Rare), 500km squared region (Very Rare), 1,000km or greater squared region (Legendary).

You may manipulate the fog within the veilglobe as an action by uttering the passphrase. When manipulating the fog, you may choose to either:

- Change the passphrase of the veilglobe.
- Reveal or hide the map the fog is shrouding.
- Create or destroy a small drawing or note on the map within the veilglobe. Each note must be fewer than 64 words. The veilglobe can store five notes within it, plus five additional notes for every level of rarity the veilglobe has past Common. You can choose where these notes and drawings exist on the map and how they appear, representing them as small icons or scribbles.
- Emit a small light from the veilglobe, which projects the map onto a nearby surface. The projection is a 10 foot diameter circle. Some veilglobes are made to project onto larger surfaces with an additional construction fee applied upon creation.



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## WEAPONS

### GLADIUS

A thin shortsword designed for use in close formations. The gladius uses the same statistics as a shortsword.

### PUGIO

A leaf-shaped dagger carried as a side-arm by legionarii. The pugio uses the same statistics as a dagger.

### TRUNCHEON

**Damage.** *1d6 bludgeoning*

**Properties.** *Simple, versatile (1d8)*

**Weight.** *4lb.*

**Cost.** *5 sp*

A long, carved hunk of wood with metal rivets at one end. The truncheon is used most frequently by street gangs and law enforcement to circumvent weapon laws.



## APPENDIX E — MAPS

### A: THE CROOKED ROWAN



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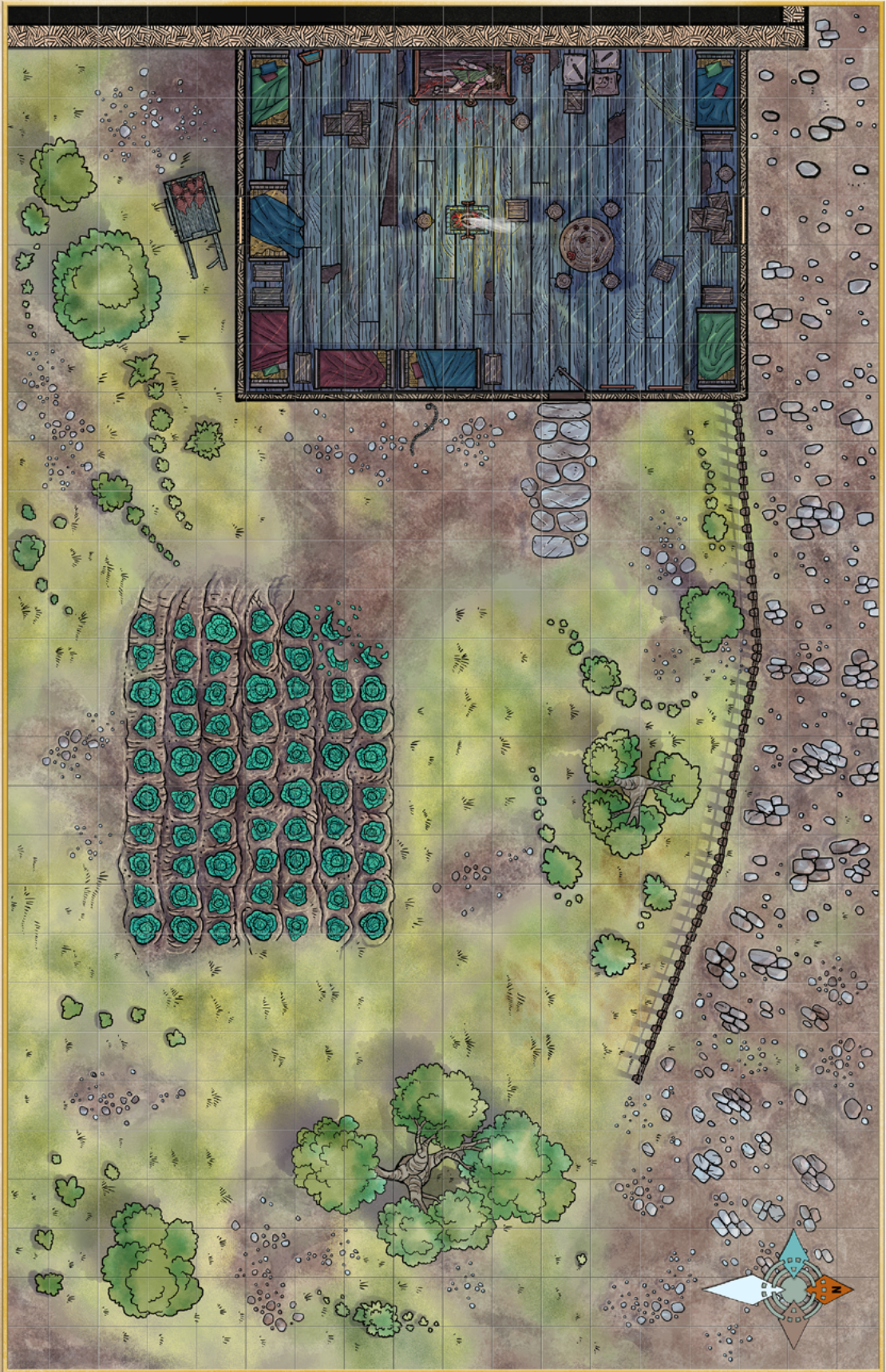
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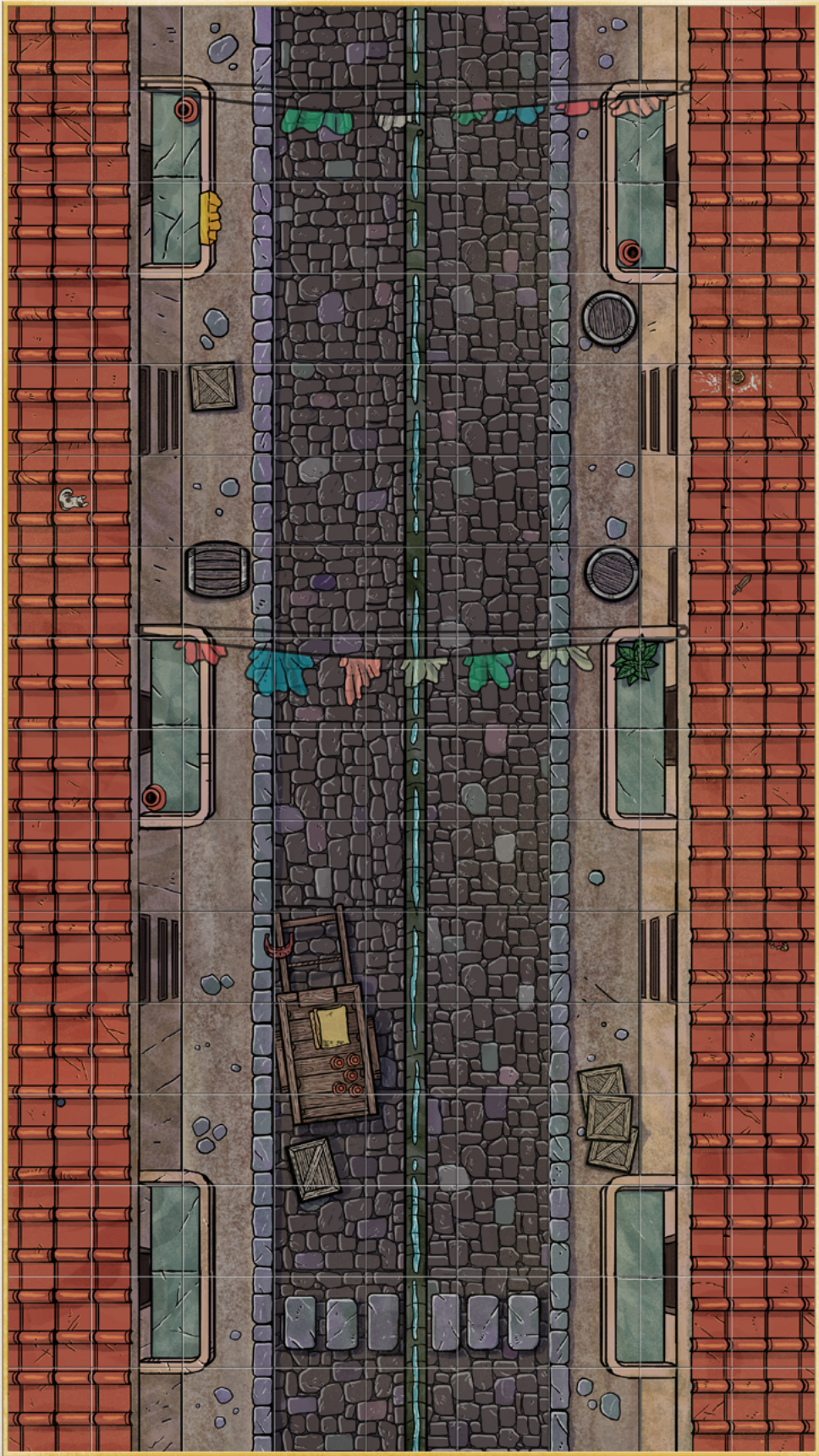


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# B: SULLA'S SHACK



# C: SIDE STREET



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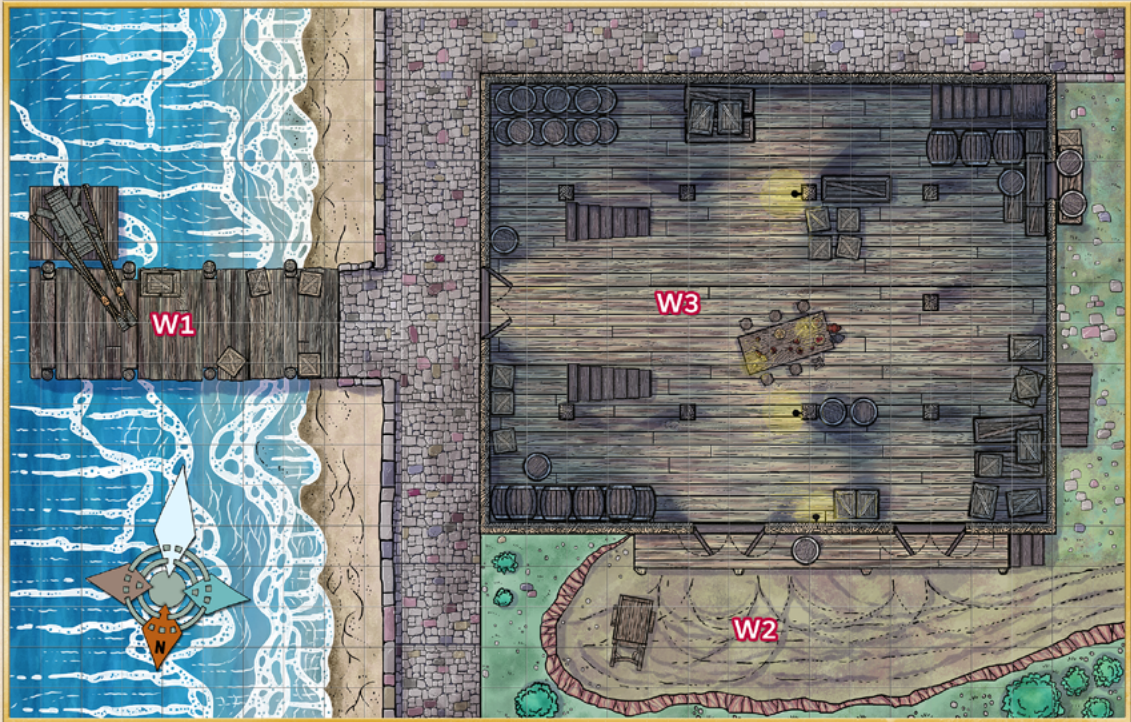
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ACT 3: FIRE  
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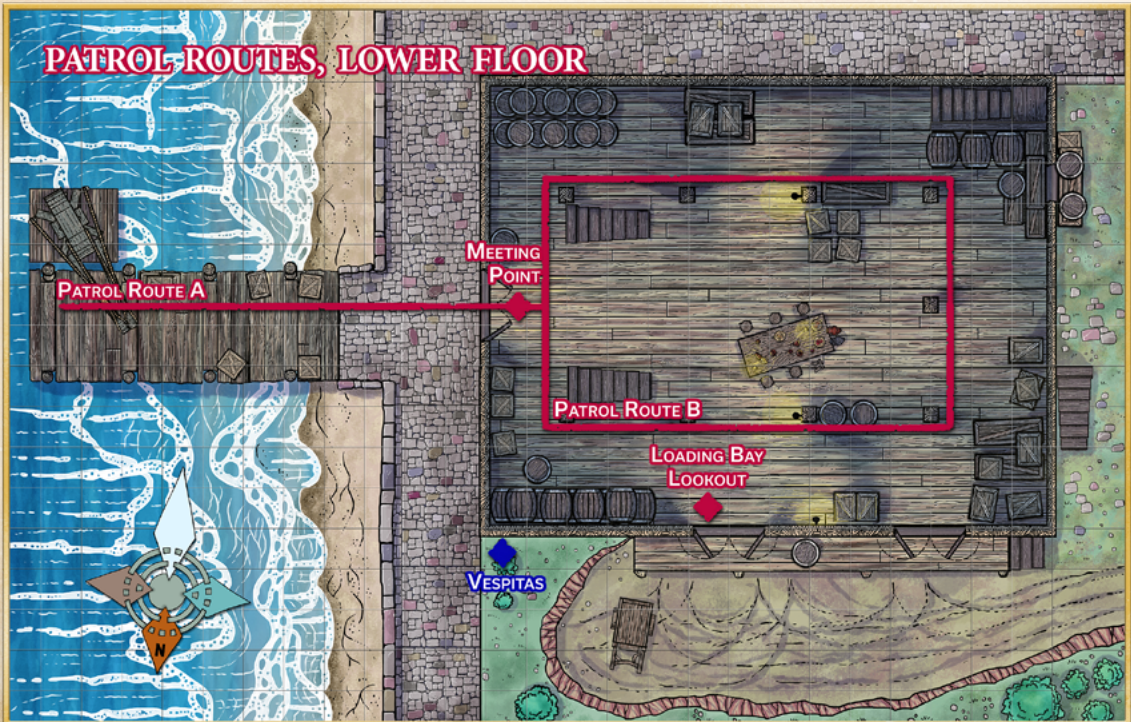
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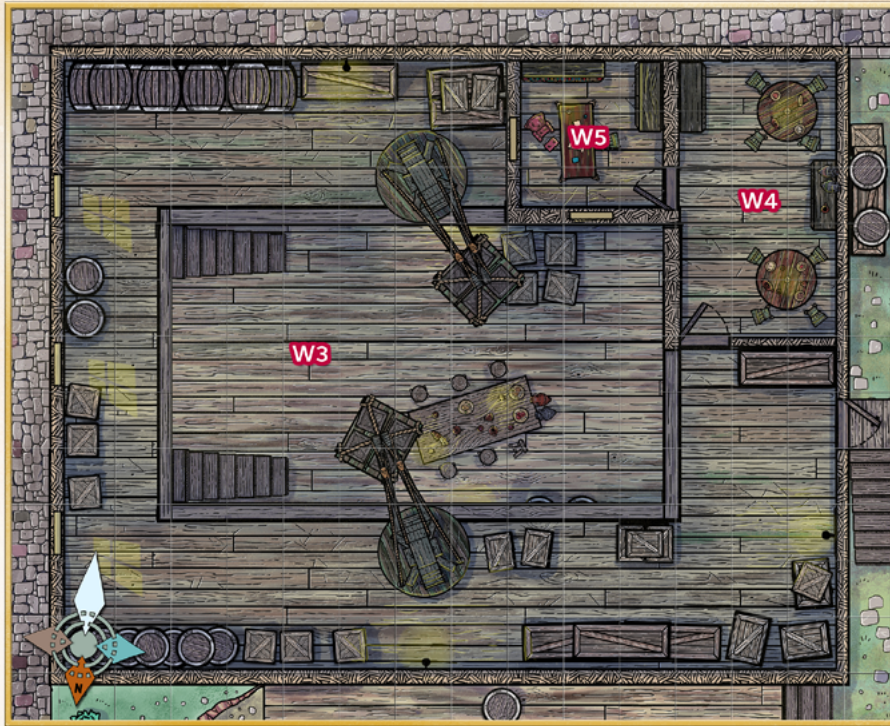
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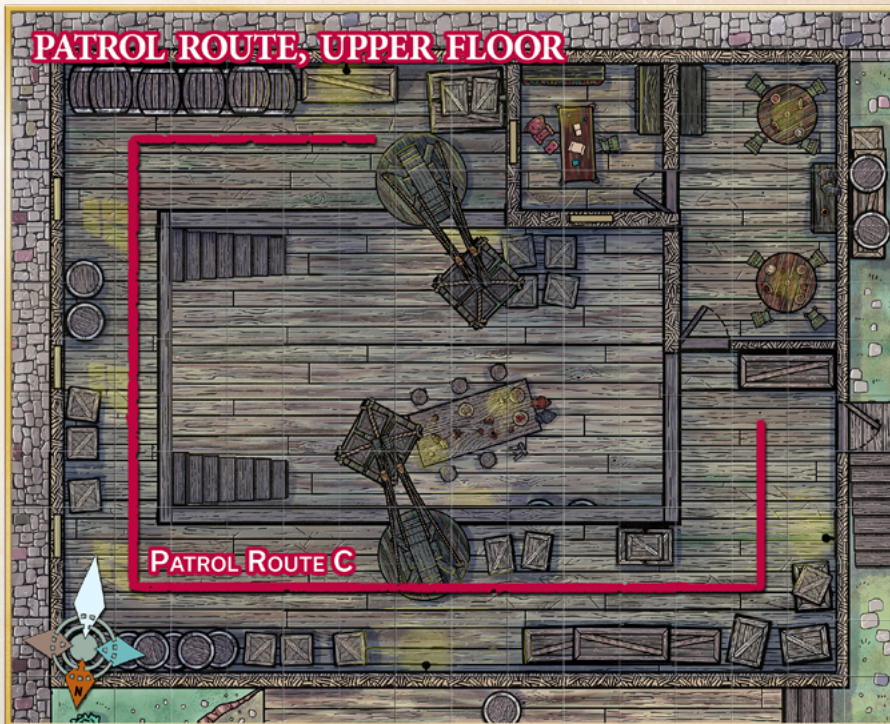
### D2: WAREHOUSE, GROUND FLOOR PATROLS



## E1: WAREHOUSE, FIRST FLOOR



## E2: WAREHOUSE, FIRST FLOOR PATROLS



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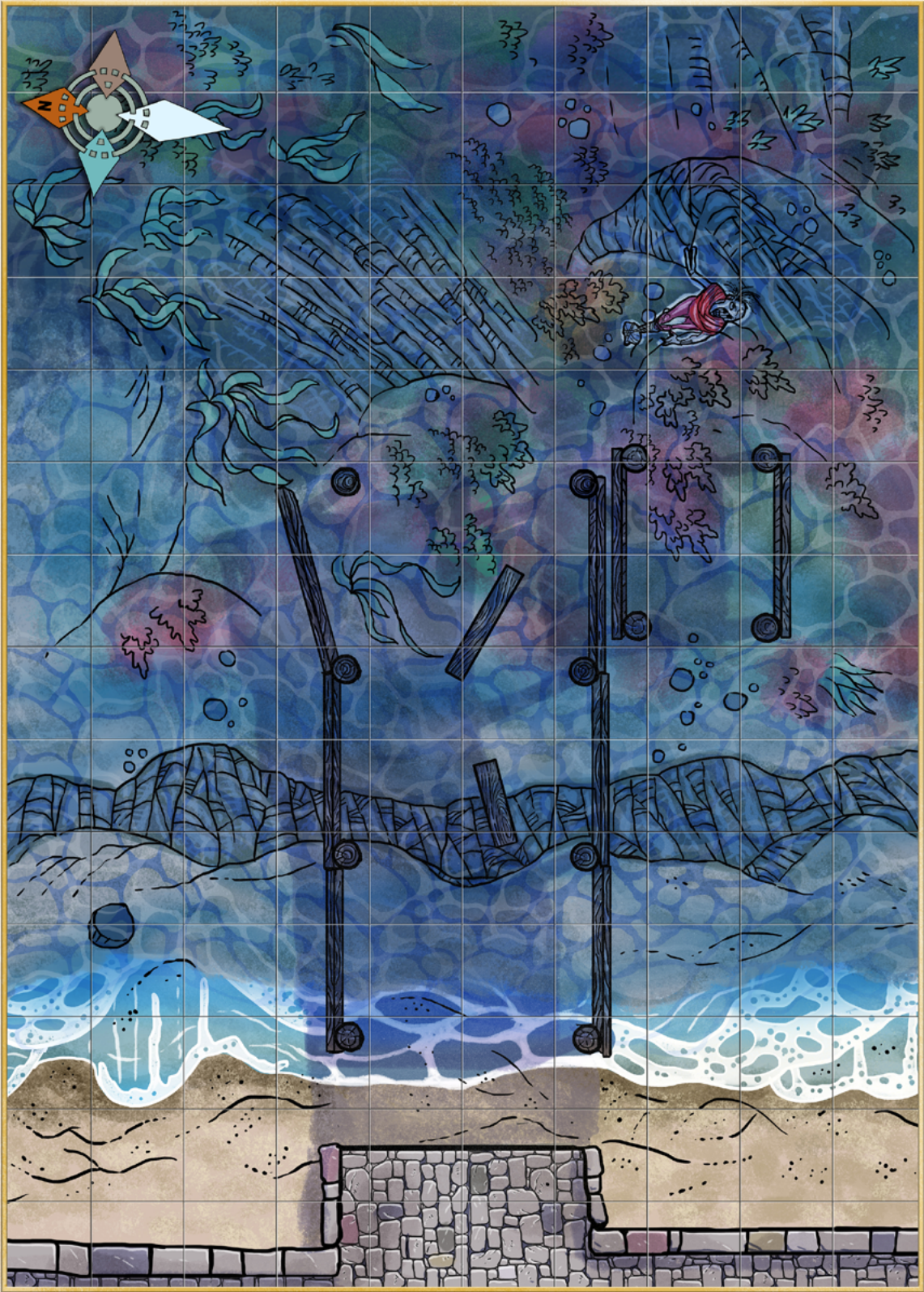
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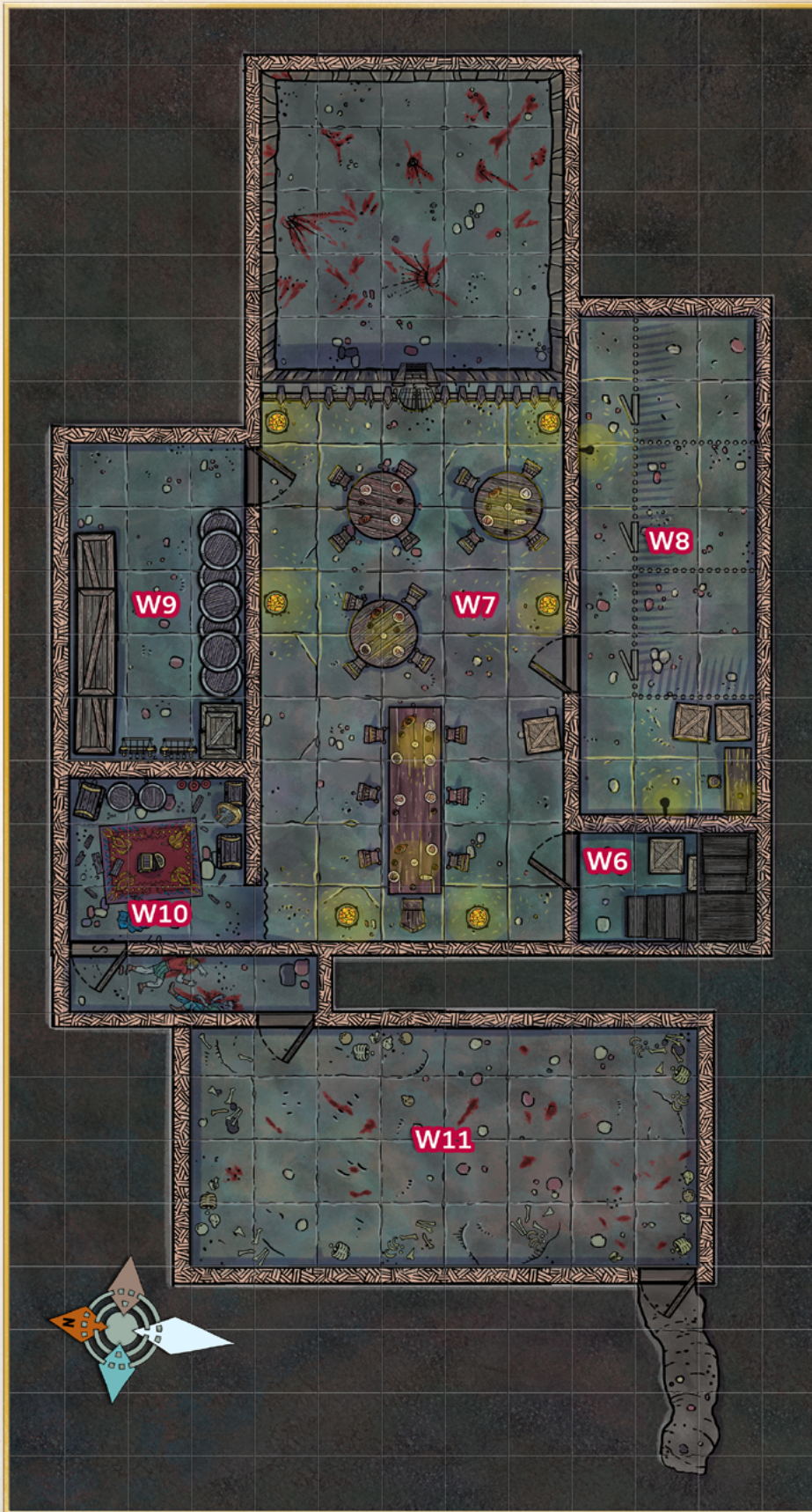
# F: UNDERNEATH WAREHOUSE PIER





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## G: WAREHOUSE CELLAR



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