



THE FREE CITY

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The fourth and fifth adventures in the Age of Worms Adventure Path take place in the Free City, a massive metropolis that holds limitless opportunities for adventure, excitement, and intrigue. A proper and full exposé on this city could easily take up an entire issue (or more) of *DUNGEON*. Further, the Free City itself is intended to be completely adaptable to your campaign. If you've set the Age of Worms in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, the Free City is Waterdeep. In *EBERRON*, it is the city of Sharn. In the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK*, it is Greyhawk City itself. In your home campaign, it could be anything else. A full accounting of the Free City would thus ironically limit its usability in the various campaigns, since each of these potential cities has a different look and feel.

This Backdrop instead presents a small portion of one of the Free City's many districts, focusing on a single neighborhood of a few dozen buildings. It is an older part of the Free City, in which the houses and hovels sag and lean, and stone surfaces are weathered smooth like grave-stones marking forgotten souls. Above the streets, towering chimneystacks rise high above rat-infested shingles, and ravens call into the perpetual twilight of the cavernous alleys beneath.

The locals call this corner of the city Midnight's Muddle.

MIDNIGHT'S MUDDLE

The streets of Midnight's Muddle are narrow and unlit, and chimneys often cloy the alleys with the tangy stink of woodsmoke. Three streets pass through the

neighborhood—Nevern Walk, Bobclay's Alley, and Muddle Street. These streets are traveled by locals, for the most part, and the looming walls of the surrounding buildings keep them in perpetual shadow save for an hour or two during midday.

Building walls are very rough and can be scaled with a DC 10 Climb check. Roofs vary between 20 and 40 feet in height (although a few buildings described are taller), and are wood shingled unless indicated otherwise. The narrow streets are slightly raised in the center so rain washes filth to gutters on either side. Drains in the gutters down to the sewer below often back up during the rainy season.

The southeastern face of Midnight's Muddle faces the Free City's Low Market, a large square that hosts crowded daily markets that draw customers and

entertainers from throughout the city's less affluent districts. If there's anything the PCs seek that can't be found for sale in Midnight's Muddle, chances are that they can probably find it for sale somewhere in the Low Market.

1. Tarquin's Manor

Tarquin Shortstone XXIV (NG male gnome expert 3) is a small gnome who seems to have every color of the rainbow in his flamboyant attire. The owner of the Crooked House (area 2) next door, Tarquin dwells in this impressive townhouse, where he leads a flamboyant life and is often seen in the early morning singing hymns from his rooftop balcony. Tarquin keeps seven extraordinarily well-behaved but still dangerous hounds as protectors and friends. He often pays customers to walk them.

Tarquin's house reflects his character—color, color, and more color. Classical statues cram his chambers (all of them extravagantly painted) and huge canvases of exotic landscapes dominate the manor's rooms. He keeps a staff of four at his house; all of which are visibly scared of his hounds. Tarquin's distant relative Fosdike recently moved into the neighborhood (area 10), and the two often spend long hours here playing with the hounds, repainting statues, or drinking into the wee hours of the night.

2. The Crooked House

One of the larger buildings in the neighborhood, the Crooked House is just that, a bit off tilt. Its walls are all at odd angles and the windows and doors aren't quite squared. Despite this, the tavern and inn is in good repair. The Crooked House is detailed in full in "The Hall of Harsh Reflections," in issue #127.

3. Mobber's Tasty Vegetables

A fine, three-story townhouse rises here. **Mobber Blaskenabby** (LN male dwarf expert 2), the owner, uses the ground floor of this fine building to sell vegetables he grows with the help of a friendly druid named **Ilakarus Hobentak** (LN male human druid 2) in a secret garden a day's travel south of the Free City. Mobber's wares vary by the week. On some days he sells leaves from a single colossal cabbage, while on others he

prepares delicious (and tangy) greenwise salads. Mobber himself talks very slowly, a side-effect from spending too much time conversing with plants that have all the time in the world to listen.

4. Crowmar's Magnificent Lantern Emporium

Crowmar Footly (NG male human expert 2) is a very tall and stocky man with a penchant for Tarquin Shortstone's barley wine. Crowmar's made a lot of money selling lanterns, sunrods, and other illuminating objects over the years—many of the lanterns found in Midnight's Muddle are his design. Yet recently he's fallen on hard times. A few months ago he had a large purse of money and a bursting enthusiasm for a great idea he believed would revolutionize lanterns. He came up with this plan whilst working as a miner at a foul Diamond Lake mine. His plan was simple: a safe, portable means of illumination for miners—specially engineered fire beetle cages. Crowmar's initial design was a cage with special leg holes so that the fire beetle locked inside could still move around, to the limits of a tiny chain attached to a bootstrap. Sadly, Crowmar overestimated the cooperation of the humble (and stupid) fire beetle, and when a large number of imported fire beetles escaped, he very nearly had to sell his shop to cover the damages. Fire beetles can still be found in Midnight's Muddle, and it's rare that a week doesn't go by with stories of a child or pet being bitten by an angry beetle. These stories hurt poor Crowmar almost as much as they hurt his savings.

5. Murdo's Pantry

Murdo Aberankus (NG male dwarf expert 2) cooks an incredible array of food daily, favoring foods he has specially imported from foreign lands. His food is expensive (double the normal prices found in the *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK*) but the cuisine (a mixture of spiced dumplings, pies and cakes) is exceptional. His eatery boasts a fine upper-floor terrace where customers can get away from the bustle of the streets and enjoy a spectacular view of the Free City. Murdo himself is astonishingly fat and usually covered in flour.



Tarquin

6. Ret's Taxidermy

A stuffed otyugh stands watch outside this cluttered shop front. The young halfling named **Ret Mallenkask** (LG male halfling expert 5; Craft [taxidermy] +14) who owns this shop often wears a bloodstained apron, even when out at night. He's an expert at stuffing trophy heads and animals and monsters of all sizes, and claims that he once stuffed an entire dragon turtle for an eccentric (but very rich) adventurer. Although the stuffed otyugh out front of his shop has seen better days, he really is a talented taxidermist. He typically charges 50 gp per Hit Die to stuff an animal or monster.

7. A Tinge of Vellum

Madame Alexia Tinge (LG female human expert 3) is a bookish, reed-thin woman who dresses in woolen clothes. She sells quality vellums (along with paper, parchment, quills, and inks) from this shop, and is never afraid to give her customers a somewhat shrill report on the rising prices of producing fine writing materials in this modern day. A life-long spinster, she shares the upper floor with her

three older (and equally shrill) sisters Agatha, Tyara, and Zelaria.

8. Moxitled's Alchemical Wares

Moxitled Jhremm (CN male half-elf expert 3/wizard 2) is an eccentric man with wild, bushy hair. He spends much of his time in his cellar laboratory, manufacturing alchemical wares for his twin sons Doran and Nordan to sell in the cramped shopfront on the ground floor above. After his wife perished in a mysterious fire several years ago in a distant city, Moxitled and his sons left town and settled here. He is rarely seen by his neighbors, but his sons are common sights at the Two-Necked Swan (area 26).

9. Two-Boy Theatre

The tiny theatre is run by a pair of young men who escaped the clutches of a wererat orphanage owner on the other side of the city. The older of the two is **Danifar** (CG male human expert 2/bard 1), a handsome lad with short, dark hair and a ready smile. **Hestek** (NG male human expert 3) is the younger of the two, and his skill at creating puppets is in large part the reason for the success of their venture.

The boys put on plays in this tiny ten-seat theatre (itself little more than a shed), using silhouette puppets and their own acting skills in religious miracle stories. The boys generally give good account of themselves, yet charge only 1 sp per performance. Both boys believe that Ludwick, the wererat orphanage owner they escaped a year ago, perished in the fire that consumed his lair. Whether or not this is in fact the case is unclear.

10. Shortstone Wines

A former temple to St. Cuthbert that fell on hard times after its priest was exposed in a scandal involving slavery and smuggling, this building's new owner is a gnome entrepreneur named **Fosdike Shortstone X** (LN male gnome expert 2/rogue 1). Unusually tall and broad for a gnome, Fosdike wears a monocle and dresses in dark velvet suits. He is in the process of converting this one-time temple into a warehouse to import and export wine. Fosdike is the third cousin twice removed of Tarquin (area 1), and the two are the best of friends.

11. Wake's Construction

Kared Wake (LG male human commoner 3/expert 1) is a strong but lean man in his thirties. His current trade keeps his warehouse full of timbers, stone, and iron. A pair of 3rd-level human warriors guards the building—Kared himself lives elsewhere in the city with his family and only visits this location to requisition building materials as he needs them.

12. Ruined Shrine

Once a small shrine dedicated to Heironeous, this building burnt down a few weeks ago. The only priest, a respected man named Varda, was killed in the fire. His body has been interred in the crypt below the Free City's glorious Sanctum of Heironeous. The loss of Varda and his shrine has left many in Midnight's

Muddle depressed and suspicious—rumors abound that the fire was deliberate. Those who arrived to help fight it insist that the windows and doors were ensorcelled and made impervious to harm, preventing anyone from breaking into the building to save Varda. Others hold that this is a flimsy excuse Varda's supposed "friends" are spreading to explain why no one was brave enough to enter the burning building. In any event, the church of Heironeous is strangely quiet on the matter, and many who once worshiped the Invincible One have become disenchanted with their faith as a result.

13. Burnt Hovel

This building was consumed in the fire that started at area 12. The family that once lived here has left the city—the



building is now used by vagrants and vagabonds as an impromptu shelter.

14. Burnt Shop

As with area 13, this shop went up in the fire that destroyed area 12. Its owner was a struggling apothecary named Laslo. The day after the fire he threw himself into the Millstream north of the Muddle and drowned. The local homeless avoid this ruin out of suspicious fear that Laslo's ghost may now haunt the place.

15. Mistress Crump's Hovel

Mistress Oriana Crump (LN female human aristocrat 2/commoner 3) is a chinless, toothless hag with such a penchant for profanity that she is incapable of uttering a sentence without betraying a paucity in her vocabulary by swearing. She's lived in the Muddle for decades, ever since her once proud family fell on hard times and was forced to sell its estate. The local children enjoy tormenting her while the local adults enjoy avoiding her.

16. Tattoo Parlor

Although many locals call him the Painted Man due to his fearsome appearance (he's covered in tattoos of writhing worm-like dragons), Jharan Hubris (NG male human expert 2/bard 4; Craft [tattoo] +14) is a kindly soul. The tattooist stands over 6 feet tall and weighs 250 pounds, and generally walks around half-naked to show off his wares. Hubris's favorite subject is dragons, but he is generally skilled at crafting any tattoo. His works are not cheap, with a small tattoo the size of a coin costing 1 gp. An apple-sized tattoo can cost up to 10 gp, while large tattoos (such as the sinuous dragon that coils along his shoulders and down his right arm) can cost 100 gp or more. His greatest works are magic tattoos that store spells. These tattoos function as potions—once used, they vanish. Jharan can make magic tattoos of the following spells: *alter self*, *cat's grace*, *cure light wounds*, *detect magic*, *disguise self*, or *expeditious retreat*. Their cost equals the cost of a potion of the same spell. Creating a magic tattoo takes one day, and only the one who bears the tattoo can be affected by its magic. Activating a magic tattoo is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

17. Lobbly the Butcher

Lobbly Drent (N male human expert 2) is a miserable and lonely soul who seems to take singular delight in chopping up meat. He never married, his parents are dead, and his only friends are his astounding collection of knives. Still, his wares are always fresh and his prices fair.

18. Marik's Buns

Marik Larathka (LG female human expert 1) is a portly lady who keeps her gray hair tied in a bun. She makes very fine cakes and buns, frequently using strong aromatic spices such as nutmeg and cinnamon to give her wares a unique taste. She and her six children run this bakery with love and devotion, and start working before dawn every day. The smells from this bakery are a welcome addition to the day, and many of the locals have made a ritual of starting their day sitting on benches and chairs out front.

19. Horatio Rib's Everything

Aging Horatio Rib (LN male gnome aristocrat 1/expert 3; Bluff +10) wears a thick velvet robe and claims to have one of everything for sale in his tiny but crowded shop. His shelves and cupboards certainly have all of the standard equipment listed in the *PLAYER'S HANDBOOK* as well as most mundane items. He actually has few magic items (anything worth more than 300 gp is probably not for sale here) on hand, but claims to have many more in "storage out back." His prices are a little high (10% over standard), a surcharge Horatio says covers the fact that his shop's so well stocked. Sadly, Horatio's belief that he has everything for sale here is a manifestation of his mild dementia. If the PCs ask for something he doesn't actually have, he attempts to Bluff the heroes that he actually has what they want if they'll only wait a few minutes for him to step in back to retrieve the item from storage. He then slips out of the building, races to another shop or into the Low Market, and buys a stand-in for the requested item, taking a minute to spruce up the item before returning with it in hand. If, for example, a PC asks for a +2 *anarchic halberd*, Horatio dashes out to Zud's Towering Armory (area 27) buys a halberd, ties some colorful ribbons around its haft and scratches an exotic

name like "Thu N'arkik Wun" on its metal head before returning triumphantly (and possibly half an hour after being asked) to the PCs. He charges full price (+10%), of course. If the PCs confront him with the truth (say, after casting *detect magic* on the halberd) he sputters and rages and refuses to sell them anything more.

20. Shrine of the Weeping Woman

Tucked under a bent yew tree of great age is a small, unassuming shrine. The little building houses a statue of a female angel that purportedly cried actual tears some six years ago. A number of priests examined the statue after the event but found it to be nonmagical. Identification of the angel itself or of the statue's mysterious sculptor escaped the priests as well, and they eventually cataloged it as a hoax.

The shrine is currently owned by Forwell Hog (NE male human druid 7/vermin lord 1), a tall, thin man who walks with the aid of a stick. He claims to worship an obscure aspect of Heironeous called the Weeping Woman, one of Heironeous's lesser servitors and a patron of martyrs. He has several devoted followers in the neighborhood—all elderly souls who have lost children in recent wars. Forwell dwells in a small cluttered chamber behind a timber door at the back of the shrine.

In truth, Forwell uses the shrine as a front, and is the head of a small but dangerous religious sect called the Cult of the Festering One. Forwell was once a reclusive druid who lived in the southern Cairn Hills. One fateful evening, he discovered a strange cairn in which laired a particularly intelligent and charismatic phase spider warlock called the Festering One. The spider captured Forwell, and over the course of the next several months of torture and telepathic inquisitions, Forwell's mind finally snapped, and he began worshiping the spider. He emerged from the Festering One's cairn a vermin lord—this prestige class is detailed in the *Book of Vile Darkness*, but enough details are provided here so you can run encounters with this villain without requiring access to that book.

Forwell charges 1 gp for visitors to see the statue, but allows his small (but growing) congregation to visit and pray free of charge. Once in a while, one of his flock vanishes,



**Forwell
Hog**

fact that the skin on his torso and back has grown rigid and chitinous.

A PC who interacts with Forwell can make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. Success indicates that he may seem sincere in his worship, the angel statue itself has no real connection to Heironeous, and there is no known entity called the Weeping Woman who serves him. With a DC 30 check, the character notices several tiny incongruities in the shrine or in Forwell's manner that make it obvious he does not actually worship Heironeous. Forwell is quite versed in matters religious and has a fairly good Bluff check—this, combined with his low profile, have kept his secrets safe so far.

FORWELL HOG

CR 8

Male human druid 7/vermin lord 1

NE Medium humanoid

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Init +2; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 46 (8 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +9

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +8 (1d4–1/19–20)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +4

Special Atk wild shape 3/day

Combat Gear wand of contagion (18 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th, ranged touch +7):

4th—*cure serious wounds*, *giant vermin*

3rd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *remove disease*

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal* (DC 14), *flaming*

sphere (DC 14), *reduce animal* (DC 14)

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *magic fang*,

obscuring mist, *produce flame*

0—*detect magic* (3), *light*, *read magic*, *virtue*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10,

Wis 15, Cha 15

SQ animal companion (none currently),

chitin +1, nature sense, resist nature's
lure, trackless step, vermin servant, wild
empathy +9, woodland stride

Feats Combat Reflexes, Persuasive, Skill

Focus (Bluff), Verminfriend*

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +4, Hide +5,

Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +8,

Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +8, Move

Silently +5, Survival +4, Spot +8

Possessions combat gear, bracers of armor +2,
masterwork dagger, threadbare robes and cloak

*This feat is from the *Book of Vile Darkness*;
any time a vermin is about to attack

Forwell, he can make a DC 20 Charisma
check. If this check succeeds, that vermin
refuses to attack him for 24 hours.

Chitin (Ex): A vermin lord gains a +1 natural armor
bonus to Armor Class from the chitinous plates
that begin to grow on his flesh.

Vermin Servant: A vermin lord gains a
servant in the form of a vermin of up to 1
HD. This servant is treated as a familiar; its
intelligence increases, and it is considered
a magical beast. Forwell's vermin servant is
a Small monstrous spider.

21. Meply's Alchemical Curatives

The short, balding Meply Molabian (N male human sorcerer 6) is an alchemist with a clever rouse. When he arrived in the Free City a year ago, he struggled to make money as the competition constantly undercut him and slandered his trade. To combat this, he came up with a trick—he became his own competition. Meply lives two existences, running shops right next door to each other. The abuse Meply and "Din" heap on each other is so legendary in this area that it is assumed they are mortal enemies. The constant war ensures that both their names are never out of local gossip—which provides both shops plenty of free advertising. Meply's shop focuses on alchemical supplies and potions, and it is open for 8 hours during the day from 8:00 in the morning to 4:00 in the afternoon. His ring of sustenance allows him to run both this shop and the one next door with ease.

A DC 20 Search check of Meply's personal chambers in the back of the shop reveals a secret door that allows access to the shop next door.

22. Din Danly's Alchemical Curatives

The bearded Din Danly has an outstanding head of red hair—his pride and joy. Of course, this is all a disguise—Din is actually Meply Molabian, disguised with a hat of disguise. Din's shop is open from 6:00 in the evening until 2:00 in the morning. His shop focuses on poisons and magical powders, elixirs, and other one-shot wondrous items.

23. Yalexex's Abode

The eccentric artist **Yalexex** (CN male human expert 10) who lives here was attracted by the cheap rent and lives in poverty in his rooftop garret. The floor below is a rickety open space in which he stores painting supplies. The paintings themselves (all wonderful and masterfully done portraits of famous citizens of the Free City) are kept in a stack under a ratty blanket in the corner. The handsome brown-haired, fair-skinned artist is often covered in colorful paint, and he talks quickly and often changes subjects in mid-sentence.

Yalexex paints people who catch his eye—most of his portraits are of average people he met on the street who possessed some hidden aspect that intrigued him. If any of the PCs has a Charisma score of 16 or higher, Yalexex might notice them in the neighborhood and ask them to come to his home to sit for a painting. The process takes 1d4 days, and the resulting portrait just happens to be a masterpiece worth 500 gp. Yalexex, of course, is dissatisfied with it and tries to destroy it. A DC 25 Diplomacy check is enough to convince him to sell it to the PC for as little as 1 gp, provided the PC gives him time to paint over his signature (Yalexex doesn't want his name attached to anything of such obvious low quality).

Yalexex's other works are quite well made—a DC 20 Appraise check reveals that each of the two dozen portraits he has on display could fetch as much as 100 gp from collectors. Yalexex has no real interest in selling his works, though, and treats his finished pieces with passive disinterest, unaware of how good they really are. If a PC convinces him to show them to a collector (a task requiring a DC 30 Diplomacy check), Yalexex becomes an overnight success and soon moves out of Midnight's Muddle into a much nicer flat in the northern end of the Free City. How the artist treats his PC patron after he's discovered is left to you.

One strange manifestation of Yalexex's eccentricity is the fact that he always incorporates a tiny green worm into his portraits. The worm is usually quite hard to find (DC 30 Search check), but it is unmistakable once located. Yalexex is unaware of this quirk, and has no explanation as to

why the worms appear in his paintings—if confronted, he may even accuse the PCs of painting them in just to mess with his head. The truth behind these hidden worms is left for you to develop.

24. Weft Tower

This three-story tower is the home of **Uious Weft** (CN male human commoner 3/rogue 3), a failed rogue and trickster with long gray hair. He moved to the neighborhood several years ago amid rumors of his fabulous wealth and stories of relatives who were successful adventurers. A broken and bitter man, Uious never receives visitors. The penniless man lives alone, save for a large number of rats he's been unable to exterminate.

25. The Boat

A large sign hanging in front of this shop brazenly proclaims "The Boat—She sails the ocean of commerce!" The sign depicts a colorful boat with a larger-than-life image of the owner's red rosy cheeks and grin emblazoned on a foresail. This is **Cobly Weent** (LG male human expert 3), a large man who dresses in red silks that match his rosy red cheeks. Cobly lives here with his wife, his three children, his mother, and his infirm grandmother, all of whom are packed tightly into the upper floor apartments. The lower floor is a shop front that sells all manner of furnishings, carpets, statues, and other goods for dressing up a home. The interior of this shop is cunningly built to resemble the below-decks chambers of a massive merchant ship.

26. The Two-Necked Swan

The roughest ale-house in Midnight's Muddle is run by **Tudge** (CN male half-orc warrior 5) and **Ruck** (CN male half-orc warrior 3/expert 1), bald half-orc brothers who won the bar in a bet. The place has a well-deserved reputation for being a den of gamblers, lowlifes, and cheap prostitutes. A small circular amphitheater in the basement is always open for business. This fighting pit hosts battles between warriors, between warriors and beasts, and between beasts. Tudge and Ruck are frequent visitors to the Free City Arena, and if the heroes can change their attitude from indifferent to friendly, they provide details on the place, in particular

the layout of the public area and the history of any notable battles there.

27. Zud's Towering Armory

Zud Yabberchap (LN male halfling expert 4) is a wild-eyed, red-haired man who fosters a pathological hatred of Souf (area 28). Zud makes a brisk living selling armor and weapons, most of which he's crafted himself. Anyone who insults or badmouths Souf earns Zud's immediate friendship and a 10% discount on anything they buy here. Zud's hatred of the lizardfolk stems from a childhood tragedy when his village was accidentally flooded by a dam constructed by a group of lizardfolk.

28. Souf's Paraphernalia

Souf (NG male lizardfolk expert 2) is something of an oddity and a local legend. A cultured and soft-spoken lizardfolk, Souf abandoned his tribe to move to the Free City in an attempt to educate its citizens about his people. Over the past several years, he's managed not only to establish himself as a respectable citizen, but a shopkeeper as well. His place is a tower of clutter. The rooms, doorways, stairs, and floor are crammed with items—piles of books about ant hills lie on top of others about horse barding, a ballistae hangs from a wall under a banner of frog-men fighting a group of badgers, and a stack of six crates of sunrods leans perilously next to the counter. Souf dresses like a human merchant and is more than willing to give his customers the luxury of looking around without dealing with a pushy salesman. Souf has had several accidents lately, and his arm is currently broken and in a sling after a timber fell on him from one of the rickety buildings nearby. He suspects Zud is behind these "accidents" but can't prove it, so he's taken to avoiding the hateful halfling as much as he can.

29-35. The Muddle

This cluster of buildings comprises the bulk of the residences in the Muddle. Each building is a tenement that houses anywhere from 10 to 30 people in small, cramped apartments. The tenants here are nevertheless friendly and open. The buildings themselves all belong to a man named **Kerril Besk** (LN male human aristocrat 2/expert 1), a fair and just landlord who makes

a tidy fortune on rent gathered from these buildings (and several others like them scattered throughout the Free City). Kerril himself lives elsewhere in the Free City and only visits the Muddle when he's forced to do so to collect on late rent. There are currently no vacancies in these buildings.

36. Ph'xeris the Miracle


Ph'xeris (CN male human aristocrat 2/wizard 7) is an artist who glimpsed the Far Realm and has never been the same since. Independently wealthy, he usually walks around his house naked, exposing his pitifully thin body. His huge house is a series of extended breezy open balconies crammed with insane paintings, statues of iron, and clay sculptures of twisted things, (including many aberrations) so real looking he must have used living examples as reference. Ph'xeris is obsessed with having the building with the most number of doors in the Muddle and has personally installed hundreds of them (many of which open outside on upper floors) in his manor over the years. Although eccentric, he's fairly harmless and would be willing to craft magic items on commission for the PCs. Bear in mind that anything he crafts incorporates subtle

influences from the Far Realm or his obsession with doors. For example, a magic suit of armor made by him is embossed with layers of colored enamel depicting pupilless eyes around filigree work of writhing tentacles and open doorways.

37. Web's Rooftop Dragonchess Parlor

Aging minor noble Ermelda Web (LG female human aristocrat 7), a double-chinned snob who wears expensive jewelry and clothes, runs a smart dragonchess parlor from the upper floor and roof of her manor. Her velvet-lined gaming tables and floors attract the finest clientele in the Muddle and beyond. Ermelda provides a selection of fine wines and delicate seafood for her guests, who can only enter by invitation (requiring a DC 25 Diplomacy check or a bribe of no less than 500 gp). In the Muddle, only Zud and Tarquin Shortstone are members of her elite circle.

38. Shrine to Obad-Hai

Aulathi Merilain (NG female elf cleric 5) is a well-liked priest of Obad-Hai, and the keeper of this small shrine of the god of nature. Her shrine is the only functional place of worship in Midnight's Muddle, and is located near a small section of undeveloped land she's managed to claim from the city government in Obad-Hai's name. Much of her time is spent ensuring that new construction and development in the Free City is undertaken responsibly, but with the loss of the local shrine of Heiromeous, many of the Muddle's inhabitants have turned to her for religious guidance. She's a little overwhelmed at the sudden shift in attention, but does what she can to tend to the sick and needy of the Muddle nevertheless. 

With thanks to building engineer Mike Whiteoak for his advice, the Muddle is also dedicated to my old mate Mark Crowfoot, one of the most shamefully ludicrous role-players its ever been my pleasure to DM. Along with the self-propelled fire beetle cage ("oh come on, how can that not work Rich?"), one of Mark's many proposals was to try to persuade me that his wizard could lie flat on his back and horizontally levitate along the ground and past some guards.

Ermelda Web



Mt. Zogon



BY TONY MOSELEY

ZOGONIA.COM