# **MURDERHOBOS** MUST DIE

A one-shot for commonfolk who are sick of the adventurers' sh\*t





### **WARNING: COARSE LANGUAGE**

*Murderhobos Must Die,* a 5e-compatible one-shot for commonfolk who are sick of the adventurers' shit.

Version 1.00.

### **Credits**

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### Feedback

I need your feedback to improve. Please review *Murderhobos Must Die* on its DriveThruRPG page:

drivethrurpg.com/product/324564/Murderhobos-Must-Die

### You

This document assumes the person reading it is the game master (GM). It's to be read only by you, the GM, and not your players.

# Introduction

These so-called "adventurers" take more lives than the plague and cholera combined. They ride upon our villages with flames and trouble in their wake, kicking in our doors, drinking our taverns dry, and then expecting us to turn out our pockets and suck the mud from their boots! When we speak, they cut out our tongues. When we stand, they cut us down. But no longer! This village may be a shithole, but it's *our* shithole, and we'll play host to these vagabonds no more! Murderhobos must die!

*Murderhobos Must Die* is a one-shot adventure in which the player characters are villagers trying to kill the murderhobos occupying their village.

# Running the adventure

Murderhobos Must Die is a sandbox adventure set in a nondescript fantasy setting. As a one-shot, the adventure may take between 1 and 4 hours. It requires very little preparation but also a GM with strong improvisational skills.

# Background

The filthy little village known as Backend has suffered its fair share of so-called "adventurers" in the past, but now a new and most vulgar party have taken the fortalice and are doing something unsavoury inside of it. A small group of villagers have decided they won't sit idly by.

# Villagers and murderhobos

In this adventure, the players must play as preexisting villagers. These player character (PC) villagers are modified human commoners, while all non-player character (NPC) villagers are standard human commoners. There are four PC villagers, and you can find information about them, including how they differ from standard commoners, throughout this document and in attachment 1. Your players choose the PC villager they'll play using this same attachment. If you have more than four players, you must create additional PC villagers. They cannot be preexisting NPC villagers. If you have fewer than four players, the PC villagers remaining become NPCs. If a PC dies and the party has rallied an NPC to their cause, you may allow the player to take control of the NPC. PC villagers do not have hit dice, but they can make death saving throws.

There are also three NPC adventurers or, more accurately, murderhobos. You can find more information on them, including their stat blocks, under the location "Fortalice." Their stat blocks are inspired by races and classes of the SRD5.

The stat blocks for monsters/creatures appearing in bold in this document, including commoners, can be found in the SRD5.

# Improvisation is key!

This adventure is suited to GMs with strong improvisational skills. It's a sandbox, and this document itself is but a modest, spatially organised toolkit with which you can prompt and react to the PCs; it is by no means comprehensive. You may end up using only a fraction of what is in this document, and that's okay. Customise it however you want, and make it work for you. The lack of backstory is intentional, as it gives you more room to move. Paraphrase the descriptive text and make it your own. Backend is basically a medieval village; it should be pretty easy to describe, as you've likely done the setting to death. The plot — if you could even call it that — is *super* simple, and you can't really screw it up. The true plot, the true story, is the one that unfurls as the PCs make a complete mess of Backend while trying to save it. It's mostly for these reasons that this adventure requires little preparation. Lastly, don't be shy to let NPCs or even PCs die, as this is a one shot! The next three sections detail the goals of all the characters in this adventure and should help you improvise on the fly.

### The PC villagers' goals

The PCs' goal is to kill the murderhobos. As the murderhobos are far more powerful, the PCs must use their environment to their advantage. On top of providing information on Backend and its villagers, this document also details some aspects of the village — and some of the aspects of locations within the village — that the PCs may exploit. For example, they might detach the chandelier in the inn, dropping it on a murderhobo's head, or they might attack a murderhobo while they're getting their hair cut. These aspects are but a few of the *many* your players will haggle out of you, however, so much of the creative weight is still on you. Aspects and the locations in which they can be found appear in the text as such:

Example text (aspect: Trapdoor, location: Backend).

The PCs learn about aspects by speaking with other villagers, but you may also allow them to make ability checks to find aspects.

### The NPC villagers' goals

Village life is different with the murderhobos there. While you may have some villagers work during the day, most will try to stay in their homes, especially at night. The PCs may try to use numbers to their advantage, rallying other villagers to their cause. Let the PCs attempt this, but bear in mind that the lord of Backend, Sir Stuart, ordered the villagers to stay out of the murderhobos way and that, in general, the villagers aren't heroes; they do not want to die.

### The murderhobos' goals

The murderhobo Laird's goal is to summon a **hell hound** in the fortalice, using a villager of Backend as the required sacrifice. The other two just want to dick around. You can find more information on all their goals under the location "Fortalice."

# Disease

Any good medieval village is rife with disease, and Backend is no exception. Characters can contract diseases simply by interacting with certain villagers, and the PCs may try to use these diseases against the murderhobos — by hurling a child infected with chickenpox at them, for instance. To further emulate the dismal conditions of a medieval village, you may also want to consider infections.

### **Infections**

After taking damage which breaks the skin, a creature must succeed on a DC 6 Constitution saving throw or contract an infection. Infected wounds swell up and leak pus, and a creature with an infection suffers sweats, sore muscles, and fatigue, among other symptoms, gaining disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity ability checks and losing 10 feet of speed. Once per day — such as when they fall asleep — a creature with an infection must a Constitution saving throw. If the result is 1 or lower, they die. If the result is 15 or higher, they recover. If the result is between 1 and 15, they survive but remain infected.

# **Candlelight meeting**

This section is the prologue. The PCs are in the Jacob Clay's cellar, and it's the middle of the night. Jacob, the village potter, has rallied them to stand up against the murderhobos.

To begin the prologue, relay the following information to your players:

- $\Omega$  You are villagers of Backend, a filthy little village in the middle of a dark woodland.
- $\Omega$  You pray to a deity called Mitch, whose symbol is an M. He's a lesser god of health and happiness, but he's terrible at his job, doing close to nothing for his followers.
- $\Omega$  Sir Stuart is a knight and the lord of Backend. He usually occupies the village's fortalice, an old fort with a single tower.
- $\Omega$  Three murderhobos came to Backend a few nights ago. They broke into the fortalice, subdued Sir Stuart's guard (Maxwell Ward) and threw Sir Stuart out.
- $\Omega$  The murderhobos always return to the fortalice at sunset (5:00 PM), and they stay there all night.
- $\Omega$  One murderhobo is a bilgy man clad in mail. His name is Butch, and he leaves the fortalice to drink in the Pisshouse between 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM every day.
- **Ω** One murderhobo is a skittish female tiefling named Vee. She's been hassling the village blacksmith, Ellie Iron, about new weapons every day from 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Between 2:30 PM and 5:00 PM, she trains in the lumberyard.
- $\Omega$  The last murderhobo is a hooded male dwarf wizard. No one knows his name, and he has yet to leave the fortalice, which now reeks of sulphur.
- $\Omega$  Sir Stuart is staying in the Pisshouse, the village's only inn. He ordered the villagers to stay out of the murderhobos' way, to simply wait for them to leave.

To continue the prologue, read the following:

A rat scurries between you and the dim candle illuminating the cellar, casting its shadow over each face at the table at which you sit. The overhead timbers groan and squeeze out droplets of black water as someone strides the floor above. It smells in here of the material after which the proprietor of the pottery shop took his name — clay, as in Jacob Clay. This very man, tiny-eyed and greying, gets to his feet. In this darkness, you can see little more than his strung-out throat.

Jacob says, "These so-called 'adventurers' take more lives than the plague and cholera combined. They ride upon our villages with flames and trouble in their wake, kicking in our doors, drinking our taverns dry, and then expecting us to turn out our pockets and suck the mud from their boots! When we speak, they cut out our tongues. When we stand, they cut us down."

Out from a nearby pot, Jacob takes a dagger and then slams it into the table. "But no longer! This village may be a shithole, but it's *our* shithole, and we'll play host to these vagabonds no more! Murderhobos must die!"

The PCs are now free to speak, though ensure Jacob makes the following suggestions during their conversation:

- $\Omega$  To defeat the murderhobos, we must use our environment and numbers to our advantage. Find out what the other villagers suggest; see if you can rally them to our cause.
- $\Omega$  It's best we take out the murderhobos Butch and Vee separately, and so the other doesn't see. Otherwise, we risk one of them regrouping with the wizard in the fortalice. Once we've dealt with those two, we can raid the fortalice together.
- $\Omega$  The longer we take, the more villagers the murderhobos will likely kill and, in turn, the harder it will be to kill the murderhobos. Time is of the essence, but rushing would also be foolish.

To complete the prologue, skip the adventure forward so the PCs are at home, huddling by fires to stave off the crippling cold of night. Then have them fall asleep.

# **Backend**

When the PCs wake, read the following:

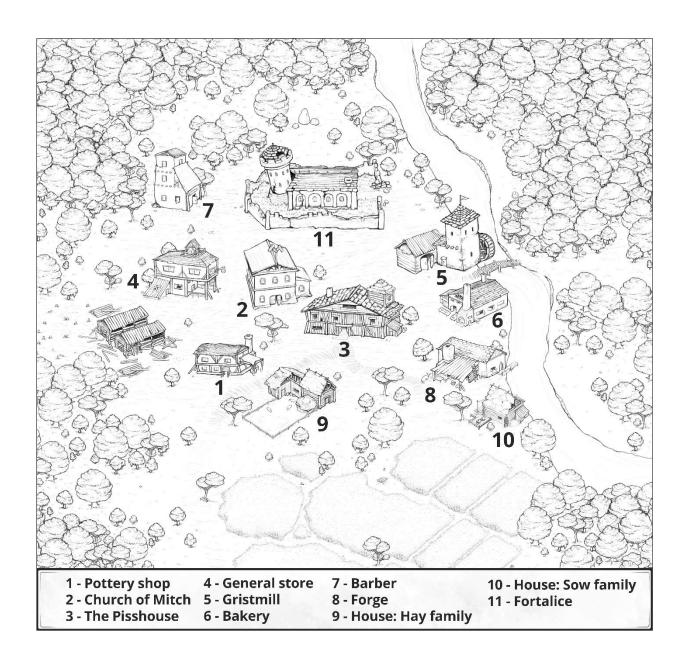
The morning creeps in through your window like a spectre, as do the telltale perfumes of Backend — cow shit, pig shit, some other kind of shit.

Ah, Backend, a scattering of sunken log cabins amid a woodland as dark and hairy as a troll's crotch. Even the village's one stone tower is flaccid — longing to expire into the earth from which it was made. And no less despairing are the villagers. Coinless, toothless, half-brained. They linger here like flies on a dead pony, bleeding their fingers on their plebeian crafts to pass the winters under which they too shall soon expire. Probably before they reach thirty. Probably in pain. All in all, it's a dreary fuedal village, but the rain pissed the snow away a few weeks ago, and things could certainly be worse.

But things *are* worse. Murderhobos have come to Backend, and *you* agreed to do something about it.

# It truly is the ass-end of the world.

It's recommended you now skip the adventure forward so the PCs are together in the middle of the village at around 8:00 AM and then share the map of Backend (**attachment 2**) with your players, letting them decide what to do.



# Backend (cont.)

As this is a one-shot adventure, there is no need for the PCs to venture beyond Backend. If they try to, warn them that **orcs**, **trolls**, and other nasties stalk the woods, and to leave is to die.

# **Aspects**

### **Domesticated animals**

Various domesticated animals roam free throughout Backend. These include **draft horses**, cattle, **goats**, chickens, ducks, dogs, and **cats**.

### Rats

For every human in Backend, there are fifty **rats**. They chew through grain sacks, wood, and sometimes bone. You may want to have a **swarm of rats** scurry out from their floorboard labyrinths to attack the PCs at some point too.

### **Bear traps**

After learning about the bear traps from Oliver Loaf, a PC succeeding on a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the woods over the east side of the river finds two hunting traps (see the SRD5).

### Log pile

A lumberyard rots near the woods on the west side of Backend. Here, a tall pile of logs strains the ropes which fasten it. The ropes can easily be cut, and a creature standing under the pile must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 8d4 bludgeoning damage as the logs roll over them. A creature hit by the logs is knocked prone.



### **Trapdoor**

After learning about it from Sir Stuart, a PC succeeding on a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the woods north of the fortalice finds a rock with a trapdoor underneath it. The trapdoor opens to a tunnel leading to a hidden door behind a bookshelf in the dungeon of the fortalice. Inside the dungeon, a PC succeeding on a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the hidden door.

# 1) Pottery shop

If the PCs near the shop, read the following:

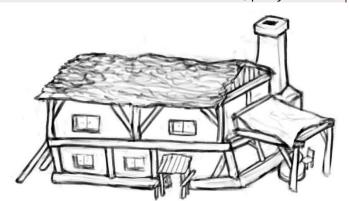
A miserable little structure, Jacob and Isabelle's home and pottery shop wraps its arms around its knees and weeps upon the earth. The decking out front is infested with pots, clustered like bubbling fungus. The chimney is a lifelong smoker choking out their final breaths.

If the PCs enter the shop, read the following:

A fire slowly perishes in the brick kiln against the back wall, and shadows start to reclaim the myriad pots, plates, and goblets spread like polyps through this sunken home. A pottery wheel stands in the middle of the room, crusty as bread.

If the PCs enter the cellar, read the following:

This is where unwanted things go to die. All but the round table in the centre is caked in wet, pasty dust.



# **Occupants**

Jacob and Isabelle Clay (wed)

### **NPC: Jacob Clay**

Potter. Made of bone, tendon, ligament, and a few layers of skin. Eyes are beads pushed into dough. Half the hairs in his head are grey. The muscles on his throat cover his trachea like strings on a loom. Revels in attention and enjoys the *idea* of leading a resistance more than anything. Happy living in his own filth.

It's up to you what Jacob does during the adventure. He may simply join the party, possibly falling under the control of a player if their PC dies, or he may even act against the murderhobos on his own. You may even have the murderhobos *murder* Jacob.

### **NPC: Isabelle Clay**

Farmer and general laborer. Hefty lass with strong hands and the portents of a beard. Her hair is a red cap pulled down over her ears. She waddles more than walks. Sick of her husband's rambling. Wants him to tidy up his damn pots.

If the PCs ask Isabelle about killing the murderhobos, she suggests cutting loose the pile of logs in the lumberyard (aspect: Log pile, location: Backend).

# 2) Church of Mitch

If the PCs near the church, read the following:

The Church of Mitch stands resolute despite the moss sucking the mortar out from between its bricks. The symbol of Mitch, an M on top of a pole, stands like a middle finger on the structure's apex, and the incense coiling away inside smells like burnt hair.

If the PCs enter the church, read the following:

The interior is as cold and naked as a corpse. The stone *burns* to stand on, even through boots. Incense smoke fills the space like an evil fog. An altar to Mitch cuts the fog at the back of the room, and over it, on a bracket bolted into the wall, there lays an iron crosier with the symbol of Mitch for a head. An open door to the side of the altar reveals a coffin-sized chamber in which there cowers a single bed, a bedpan at its foot.



# **Occupants**

# **PC: Penelope Pious**

Priest of Mitch. More robe than anything. Drops to her knees, closes her eyes, and prays to Mitch when bad things happen.

Penelope knows a great evil stirs in the fortalice and that it's harming Backend's connection with Mitch. This is what drives her.

As a PC, Penelope begins with 15 gp.

### **Penelope Pious**

Female human

Armour Class 10 Hit Points 8 Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Religion +3 **Senses** passive Perception 11 **Languages** Common



### **Actions**

*Unarmed Strike. Unarmed Strike:* +1 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.

**Healing word.** Penelope can cast *healing word* at a 1st level spell slot twice per day. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom.

# **Aspects**

### **Crosier of Mitch**

The crosier over the altar is the *Crosier of Mitch*. It's considered a quarterstaff, and it deals an additional 6d6 radiant damage to fiends and undead. It does not require attunement. Penelope knows the crosier was used decades ago to smite a zombie, but she doesn't know exactly what it does.

# 3) The Pisshouse

If the PCs near the Pisshouse, read the following:

Piss on the road, let your hot urine slide back down and bloat your socks, put those socks in the dark for a few days, and then plug 'em up your nose. What you're smelling is what you would smell if you swung in the door to the buckled shack standing (barely) before you.

The Pisshouse, Backend's only drink-hole and only inn. The ale is acid, and the innkeeper is a mule, but they do a decent pie, and the innkeeper's wife wears the hell out of a corset. The beds are full of lice, but what isn't?



If the PCs enter the Pisshouse, read the following:

What the Pisshouse *does* have going for it is the angry fireplace between the door to the kitchen and the stairs ascending to the guest rooms.

The bar top is heavy with ale and tears. One shelf behind the bar has come away from the wall on one end, and it swings back and forth like a pendant. Four round tables loiter on the stone floor. The chairs gathering around the tables will give you arthritis.

# **Occupants**

Gregory and Martha Stein (wed), and Sir Stuart

### **NPC: Gregory Stein**

Innkeeper. Stout, stubborn fellow. Black ponytail licked back with meat grease. Uses spit for polish.

If the PCs ask Gregory about killing the murderhobos, he says Butch sits under the chandelier every time he comes to the Pisshouse; he suggests dropping the chandelier on his head (aspect: Chandelier, location: The Pisshouse).

### **NPC: Martha Stein**

Innkeeper. Unnecessarily hot. Wears a corset. Eyes like the sea, and hair like the waves rolling over it. Plays the lute.

If the PCs ask Martha about killing the murderhobos, she suggests talking to Dana Hay about the poisonous mushrooms her pig ate (aspect: Poisonous mushrooms, location: House: The Hay family).

# 3) The Pisshouse (cont.)

### **NPC: Sir Stuart**

A knight and the lord of Backend. Tall, yet hunched over with the weight of some great lie. A blonde moustache rides his upper lip. Wears a pompous gold doublet and carries a longsword at his side. Pompous in every sense of the word, really. All talk. A coward in the face of danger. Also, he is not a real knight nor lord. He forged his way into the fortalice, and he has no proficiency with a sword whatsoever. Sir Stuart now occupies the deluxe room upstairs in the Pisshouse, venturing down only when Butch isn't there.

Sir Stuart told his villagers that he was about to slay the murderhobos when they took his guard, Maxwell Ward, hostage and threatened to kill him if Sir Stuart tried anything; he vacated the fortalice to save his guard. This is a lie. In reality, Sir Stuart begged them to spare him and kill his guard instead. They spared Sir Stuart only so he could order the villagers to behave. Sir Stuart did not see what happened to Maxwell, but he knows the murderhobo Laird is doing something unsavoury in the fortalice.

If the PCs ask Sir Stuart to help them kill the murderhobos, he refuses, saying he won't risk the safety of his guard nor the village. He also orders them to leave the murderhobos alone, but he does nothing more to enforce this. In the past, when other murderhobo parties came to Backend, Sir Stuart employed similar tactics, which worked to some extent, but these murderhobos are the worst ones yet.

If the PCs ask Sir Stuart about another way into the fortalice, he lies, saying there is none. A PC succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell it is a lie, and if they press Sir Stuart, he tells them the location of a secret entrance — a trapdoor under a rock in the woods north of the fortalice (aspect: Trapdoor, location: Backend).

# **Aspects**

### Items and services for sale

Item or service	Price
Mug of ale	4 ср
Gallon of ale	2 sp
Daily special (e.g. stew, pie, roast)	3 sp
Standard room for one night (two available)	4 sp
Deluxe room for one night (not available)	2 gp

### **Empty tables**

During the murderhobos' occupation, only the murderhobo Butch visits the Pisshouse for food and drink, and Sir Stuart only ventures down from his room when Butch isn't there.

### Chandelier

After learning about the chandelier from Gregory Stein, the PCs notice that its chain goes through the ceiling into one of the standard rooms above. A PC succeeding on a DC 3 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check in the room finds where the chain is anchored to a block of wood under the bed. The bolt fastening the chain can easily be removed. If the chandelier falls while a creature is under it, they must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to dodge it or take 2d12 bludgeoning damage as it crashes down on them. A creature under the fallen chandelier is prone and must use an action to remove the chandelier.

# 4) General store

If the PCs near the store, read the following:

Some punk kid pitched a rock through the window of Albert's store almost a hundred years ago, but Albert will be deep in the cold earth before he coughs up the coin to fix it.

Merchants who get turned around on the road sometimes end up in Backend, and that's when Albert strikes, taking the poor bastards for all their worth.

If the PCs enter the store, read the following:

Frayed ropes and rugs, dusty bottles and jars, mismatched crockery, lamps and candles, ink, paper, burlap sacks, burlap clothes, brass miscellany — these are among the items one can pay exorbitant prices for in old Albert's store. The air in here is as greasy as the proprietor's pork sausage thumbs.

# **Occupants**

### **NPC: Albert Misc**

Owns the general store. Tiny black eyes on either side of a broken nose. Rubs his hands together excitedly when speaking. Lives on the thrill of ripping people off. Hoards gold like a dragon.

If the PCs ask Albert about killing the murderhobos, he says they'll only get *themselves* killed trying.



# **Aspects**

### Items for sale

Item	Quantity	Price
Glass bottle	30	2 cp
Glass jar	30	2 cp
Candle	30	2 cp
Burlap sack	10	2 sp
Burlap tunic	5	4 sp
Burlap pants	5	4 sp
Sheet of paper	30	4 sp
Mismatched cutlery set	5	6 sp
Mismatched crockery set	5	6 sp
Lamp	5	10 sp
Hempen rope	3	2 gp
Rug	3	16 gp
Ink	3	20 gp

### Hidden chest

Albert keeps a chest under some loose floorboards behind the counter. Inside it are two potions of healing and 100 gp. A PC succeeding on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the loose floorboards. If the PCs ask Albert about any items that are not on display, he lies, saying there are none. A PC succeeding on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell it is a lie, and if they press Albert, he reveals the two potions and will sell them for 50 gp each.

# 5) Gristmill

If the PCs near the gristmill, read the following:

The blades of the old mill slap the river with the energy of a dead man. They're bent out of shape too, and as the mill's mechanical innards turn, they shriek and pipe demon-like, gifting every creature in a hundred-foot radius tinnitus.

If the PCs enter the gristmill, read the following:

The spur wheel and stone nut clash like an addict's last teeth. The loose grindstones clap together just beyond the overhead boards, and bits of poorly ground grain fall between the gaps and are flung out as they hit each tier of cog below. Ladders and pulleys grant passage to the floor above, where the hopper spews Backend's meagre harvests into the shoe, and where Henry Miller keeps his bed.

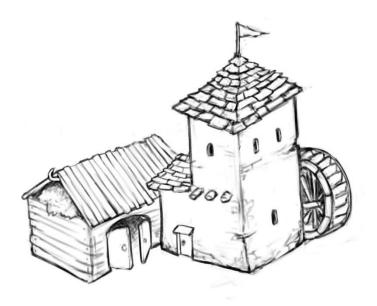
# **Occupants**

### **PC: Henry Miller**

Gristmill operator. Head like an egg. One crushed pinky finger on each hand. Can no longer speak properly because he's incredibly deaf. Everyone just smiles and nods.

The last party of murderhobos that came to Backend busted up Henry's gristmill just for fun. He won't let it happen again.

As a PC, Henry begins with 5 gp.



### **Henry Miller**

Male human



Armour Class 10 Hit Points 10 Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10 **Languages** Common

**Deaf.** Henry makes Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing with disadvantage.

### **Actions**

*Unarmed Strike. Unarmed Strike:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 bludgeoning damage.

# **Aspects**

### **Decibels**

A creature entering the gristmill must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become temporarily deaf, gaining disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing for 3 hours.

# 6) Bakery

If the PCs near the bakery, read the following:

The one breath of fresh air in all Backend, Oliver's bakery stands proud and true, effusing ever the smell of delicious warm bread.

If the PCs enter the bakery, read the following:

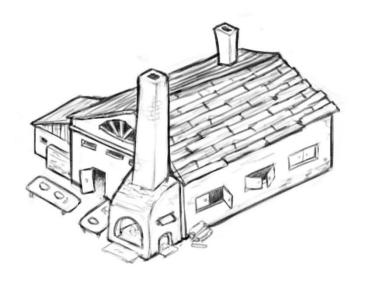
An oven, several bread racks, and two kneading tables make up the front of this shop. Between two of the racks, an open doorway offers a glimpse into a cozy room which is adorned with indoor plants and a red rug that really makes the whole place pop. Various loaves cool the larger racks, and the smaller racks bear scones, muffins, and honey cakes.

# **Occupants**

### **NPC: Oliver Loaf**

Baker. Wears a white apron far too small for his chest, on which he wears his heart. Hair blonde as butter. About the healthiest man in the village.

If the PCs ask Oliver about killing the murderhobos, he says he left two bear traps in the woods over the east side of the river, where he used to collect honey for his cakes, and that the PCs can have them (aspect: Bear traps, location: Backend).



# **Aspects**

### Items for sale

Item	Price
Scone	3 ср
Muffin	3 ср
Honey cake	5 cp
Loaf of fresh white bread	1 sp
Loaf of fresh brown bread	1 sp

# 7) Barber

If the PCs near the barber, read the following:

Need something lopped off? Sewn on? Maybe you just need a trim. Jane Razor is a bloody *wizard* with a shaving razor, and she's accidentally killed just *five* of her patients. The house in which she lives with her son is either as silent as her husband in his grave or tremoring with the screams of her next victim.

If the PCs enter the barber, read the following:

A dry crimson puddle stains the centre of the room, and over it is a wooden torture table, upon which Jane performs her surgeries. Saws and pliers and other instruments of pain bathe in a beaker of bloody vodka. A brass swing-arm lamp bends over the beaker, looking to take a drink. A chair sits before a mirror thick with dust. In the dust, someone has written: "How can I abandon hope if I had none to begin with?"



# **Occupants**

Jane Razor and her son, Charlie

# **PC: Jane Razor**

Barber. Black hair pointing every which way but down. Bloody handprints on the front of her light-brown smock. Eyes like rubies. Laughs *solely* at inappropriate moments.

The last murderhobo party that came to Backend killed Jane's husband. She won't let the same thing happen to her son.

As a PC, Jane begins with 20 gp.

### **NPC: Charlie Razor**

Barber's assistant. A ghost of a boy. Passes instruments to his mother without needing to be told. Thinks, but often forgets to speak.

If the PCs ask Charlie about killing the murderhobos, he suggests getting them in for a hair cut and then slitting their throats (aspect: Hair and throat cut, location: Barber).

# **Aspects**

### Services for sale

Service	Price
Hair cut, male	3 sp
Hair cut, female	5 sp
Light surgery	1 gp
Heavy surgery	5 gp

### Hair and throat cut

The PCs may be able to convince a murderhobo to let Jane give them a hair cut. During the hair cut, Jane may make one sneak attack with her razor, dealing an extra 3d6 slashing damage.

# Jane Razor Female human Armour Class 11

Hit Points 8
Speed 30 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Medicine +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Initiative +1

**Surgeon.** While in her barber/home, Jane makes all Wisdom (Medicine) checks with advantage.

### Actions

**Razor.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: (1d4) slashing damage.

# 8) Forge

If the PCs near the forge, read the following:

From the moment the sun rises till the moment it sets, a metal-on-metal tone echoes out through Backend from Ellie Iron's forge. The forge juts out from the side of her house like a tumour, and horses, cattle, and all manner of livestock gather near it to feed off the heat of the furnace burning ruby inside.

If the PCs enter the house, read the following:

The smell of the forge has seeped irrevocably into the timbers and fabrics of the Iron family's home; so too has the matriarch's trade. Metal sculptures stand where any two walls meet — horses, humans, cats, one small dragon. The kitchenware is made of metal as tough as the stuff wagon wheels are made of.

# Occupants

Ellie and Tom Iron and their son, Peter

### **NPC: Ellie Iron**

Blacksmith. Nugget of iron, as the name suggests. Pretty face smeared with grease and metal dust. Smells like burnt skin. Talks short and gruff.

If the PCs ask Ellie about killing the murderhobos, she suggests shoving them in her furnace (aspect: Furnace, location: Forge).

### **NPC: Tom Iron**

General labourer. A weed of a man. Mopes around, sputtering, sneezing. Always pallid.

If the PCs ask Tom about killing the murderhobos, he accidentally coughs all over them.

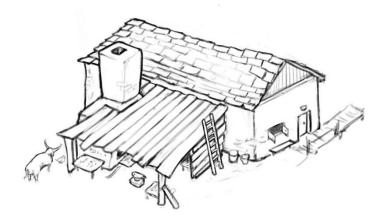
### Disease: The flu

If a character other than Ellie and Peter comes within 5 feet of Tom, they must succeed on a DC 6 Constitution saving throw or contract the flu. Symptoms show in 8 hours, and a character expressing them gains a -3 penalty on all ability checks and loses 5 feet of speed. Each night before bed, an infected character must make a DC 6 Constitution saving throw. If they succeed, they get better by morning. If they fail three times, they die in their sleep on the third night.

### **NPC: Peter Iron**

Blacksmith's assistant. Lanky, onyx-haired lad. One bung arm, but this doesn't stop him from working the forge. Talks as little as his mother and follows her in everything.

If the PCs ask Peter about killing the murderhobos, he suggests burning down the fortalice (aspect: Fireproof, location: Fortalice).



# **Aspects**

### **Services for sale**

Ellie Iron can forge everyday items — such as nails, knobs, locks and keys, chains, horseshoes, and knives — with ease, but she has never needed to make weapons and armour. It takes Ellie up to 1 day to make an everyday item and up to 1 week to make something she hasn't made before. For each day's labor, Ellie charges a flat rate of 2 gp.

### **Furnace**

The PCs may try to kill a murderhobo by holding them in the furnace. A creature trying to hold another in the furnace must win a Strength (Athletics) contest, with the defending creature able to use Dexterity (Acrobatics) instead. A creature held in the furnace takes 8d4 fire damage, after which another contest must be made to keep them in. This process is repeated until the defending creature escapes or burns to death, screaming all the while.

# 9) House: Hay family

If the PCs near the house, read the following:

It's hard to tell where the pigsty ends and where the Hay family's house begins. Bloated sows roll in the mud, and their juicy little piglets smile and kick about, oblivious to the sizzling fate awaiting them.

If the PCs enter the house, read the following:

It's as if a throng of people brought the mud in from outside on their shoes and had a bloody ballroom dance in the living room. Disease is thick in the air, tangible like dust.

# **Occupants**

Dimitri and Dana Hay and their daughter, Mary

### **NPC: Dana Hay**

Farmer and general labourer. Stress has pulled this woman's hair out. She might have been pretty once, but now the dirt under her nails is as much a part of her as her burlap skin. Makes jittery small talk out of habit.

If the PCs ask Dana about killing the murderhobos, she says one of her pigs got out the other day, ate some red mushrooms, and died. She then points them towards a copse of trees near her house (aspect: Poisonous mushrooms, location: House: Hay family).

# **NPC: Dimitri Hay**

Farmer and general labourer. More pig than the animals he tends. Prefers to watch his wife and daughter work than get his fat fingers dirty.

If the PCs ask Dimitri about killing the murderhobos, he sucks residual grease from his thumb and tells them their best bet is to do nothing at all, as Sir Stuart ordered.

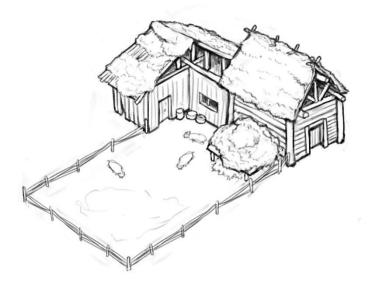
### **NPC: Mary Hay**

Farmer and general labourer. Malnourished little urchin. Red, blistery rash claiming her body. Almost a teenager, yet she has the linguistic skills of a two-year-old.

If the PCs ask Mary about killing the murderhobos, she scratches her rash like a rabid dog and says something unintelligible.

### **Disease: Chickenpox**

If a PC touches Mary, have them roll a Constitution saving throw, but don't tell them whether they succeed or fail. The symptoms of chickenpox won't show for 8 days at minimum, and the adventure will not last 8 days. This is here just to freak them out.



# **Aspects**

### **Poisonous mushrooms**

After learning about them from Dana Hay, a PC succeeding on a DC 3 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the copse of trees near her house finds a cluster of red mushrooms. After consuming the mushrooms, either raw or in a refined form, a creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage and become poisoned for 6 hours.

# 10) House: Sow family

If the PCs near the house, read the following:

Grain stalks bend in the breeze, breaking in waves over the sodden timbers of the Sow family's home. A pair of ghosts operate the rocking chairs on the front deck. Peppers swing in clusters from the roof. A cow walks in a slow circle nearby, looking for somewhere to throw over and die.

If the PCs enter the house, read the following:

A fire burns small but sturdy in the fireplace, casting light on the maroons, burgundies, and other variants of red finishes in this room. It smells of old hands and menthol tobacco. Death lingers in the shadowy corners of the open ceiling, keen to do his job and move on.

# Occupants

Bob and Lois Sow (wed)

### PC: Bob Sow

Farmer and general labourer. Plagued with arthritis but hardly complains. Knows a little about everything. A simple, honest man who remembers the old days, back when Backend was a respectable place. He still cares for it, some.

Years ago, a group of murderhobos killed Bob and Lois's son. Bob is on his last legs, and he wants to go down fighting, for Backend's sake.

As a PC, Bob begins with 15 gp.

### **NPC: Lois Sow**

Farmer and general labourer. A tough old girl. Works like a horse. Suffering from bouts of sweating sickness. Doesn't have long left.

If the PCs ask Lois about killing the murderhobos, she says time will deal with them as it deals with all, and that she wishes Bill would put down his pitchfork and stay home.



### **Bob Sow**

Male human

Armour Class 9 Hit Points 8 Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +3, History +1, Nature +1
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Initiative -1

**Respected.** Bob makes all Charisma checks with advantage.



**Actions** 

**Pitchfork.** Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: (1d4) piercing damage.

### **Disease: Sweating sickness**

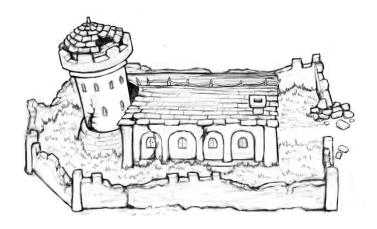
If a character other than Bob comes within 5 feet of Lois, they must succeed on a DC 6 Constitution saving throw or contract sweating sickness. A character with sweating sickness must make two Constitution saving throws per day, 12 hours apart. If the result is 18 or higher, they get better. If the result is 3 or lower, they die. If the result is between 3 and 18, they suffer the symptoms of sweating sickness for 1 hour, during which time they have disadvantage on all ability checks and lose 10 feet of speed. Symptoms include apprehension, shivering, headaches, sore muscles, and fatigue; during a bout, these progress to sweating, delirium, a rapid pulse, and an overwhelming urge to sleep, during which death may occur.

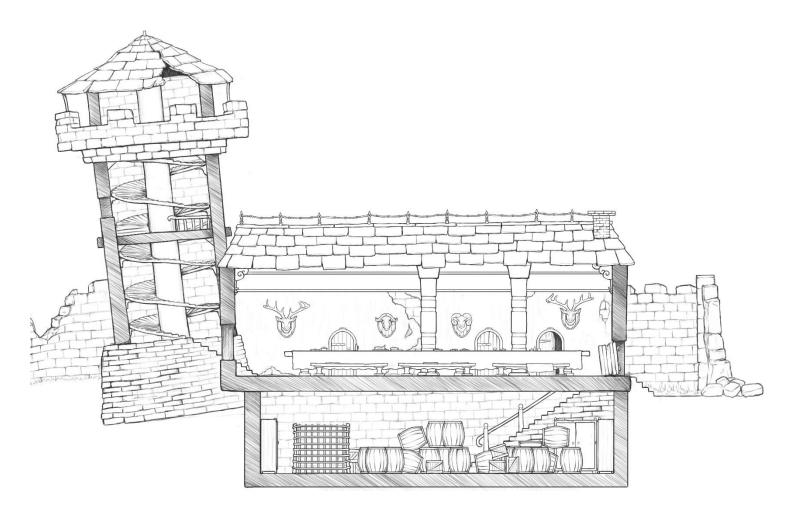
# 11) Fortalice

If the PCs near the fortalice, read the following:

The fortalice's tower leans away from the stone keep at its base like a drunk trying to escape the tackle of a well-meaning friend. The wall enclosing the tower and keep *really* pushes the meaning of the word "enclosing." It is a weather-worn stump, a row of gum without teeth. Inside the wall is a concentric layer of fetid grass, mottled with mosquito puddles.

All in all, there are two floors above ground (one in the keep and two in the tower) and, rumour has it, a dungeon beneath. The top of the tower is crenellated, but long has it been since Backend held any prize worth the keen eye of an archer.



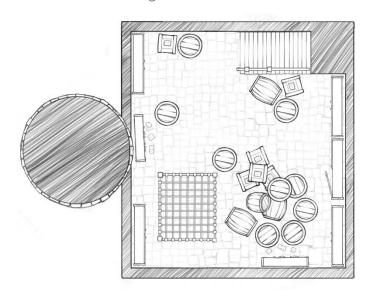


If the PCs enter the first floor, read the following:

Thick rugs and runners cover nearly every tile of the stone floor, and a fire roars in a fireplace before a kingly lounge. A table reaches almost from wall to wall, bearing the scraps of a hundred feasts. Over it creak two chandeliers, and the severed and stuffed heads of large game animals stare at each other across the sweltering gulf between. Three travelling packs spill their guts against the back of the lounge.

Several lesser rooms connect to this main one, and an open archway leads into the base of the tower, in which a spiral stair begins its way up. Nothing else, besides the overwhelming stench of sulphur, occupies this first floor of the tower.

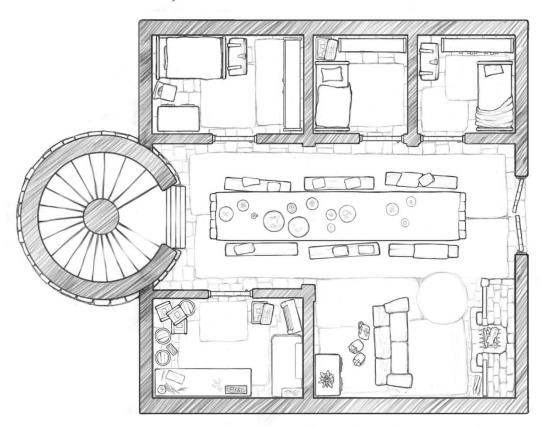
### Dungeon



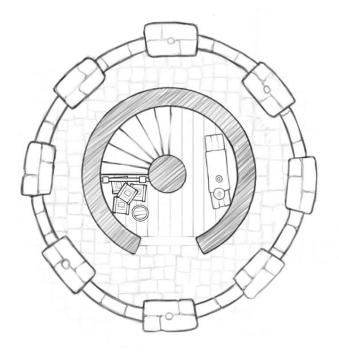
If the PCs enter the dungeon, read the following:

Shelves cluttered with putrid vials and soggy books line the walls. A gnawed human skeleton sits in a cage in the southwest corner of the room, clutching its ribs. Most of the floor space is filled up with barrels and crates. Rats run circles through the room, whipping your ankles as they pass.

First floor



If the PCs enter the second floor of the tower, Laird will likely be there. Refer to the section "The ritual" in this location when describing this room.



# **Aspects**

### **Run-down**

The fortalice is run-down; its doors and windows can be destroyed or opened with brute force. Its front door has 30 hp, and a creature succeeding on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check can force it open. The fortalice's windows each have 20 hp, and a creature succeeding on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check can break a window's bars out of a window frame. If the PCs use violence or brute force to enter the fortalice, Laird hears them and gets ready for a fight.

### **Climbable**

There are gaps and cracks in the bricks of the fortalice. A creature succeeding on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check can scale the walls. If they use a grappling hook, the DC is reduced to 8. A creature falling from the top of the first floor falls 10 feet and takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A creature falling from the second floor of the tower falls 20 feet and takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage. All the windows on the tower are covered merely with shutters, which can easily be opened, and the external door on the second floor of the tower is missing.

### **Fireproof**

Made mostly of stone, the fortalice is reasonably fireproof, but a fire large enough will flood the interior with smoke. If exposed to a sufficient amount of smoke, a creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, they begin suffocating (see the SRD5). They must repeat the throw at the start of each turn they begin in the smoke. A room full of smoke is considered lightly obscured (see the SRD5).

### **Travelling packs**

If the PCs search the travelling packs against the lounge, they find 50 gp, two *potions of healing*, and one *alchemist's fire*.

### **Trapdoor**

A PC succeeding on a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check in the northeast bedroom on the first floor finds a trapdoor underneath the bed. This opens to the flight of stairs descending into the dungeon.

# Murderhobos

Members of a murderous "adventuring" party, Butch, Vee, and Laird were passing through Backend on the way to a city when Laird decided the fortalice would be a good place to summon a **hell hound**. Happy to pass the time drinking things and breaking things, Butch and Vee agreed.

### **General proactive actions**

While Laird is busy in the fortalice, either Butch or Vee — or both of them together — may screw with the village in the following ways:

- **Ω** Haggling for fun
- $\Omega$  Stealing and burgling
- $\Omega$  Collecting "protection" fees
- Ω Making villagers fight for entertainment
- Ω Kicking down doors
- Ω Tipping cows
- $\Omega$  Murdering someone for no good reason

These proactive actions, especially the last one, act as a sort of pressure mechanic against the PCs. As the murderhobos kill more villagers, less aspects are available to the PCs, making slaying the murderhobos more and more difficult, just as Jacob Clay tells them in the candlelight meeting. Of course, you may also have the murderhobos screw with Backend however else you see fit.

Each murderhobo, including Laird, has unique proactive actions too. Like general proactive actions, the murderhobos undertake these whether the PCs are there to see it or not. It's up to you when the murderhobos undertake proactive actions.

### **General reactive actions**

If attacked, Butch and Vee won't pull their punches and will fight to the death.

If they learn about the villager uprising, Butch and Vee will use whatever means necessary to find out who's involved and execute them.

If either Butch or Vee is killed and the other learns about it, they try to return to the fortalice, where they wait for Laird to complete the ritual. They then assault Backend together.

### **Murderhobo: Butch**

Rugged male human clad in rusty mail. Stubbly cheeks and chin. Battleaxe over his shoulder. Loves an ale or twelve.

### **Proactive actions**

Unless he's carrying out a general proactive action, Butch drinks in the Pisshouse and listens to Martha Stein play the lute from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

He may also try it on with Martha, enraging Gregory Stein. Butch then tries to attack Gregory, but he might not kill him; that's up to you.

### Butch

Male human (medium humanoid)



**Armour Class** 15 (chain shirt) **Hit Points** 36 **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving throws Str +5, Con +4 Skills Athletics, Acrobatics Senses passive Perception 11 Languages Common

**Improved Critical.** Butch's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

### Actions

**Battleaxe.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit: (1d8 +5) slashing damage.

**Second Wind.** Butch has a limited well of stamina that he can draw from to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain HP equal to 1d10 + 3. He can only use this feature once per day.

### Murderhobo: Vee

Skittish female tiefling. Sapphire-blue skin. Eyes as white and muscle as hard as marble. Laughs maniacally.

### **Proactive actions**

Unless she's carrying out a general proactive action, Vee hassles Ellie Iron about forging her new weapons — daggers and darts and such — between 2:00 PM and 2:30 PM.

Between 2:30 PM and 5:00 PM, Vee trains in the lumberyard, splitting wood with her fists and feet.

### Vee

Female tiefling (medium humanoid)

Armour Class 13 Hit Points 27 Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Saving throws** Str +2, Dex +4 **Skills** Acrobatics, Athletics

Senses Darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Infernal



Hellish Resilience. Vee has resistance to fire damage.

*Ki.* Vee's training allows her to harness the mystical energy of ki. Her access to this energy is represented by a number of ki points. Vee has 3 ki points. She can spend these points to fuel various ki features. Vee knows three such features: Flurry of Blows, Patient Defense, and Step of the Wind. When Vee spends a ki point, it is unavailable until after she spends at least 30 minutes meditating, during which she regains all of her ki points.

Flurry of Blows. Immediately after Vee takes the Attack action on her turn, she can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.

Patient Defense. Vee can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on her turn.

Step of the Wind. Vee can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on her turn, and her jump distance is doubled for the turn.

### **Actions**

**Unarmed Strike.** Unarmed Strike: +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit*: (1d4 +2) bludgeoning damage.

### Murderhobo: Laird

Pallid male dwarf in dark robes. Black sacks under his eyes. Nose like a fist. Uses a tome bound in human skin as an arcane focus. His own skin is a canvas for rune tattoos. Uses others to get what he wants. Loves to watch things writhe and crumple in flame.

### Laird

Male hill dwarf (medium humanoid)

Armour Class 9 Hit Points 30 Speed 25 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	СНА
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving throws Int +4, Wis +4
Skills Arcana, Insight
Senses Darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Infernal

**Dwarven Resilience.** Laird has advantage on saving throws against poison, and he has resistance against poison damage.

**Spellcasting.** Laird is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): firebolt, mage hand, minor illusion
- 1st level (4 slots): burning hands, mage armour, shield, identify
- 2nd level (2 slots): flaming sphere, scorching flame

### Actions

*Unarmed Strike. Unarmed Strike:* +2 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.

### The ritual

Laird is trying to summon a **hell hound** with an ancient ritual he learnt on a recent quest. This ritual requires a summoning circle, candles, incense, an incantation, and a sacrifice. The summoner must draw the summoning circle, burn candles and incense around the circle, speak the incantation so the circle begins to glow, repeat the incantation until the glow turns into a trimming of infernal fire, and then gut a live medium humanoid in the circle. The hell hound digs its way out through sacrifice's gutless torso. Laird conducts the ritual on the second floor of the fortalice's tower.

At some point during the adventure, Laird will send Butch and Vee into the village to abduct an NPC villager for the sacrifice. If they are unable to do so for any reason, Laird sacrifices Sir Stuart's guard, Maxwell Ward, whose fate was intentionally left unclear for this very purpose. If Laird doesn't need Maxwell for the sacrifice, have it so the murderhobos killed him and stuffed him in a cupboard or barrel somewhere in the fortalice (he's wearing a chain shirt and a belt with a shortsword on it). You may choose which villager Butch and Vee try to abduct, but it's recommended you pick someone the PCs like. The ritual itself can take as long as you need it to, but to indicate that something is indeed happening in there, the fortalice effuses a sulphuric reek which can be smelt from anywhere in the village. It worsens by the hour.

If Laird successfully summons the hell hound, he tests his new familiar by commanding it to burn down the entire village.

### **Reactive actions**

If the PCs enter the room in which Laird is conducting the ritual, he pauses the ritual to try to kill them. Alternatively, have it so the PCs enter just as the **hell hound** births itself into the world.

If the other murderhobos don't return to the fortalice at night for whatever reason, Laird doesn't care. He simply continues with the ritual.

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