Realm Fables

Preformed Settings: Volume One

SHIELDICE STUDIO.

Introduction

Realm Fables are source-books containing a collection of micro-settings, tables for random generation and much more for your favourite fantasy role playing games. Most content and tables within use bold, large fonts to make them easy to read on the fly while at the table, but the tools and texts in 'Realm Fables' work best when part of a meticulously preplanned adventure or campaign setting. The content is meant to spark the imagination of the Game Master and help them push through the creative blocks we all find ourselves struggling with from time to time. So mix it up! Chop up and change sections of the micro-settings, cherry-pick specific ideas from tables, use specific NPCs or dungeons and leave others for later, or simply play one of the full settings of 'Realm Fables' as they are laid out in the books. Use the collection of tables to generate your own settings, from towns to cities, NPCs and monsters, items and weapons, or roll against the tables on the fly whilst running your games. If the party of adventurers happen to take a turn you hadn't yet thought of or planned for, these tables can quickly get you out of a tight spot or a creative bind. However you choose to use the system neutral settings and tools of 'Realm Fables', good luck with the crafting of other worlds, and happy (or not so happy) adventuring to your players...

Written, illustrated and designed by Jay Merritt.

Contents Page

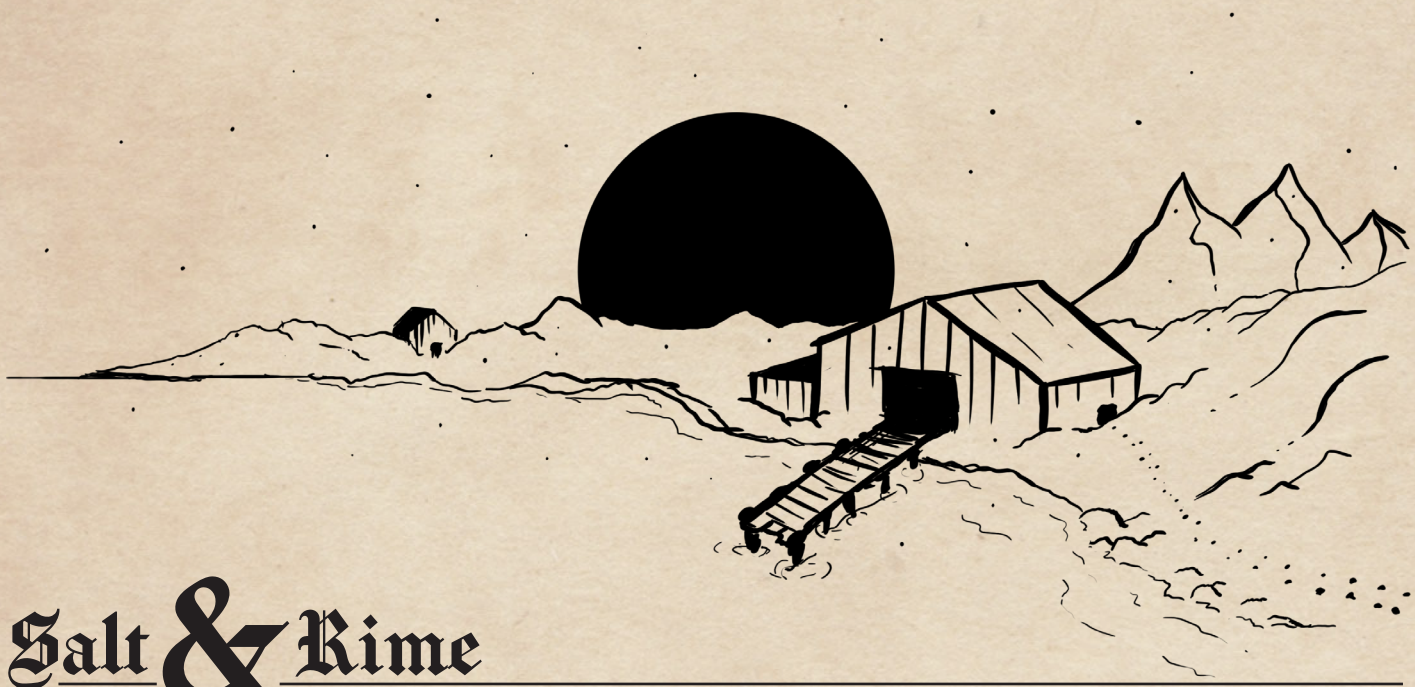
1 Intro
2 Contents

Salt & Rime

3 Story
5 Introduction & Hooks
7 NPCs
8 Creatures
9 The Scattered Isles
10 Map
11 Location Details
14 Wreckage of the Norn-Tongue
15 Location Details Continued
18 Important Notes
19 The Quiet Baroness
21 Encounters
23 Flora
24 Fauna
25 Mysteries & Goals

Shadow & Ash

28 Story
29 Introduction & Hooks
31 Notes on a Hexcrawl
32 The Four Counties
33 Hexworld Map
34 The Quarter Lands
35 Factions
37 NPCs
39 Monsters & Enemies
41 Spell Book
43 The Myst Fort
44 College of the Umbra Coven
45 Within the Sundered Tree
46 The Tomb Under Tethra
47 The Town of Dampholt
49 Encounters
51 Flora
52 Fauna
53 Mysteries & Goals



Salt & Rime

Gunnar's boots hit the packed layer of snow on the wharf with a crunch, his nose tickled by the smell of rotten whale flesh. No whalers greeted him there and he was thankful for it. The thought of those men who killed beasts for coin made him spit into the water. His row-boat was tied and bobbed behind him, chunks of ice rapping against its side. The dark fur across his shoulders tickled his neck and the beads in his long red beard jingled on the salty breeze. He began to pace toward the old whaling station at the other end of the wharf, glancing back just once to spy the murky silhouette of the Quiet Baroness. The fog trailed cold fingers across the Verglas. That ship was his only home now, his silent maiden of the sea, and he was honoured to have been made First Mate. The shadows of the whaling station loomed over him, its wooden planks distorted by harsh winds and frozen rains.

'So,' a voice said from where the dark became like coal, 'you finally decided to venture on land.'

Gunnar Stone-fists grunted.

'Please,' the voice said. 'Try not to kill anyone, Gunnar.'

'I can't promise anything,' he replied. 'One of them whalers so much as looks at me, he's getting a mouthful of rock.' Gunnar lifted his fists, stone knuckledusters wrapped about them.

The owner of the voice moved into the light. 'Put them away,' she commanded.

He grunted again but complied. 'Run out of ale on the ship, Captain Thyra.'

'Let's visit old man Hargyle, then. See if we can't convince him to gift us a barrel or two.'

Thyra walked beside him now, the last pale light of day casting an eerie glow across her face. Her hair was tied up in two buns, her cheeks and hands tattooed, dual rapiers at her waist. Gunnar was a foot taller and muscular, but she had a presence felt by all, a certain danger that dripped into the air around her. Gunnar had seen her single-handedly kill four barbarians of the Amber Coast with nothing but a naval dirk. He grinned as he watched her step through the snow. His Captain, she who had saved him from the gallows, and to who he owed a blood debt. Gunnar and Thyra were bound now.

He spied in the snow a wooden toy, a carved boat for a whaler's child back home, wherever that may be. He thought then of his own son and wondered which waters that young and famed pirate now sailed. The daylight left them and all became a shadowed world. The bay was lit now by the shimmering moon, seen only a little through the towering clouds. Silence save the crunching of boots. Thyra stopped pacing and looked to the skies. Gunnar stopped beside her. The red hairs which grew from tattooed serpents on his arms stood on end in the frigid air.

'What's wrong?' he asked.

Thyra breathed out a vaporous cloud. 'Listen,' she whispered. 'Can you hear them?'

Gunnar Stone-fists strained his ears. 'Hear who?'

'Wait, it will grow louder.'

The evening carried soft voices to him then, overlaid, a beautiful chant which haunted him to his core. He could feel the ocean in those ancient words, see the wind on their tongues. He shivered.

'The People of the Pass,' Thyra said to him. 'They sing in the hope that the sickness of the Frost will leave them. They pray to the winds and waves with song.'

Gunnar had never heard voices so beautiful. 'Who are they, these people?'

'A race from before the times of man. Simple, tribal. They are enemies to none. Allies to none.' Thyra began to pace again toward Hargyle's Hovel in the whaler's village.

He followed her, and though he trusted his captain's knowledge and found the song mesmerising, it put a fear within his broad chest, as if the strange people of the mountain pass knew of horrors here which he did not. As the buildings came into view, like inky stains in the night, he saw white eyes watching from the dark, white fur and bone. The tribesman jerked its head to the side as if intrigued. Before Gunnar could react, the creature was lost behind the wooden slats of Hargyle's Hovel.

The interior smelled of stale ale, sweat and cinnamon pipe weed. Three whalers were present, two of the three asleep, one in his own vomit.

'My kind of place,' Gunnar grinned.

He felt a scratching beneath his fur vest, tiny feet clawing. The warmth of the place had awoken Nut, his pet ferret, who slunk out from beneath the furs and rested on Gunnar's shoulder, tiny black nose sniffing the air.

'Hargyle, you old goat,' Thyra said, spreading her arms in greeting.

'You and your scum still here, then?' Hargyle grumbled from behind the bar. He sat on a stool so low that only his head was visible, nose ripe like a fresh tomato, grey hair marred by an old scar that ran across his head.

'Still here,' Thyra said. 'Looking for some supplies.'

'Hah! Not enough to go around for me and mine. Best cough up some serious coin if you want into our stocks.'

'You and yours look as if they could use a little less ale,' Gunnar said, eyeing the drunkards at the tables. One of the whalers lifted his head from the wet table with an angry stare, saw Gunnar and Thyra, panicked, then planted his head back down into his own spew.

'And who's this one, then?' Hargyle asked.

'Gunnar,' Thyra answered. 'First Mate.'

'Looks like a bloody savage.' Hargyle stood and was taller than he had seemed, though hunched in his old age.

'I can hear you, old man,' Gunnar replied, feeling the rough stone of the dusters in his pocket. Hargyle ignored him.

'We can pay,' Thyra said. 'But I believe our cause and yours to be one in the same. Why not aid us, then perhaps we can all go home?'

'You ain't here to rid us of the ice or the illness, girl. You're here to line your pockets out there on the Verglas.'

'Like you line your pockets by killing helpless creatures?' Gunnar growled.

'Put a muzzle on your savage, Captain,' Hargyle said.

Gunnar drew his fist from a pocket, fingers locked through the holes of the stone knuckleduster. Nut, the ferret, hissed.

Thyra raised a hand. 'Stop. Gunnar, stop.' She turned to Hargyle. 'You're a miserable wretch, and having been in this freezing bay for only four days, I can see why. But how long have you and yours been trapped here? How long has the weather been against you?'

Hargyle was stilled by the questions, his dark eyes watching the walls of the hovel. 'Fourteen months,' he said. 'Fourteen, cold, damned months.'

'Help me,' Thyra continued. 'Help my crew and we'll see this mystery solved, Hargyle, I swear it.'

The old man sighed. 'The weather and the illness aren't connected, Captain. You find a cure, we're still stuck here.'

'The People of the Pass disagree. They think it all connected.'

'Bah! Superstitious folk. More of theirs have been taken by it than ours. Probably those ugly things that caused it.'

Gunnar found it amusing, that a man with such features as Hargyle's could call anyone, or anything, ugly.

'Maybe so, but I'll need supplies to get to the bottom of it. This thing, this dark affliction, it will spread across the seas, Hargyle. This place is the source of it. We need to cut it off at the neck.'

'How?' Hargyle sounded exhausted. 'How will you find the source, let alone cure it?'

Thyra looked to Gunnar. He felt a worry building as he thought of Doctor Hallvard, locked beneath the deck of the Quiet Baroness, skin slowly turning to ice, mind drifting like a bottle at sea. The Doctor had saved all of their lives on many an expedition of the Quiet Baroness. He was a most valued crew member. Gunnar knew Thyra cared greatly for him, and he, the Stone-fist of the seas, would die for both of them.

'I don't know,' Thyra said. 'The answers are out there, on the waters of the Verglas. My gut tells me so.'

Hargyle was still for a moment. His jaw moved, chewed, as he mulled it all over. 'Best warm that gut, then. Take some barrels of ale, dried meat, blankets.' He stared at Gunnar. 'You,' he said. 'Savage. I can read a man's lies like a book. You follow her. Do you trust her?'

'To my death,' Gunnar replied, flickering candlelight shifting the contours of his body.

'Very well.' Hargyle sat back in his stool and closed his eyes to the warmth of the place. 'If the sea takes you before you visit again, tell those dead in the deep I'll be there shortly.'

True night had fallen over the sea of Verglas and made it black and calm beneath the stars. The song of the People of the Pass had ended and in its place a tormented wailing rang out across the bay. Gunnar and Thyra exchanged a worried look then made for the wharf. Gunnar had a barrel beneath each arm and Thyra had blankets over her shoulder and a large pouch of dried meat. Their footsteps were rushed.

A commotion was ahead and through the gloom Gunnar could make out the shapes of whalers in a brawl.

'Just drunken men,' he said.

Thyra did not reply and instead moved closer to the frozen sands of the bay. A light snowfall had begun, scant orbs of it drifting here and there. From the black a lantern burst into an orange aura and Gunnar saw all as it was.

His cries were harrowing, piercing the mountains and the waters like an icy blade. His neck was wrapped in rope and whalers pulled him this way and that, one of their own, yet no longer. The skin was blistered and cracked, showing beneath slivers of crystalline frost. His eyes could not be seen, dark and hollow. The men who held him down with ropes cried also, some in anger and some in sorrow.

'God of the deep,' Gunnar whispered.

'He's at the end of the sickness cycle. He'll be Frost-Torn by morning.'

'Will they kill him?' Gunnar asked as the men and the circle of bronze light disappeared. They neared the wharf.

'No.' Thyra shook her head. 'They'll bind him and wrap him. They'll leave him for the People of the Pass, who will deliver him to the isle in the north-east, where the Frost-Torn wander freely.'

'Doctor Hallvard, will he...'

Before Gunnar could finish his question, Thyra paused her hasty walk and interrupted. 'Yes,' she said. 'He hasn't much time.'

Gunnar wished to place a hand on his Captain's shoulder, to comfort her, but the barrels in his grasp forbade him.

They reached the wharf without speaking another word, the row-boat caught in moonlight. Gunnar blinked at it, focused his sight. Something was amiss. Its shape. The way it leaned to one side so heavily.

'Captain,' he said, then placed the barrels down. 'Back away. Behind me.'

Nut scampered beneath the furs. Gunnar Stone-fists placed both dusters on his hands and stood in stance as the tentacles slid from the row-boat and the eyes of the Tridenfolk emerged from the rippling waters, teeth bared and catching starlight.

Thyra stepped to his side and drew her rapiers. 'I fight beside you, Gunnar. Always.'

'Together, then, Captain.' Gunnar smiled. 'For Doc Hallvard.'

The shapes of those monstrosities of the deep rose onto the wharf to meet them.

'Together,' Thyra said.

And there beneath the snow, wet flesh met steel and stone amidst a place of salt and rime...

An Introduction to the Micro-Setting of 'Salt & Rime'

Salt & Rime is the first of the Realm Fable settings. A location of icy seas, whalers, ghosts and pirates to be placed into your campaign or game world. There are mystery and encounter concepts laid out here to help you build a quest in the Scattered Isles, but implementing your own ideas or choosing to take from certain sections is encouraged.

Perhaps the party will join Captain Thyra and the crew of the Quiet Baroness to aid them in their search to uncover the cure of the Frost-Torn sickness? Or, maybe, they will take the ship for themselves by force and sail alone between the icy isles.

Alternatively, they could find shelter with the Human Whalers in the old Whaler's Station, or avoid the humans and pirates altogether and seek to befriend the strange People of the Pass to gain access to their ancient knowledge of magical language, songs and sturdy canoes.

Toward the end of this section is an example of the mysteries of the isles, and how they may be uncovered through play, but none of this is set in stone. You may want to simply use the layout and atmosphere of the Scattered Isles as a location for over-world travel.

Some NPCs have been described to populate the location. These people of the Isles can easily be lifted from Salt & Rime and transferred to another setting if you wish, or possibly become a part of your larger campaign if they survive the dangers of the frozen sea of Verglas. Try to think on how your players' party will likely interact with these NPCs, and tweak their given personalities if you think it may make them more trustworthy or likeable to the party if you wish for them to join forces. Maybe add an incentive: A promise of payment from the Captain, an emotional tie to the party or threats they cannot ignore.

All of the main locations of the Scattered Isles on the sea of Verglas are mapped out and described, from the Mountain Pass to a sunken ship that acts as an underwater dungeon. Again, you could take these individual ideas, change them to suit your parties needs or add them to your own settings.

Tables for daily weather, encounters, flora and fauna are all present in order to make the Isles feel alive and offer concepts to build and create from. Roll against these tables while you play for random situations or read through them for quest ideas.

Adventure Hooks: How to Implement 'Salt & Rime'

How do you attach this setting to your current campaign or convince the party to venture here? These are some ideas on how to hook (or force) your players into stumbling across, venturing to, or finding themselves before the snowy skies and lapping waves of the shores of the Verglas.

Setting Hooks

[1] - SNOW & ICE:
If your current campaign is already set in a wintry location, then connecting Salt & Rime should be no problem! Simply have the party come across a Mountain Pass which leads to the Sea of Verglas, and let the adventure unfold. Entice them through the pass by following a trail of blood, dropped loot or strange tracks.

[2] - SEASONAL:
If your current campaign is set in the height of summer or the budding months of spring, bring an untimely winter to the lands. This will make the party realise something magical is afoot. It should then be easy to connect the setting to your wintry world.

[3] - THE HIGH SEAS:
If your current campaign is set on the high seas, near a port or on an island, you can connect Salt & Rime to your campaign by boat. A storm blows the ship the party is currently travelling on to icy waters, where you drift with no wind for days until finally the isle of the Mountain Pass and the Whaler's Station comes into view.

Perhaps in a port town or on an island a Captain could offer payment to travel with them to the sea of Verglas as they have recently lost some crew members.

[4] - PORTALS:
Making your party go through a portal to a new setting can feel a little generic at times, but if done properly it can set up a dangerous situation, leaving them disoriented and helpless. If your current setting is already rich with portal hopping then the party will feel right at home exploring an icy, stone portal which closes behind them when they enter, leaving them helpless in the cold of the Mountain Pass.

Another way to do this is to have a magical NPC create the portal. Perhaps after completing a challenging task in your current campaign, a Wizard, cursed with frosted skin, confronts your party and offers them a job. Go to the sea of Verglas and find the cure for his illness. The mysterious Wizard offers gold as a reward, but claims that the true prize of lifting his curse will be his knowledge of something the party seeks (this can be an unknown destiny, or knowledge to further your current campaign or the personal needs of a player's character). Also, having repercussions to the parties response to this NPC can make it all the more exciting. For instance: If the party agrees, they are each gifted warm winter clothing. White fur cloaks, Snow Boots, Woollen hats. The Wizard

then creates a portal which engulfs them, and they fall into the snow of a collapsed mountain pass on the Scattered Isles of Verglas. If they refuse, however, he is somewhat angered but leaves. The next time the party sleeps they wake late, bathed in the blue light of a tingling portal. Snow flutters about the place. If someone is on watch they are the first to fall through. One by one the party fall into the portal and land in the collapsed mountain pass, without appropriate winter clothing.

Rumour Hooks

[1]- HEARSAY:
Keep laying in rumours throughout the land. Have your party overhear conversations about a frozen sea and a sunken ship full of treasure there. Let whispers of a sickness in another land float through taverns until the party can't resist investigation. This can be easily used in conjunction with any other hook to solidify the intrigue of the Scattered Isles.

[2]- NPC:
Have an NPC the party have already had dealings with confront them about rumours they have heard about the goings on of the setting. An NPC who they deeply trust would work best for this. The NPC could have a personal interest in exploring the rumoured magic and treasures of the Isles and ask the party to join them on their travels.

[3]- NOTICEBOARD:
If the party are currently in a town, have them come across noticeboards and posters put up by the Whaler's wives and families. The notices tell of how their husbands, Whalers, have not returned from the Scattered Isles and a reward is offered for any information or aid given.

[4]- SAILORS:
Sailors in a tavern or a port town who have visited the sea of Verglas and the Scattered Isles before could tell the players of the strange People of the Pass and their magic, and of the wealth the Whalers accumulated there.

Perhaps a ship docks in port and is instantly put under quarantine by the town guard. Further investigation by the party reveals the sailors on-board have contracted some illness that causes the skin to turn to frost. The crew can tell the party about the place where they have sailed from.

Personal Hooks

[1]- TRUSTWORTHY NPC:
Have a trusted, and well-liked, NPC disappear. When the party finds out and investigates, they discover the NPC had a personal connection to a member of the crew of the Quiet Baroness, or one of the Whalers at the station. A family member of the NPC could beg them to follow and assist or save the NPC.

[2]- FROST-TORN SICKNESS / TIMER:
Probably the safest way to be sure the party will travel to the sea of Verglas is to have a member catch the sickness. Highlight the spread of the sickness, and that it will eventually turn the player's character into a mindless Frost-Torn unless they discover a cure. Use rumours or the knowledge of a sailor they could have caught the illness from to give them clues to the direction of the location.

[3]- FAMILY / MYSTERY:
Perhaps one of the party has been searching for a family member, friend or answers to a personal mystery. Drop hints that further answers lie across the Scattered Isles of the Verglas. You could be as subtle or heavy-handed as you like with this. Actually tying up a personal story of the party with the mystery of the Isles will put them in a position where they feel as if they have to investigate, regardless of the dangers that may await them.

[4]- DEATH / ILLNESS:
If you want to make this journey a little more harrowing, have someone close to the party (a trusted NPC, a pet, a family member or even a lover) fall sick and become one of the Frost-Torn. When they witness the one once close to them shambling or die, eyes hollow, they will be driven to find the source of this great sickness, and rid the lands of it. Maybe they will even find a cure for those already turned to frost...

NPCs of the Scattered Isles

NPCs

BROG BARROW-CARVER:

Brog is one of the People of the Pass. He is shy in nature, wearing white furs and large boots. He has a fascination with humans and other races and will sometimes follow them at a distance if they show they mean no harm. He likes to watch the whalers in their working and they have become used to the sight of him slinking about the Station. When with his own people, Brog is a priest of some kind, and he carves archaic patterns into walrus tusks and sings as he places them on the sacred isle of the Shrine of Tusks.

Locations:

- Brog can be found in the Mountain Pass within his people's camp.
- Occasionally he is seen wandering about the Whaler's Station.
- Can be found at the Shrine of Tusks, singing or placing carved walrus tusks there. Brog has a canoe.

Goals and Secrets:

Brog can speak a little of the human tongue, although only to those who gain his trust. His main goal is to worship the gods of the People of the Pass, and pray that the illness of the Frost-Torn is lifted.

HARGYLE:

Hargyle is a human whaler who runs a tavern-like building at the Whaler's Station called Hargyle's Hovel. He wears a long leather coat and has grey hair and a bulbous nose. Through his hair, on the right side of his head, runs a pink scar, caused by a harpoon in his youth. Old and ill-tempered, though never violent.

Locations:

- Hargyle's Hovel in the Whaler's Station.

Goals and Secrets:

Hargyle wants nothing more than to leave the Verglas and return to his wife. He secretly has a deep fondness for the men of the Whaler's Station. He knows of a dead whaler, buried in the snow and frozen behind his hovel, though he hasn't the heart to tell the men who assume the well-liked man has somehow found a way home, back to warmer climates.

CAPTAIN THYRA:

Thyra is captain of the Quiet Baroness. Tattooed and dark haired, she is a commanding figure, especially when her dual rapiers are drawn. A proficient warrior with years of experience at sea, she commands a great respect from her crew. She is stern but fair, and a sadness resides behind her blue eyes.

Locations:

- On the deck of the Quiet Baroness.
- In Hargyle's Hovel.

Goals and Secrets:

Captain Thyra has brought her crew to the Scattered Isles of Verglas with the hope of finding a cure to the frosty skin disease her crew's physician, Doctor Hallvard, has caught. The doctor has saved her life from battle wounds on many occasions. Unknown to the doctor, Thyra loves him. She has vowed to solve the mystery of the strange illness that consumes him before he becomes one of the Frost-Torn. Captain Thyra has lost crew members and wishes to hire a party to work on her ship and help in her quest. In her youth, she was kidnapped by a pirate lord and forced to work on his ship. She learned the ways of the sword and sea, and at the age of fifteen, she killed that pirate who had taken her from her mother and took control of his crew.

DOCTOR HALLVARD:

Physician of the Quiet Baroness. He is currently locked in a storeroom of the lower deck, for fear of him spreading his illness. The frost runs from his red cheeks, through his short beard and down his neck and across his thick arms. He still has his mind, but he will soon become one of the Frost-Torn.

Locations:

- Storeroom on the Quiet Baroness.

Goals and Secrets:

Doctor Hallvard is a loyal crew member and wishes only to serve his Captain, Thyra. He has never spoken to Thyra or the crew of it, but he once had a wife and child who died in a terrible storm, and he has vowed to die at sea to be with them again. The party can ask him how to cure wounds through the storeroom door.

GUNNAR STONE-FISTS

Gunnar is First Mate to Captain Thyra. He is a tall, brooding man. He wears a black fur vest and his arms are covered in serpent tattoos. He uses carved stone knuckledusters as his preferred weapons. His beard is fiery and to his waist, braided with beads. He is distrusting of anyone who is not of the crew of the Quiet Baroness. He has a deep love of animals, so abhors the Whalers as they kill the creatures only for profit.

He has a white and grey pet ferret named Nut. If the party has good intentions toward the crew, Nut takes a liking to one of them, perhaps gaining them the trust of Gunnar.

Locations:

- On the deck of the Quiet Baroness.

Goals and Secrets:

Gunnar's goal is to save Doctor Hallvard and protect Captain Thyra with his life if he must. He owes the Captain a blood debt, as she lost a member of her crew when saving him from the gallows. If his pet ferret, Nut, is hurt or killed by anyone or anything, Gunnar will fly into a fit of rage and become almost unstoppable for a short time.

Creatures of the Scattered Isles

Creatures & Races

PEOPLE OF THE PASS:

The People of the Pass are a timid and private people. They are humanoid and have mottled skin, white eyes and sharpened teeth. They wear walrus headdresses and white fox fur. The gods they worship are not so much deities but the movements of nature itself. They hunt in canoes on the Verglas for walrus meat in order to survive. In honour of their hunt and their gods of the weather they sing beautiful and haunting songs in unison. Sometimes the winding Mountain Pass echoes with their melodies. They mostly ignore other races and are peaceful unless provoked.

Locations:

- The Mountain Pass.
- Shrine of Tusks.
- Rowing in canoes on the sea of Verglas.

Goals and Secrets:

The People of the Pass don't crave riches or expansion like other races, they only wish to live in harmony with the sea of Verglas and survive, and sing songs of their gods together.

HUMAN WHALERS:

These men took to the frozen seas to hunt the large whales and take the produce back home for profit. An extremely cold onset of weather has forced them to mostly hide inside their stations or Hargyle's Hovel. They are most of the time drunk and bored, angry at their isolated post. Fights break out amongst them often. Some have caught the disease and have been treated as best they can be, or taken to the Isle of the Frost-Torn to forever wander, aimless and broken.

Locations:

- The Whaler's Station.

Goals and Secrets:

Their main goal now is to leave the Verglas, as the climate has become inhospitable. If the whalers find out about the Rime-heart on the Quiet Baroness, they will plan and attempt to steal it, so their own vessels might melt the ice, allowing them to finally sail home.

FROST-TORN:

Human Whalers and People of the Pass who have been overtaken by the illness. Their skin is like frosted glass, their eyes hollow. They are beyond treatment. They shamble about, muttering and whispering to themselves like madmen. No longer do they need water and food to survive. They are passive in nature, ignoring others, but if touched the affliction can be caught from their skin. To the north-east of the sea of Verglas, the People of the Pass and the Whalers have put their friends who have become Frost-Torn on an isle there, so they cannot spread the illness. They wander the frozen flats in the fog and snow, talking to themselves about quiet nothings.

Locations:

- Isle of the Frost-Torn.

Goals and Secrets:

The Frost-Torn have no goals and know no secrets, for they are entirely lost and doomed to be forever cold and unsound of mind.

TRIDENFOLK:

Tridenfolk live on the silt floors of the frozen Verglas sea. Tentacled and three eyed with flippered feet, the Tridenfolk are incredible swimmers. They are intelligent creatures and mostly stay beneath the waters, hunting and eating fish and other sea-life. Since the frost illness began, however, they have become increasingly more violent towards dwellers of the land, arming themselves with driftwood tridents and shell shields. The Tridenfolk have attacked both Whalers and the People of the Pass. The cold cannot harm them.

Locations:

- The Sea of Verglas

Goals and Secrets:

The Tridenfolk worship and feed an ancient creature of the deep, a colossal crab, which has become ill. The great crab is becoming one of the Frost-Torn, though the Tridenfolk themselves seem immune to the affliction. They blame the land dwellers for their deity's illness and have become panicked and crazed.

GHOSTS:

The sea of Verglas is haunted, but not in a malicious or vengeful way. The spirits here seem lost, saddened by the hard lives they once endured. Some are silent in their wanderings, but some seek to help the living, especially if their quest is to bring peace and balance back to the Scattered Isles. Most ghosts can be seen floating offshore, or standing in bays, watching the world move ever on, as they stay stranded within their ethereal bodies. Some may continue their death journey if they find a purpose fulfilled or something close to them in life is rested with their corpse.

Locations:

- All across the Isles.

COLOSSAL CRAB OF THE DEEP:

Over a thousand years old, this giant crab slumbers beneath the waves. When it wakes the Tridenfolk worship it and catch for it great feasts of sea creatures. It has become ill, cursed with the frost, becoming Torn. Though peaceful in its nature, it is scared and angered.

Locations:

- Beneath the Sea of Verglas.
- Nearing its full transformation into a Frost-Torn creature, it surfaces and becomes hostile.

The Scattered Isles of the Verglas

The Scattered Isles are an isolated collection of islands of ice and rock, floating on the frozen sea of Verglas. They are rarely visited except by whale hunters and the occasional canoe of the tribes of the Mountain Pass. The ice on the water's surface slows ships to a snail's pace, and the salt winds burn like a cold flame. A recent climate change in the area has seen even colder nights, and the whaler's vessels are all moored, and the men are longing for warmer shores.

Main Locations

[1] - WHALER'S STATION:
The Mountain Pass opens out into a bay. The wooden homes of human whalers are built here. They are dishevelled and snow laps at their bases, piling and drifting about the place. Whale bones scatter the shore. Men trudge through the slush in their furs and snow boots.

[2] - THE MOUNTAIN PASS:
A winding maze of sheer walls of ice and stone. The home of a strange tribe of humanoids named the People of the Pass.

The Pass is shielded from the bitter winds of the Verglas sea. In places frozen water pools must be crossed, some in danger of splitting. The People of the Pass know which you can safely cross and which you cannot.

[3] - WALRUS ISLE:
This thick island of ice is populated by hundreds of walruses. They lounge about and bark, and slide down slopes into the water. The People of the Pass are sometimes seen hunting offshore here. A rocky shelf sits the centre, a slope which rises to around 60 feet high. It gives a better view across the sea of Verglass.

[4] - WRECKAGE OF THE NORN-TONGUE:
A shipwreck, lying beneath the icy waters of the Verglas. It is ancient and fully submerged, but can easily be seen from the surface.

[5] - BLUE-CORAL BAY:
The waters of this bay are luminous. Beneath the salt and ice a strange blue coral grows, the spines of it letting off a faint glow. The snow on the island dances with the patterned light which is reflected from the water's surface. The island itself appears empty, save for snow and rocks.

[6] - SHRINE OF TUSKS:
Across this tiny island is a field of carved walrus tusks, buried in the ground, point up. It is an eerie sight. From time to time People of the Pass will come here and sing in unison.

[7] - ICEBERG:
A huge iceberg out to the west of the Verglas sea.

[8] - WHALER'S ISLE:
This island is a flat sheet of ice and snow. Off its shores whales can be seen, breaking through the ice and spurting water into the air. The abandoned camps of whalers litter the place.

[9] - ISLE OF RIME:
This island is a misshapen climb of sharp ice and fallen rock.

[10] - SNAER PEAK:
On the Isle of Rime a rocky peak towers. It is difficult to climb and crumbling, but at its top is an ancient obelisk with a viewing hole carved through, which, on a clear day, shows the Isle of Skerry.

[11] - ISLE OF THE FROST-TORN:
A haunted island draped in mist. It is flat and barren. Those afflicted by the frost sickness, People of the Pass and unlucky Whalers who have become Torn, shamble here, abandoned for fear of spreading the curse.

[12] - VANISHING SKERRY:
The Vanishing Skerry is a quiet island. Whalers tell haunting tales of the waters about it; the hearing of lost loved one's cries and of shadows beneath the waves. Every night the isle sinks from sight. The next morning it reappears...

Weather

Roll a 1D6 each morning to determine the day's weather, unless a location is stated to have its own specific weather condition.

1] Clear skies	4] Harsh Winds
2] Light Snow	5] Rain
3] Blizzard	6] Cloudy Skies

Clear/Cloudy Skies:
Sailing and health aren't affected. Vision is affected only when atop Snaer Peak when the skies are cloudy.

Light Snow:
Vision partially impaired and warm clothing must be worn otherwise cold damage is inflicted.

Blizzard:
Vision is blocked. Warm clothing must be worn. If on a boat, the boat's speed is halved.

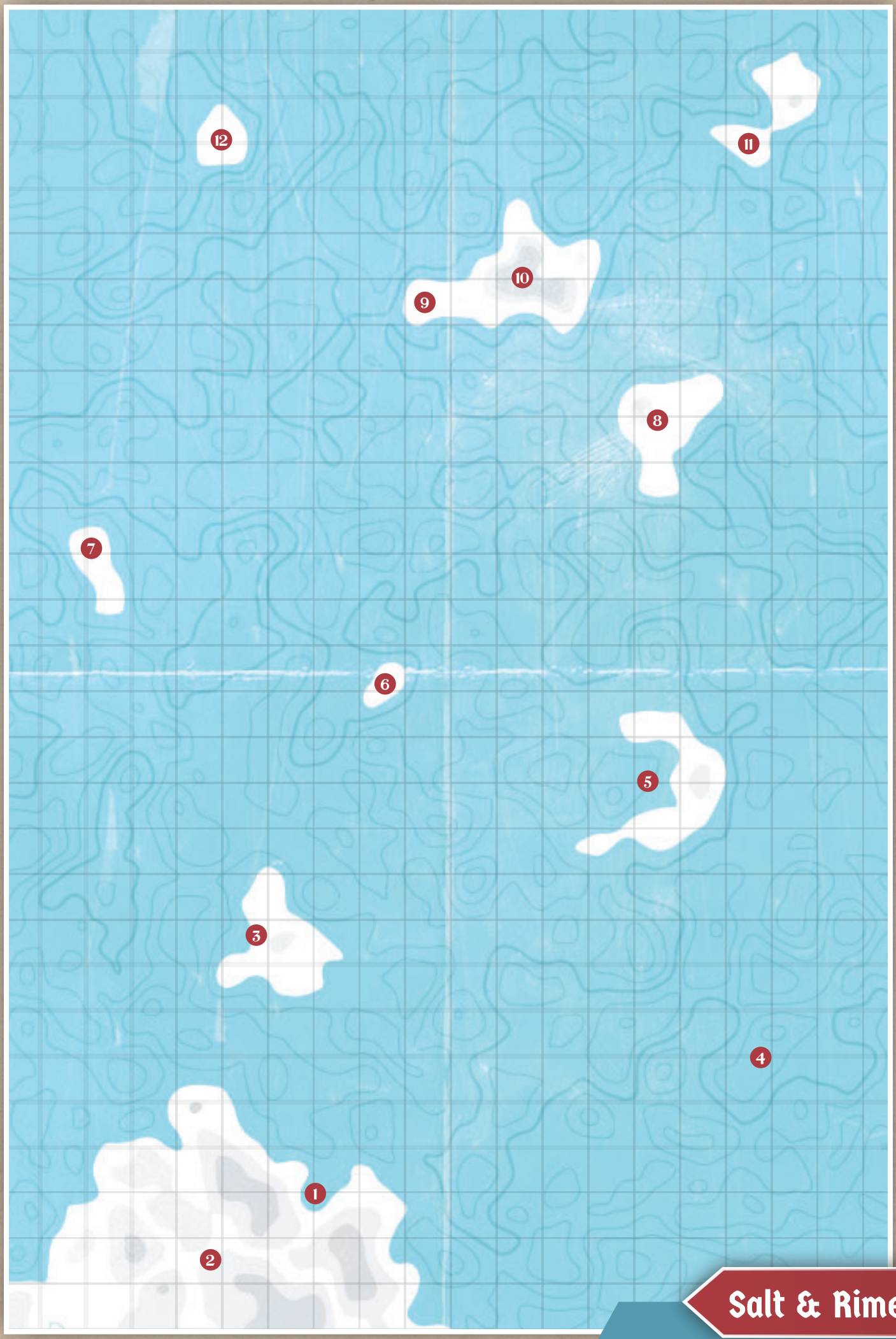
Harsh Winds:
Warm clothing must be worn. If the face is not covered, cold damage is inflicted. If on a sailed boat, the boat gains movement speed.

Rain:
Vision partially impaired. Warm clothes must be worn. When rainfall ceases, clothing must be changed or cold damage is inflicted.

Map Notes

A map of the Scattered Isles can be found on a dead whaler in the Whaler's Station. He is frozen in a snowdrift behind Hargyle's Hovel. The map is held within a roll of frozen leather.

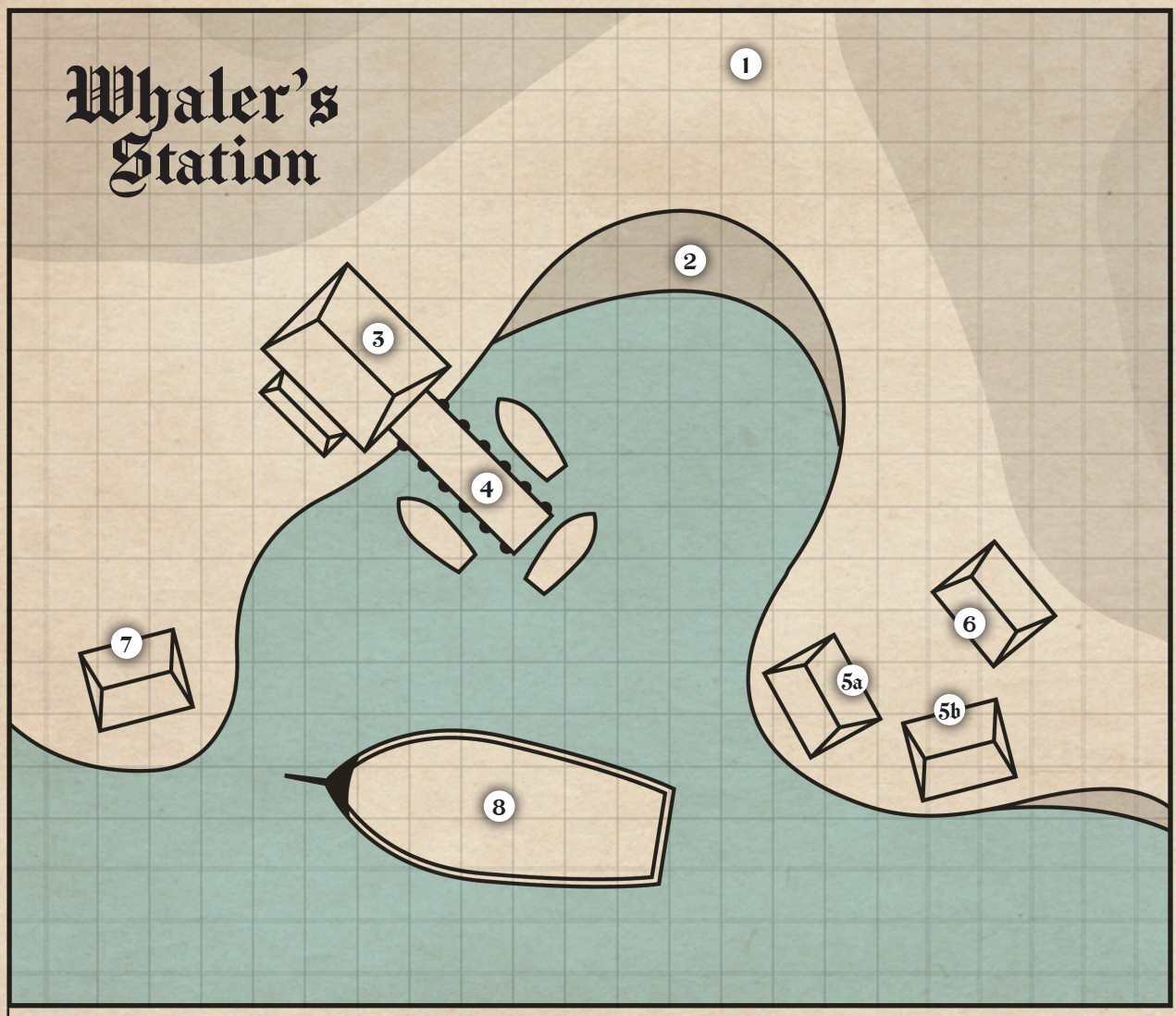
- 1 Grid Square = 2 Miles
- The Map Item only shows the layout and important places marked with an 'X'.
- North, East and West of the map leads to vast seas of shifting icebergs and constant sleet.



Salt & Rime

Location Details

Map Location - [1]



This Whaler's Station tells of better times. A mysterious air hangs over the place, a quiet that is only broken by the songs of the People of the Pass, or the yammering of the occasional drunken whaler.

Snowdrifts / Whale bones / Icicles
Rotten whale flesh / Rusty metal tools
Ice patches / Broken barrels / Whale oil

[1] - The entrance to the Mountain Pass rises here, grey limestone cliffs, riddled with fossils and shelves of snow. When near, the songs of the pass drift to you, haunting, yet beautiful.

[2] - The beach of the bay is made up of wet sands, slush, sleet and cold waves which carry chunks of ice inland. Whale bones are littered here, jutting upward like bleached trees.

[3] - The main whaling station. A wind-gnawed building of flaking wooden planks and rusted bolts. Within, the carcass of a large whale rots. Barrels of oil are stacked in the storeroom, and a desk filled with ledgers and shipping manifests.

[4] - The wharf juts out over the icy bay. The ships of the whalers are moored here and covered in a layer of frost.

[5a] - Whaler's quarters. This building is dilapidated, but stands firm against the harsh winds which batter its sides. Four beds are within, and trunks and barrels filled with whaler's belongings.

[5b] - Whaler's quarters. In slightly better repair, this dwelling holds four beds and a desk. The desk is littered with letters, written by the whalers to their loved ones, in case they do not survive this place.

[6] - Hargyle's Hovel. A hovel beside the cliffs where the whalers eat and drink. This makeshift tavern is filthy, but warm. They sell bitter ale and dried whale meat.

[7] - An old, disused whaler's dwelling. The roof has been crushed by heavy snowfall and within is nothing more than lumber and rusty tools, and an old key on a string. (This key unlocks the door on the shipwreck of the Norn-Tongue).

[8] - Off the coast the Quiet Baroness is anchored. Her masts rise into the wintry smog and icicles hang from her rigging.

Whaler's Village Encounters

[1] - Drunken whalers are causing trouble and looking for fights.

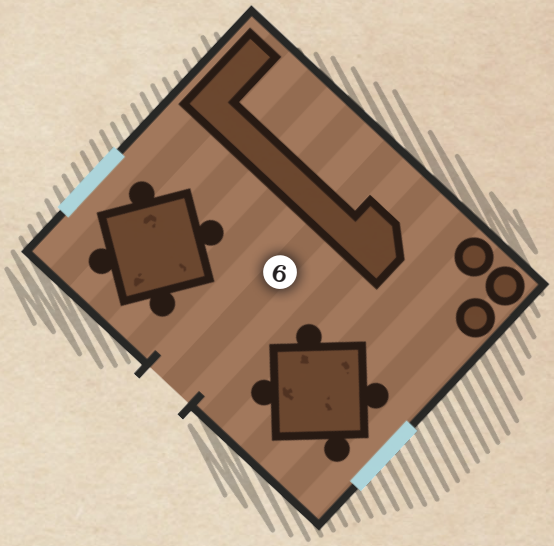
[2] - A whaler gives to you a letter for his daughter, and asks you to deliver it if he should not survive the cold.

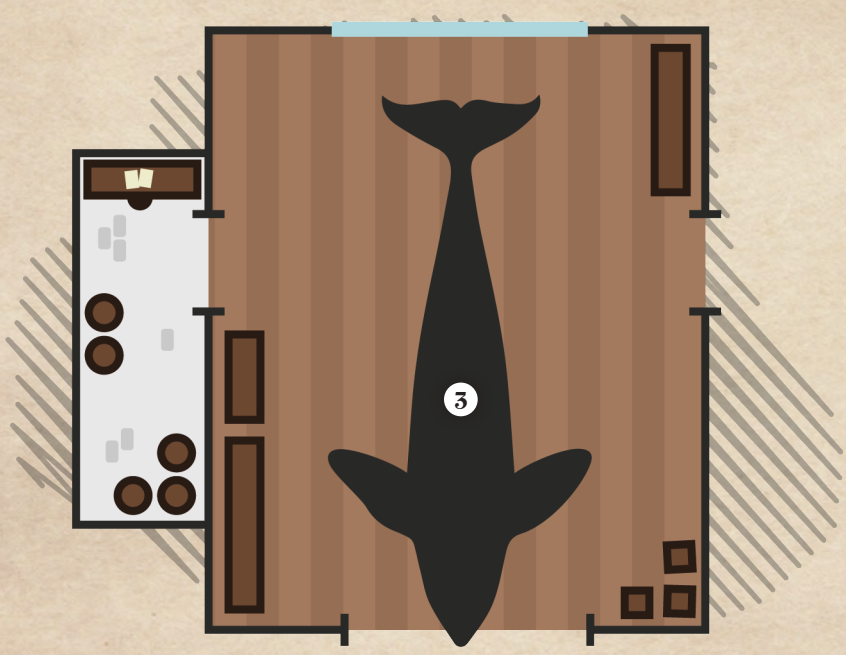
[3] - A whaler has caught the illness, becoming Frost-Torn. He must be bound, but his skin must not be touched.

[4] - A whaler asks if you would be kind enough to join a hunt in the Mountain Pass. They are hunting White Fox and Hare for meat and furs.

[5] - A whaler tries to light whale oil to keep warm and causes a fire in one of the dwellings.

[6] - A whaler has died of hunger and the cold. He wished to be buried at sea.





Main Station Encounters

[1] - An old whaler smokes a pipe here and tells you stories about the sea of Verglas.

[2] - 1D4 Tridenfolk are eating the rotting whale carcass in the station. They are hostile.

[3] - When inside the station, huge amounts of snow and ice slide off the rooftop and block the doors.

[4] - You see beside the storeroom desk the ghost of an explorer conversing with the ghost of a whaler. They spot you and vanish.

[5] - A crew member of the Quiet Baroness is stealing a barrel of whale oil.

[6] - 1D4 Frost-Torn People of the Pass shamble in through both doorways which lead outside.

Location Details

The Mountain Pass

Sheer rock faces / Sparse snow on quiet air / Gravel paths
Limestone rocks covered in fossils / Icy flats and shrubbery
Pale mist at the mountaintops / Haunting voices singing
Faint camp-fires in the distant dark / The howls of wolves

[1] - The crossroads are bordered by high faces of rock. Abandoned wicker baskets and fallen tents lay beneath a covering of snow. All is still here. Quiet. Eyes seem to watch you.

[2] - The fork in the pass is steep and slushy. Slip and you might slide all the way down to the bay. The rocks of the edges here are sharp and brittle.

[3] - The mountain looms like an ancient sentinel, built by the hands of some god of nature none know the name of. A good eye might spot the bodies of climbers swaying from frayed rope above.

[4] - The icy flats. Hares bound here where the shrubs grow wild. People of the Pass hunt and camp in the more sheltered places of the flats, beside the mouth of the pass.

[5] - A bay filled with the canoes of the People of the Pass. An icy wind blows here, cutting skin.

[6] - A small forest of carved totem poles, each depicting a different animal of the Isles and the sea.

[7] - Snow and shingles shift here. Mountain goats climb the higher parts of the dangerous terrain and wolves stalk the edges.

[8] - The Whaler's Station sits low in the bay, seen through mist from the high fork of the Mountain Pass. Songs of the People of the Pass float eerily downward, the noise of drunken Whalers lost to the winds.

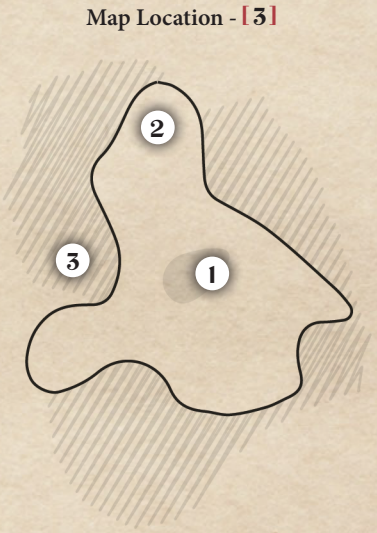
Walrus Isle

Translucent surface / Slippery Ice
Walrus growling / Shifting grey bodies

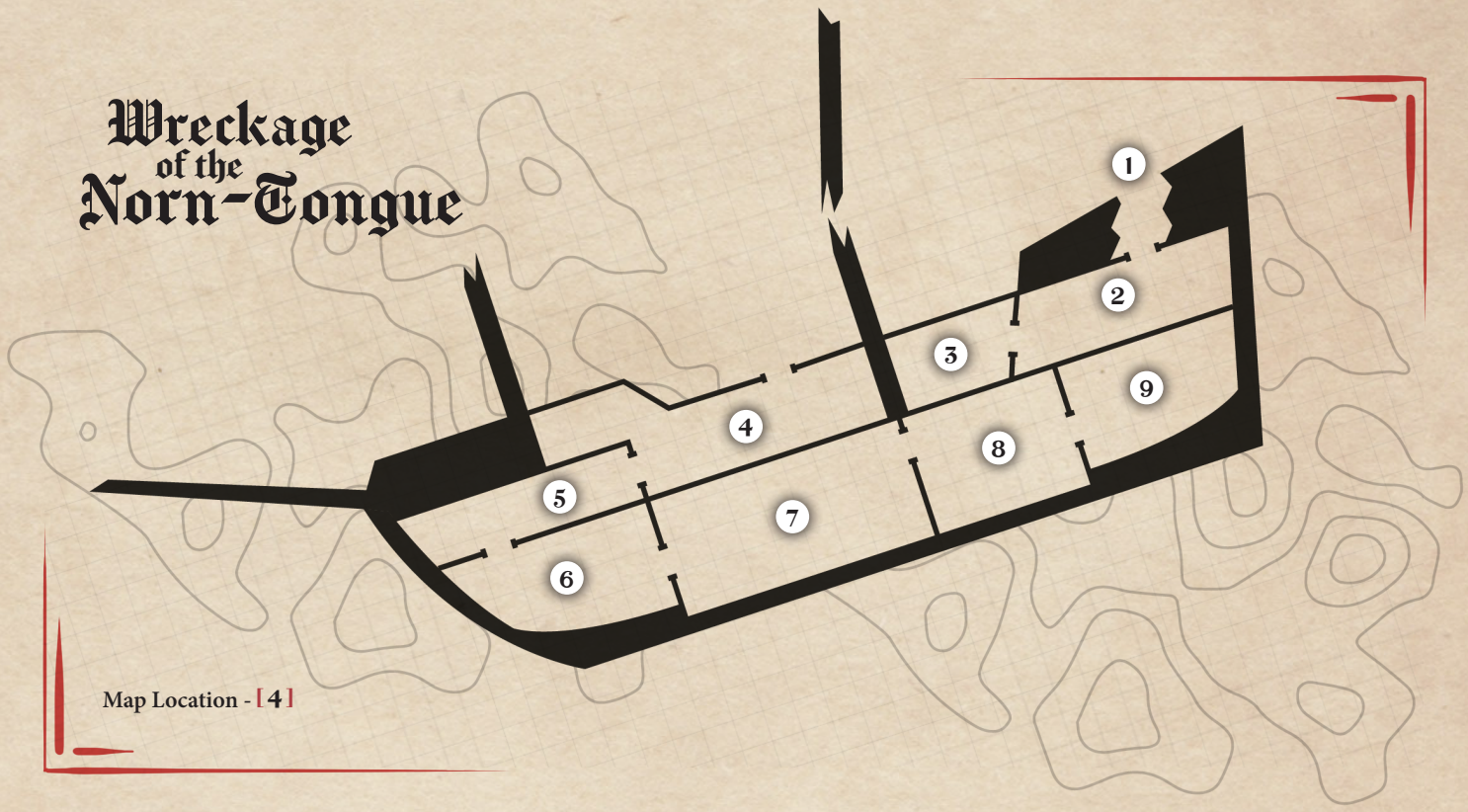
[1] - A 60ft high shelf of rock rises in the centre of the island. Walruses litter the base of it but rarely climb up the steep slope. The view from the top on a clear day is beautiful.

[2] - The north of the island is where most of the Walrus congregate. They are seen shuffling all over the isle but to the north they roll over one another in an attempt to reach the sloping sides of the isle here, and slide into the shallow waters where the ice tapers out and drops off into the salty deep.

[3] - Out on this glistening bay large chunks of ice float and crash, making it hard for larger ships to dock here. The canoes of the People of the Pass, however, can frequently be seen here, hunting for walrus stragglers.



Wreckage of the Norn-Tongue



Map Location - [4]

The old shipwreck of the Norn-Tongue lies still on the floor of the Verglas sea (100ft to the sea-floor). The icy waters have preserved it well and fill every inch of it. All manner of sea-life and plants have made their home across and within the ship. Planks, ropes and pieces of broken mast litter the rock and coral covered area around it.

Coral / Patterns of light from the surface
Limestone rock structures / Shoals of fish
Wooden debris / Empty chests / Molluscs
Frozen sailors tangled in the rigging

[1] - The quarter deck is smashed to pieces which creates a tunnel into the shipwreck. A Shark circles outside the mouth of the tunnel.

[2] - Upturned tables and tumbled barrels litter this room. Sallow light falls into it from cracks in the ship's hull. A wiry forest of tall Kelp grows near a hole to another room. If touched the kelp releases white vapour that limits vision.

[3] - The hull here has not been preserved as well as the rest of the ship. The sodden wood can break with a weighted footstep in a diving suit, and sharp coral grows just beneath. If swimming this does not effect you. The 'Pendant of Weathered Eyes' floats here. It is shaped like a wolf's eye and a dull blue stone rests at its centre. The pendant allows its wearer to gain their normal visibility when in a snowy blizzard.

[4] - You enter this room through the ship's hatch, which is unlocked by a key found in the disused whaler's dwelling. Many chests and crates are piled here. Silt floats thickly and impairs vision. If wearing the diving suit there is lots of debris to get your air hose tangled on. In the far corner of the room a collapsed wall leads to an area where a chest contains the 'Pendant of Knowing Tongues'. It depicts a mouth and a forked tongue. This pendant has been imbued with the knowledge of the language of the People of the Pass. When worn their strange words can be understood, and their runic carvings can be read.

[5] - This room is filled with shadows and the frozen bodies of the Norn-Tongue's crew. They drift about the place, and amongst them is a sleeping Tridenfolk. If awoken it is aggressive.

[6] - Here you can see great slashes in the ship's hull, as if made by a giant claw. Jellyfish swim here, bathing the room in a blue glow. They are not aggressive but if touched they cause electrical damage. If the room is thoroughly searched a small tin chest can be found beneath debris. It contains a 'Silver Ring' and a 'Rusty Compass' that still works.

[7] - The room you enter is large and dark. Spines of rock have burst through the hull here and rise into shadow. Tangled seaweed grows on the rocks and hundreds of sea-snails crawl across the rough surface. It is especially easy to tangle your diving suit's air hose here. Two Tridenfolk slumber beside a rocky structure you must pass. If awoken they are at first confused, but then become aggressive.

[8] - This room is packed with floating clothing, blankets and paper. If you attempt to read the text on any of the paper you may decipher a word or two, but it breaks apart in your hands or the ink is smudged. An 'Antique Writing Set', corked ink vials and a golden feathered quill, can be found in a treated oak box here, preserved and fine.

[9] - Smashed crates and rusty wares cover the floor. In the centre of the room, robes floating as if he is flying, is a Human Mage. The icy waters, and perhaps the magic in his blood, have preserved him so much so that he almost appears to be alive, save for the thick layer of frost sickness on his skin. The diving suit may not be enough to stop you from catching it if the skin is touched. His eyes are closed and his golden hair shifts eerily in the rippling current.

Clutched in his stiff and Frost-Torn grasp is the 'Mage's Journal'. The pages of it are magically preserved and tell of the Norn-Tongue's study of the language of the People of the Pass, and how on one drunken eve the humans sang a Pass Song of the earth while at sea, which is considered taboo. This song caused the Isle of Skerry to sink every evening, and woke a Colossal Crab deity of the Tridenfolk. The journal then tells of the Norn-Tongues flight, and of the humongous crab rising from the waves in pursuit of them...

Location Details

Blue-Coral Bay

A dance of light / Rock and ice
Coral reef / Chilling silence

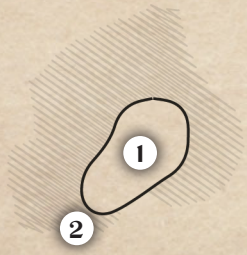
[1] - Here the bay is bathed in a sparkling blue glow. Beneath the water a sharp reef of blue coral pulsates like electrical spearheads. The edges of the island catch the light and it is thrown this way and that by the ice, causing a hallucinatory atmosphere in the place. The wind seems to stop here and no matter the weather beyond this isle it is always calm. The People of the Pass seem not to venture near it and this is the only location in the isles where the Tridenfolk can never be found. The island stretches about the reef, the north side high sheets of layered ice, the south low rock and snow.

[2] - At first the island seems empty. It is mostly flat, save the rise and ridges to the north. On further inspection of a strange cluster of rocks at the centre a den is found, burrowed out beneath the isle. Within, the skeletons of Tridenfolk families can be found, large and youngling both. They are huddled in the burrow, as if they were sick and afraid. Driftwood tridents and rare shells can be found here.

Map Location - [5]

Shrine of Tusks

Map Location - [6]



Ghosts fade in and out here / Mist on the water
A forest of knee-high tusks / Runic carvings

[1] - The Shrine itself is made up of hundreds of walrus tusks, carved with ancient runes and depictions of animals. Pathways run between the tusks which are planted, as if small trees, the spirits of the People of the Pass growing from them. You feel calm here, a little too at ease, as if some unseen force has wrapped blankets about you and caresses your mind with soft fingertips. Sometimes one of the Pass can be found kneeling amidst the tusks, muttering or singing softly in prayer.

[2] - Off the shores of the Shrine of Tusks, usually at dawn, canoes filled with People of the Pass float. They sing as one, their voices rising and travelling across the sea like honeyed tongues, singing words not known to other races. A power is felt between the sounds, a tangible substance of sound, binding all that is.

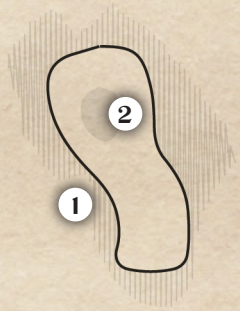
Iceberg

A blue hue / Wet and shifting / Ridged ice
Cracking sounds echo here / Gulls sit the top

[1] - This huge iceberg can easily be mistaken for an island. It towers above the water's surface to around 80ft, and its roots sink to the sea floor, 100ft down. It catches daylight within and refracts it across the waves as a dance of blue light. Every so often it shifts with the tides, a mile south or a mile or so to the north. The sides of it are ridged and cracked in places.

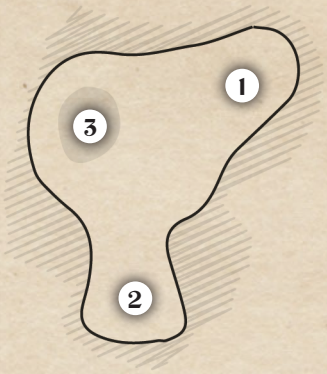
[2] - Far up the face a hollow can be seen. Whalers, long ago, saw what they thought was a large gemstone shining within the iceberg, so climbed it and cut out a cave where they broke the ice and retrieved the Rimeheart. Within this chipped away cavity the ice picks still lie, along with some frozen winter boots and a Whale Pendant, missing its chain. A sketchbook of a whaler can be found here, and one sketch shows the Rimeheart freezing water, instead of melting ice.

Map Location - [7]



Whaler's Isle

Map Location - [8]



Whales rise offshore / Old camp-fires
Rusty tools / Abandoned structures

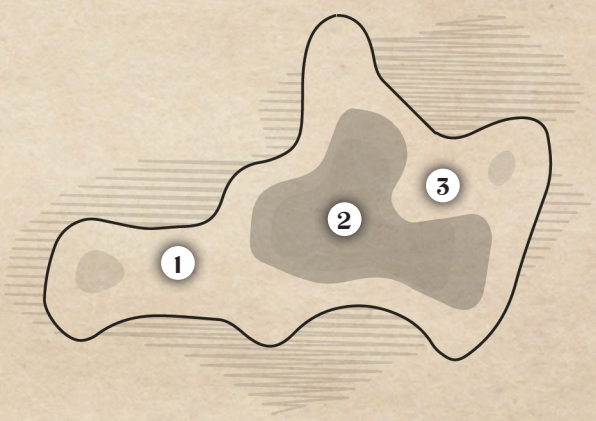
[1] - The Whaler's Isle is littered with snow covered tools and damaged racking, tents and row-boats. A splitting sound echoes outward from the ice of the island every few minutes, as if the place groans in its loneliness.

[2] - Here, at the south of the isle, a ghost can be found. He is an old whaler named Hakon, and if communicated with he tells of the finding of the Rimeheart within the Iceberg out west and the using of it to melt the ice of Blue-Coral bay in the hopes of harvesting that ancient coral, but it proved fatal as a pack of Tridenfolk tracked them back to Whaler's Isle and killed him and his brother. He lingers, for some reason, though his brother passed on.

[3] - A crack in the ice leads down to an underground cavern. Within, the bones of Hakon and his brother can be found, who both died of their wounds beside one another. Hakon's brother wears a chain with a Whale Pendant of their father's crest, Hakon's skeleton wears the same chain, but the pendant is missing. If found, the Whale Pendant can be reattached to the chain, and Hakon's ghost appears to thank the party. He gifts them the knowledge that the Blue-Coral bay must be refrozen to bring peace to the Verglas, then vanishes.

Isle of Rime & Snaer Peak

Map Location - [9,10]



Towering peak, draped in snow / Shingles and fallen rock
Large snow drifts / Sharp rock and ice / Occasional rockfall

[1] - The Isle of Rime is a misshapen place of ice and rock, sharp inclines and steep declines, the sounds of shifting earth creep here. Shingle and old shells are piled high about the base of Snaer Peak, the terrain hard on the ankles. An icy flat resides here, to the west of the isle, where some shrubbery grows and small rodents scamper between stones.

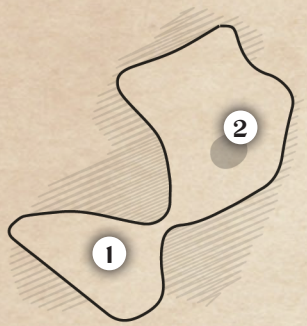
[2] - Snaer Peak rests 160ft above the isle's floor. It is steep on all sides, entirely sheer to the west, but the east faces can be scaled by experienced climbers. Around 80ft up a shelf of rock and packed snow provides an area large enough to make a small camp and rest, though in a blizzard or harsh winds the snowy surface there shifts and becomes dangerous. Fossils of ancient sea creatures make good handholds in the last leg of the climb. Just before the summit is reached, the face overhangs, and it is here an old rope hangs. It can be jumped to, then used to pull oneself up and over the ledge. The peak itself flattens off, a small circular area bordered by crumbling stone and an obelisk. Beside the obelisk the body of one of the People of the Pass lies frozen, preserved there, legs deep in snow, eyes open to the sky. In the hands of the dead one are a hammer and a magical, rune covered chisel. It appears he was the one to have carved the obelisk. In the evenings and at dawn his ghost can be seen watching the party from nearby fog that circles the peak in the open air. He does not respond when talked to.

Obelisk of Snaer Peak: The obelisk is 12ft tall and depicts carvings of humans in a boat beside the shores of an Isle. They appear to be in song, as runic words leave their mouths and small depictions of waves circle the words. When the viewing hole is looked through on a clear day, the Isle of the Vanishing Skerry can be seen.

[3] - Here a steep hill of shingle tumbles down to the shore and into the waters. Tridenfolk often clamber about here, searching for stone to build their underwater nests. The terrain here is dangerous and a slip might mean tumbling all the way down and into the sea. To reach the climbable eastern walls of Snaer Peak this terrain must be tackled.

Location Details

Map Location - [11]



Isle of the Frost-Torn

Knee-high thick mist / Groans of the turned
Wavering light / Watching ghosts

[1] - Hordes of shambling Frost-Torn pace the ice here, their minds long gone and skin now crackling like icy shards. They each of them once had names. People of the Pass and Whalers both. Items still sit within their pockets and some wear fine winter hats and gloves, but the slightest touch of their skin on yours and the sickness can pass over, and soon you will join their wandering ranks, doomed to walk this isle for an eternity, nothing but the soft sound of the waves and the writhing mists at your feet for company. It is a haunting site, looking over the field of Frost-Torn. It is enough to strike dread and sorrow in even the blackest of hearts.

[2] - Here a great old altar stands, a stone slab piled with frozen wood. Once, the Frost-Torn were set ablaze here, though when the flames finally dissipated, they would stand, unburned, and walk the isle in their aimless way.

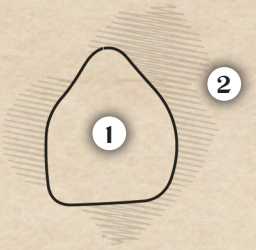
Vanishing Skerry

Faces of people in the fog / Voices on the wind
Shadows in the waves / Emptiness

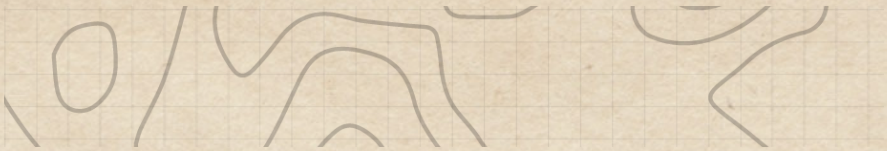
[1] - The Vanishing Skerry is an isle to the north-west of the sea of Verglas. Every evening, as the sun sinks, so too does the Skerry. It slowly moves beneath the waves, only to resurface at dawn. The surface here is slippery, wet and like glass. If one were to stand on it in the diving suit while it sinks, they will see in the darkness hundreds of Tridenfolk, floating there, watching, though not daring to near the strange isle. It is as if they wait for something. So to do the People of the Pass who float offshore in canoes and watch with anticipation. Here, all is peaceful, yet disturbed. The Tridenfolk do not attack, no sharks swim here, no whale bones rest on the isle.

[2] - It was here, unknown to most, off the coast of the Vanishing Skerry, where the Norn-Tongue floated, her human crew drunk and singing forbidden songs of the land in the tongue of the People of the Pass. It wrought a great disturbance in the natural balance of the sea...

Map Location - [12]



The Sea Herself



Like sapphire jewels melting beneath a pale moon...

The sea of Verglas stretches out beyond the Mountain Pass and the bay of the Whaler's Station. The icy waters ripple and churn like a blue plane of glass, catching the reflections of the ancient wanderings of the skies above. Icebergs float like vessels, ferrying ghosts of the lost. The backs of scaly things writhe for a moment above the surface, then disappear into the broken places of the deep. When night falls, the moon's double takes its place below, sending silver strands to break across the waves as the stars twinkle in defiance of the black shroud at their backs.

'Oh she, the sea, the whalers say, shall never notice us small things upon her back. Calm and gentle she can be, though an icy temper becomes riled within, one which threatens to become an angered storm and waves that may make kindling in seconds that which took man months to build. Oh she, oh she, fair maiden of the sea, take us not untimely to your abyss, but let us pass upon your back and make not watery graves of your tears. Oh she, oh she, the sea...'

Important Notes

THE RIMEHEART:

The Rimeheart is an ancient relic of the ancestors of the People of the Pass. None know of who crafted it or where it came from. It was found frozen in an iceberg to the west of the sea. It is the size of a human child's head and is surprisingly light for such a large gemstone (30lb), though it seems to be unbreakable. The surface is smooth and cut, the shape of it hexagonal.

The Rimeheart contains an energy that melts ice, though it is not warm to the touch and it does not emanate warmth when activated. It melts the ice through unknown magical properties.

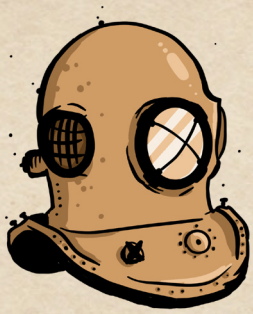
To activate the Rimeheart one must place a hand on it and imagine images of summer: sands warmed by a high sun, flowers swaying before a leafy oak on a midsummer's eve...

When activated ice melts for 40ft around it for four hours, once per day. Its power can be reversed by an old song of the People of the Pass. When placing a hand on the Rimeheart and singing the song, it sparks and flashes. After this, one must imagine images of winter when touching it and it will freeze water, rather than melt ice. It will freeze creatures within its circumference of effect if those creatures mean harm to nature itself.

PENDANT OF KNOWING TONGUES:

This pendant can be found in the shipwreck of the Norn-Tongue. It has been imbued with the magic of a Human Mage who sought to learn the language of the People of the Pass, and combine the magic of their songs with his own. The pendant is a forked tongue. When worn you can understand the words spoken by the People of the Pass and read their runic carvings, but you cannot speak it back to them or write it yourself.

Sleeping while wearing the Pendant of Knowing Tongues gives the wearer nightmares of the Mage's final moments. These dreams are fed to the party member in short bursts on separate nights. Quick visions of a giant crab claw crushing the side of the ship. The Mage stands on the quarter deck singing a song of the People of the Pass, imbuing the words with his own magic, and strikes the colossal crab with a bolt that sends rippling frost across its skin which then begins to spread through the crew of the Norn-Tongue, turning them into Frost-Torn as the ship sinks. The Mage appears horrified at what he has done and flees to the lower deck. He grasps the journal to his chest, closes his eyes, and lets the waves take him as the ship sinks.



DIVING SUIT:

On the deck of the Quiet Baroness, beside the main mast, a Diving Suit is stored. The Diving Suit consists of a full body suit, a diving helmet, a weighted belt, air hose and a pump and winch which stay on-board.

When wearing the suit and submerged:

- Movement speed is halved.
- You gain cold resistance.
- Disadvantages on attack rolls.
- A crew or party member must continually pump air on-board the ship.
- Must regulate air valve every half hour.
- Take off weighted belt to gain faster surfacing speed (usual running speed).
- Must make checks on air hose to see if it has been tangled in places containing coral, rocks or debris.
- Peripheral vision is slightly impaired by diving helmet.
- If you have entered an interior location beneath the water, making turns or passing through doors, the air hose must be followed back the way you came or be cut.

FROST-TORN ILLNESS:

The Frost-Torn illness begins with a patch of frost-like crystals on the skin. This icy rash spreads until it has covered the entire body, lastly the eyes, and then the mind of the victim is lost. A full Frost-Torn walks for the sake of walking, they do not attack or follow other creatures, but if touched they can transfer the illness.

When one has caught the frost sickness, it can take anywhere from five to thirty days before they are completely lost. This depends on the strength of the individual and whether they have any magical qualities, spells or cold resistance that might slow the process. It cannot be cured in any ordinary way, however, and will eventually overtake the victim entirely.

Tridenfolk can catch the illness, but it seems not to affect them as they are entirely immune to cold damage. They are carriers, though, and after any battle with them it should be made sure crew and party members have not caught the illness, though none initially know that the Tridenfolk carry the sickness. It is far rarer to catch it from a Tridenfolk than a full Frost-Torn.

SONGS OF THE PASS:

The People of the Pass sing songs that are imbued with an ancient and misunderstood magic. The properties of these songs are one with nature itself. Two songs will need to be learned if the Isles are to be at peace.

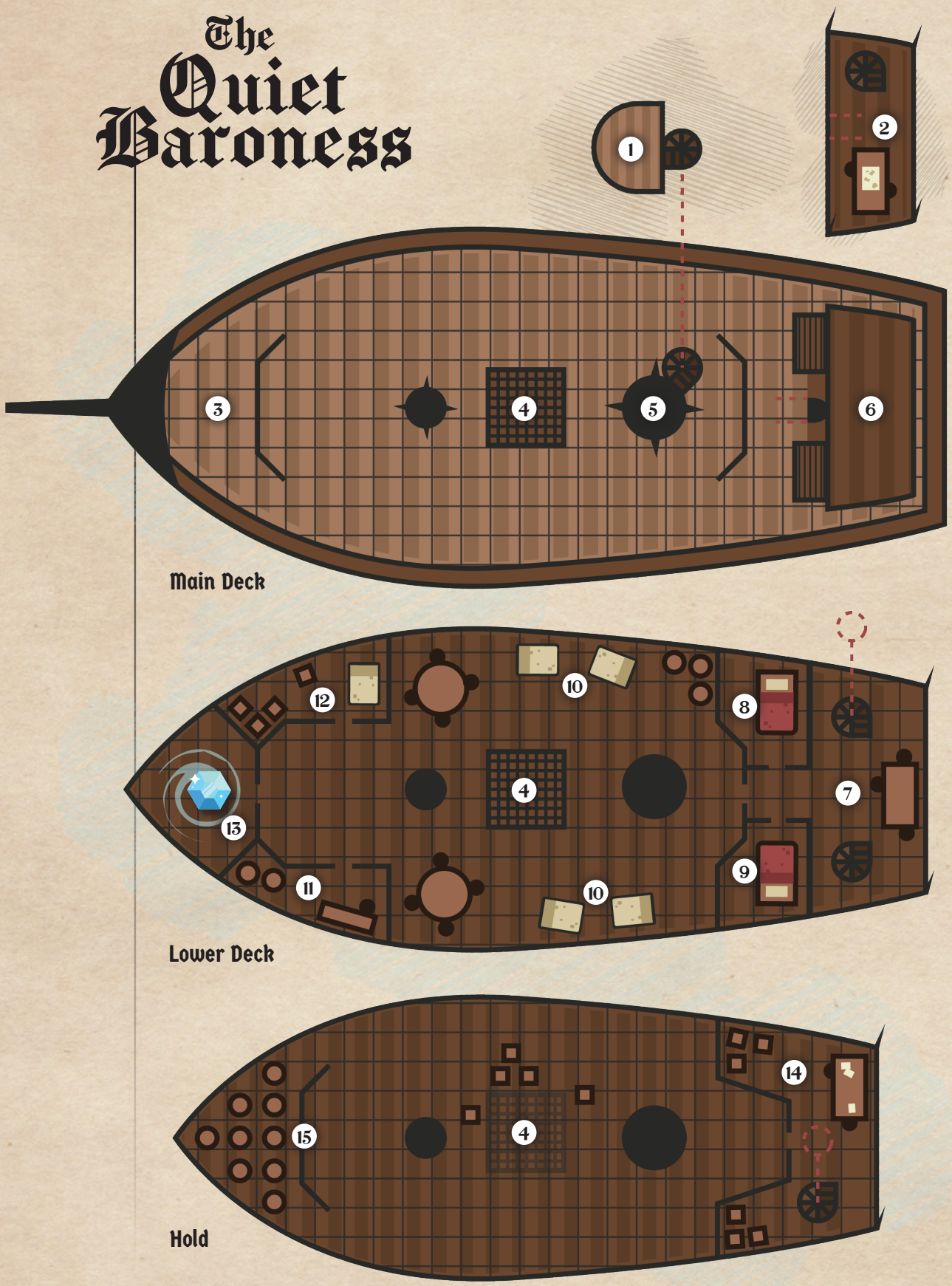
The Song of the Sea:

This song can be learned by reading the runes on the obelisk at the top of Snaer Peak. It must be sung near the Vanishing Skerry by a human to put back the natural order of earth and sea, and undo what the crew of the Norn-Tongue did, breaking the curse of the Isles which was accidentally created by the human Mage.

The Song of the Rimeheart:

This song can be learned from Brog Barrow-Carver or runes on the walrus tusks. When sung with a hand placed on the Rimeheart, it inverts the powers of the ancient relic.

The Quiet Baroness



Captain Thyra first came across the Quiet Baroness whilst looking for a new ship on the Amber Coast. Thyra's own ship had been blown to shrapnel by a naval vessel, and what was left of it lay at the bottom of a cove somewhere.

The Baroness floated on sunlit waves, unmanned, and the ship-less Captain had heard her call. The old port town was famed for its selling of ships, yet the Quiet Baroness did not appear to be for sale. It took Thyra several weeks to track down the owner, an Elven sailor who claimed it haunted. She had asked him why he refused to sell it, and he had said he was waiting on a sorcerer, one who would study the ship and rid it of the ghost or perhaps harness the power for himself. She offered more than its worth, but still the Elf would not sell the Quiet Baroness to her.

Captain Thyra and Gunnar Stone-fists made a plan to steal the ship, and all went well until the final moments. With the sails unfurled the Quiet Baroness began to take flight across the sea, the shimmering port town a haze in the distance behind them, the Elven sailor none the wiser. A dark cloud coalesced about the Baroness, one made of magic and shadow.

Upon the deck appeared the Sorcerer. He warned them to abandon ship, but Thyra and her crew fought back instead. They all of them were wounded by some magic or another. It was a lucky crossbow bolt to the leg that stopped the onslaught of shadow magic, and Gunnar Stone-fists dealt a blow which paralysed the Sorcerer. As the Sorcerer died from his wounds he spoke his name; Baron Drisos. He told them that the ship was once his, and the ghost who haunted the decks of the Quiet Baroness was the engineer who built her, Baroness Laurel... The Sorcerer's wife...

Main Deck:

[1] - CROW'S NEST
Vision distance is tripled here if there are clear skies.

[2] - MAP ROOM
A bright, windowed room. There is a stairway and a desk. Upon the desk is a rough map of the Verglas, but it is not labelled with the names of the isles.

[3] - BOWSPRIT
A wooden lady is carved here. She wears a headdress of laurel leaves and her hands are in prayer.

[4] - HATCH
This large hatch allows the spoils of the sea and supplies to be winched down into lower decks.

[5] - MAIN MAST
This mast towers above the ship, a pale sail adorned with a crown of leaves hangs from it. A ladder here leads up to the Crow's Nest, and beside it a Diving Suit, pump and air hose are stored.

[6] - QUARTER DECK
This deck gives a view over the main deck. The ship's wheel is here, and Captain Thyra helms her from this position.

?

On quiet nights, when the deck is empty save a single soul, some have claimed to have seen the ghost of the Quiet Baroness walking there, humming faintly in the hopes of reaching her home again. She was said to have been the engineer of the ship and the wife of the Sorcerer Baron who sailed it. On its first voyage it is told that she died of a fever. As she died she hummed a song of the shores.

Lower Deck:

[7] - STAIRWELL
The stairwell of the lower deck. A frosted window runs across the back of the ship, lighting a desk where instruments and tools are littered.

[8] - CAPTAIN'S CHAMBER
Captain Thyra's bedroom. None are allowed to enter. Within is a bed and ornaments collected from across the seas.

[9] - FIRST MATE'S CHAMBER
First Mate Gunnar Stone-fist's bedroom. The floor is covered in straw and ferret droppings. Empty bottles of ale and rum are piled in a corner.

[10] - CREW'S HAMMOCKS
Mats and hammocks litter the edges of the lower deck. Crew sleep here and gamble and sing songs of the sea.

[11] - DOCTOR HALLVARD'S STUDY
This room is the Doctor's study and surgery. Here he treats sick or injured crew members. He also keeps a diary which can be found in a desk drawer.

[12] - STOREROOM
This storeroom is locked, with Doctor Hallvard within it. It contains a mat for him to sleep on and barrels of spices. The Doctor is suffering from the affliction, but has not yet become a Frost-Torn.

[13] - THE RIMEHEART
A large, blue gem with a magical energy capable of melting the ice before the ship for four hours when active. Once deactivated it cannot be activated again until the next day. Unknown to the crew, the energy can be used in reverse to freeze water.

Hold:

[14] - LOWER STAIRWELL
Here crates of food supplies are stored. A desk covered in ledgers sits the corner. It is cold down here.

[15] - FRESH WATER SUPPLIES
Barrels of fresh water are stored here. On the sea of Verglas they freeze overnight. When the Rimeheart is activated, however, they unfreeze.

Ship's Speed:

The Quiet Baroness can travel at 2mph.

If the Rimeheart is activated the ice melts before the ship and it can travel at 4mph for four hours.

If the day's weather is harsh winds, add 2mph to current travel speed.

If in a blizzard, the ship can only travel at 1mph.

?

OBSTACLES ON BOARD:

1. A crew member falls down the hatch.
2. The Lower Deck begins to flood.
3. Gunnar's ferret, Nut, is lost on-board.
4. The party experience seasickness.
5. The small sail is torn by weather.
6. Food supplies run out.
7. Crew members have a drunken brawl.
8. A fire begins in the lower deck.
9. The party is coerced into gambling.
10. Fresh water supplies run dry.
11. Deep snow covers the Main Deck.
12. The Ship's steering breaks.
13. A crew member falls overboard.
14. The Main Deck is slippery with ice.
15. The party receives deck scrubbing duties.

Encounters On Land

The Mountain Pass.

1	1D6 Grey Wolves begin to track you.	11	A stone sits in the snow, carved with strange pictures of the People of the Pass in song.
2	You come across a group of the People of the Pass. They fear you.	12	A cold wind, strong enough to knock you over, blasts through the Mountain Pass.
3	You hear a rumbling, then rockfall, tumbling and crushing all in its path.	13	You come across an abandoned camp made up of three collapsed tents and racks of dried meat.
4	You spot the corpse of a climber swaying from a rope on a cliff above.	14	1D4 Wolves hunt a Mountain Goat, who sits on a ledge above.
5	A Hare bounds past you.	15	The frozen body of a Whaler lies in the snow.
6	Ahead the People of the Pass sing and some play skin drums.	16	1D6 Frost-Torn People of the Pass appear beside you through the snow.
7	The floor and walls here become sharp rocks. Like blades, they cut when touched.	17	A White Owl flies overhead.
8	You enter a misty clearing of carved totem poles, the animal faces haunting.	18	A child of the People of the Pass is injured, having fallen from a cliff face.
9	The floor becomes steep and made of shifting shingle. It is difficult to walk on.	19	A Human Whaler is lost in the pass and asks if he can join you.
10	A Snow Cat appears on a ridge above, licking the air at the sight of you.	20	A White Fox hunts in the snow.

The Isles.

1	People of the Pass sing in their canoes just offshore.	11	Old, rusty traps of hunters hide beneath the snow here, threatening to snap your ankles.
2	A ghost stands before you, beckoning with her hand to come to her.	12	A strange blue glow emanates from a hole in the ground.
3	You come across several dead Tridenfolk.	13	A large pile of Walrus tusks, all carved with strange designs, rattles in the wind.
4	A huge, aggressive Walrus bulls towards you.	14	The corpse of a dead Whaler lies frozen on a rise.
5	The ice begins to crack and split beneath your feet, cold water rising.	15	A camp fire's coals still glow with warmth.
6	An old shrine covered in frozen flowers rests nearby.	16	1D6 Tridenfolk attack with driftwood tridents.
7	You find an old camp, rusty tools littering the floor.	17	You see, in the mists, the faces of long lost friends. They whisper to you in quiet tongues.
8	1D4 Frost-Torn shamble towards you.	18	Trickles of blood mar the snow. The trail leads to an icy pool cut from the isle itself.
9	A thick front of snow, like a wall of ice, blasts towards you.	19	Offshore of the Isle, a colossal crab rises from the deep, only to disappear a moment later.
10	Tiny Tridenfolk children play with sea shells nearby.	20	The mingled bones of Tridenfolk, Humans and People of the Pass are piled high here.

Encounters At Sea

On Deck - Day.

1	1D6 Tridenfolk are attacking People of the Pass in their canoes nearby.	11	Gunnar's Ferret, Nut, steals an item from your pack.
2	A large, icy wave sweeps across the deck, knocking over crew members.	12	The Quiet Baroness hits a shallow area and the ship becomes grounded.
3	A large whale bashes into the hull of the ship.	13	A crew member takes a strong disliking to the party. He plots to tarnish your name.
4	A Human Whaler cries for help, floating on a small piece of ice which is sinking.	14	A rope and cable snaps, the length of it flying across the deck at leg height.
5	A large shoal of fish leap into the air, splattering across the deck.	15	Sharp rocks and ice appear in the waters ahead, threatening to damage the hull of the ship.
6	Tridenfolk throw their driftwood tridents at crew members from a nearby iceberg.	16	A pack of sharks begins to stalk the Quiet Baroness.
7	A strange moss begins to grow all over the ship. You all begin to get rashes.	17	1D6 Tridenfolk board the ship.
8	An ice-fall begins, shards of sharp ice raining down on the ship.	18	The party is given watch in the Crow's Nest.
9	An upturned canoe floats by the Quiet Baroness.	19	You spot something shiny, frozen within a block of ice, bobbing beside the ship.
10	People of the Pass sing eerie songs in their canoes nearby.	20	The Rimeheart begins to splutter, shards of magical ice shooting through the upper deck.

On Deck - Night.

1	An injured Tridenfolk climbs aboard. It seems confused and not aggressive.	11	A crew member drunkenly tells you stories of the Quiet Baroness in the Lower Deck.
2	The party is given watch duties. The ghost of the Quiet Baroness haunts the deck.	12	Gunnar learns of the death of his son from a messenger bird. He drinks three bottles of rum.
3	A strange pillar of ice shimmers in the dark waters, carvings on its surface.	13	The moon shines an eerie light on deck, and a White Owl lands beside you.
4	You hear Doctor Hallvard screaming in pain throughout the night.	14	A large whale raises an eye from the murky waves and watches you curiously.
5	A shark leaps from the dark water and takes a bite at anyone stood near the edge.	15	Someone tries to light a lantern. Oil spills across the deck and he drops the match.
6	A crew member becomes a Frost-Torn within the Lower Deck.	16	The crew begin to have terrible nightmares.
7	Captain Thyra takes watch with you, and tells you of her past.	17	A crew member offers you his own brew of ale. It makes you so drunk you can't stand.
8	Gunnar wakes you to tell you that you were speaking in your sleep of dark things.	18	You see a ghost floating on the sea. It seems to be whispering your name.
9	You find a dead crew member swaying from the rigging. He has a letter in his pocket.	19	A procession of ghosts passes by in the sky, the sight of them brings fear to the crew.
10	Human Whalers frantically try and board the ship as Tridenfolk attack their rowboat.	20	A larger than usual Tridenfolk somehow reaches the Lower Deck while the crew are sleeping.

Flora

	Name	Description
1	Rust Lichen	A lichen that grows on metal surfaces. It is extremely flammable when dried, and causes red smoke to rise when lit.
2	Ghost-Flake	This white petalled wild flower can be brewed into a tea and drank to better see the ghosts of the Isles.
3	Ice Moss	This moss is white and easily mistaken for snow or ice. It covers surfaces and is so slippery even spiked climbing shoes won't grip.
4	Blood Berry	When crushed this berry smells like blood. It can be used to attract predators.
5	Shamble-Weed	It grows into seeded tufts that tumble across the waters of the bay. Its seeds can be used for fish bait or beads.
6	Frost-Weed	This curling plant is white and grows across the isles. When brewed into a tea it causes hallucinations of loved ones.
7	Winter Sage	This pale green plant grows in the Mountain Pass. When burned it creates a warded area that staves off the effects of a blizzard.
8	Howl Grass	Tall grasses grow in the Mountain Pass. When burned wolves are kept at bay by the smell, but if breathed in it causes drowsiness.
9	White-Vine	This strange plant only grows from the surface of ice. When touched it causes a searing pain. Can be harvested for poison.
10	Tingle Leaf	A coarse shrub that grows in the Mountain Pass. When consumed it makes you warm, but also causes visions of the dead.
11	Blue Coral	A poisonous coral that grows in the Blue-Coral Bay. The poison only effects creatures of the sea.
12	Kelp	Forests of Kelp grow beneath the Verglas. If touched they release white vapour that entirely impairs vision.
13	Black-Kelp	This plant is a cousin of Kelp. When touched, it releases a vaporous shadow that if swallowed with salt-water poisons you.
14	Saltskin Algae	This salty leaf grows on the sea floor. When consumed it gifts you with hardened skin for a time, but causes extreme leg pains.
15	Pink Coral	Hard as steel. Can be dug up from the sea floor and filed into a coral blade.
16	Sorrow Seagrass	When consumed it causes unbearable sorrow, but also allows you to see the hidden sorrow in others.
17	White Coral	This coral is brittle, but seems to attract all manner of sea-life.
18	Bubble-Bristle	A spiny plant that grows in salt-water. It creates a bubble of oxygen above it that can be breathed.
19	Electric Anemone	This bizarre species may be more animal than plant. Get too close and it radiates a dangerous electrical pulse.
20	Plank-Weed	This foul smelling seaweed grows on the underside of ships. When dried it can be smoked to induce sleep and relieve pain.

Fauna

	Name	Description
1	Elk	Elk sometimes wander into the Mountain Pass, usually to be eaten by packs of wolves or hunted by the People of the Pass.
2	White Fox	This animal is sacred to the People of the Pass. They are spirits of the Mountain, and given ritual rites when hunted.
3	Mountain Goat	Amazing climbers, these Goats cover the ridges of the Mountain Passes and venture high to avoid wolves.
4	Hare	On the flats to the north of the Mountain Pass, Hare bound about, eating from shrubs. Their pelts and meat are both useful.
5	Grey Wolf	The Grey Wolf hunts with its pack. Larger than usual wolves and far more daring. Their tactics are not to be underestimated.
6	Snow Cat	Rarely seen, these large cats stalk the Mountain Pass, hunting for Goat or larger prey. They are camouflaged and fast.
7	White Owl	The White Owl soars across the Isles. Its feathers fetch a large price, but like the White Fox it is considered sacred.
8	Seal	Seals can be found near or on the Isles, though the Walruses tend to bully them off. They are a favourite food of the sharks.
9	Seabird	Seabirds circle in the air. They dip and dive for small fish, and will attempt to steal food straight from a sailor's hand.
10	Walrus	The large beasts are common across the Isles, gathering in groups of hundreds, barking and lounging. Some can be aggressive.
11	Whale	These magnificent beasts are hunted by the Whalers, though they are usually curious and not violent.
12	Shark	The sharks in the Sea of Verglas are large and vicious. When full on seal meat they will simply hunt for sport.
13	Sea Eel	These long and menacing looking creatures are not threatening despite their appearance. They make for a good catch and meal.
14	Verglas Cod	The Verglas cod is the main food source for the Scattered Isles. The Tridenfolk mainly eat these.
15	Shimmer Crab	These glassy crabs strafe the sea floor and clamber across the rocks of the Isles in their thousands. Their shells are like mirrors.
16	Ghost Jellyfish	These white jellyfish float beneath the waves. If you touch one the sting will send your soul to the ghost world for a time.
17	Starfish	These creatures can be caught and dried. They sell for good coin at distant markets, or they are used in potions of breath.
18	Narwhal	The Narwhal can be hunted for its horn, which fetches a lot of coin at port cities. The horn can also be used as a weapon.
19	Silver Mollusc	Snail-like things that cover the sea floor. Their shells have been used to make ocarinas for centuries.
20	Bloat Fish	This swollen fish is full of poisonous gas. If you can lift one from the water quickly they can be used as a makeshift poison grenade.

Mysteries and Goals: How to conclude 'Salt & Rime'

How do you end this journey of salt and ice? Certain mysteries across the isles can be uncovered, and the balance of the bays and quiet isles can be put back in check by performing certain tasks. You can, however, invent your own mysteries of the Scattered Isles or implement elements from your current campaign here.

Mysteries

[1]- LANGUAGE:
How to understand the language of the People of the Pass?
What magic does it contain?

A big part of Salt & Rime is the study of language. The Norn-Tongue crew were initially attempting to learn the magical language of the People of the Pass, and new parties venturing here will find multiple ways to uncover the mystery of this ancient tongue, and they may learn the language or come to understand it themselves. There is the Pendant of Tongues which will let them read and understand the language, but not speak it. A strange shrub could grow in the Mountain Pass, Tongue Willow, that when brewed into a tea causes better understanding of unknown languages? Perhaps the party will befriend Brog Barrow-Carver and let him guide them.

[2]- SONGS:
What do the songs mean?
How can you learn them?

The People of the Pass sing songs that have magical effects, and the sounds of the words create an almost visible property that can be felt within the world around you. Two songs must be learned to accomplish and wrap up certain mysteries of the isles. The Song of the Sea and the Song of the Rimeheart.

[3]- THE RIMEHEART:
What is the Rimeheart?

No one knows where it came from, only that the ancestors of the People of the Pass once owned it, Whalers found it in an iceberg and now Captain Thyra has it on-board the Quiet Baroness.

[4]- GHOSTS OF THE ISLES:
Where are the ghosts from and why do they still linger?
Can you help them in any way?

The sea of Verglas is strewn with lost souls. These ghosts may cooperate and give clues to the mysteries of the Scattered Isles if you help them.

[5]- TRIDENFOLK:
Why have the Tridenfolk become increasingly angry with those of the land? What ails them?

The Blue-Coral bay is poisoning them and their crab deity is ill, slowly becoming Frost-Torn. Perhaps you should help them by freezing the Blue-Coral bay and returning the Vanishing Skerry to its normal form.

[6]- OBELISK:
What do the carvings on the obelisk mean? Why does the viewing hole show the Vanishing Skerry?

The language must be learned to read the runes of the song coming from the human's mouths on the carving. The Song of the Sea. The Vanishing Skerry is shown because just offshore is where the crew of the Norn-Tongue sang a song of the earth while drunk, and caused the Skerry isle to sink each night. This must be reversed.

[7]- WHALERS:
Can the whalers survive the harsher than usual climate? Can you bring them home to their families?

The whalers are stranded in the Scattered Isles. The sea too frozen for their boats to leave, the icy plains too far for them to travel by foot. Why would they choose such difficult lives out here at the frozen edge of all things?

[8]- THE QUIET BARONESS:
Can Doc Hallvard be saved?
Are the crew well intentioned, or self serving?

The crew of the Quiet Baroness may become allies or foes, depending on how the party interact with them. The back-stories of the Captain, First Mate and Doctor are intertwined.

Backstory Notes

The back stories and answers to specific mysteries told here can be given to the party in bits and pieces or as rewards for completing smaller quests across the Scattered Isles.

The human crew of the Norn-Tongue were studying the language of the People of the Pass and exploring the Scattered Isles. One drunken night on deck they sang a Song of the Pass that was meant for land, not sea, and the old natural magic of the world sunk the Isle of Skerry. The sea stole the earth in defiance to the blasphemous song. In anger, beneath the waves, a giant god-like crab rose and chased down the Norn-Tongue and sunk it, but not before a Human Mage combined his magic with the magic of the songs and cursed the colossal crab, creating the illness of the Frost-Torn.

After a time the giant crab slumbered as it became weak, the Tridenfolk who worshipped it angered at the site of their deity's dying form.

Whalers began to settle near the Mountain Pass, and they ventured further out and made camp on Whaler's Isle. On an expedition they noticed a shimmering blue gem within an iceberg. There they discovered the Rimeheart and used it to melt ice as they travelled.

The Whalers accidentally melted a long frozen bay on one of their hunts, which created Blue-Coral bay. The unfrozen, strange coral here poisoned the waters and angered the Tridenfolk further. The polluted waters of the bay killed many of the Tridenfolk families. The Tridenfolk blamed the land dwellers for these deaths and the illness of their deity. They had become infected by the Frost-Torn illness, though they were unaffected by the symptoms of the curse. They did, however, spread it to humans and the People of the Pass in their attacks.

The People of the Pass created the Shrine of Tusks to call upon the spirits of earth, sea and sky to heal the Verglas. This mingled the spirit world with the corporeal and ghosts

began to appear, lost and confused. The Shrine holds the curse and sickness at bay, but it is weakening. They know to reverse it all, a song of the sea must be sung near the Vanishing Skerry by a human voice, and the Rimeheart must be used to refreeze the Blue-Coral bay and stop the drippings of poison there.

So one of the pass climbed Snaer Peak and carved with a magical chisel of his people an obelisk that shows the Vanishing Skerry and the humans singing a song of the sea beside it. The obelisk calls to those distant, those who might come and save the sea of Verglas from all that has befallen it...

Once the songs have been learned and sung, the mistakes of the Mage repaired, and the Blue-Coral bay frozen over, the weather of the Scattered Isles will fall still, and the Frost-Torn curse will be lifted, though those who have already fully turned may perish...

Goals

What goals do the party wish to accomplish? A goal may be known before reaching the Scattered Isles or may develop overtime. These are some goal examples that can push the narrative forward and alter the conclusion within the setting.

- Save a friend (NPC) who has ventured to the Scattered Isles.
- Bring back the Whalers to their families.
- Prevent a member of the party from becoming Frost-Torn.
- Steal the Rimeheart for yourselves.
- Protect the People of the Pass.
- Learn the magic language of the People of the Pass.
- Simply travel through the Scattered Isles on an expedition or to reach another area.
- Solve the mysteries of the Isles.
- Prevent the Frost-Torn sickness from spreading.
- Solve the mysteries of the Isles.
- Help Captain Thyra save Doctor Hallvard.
- Befriend Brog Barrow-Carver and learn his secrets.
- Help the Ghosts of the Isles pass on.
- Make sure the magical songs are protected.

Conclusions

Depending on the initial goals of the party, and more importantly the journey, the conclusion of their time in the Scattered Isles could vary. Listed here are some short paragraphs alluding to possible endings. These endings are not set in stone, but if you find one may be specifically emotional to your party, you can work the narrative and mysteries towards these end goals.

OUR SONGS ARE SUNG:

The pastel light of a blue dawn stretches across the horizon. The Vanishing Skerry vanishes no more, the ill workings of that drunken Mage and his crew have been reversed. The old song fused with the power of the Mage, which had caused the curse of the Frost-Torn, holds no sway over the sea of Verglas and the Scattered Isles. The air is still cold but the unnatural bite of it has been dispelled. You see whalers shuffling about the shore, some taking off their gloves to feel the warming air. The Frost-Torn who shambled now lie dead, finally at peace. Any with the spreading illness are rid of it. The People of the Pass sing a joyous song not of earth, sea, or sky, but of you, and of how you rid their home of its wrongs. You will forever be a part of this place, carved into it like the ancient obelisk and the runic tusks of the shrine. The Scattered Isles seem scattered no more, but whole. All of it, and you, are one.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE DOCTOR:

The Rimeheart you sang to changed its power, and froze Blue-Coral Bay, the poison of that ancient reef no longer affecting the Tridenfolk and the sea. They halt their attack and watch you from the waters, but they give no thanks, only condescending stares. You know the sea-folk still wish you ill, but their frantic states have ceased. The deck of the Quiet Baroness is quiet. Captain Thyra holds Doctor Hallvard amidst the bodies of the Tridenfolk who had attacked the ship. Doc Hallvard had saved her in that final battle, and you had saved them all by casting the freezing Rimeheart into the depths of the bay. The Frost-Torn curse has taken him now, and you all and Gunnar Stone-fists watch as Captain Thyra places her head to his, tears in her eyes, and the sickness consumes them both in a blanket of frost. "We have failed them," chokes Gunnar. "But we did not fail the sea." You watch as the crew wrap the Captain and the Doctor in a sail and bind them. Some time after, you leave the deck of the Quiet Baroness in a row-boat, headed for the Whaler's Station. "We will take them to the Isle of the Frost-Torn," Gunnar says. "There they will walk together for eternity."

AN HONOUR OF THE PASS:

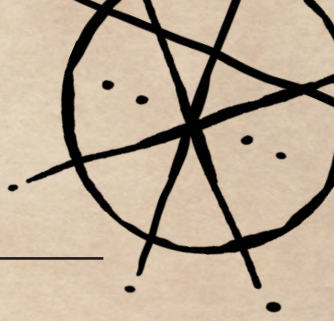
Brog Barrow-Carver leads you through the pass, the sound of song growing louder in your ears. Firelight flickers and cascades over the snowy outcroppings and dark shingles of the floor. The People of the Pass dance here, their young ones darting in and out of tents, the elderly approaching you from the shadows. Brog gestures for you all to come forward and greet his people. As the strange folk surround you and place their hands on your shoulders you feel a connection with the earth and the seas. The People of the Pass welcome you in thanks. You have cured this ancient place of its sickness and poison. You are perhaps the first in hundreds of years to be accepted into the tribe of the People of the Pass, or perhaps the first of all time. Brog stands with his chest out in pride and smiles at each of you not just as a friend, but a brother. One of the hunched elders speaks and though the words are alien to you, you feel the meaning of them. "Forever will you be welcome here, children of the world beyond. Forever will you be one of us." And drums begin to beat then into the deep places of the pass, all manner of creatures flocking to the sound. Foxes, wolves and hares stand just beyond the orange glow of the camp fires. The music fills you and you drink of strong mountain ale brewed from winter flowers. You are restful and filled with joy, and in the dark you see the faces of those who were once a part of your life, but no longer. They smile at your victories from their ghostly realm, and their gazes warm your hearts.

ON THAT SEA WE HUNT NO MORE:

The sea of Verglas lies still beyond the deck of the Quiet Baroness, her waters calmed as all has been made right here. You stand together, warm blankets across your shoulders, watching the rippling tides. Captain Thyra and Gunnar Stone-fists stand with you. "Finally, we can leave this place," Thyra says. "Doctor Hallvard is on the mend. Thank you, all of you. Me and the crew, we could not have done it without your aid." Gunnar grunts in thanks. You turn to see the whalers sitting about the deck, warming their hands by lanterns and drinking flasks of ale. Hargyle looks to you and smiles. Thanks to you they will see their families again. "Once the whalers are home," Captain Thyra continues, "we sail for warmer seas. You are welcome to join us on our voyage. I am sure there will be plenty of adventure to be found, and plenty of coin." The Quiet Baroness rocks as she moves into a strong wind, the sea becoming an open ocean, the call of distant lands finding you there, the far off ports of sun and silk flashing in your mind's eye. The chill of the air subsides then, but the smell of salt remains.

Shadow & Ash

Shadow & Ash



She peered through the gap in the door's woodwork, fingers wrapped about the hilt of her sword, watching as the witch of the Boundless Coven raised an athame above the child. The smell of rot was heavy in her nose, the tickle of sweat irritating on her brow, the beating of her heart, however, was calm as a winter's dawn. It all happened so slowly, as if time itself were warped by some strange craft, though she could not tell. Blathnat of the Empress' Own had not been born with the Glint. She had not the fortune to be birthed beneath some starlit sky. But she had strength. She had her sword. Swords, she'd found, were always quicker than a witch's tongue.

The door splintered inward as she planted a booted foot through it, moonlight caressing her blade as it woke from the scabbard and breathed silvery life into the night. The ritual dagger stopped as the haggard Boundless witch flinched at the sound of Blathnat's entrance. It was a novice move, entering so abruptly. Blathnat had no idea how many were inside, no idea if death waited for her within the stilted outbuilding. But she could not let another child die. She'd gladly give her life in the service of the infant, and join her sisters on the fields of Mag Mell.

Before the witch could react with anything more than a bewildered expression, Blathnat's sword took her hand, sending the athame scattering across the planks. The witch wailed and the child squirmed. Blathnat dropped into a defensive position, letting her eyes adjust to the new light. An oil lantern ran orange fingers about the place, revealing no one else. She removed the witch's head with a feral swing, sending droplets of red across the wall beside her.

'What a waste,' a voice said from the doorway, 'I hate killing those gifted with the Glint.'

'I don't think it's a gift if you use it on unarmed children,' Blathnat replied.

A broad woman entered, wearing mail and leather slacks. Her gauntlets looked black in the lantern light, but Blathnat knew the truth of them. They were slick with blood.

'Grab the child,' Úna said, scratching at her shaven head. 'This was a solitary ritual, but any Boundless nearby will feel the craft unfinished.'

Blathnat sheathed her sword and knelt beside the boy, his hair curled, chest raising as if in some comfy slumber. Thank Danann he wasn't awake for that, Blathnat thought, eyeing the foul head of the witch in the shadows. She got her arms under him and stood, holding him close to herself.

Úna moved into the moonlight, keeping low, checking for any unneeded company. She signalled with a hand and Blathnat followed, careful not to knock the boy's head on the frame of the door.

The waters of the Whispering Fen lay before her, moving eerily with ghost-light, reeds crackling in the cool breeze. Blathnat's steps were hurried, following Úna's lead, until they reached the unsteady planks that led down to their rowing boat. She eyed the boat below then looked to the faster flow of the river that ran the middle of the wetlands. If they could just reach it… A crunch made Blathnat freeze. She moved her sight over the shallow waters, trying to pierce the undulating shadows. Was it just the reeds?

Úna drew her Bracken Blade, the emerald metal like green fire in the dark, then yelled as something hit her shoulder, sending her to the water below. Blathnat saw the shadows coalesce as a tall figure waded toward them, the moon at its back, making it a silhouette of its daylight self. It moved in irregular patterns, shifting, wiry, hair long. Blathnat nearly dropped the child as instincts moved a hand to her sword. A bolt hit the wood at her back. Then another. A stream of bolts embedded into the building as she saw among the reeds assailants appearing. She leapt.

The horizon sped upward and then out of sight as the water enveloped her legs. The splash soaked her through but she was not submerged by the fall. She had landed beside the boat and flung the spell-sleeping boy within. She drew her sword, the velvet black that hung over the Fen impairing vision. Clashing of steel. The twang of a crossbow. There, amidst the reeds and shadow, she saw the emerald dance of her captain. Before Blathnat reached the fray Úna burst from the tall stems and was by her side.

'The boat!' she yelled. 'Push it into the river's current.'

They threw themselves against it. Blathnat felt her feet sinking into the mud, water lapping her waist. Shouts came from behind. Was that Druidic speech she heard amidst those who attacked them? Strange, she thought, for Druids to take up arms alongside the Boundless. The front of the boat left the shallow water and hit the flow of the river. It caught so fast that Blathnat thought they might lose it. She gripped the side, pushed with all her strength, and vaulted in beside the boy. Her sword seemed to slip from her scabbard and she scrambled about to stop it.

As she turned she realized Úna still stood on the shallow embankment and had drawn Blathnat's sword. The bulky woman chucked her Bracken Blade into the air and Blathnat caught it, then gasped aloud as the boat began to speed away.

'Look after her, Blathnat.' Úna said. 'That sword means more to me than my life!'

Blathnat dropped the sword to her side, put a foot on the edge of the rowing boat, bent her knees…

'I command you to leave with the boy!' Úna shouted.

Blathnat froze. Úna was Captain of the Empress' Own. An order from her was something Blathnat could not ignore. She bit down and stared at her captain, her tutor, her friend. Her heart was hollow. In that moment, as the boat floated away, the reeds behind Úna shook violently with enemies. Blathnat felt nothingness then. A horrid, cold nothingness.

Úna turned and raised Blathnat's sword, roared, then bulled into her attackers, lost from sight in the chaotic fray. Blathnat heard the hacking of steel. The stilted building disappeared from sight. The cries of combat dissipated to the wind, and the river wound on, the current pulling her away from her honour. She should have defied the order, died beside her teacher, walked hand in hand with Úna to the land of Mag Mell. She looked down at the emerald blade in shame, unable to lift it up.

The boy moved to a sitting position, then rubbed his eyes and stared at her with what appeared to be absolute terror. Blathnat began to raise a hand. She was about to explain she meant him no harm, when the moonlight caught his eyes. He wasn't looking at her at all, but past her. Blathnat turned and saw the tall grasses beside the river, and amidst them, watching, a towering woman, pale as sleet, eyes sunk and lifeless, slender frame adorned with strange white metal. She seemed to open her mouth, as if to speak, then closed it and turned to fade away into the lands of the Whispering Fen.

Blathnat now held the Bracken Blade aloft. The child hugged at her leg. Both of them were statues amidst the marshland, bathed in starlight, the river carrying them southward to the land of shadow and ash...

An Introduction to the Micro-Setting of 'Shadow & Ash'

Shadow & Ash is a Hex Crawl setting for your campaigns. The Boundless Coven experiment with dark rituals here, while the Starlit and Umbra Covens attempt to keep balance. Druids wander the wilds. The Aos Sí, Highfolk, walk the heath in their spirit forms and sit beside ancient burial mounds that scatter the land. The Fomóiri, Lowfolk, haunt the dark nights beneath the stars, preying on lost travellers. Those born beneath certain star signs on cloudless nights are gifted with the Glint, witch powers of different origins.

Perhaps the party will seek out the Umbra Coven and aid them in their plight against the Boundless Witches of the Whispering Fen, and in return gain knowledge of shadow magic. Alternatively, they may avoid the Covens and their war altogether, and traverse the deep wilds of the Quarter Lands and uncover old secrets in the Mountains of Wraith's Range.

This Hex Crawl can be used as a place of over-world travel, an entire campaign setting, or even a floating, magical plane riddled with Glint magic of the Witch Covens, all to be learned and added to your players' characters' spell books.

NPCs, factions and spells are all listed and detailed here for use in the Hex Crawl, Shadow & Ash, but can easily be manipulated to fit another campaign world or used as sparks of imagination to fuel your own stories and settings. Any individual location listed here can also be lifted from this Hex Crawl and placed into your own campaigns, used as dungeons or locations that fit more with the themes of your setting. Changes and amalgamations, again, are encouraged! Splice up the setting as you see fit, or run it as it is.

The Quarter Lands are a strange place to travel. Each county of the Quarter, the Beryl Wilds, Ashen Heath, Whispering Fen and Wraith's Range, differ in their terrain style but all contain old dangers and magic.

Tables for weather, encounters, flora and fauna relating to the Hex Crawl of Shadow & Ash are listed in this section. They can be used to populate the hexes and make progress across these lands feel rich and energising to the players. Feel free to use the tables or spell books of each coven within your own settings or draw inspiration from them to create encounters across the Quarter Lands. An old place awaits you, and older things lie in wait within it...

Adventure Hooks: How to Implement 'Shadow & Ash'

How do you attach this setting to your current campaign or convince the party to venture here? These are some ideas on how to hook (or force) your players into stumbling across, venturing to, or finding themselves within the misty Quarter Lands, seeking the Witch Covens of old or venturing deep into the wilds.

Setting Hooks

[1] - HEX MAP INCORPORATION:
Dropping an over-world Hex Map into your campaign may at first seem daunting if your players haven't explored one before. A simple way to implement Shadow & Ash is to have the Hex Crawl map be a floating plane or another dimensional plane of existence, reached through some sort of magic. The Hex Crawl map could also be a floating island, surrounded by sea, or a lost place surrounded by high, impassable mountain ranges. A more complex way to implement the Quarter Lands is to slot it into your current campaign world, meaning that most borders would join or touch somewhere already established within your setting.

[2] - BY ACCIDENT:
Having a party come across a new land by accident can inspire the adventurers within them. Perhaps they attempt to explore an old pass once blocked by magic that has now dissipated. As they reach the end of the pass the view of the Quarter lands sweeps before them, a place once blocked off from the rest of the world, but now open, and they are the first outsiders for centuries to venture into the depths of the Beryl Wilds or the swamps of the Whispering Fen.

[3] - SAILING:
If your current campaign is set on the high seas, near a port or on an island, you can connect Shadow & Ash by the oceans. Perhaps you are working on-board a vessel heading for the Myst Fort, a location south of the Hex Crawl map, but the ship wrecks on the rocks there, so the party is forced to venture inland and find people who may help them leave the island.

[4] - PORTALS AND PLANES:
The eerie, Celtic inspired setting of Shadow & Ash, filled with dark magic, suits a magical plane or alternate dimensional plane of existence. The Highfolk, and the Lowfolk, are magical entities from a realm even beyond the Quarter Lands, and perhaps their magic is waning, and the divide between your current campaign world and the Quarter Lands is becoming smaller, elements of Shadow & Ash creeping into the world, catching the attention of the party.

A portal would work well, also. On the Ashen Heath a large henge sits the top of a burial mound, its stones laid out in strange archways. The party could come across a similar site and activate it, passing beneath the stone arch and entering into the Quarter Lands.

Rumour Hooks

[1]- HEARSAY:
Place rumours throughout the land. Have your party overhear conversations about dark Covens of Witches and their strange, otherworldly battle with one another. Have them hear tales of the red haired warriors of the Myst Fort, whose people fight with shield and sword for an ancient Empress of the Starlit Coven. Let tales of the Beryl Wilds, plains of grass decorated with giant shards of crystal that grow like trees, flood the taverns.

[2]- NPC:
Have an NPC, perhaps a woman feared to be a witch by local townsfolk, spread rumours and perhaps offer payment to the party to bring her something from within the Quarter Lands, or to meet with a witch of the Umbra Coven in order to relay the message that the worlds are blending.

[3]- NOTICEBOARD:
Noticeboards in towns and villages could begin to show messages of missing children, thought to be taken by haggard witches to a swampland nearby. This swampland could connect to the Whispering Fen and the rest of the Quarter Lands.

[4]- AOS SÍ:
Have the party begin to hear rumours of slender spirits, pale and beautiful beings who wander near graves. Have these Highfolk talk to the party in their dreams, telling of their magical planes coming under threat from the dark magic of the Boundless Coven, who will wreak havoc in your world once they have consumed all the magic of their own.

Personal Hooks

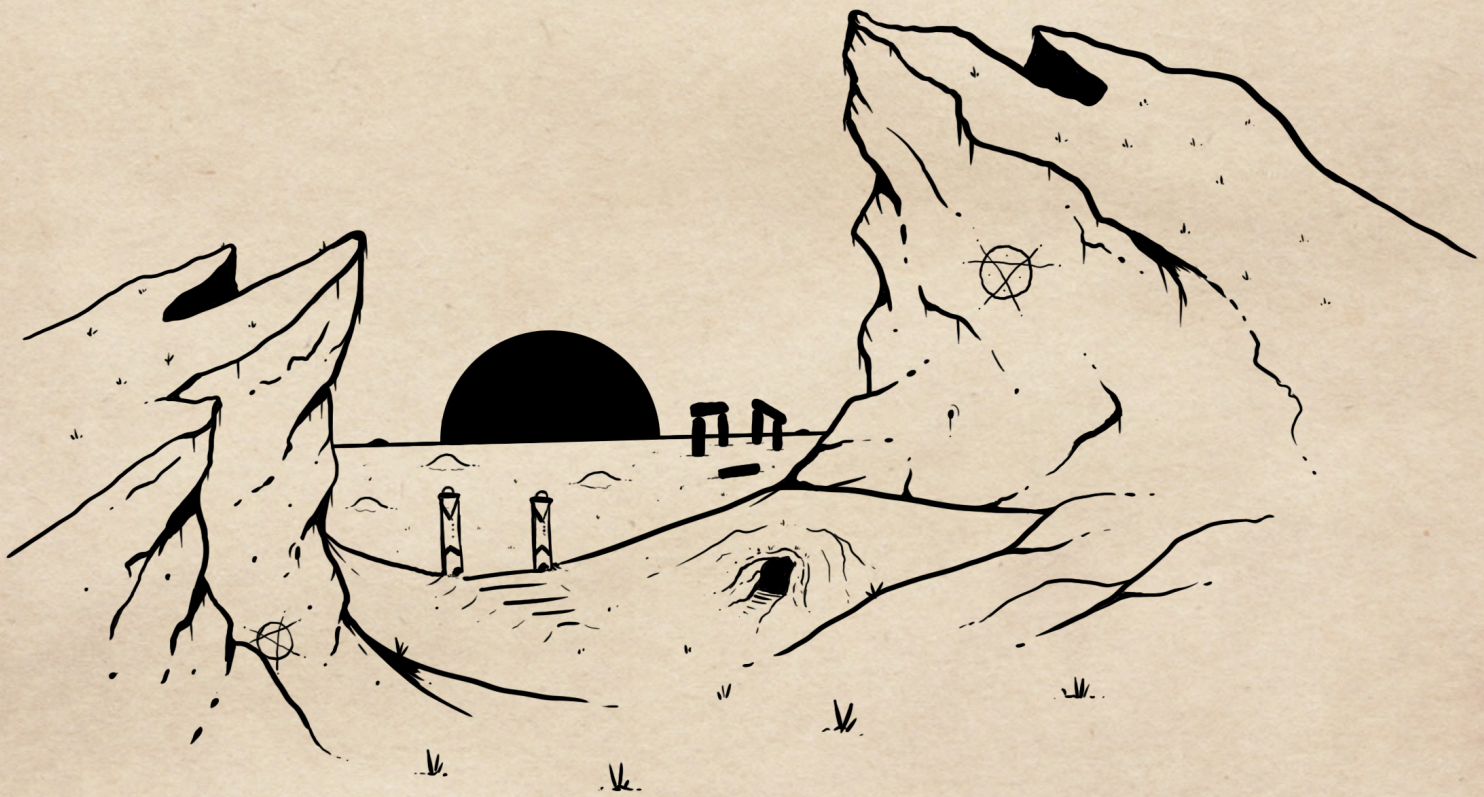
[1]- TRUSTWORTHY NPC:
Have a trusted, and well-liked, NPC disappear. When the party finds out and investigates, they discover the NPC had a personal connection to a member of the Umbra Coven or the Myst Fort. The NPCs family can beg the party to search the Quarter Lands for them.

[2]- MAGIC USERS WITHIN THE PARTY:
A good way to convince the party to venture to the Quarter Lands is the promise of learning new spells. Magic users will want to find the spell books of the Witch Covens to see if they are compatible with the magic of the Quarter Lands. Perhaps a none magic user may find out that they were born beneath a starlit sky on the correct night and can summon the witches' magic. This is a great incentive to get the party moving in the right direction.

[3]- FAMILY / MYSTERY:
Maybe a family member of one of the party was killed by witches or abandoned by them when they were a child for some unknown reason. The Quarter Lands is a setting filled with strange mysteries that could perhaps uncover the truths of character back stories.

[4]- POSSESSION:
A darker way to implement the setting of Shadow & Ash is to have a party member become possessed by the ritual magic of the Boundless Coven. A demon grows inside of them, who one day when grown wishes to use them as a host to break the barriers between worlds forever.

A Fomóiri, known commonly as Lowfolk, could posses one character, while an Aos Sí, a Highfolk, possesses another. The two friends become more and more hostile to one another until they can find a way to break the possession from within the Quarter Lands.



Notes on Running a Successful Hex Crawl

After spending time dungeon delving or creeping through the halls of an ancient castle, exploring the vast over-world in the form of a complicated Hex Crawl can be overwhelming to players and GM's alike. The trick is to not reveal too much too fast. Treat each hex as you would a large battle map or dungeon, except with a little more freedom of traversal. Breaking down areas into manageable portions is the key here, allowing the party to feel a sense of the foreboding size of the world beyond, yet distracted enough by what is directly in front of them so that the seemingly infinite decisions and places to discover don't cause a panic.

Populating the current hex and having good knowledge of the surrounding hexes is important, but encounter tables or mapped locations of interest can save a game master in times of need. Attempt to have a few encounters, that aren't just terrain traversal, ready for each hex that doesn't contain a main location. Rumours on the road are a good place to start. Examples of this are travelling NPCs who stop to chat to the party, or perhaps ask a favour or tell of something monstrous in a certain direction.

Another way to keep a party on their toes and away from the boredom of constant travel is to use enemies and monsters that will challenge them to the brink of their ability, or better yet, be far too difficult to overcome, so they are forced to flee and find safety in the form of towns, hovels, caves or ruins. Have a powerful villain stalk the party and study them from the shadows and undergrowth of the hex world. Don't allow the party to engage, but let them feel that someone, or something, is watching them at all times. Make night dangerous. Perhaps stronger creatures come out in the dark and hunt the party, forcing them to find shelter and camp before nightfall.

Don't be afraid to alter the size of your hexes. The hexes are set at 6 miles in Shadow & Ash, but if you have a party who love preparing for long journeys, foraging for food, camping by firelight and telling stories of the brave to one another, consider making the hexes larger. In contrast, if the party loves nothing more than hacking down droves of monsters, exploring tightly winding dungeons and looting corpses, make your hexes smaller so they can reach prominent locations in a faster manner.

One of the main reasons Hex Crawls can become boring and a slog for players is that the GM doesn't lay down specific directions. If the party does not have an accurate map of the over-world, and the Hex Map is being revealed portion by portion as they travel, it is easy for the party to miss vital locations and become annoyed at traversing open spaces. They will consider themselves lost and, most frustratingly, aimless. To counter this problem, the GM should have NPCs of the world and other sources inform the party of interesting locations or directions in which they should or should not travel. For instance, a farmer may shout to them as they enter a forest that there is nothing but trees that way for so many miles, but if they veer north west for twelve miles, they will see a tower on the horizon. Trying to reach a tower you have heard of, and at some point can see in the distance, across miles of grassland or forest, but being routed off-course by a villain or monsters and having to find your way back is much more fun than being lost from the get go or having no idea of the towers existence in the first place.

If anyone in the party is a ranger or a tracker type, give them opportunities to find clues or monster tracks across the hexes. Perhaps the party are following a road north to a location they were told about by the people of a village, but the tracker spots blood in the grass and hoof prints moving away from the road, into a dark swamp. This will give the party the same sense of coming across two doors in a dungeon. Do they continue north to their original destination, or do they venture into the unknown to follow the tracks?

Another issue with over-world travel in sandbox spaces, such as Hex Crawls, is the difficulty of a narrative drive. It is hard to funnel a party through narrative beats when they can seemingly venture off any which way. An overall narrative and emotional story beats should not be left out in a Hex Crawl, however, as again the party will feel their actions to be aimless. When writing main story beats try not to focus so much on setting, but triggers and time-lines. If you write an encounter with the main villain on a snowy mountainside, but the party venture south into a desert, you won't have the time, or energy, to wait until they finally decide to visit the snowy region, if they ever do at all. So instead, write the main points of the encounter or narrative so they can work wherever the party may be, and set it to a timer. Perhaps the narrative thread will be revealed in three hexes time, or a trigger, such as an action the party may take to cause the story beat to begin.

Some story options suit Hex Crawls extremely well, as they encompass the feeling of a large world that can never entirely be explored, making the party feel small within its vastness, yet integral to the shifting of factions and events within it. Listed here are some story points to consider when creating a narrative plot to be told through the use of over-world travel in a Hex Crawl:

- Create more than a single goal for the party, but by achieving one, it means another is lost for good.
- Character back stories or inherent flaws in their temperament should affect the events that change the over-world.
- Decisions characters make must have devastating impacts on the people of the over-world.
- Make sure the narrative is full of moral conundrums.
- Choosing which factions to ally with must have serious consequences both for the party members and the world itself.
- Show, don't tell. Allow the land and locations themselves to tell a story.

In conclusion, to run a successful Hex Crawl, remember to populate, give direction, create challenges other than terrain traversal, and continue or begin a strong narrative regardless of the free roam nature of Hex Crawls.

The Four Counties

The Quarter Lands are broken up into Four Counties: Ashen Heath, Beryl Wilds, Whispering Fen and Wraith's Range. Each county contains its own factions, locations of interest, biomes and themes. The details here give an overview of each location within the Hex Crawl.

Ashen Heath

The Ashen heath is a vast moorland, bordered by woodland to the south, and boggy terrain to the north. Burial mounds scatter the landscape here alongside mossy, grey rock formations. Purple heather grows in an abundance amidst the coarse grass. Rainfall is frequent and the earth seems to soak it up like a sponge. Small hovels can be found here, but the main location is the College of the Umbra Coven. The people of the Ashen Heath struggle in life, and are hardened to the strong winds and cold winters here. The land is hard to cultivate and frequent storms are hard on cattle.

There are more burial mounds and shrines to the Highfolk here than in all the other counties combined. The Aos Sí are seen most frequently here. The Lowfolk, Fomóiri, haunt the heath at night, their dark forms stalking before starlit skies, hunting the spirits of the Highfolk and travellers both.

The Umbra Coven have a great influence here, their witches guarding the borders of Ashen Heath and their college. They serve the Empress of the Starlit Coven, but those of the Umbra have their own laws in the county of Ashen Heath. The magic here, that of shadow, seems dark but because it is caused by light, not the darkness itself, the Boundless Coven holds little sway here for now.

Beryl Wilds

The county of the Beryl Wilds is made of vast grassland and what the people there call Shardplains, fields of crystal shards that grow and tower like trees, casting an eerie, wan light across the land. The Starlit Coven make their home here, and within the Shining Vale of Áine, a fissure in the earth lined with the crystal shard, their council is heard. Cliffs rise across the plains and forested regions to the north are dusted with light snow which drifts down from Wraith's Range. The woodlands of the Beryl Wilds connect the county to the Ashen Heath in the south east.

To the far south, on the edge of all things, sits the Myst Fort, an old, decaying castle which houses the Warriors of Myst. These fiery haired, shield bearing men and women fight for the Starlit Council, and aid the Umbra Coven in their battle against the Boundless. Across the Myst Fort grows a vine that produces fruit called the Feral-berry, which is crushed and worn as blue war paint by the Warriors of the Myst.

The Beryl Wilds are an arduous place to travel, as beasts hunt men and the Boundless send foul things to attempt to rid the Starlit Coven and the Empress of their thrones.

Whispering Fen

A sweeping marshland of swamps, forests of tall reeds, weeping willows and forgotten places. The people of the county of Whispering Fen, the Fenfolk, mostly reside in the ramshackle town of Dampholt to the south west of the county. Here the Alchemists work their strange sciences and abhor the magic of the Covens. Thieves and wanted murderers flock to this sodden place of stilted buildings as it is away from the Starlit Council's gaze. Dampholt is a dwelling of odd potions, odder people and lax laws.

Within the deep fen boats can be found moored to stilted buildings, all seemingly uninhabited for an age. Strange creatures have made their homes in and around these rotten dwellings, and the occasional criminal or madman may live in one. The stilted outbuildings of the Whispering Fen are dangerous to explore and likely to collapse or crumble beneath the feet of an adventurer. Strange ritual chants can be heard here, drifting over the misty marshland from afar.

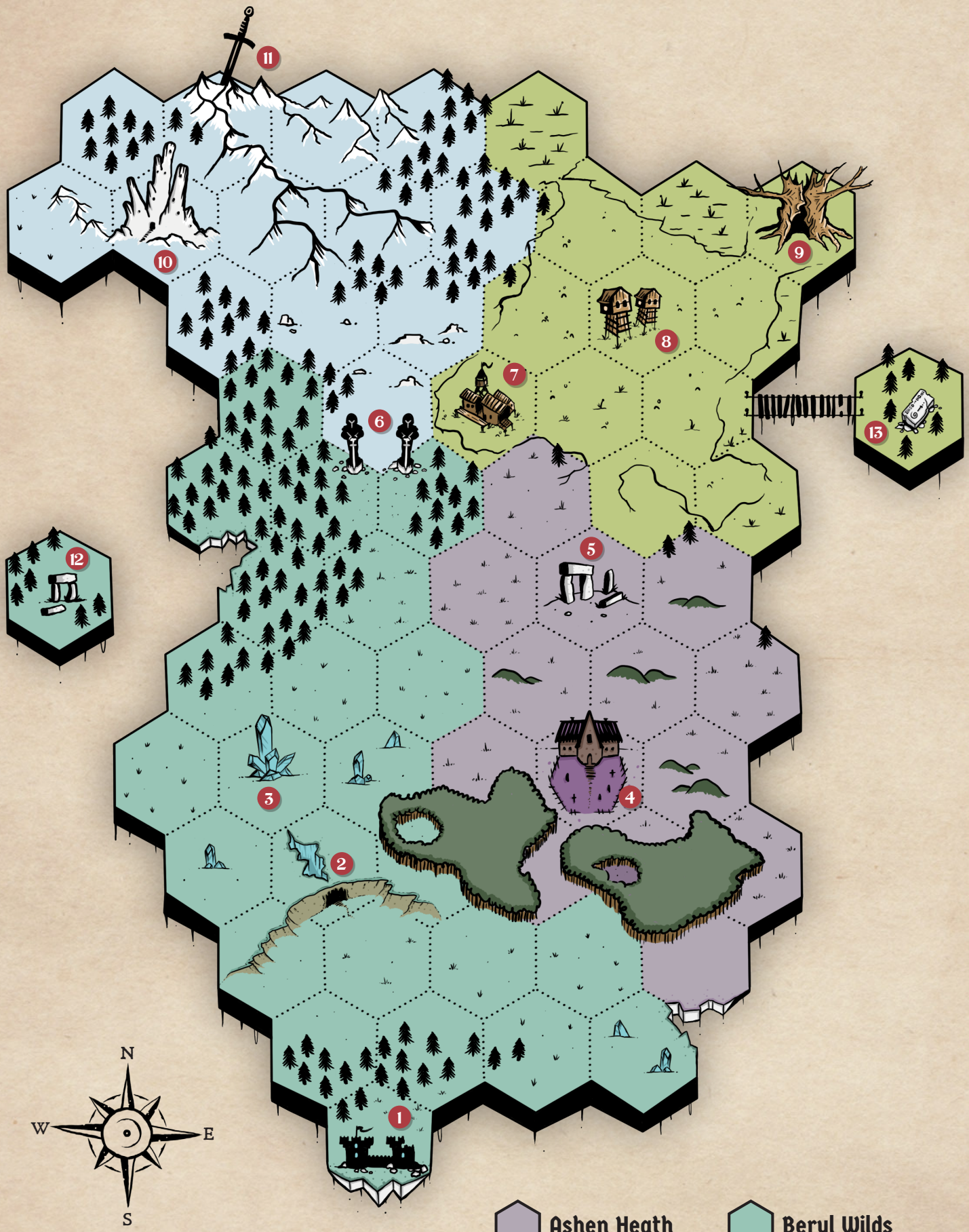
Deep in the wetlands of the Whispering Fen are the Boundless Coven. They are a wild group and practice dark arts far from the laws of the Starlit Coven. There are talks of sacrificial rituals and other such evil goings on in the deep places of the fen. To the north east it is rumoured that the Boundless dwell in the trunk of a giant, dead, ungodly tree.

Wraith's Range

Wraith's Range is a snowy region to the north west of the Quarter Lands. Here the lands lie still save for the drifting of snow. Few venture here, and the tower of the crumbled mountain city of Tethra is silent save for the wolves. The mountain range cuts this county in two, the eerie gates beside the forests of the Beryl Wilds are watched over by giant statues of warriors of old, the names of who none now remember.

The ancient city of Tethra that resides in the Wraith's Range is now no more than hollow towers that rise above the mountains at strange angles. It is said these towers were carved by a million spirits to aid the people of the physical realms and harbour them from the storms of the Range. One may still enter Tethra, but the floors and stairwells of the upper limits have long collapsed and the dizzying view to the top shows nothing more than broken light that finds its way through holes which were once windows. Some of the Beryl Wilds and the Ashen Heath still tell tales of a maze-like shrine beneath the city. This shrine is said to have been made for the bodies of warriors who wished to join their brethren on the fields of Mag Mell in the afterlife.

To the far north of Wraith's Range, through snow and fog a sword hilt is seen. A colossal, stone blade buried into the mountainside. It is named Orna, and it is told that the goddess Danann tried to kill the god Elatha. She struck so hard with her sword that the blade broke from the world of the Aos Sí and pierced the Quarter Lands. Wraith's Range is said to be haunted in places by the otherwordly spectres of the Fomóiri, the lowfolk of the lands, and servers of the dark god Elatha.



1 Hex = 6 Miles

Ashen Heath

Beryl Wilds

Whispering Fen

Wraith's Range

The Quarter Lands

The Quarter Lands are mapped out here with brief notes describing some of the main locations. This Hex Crawl map can be used in its entirety for the setting of Shadow & Ash, or you can use the map, location icons and details as inspiration for your own setting.

When running a Hex Crawl don't allow your players to become lost within an over-world slog of constant traversal. Travelling through Hexes without main locations should not mean they are empty or void of characteristics. Try to populate each hex with encounters, NPCs, foraging opportunities and unique camping spots that could become bases for your party.

Main Locations

[1] - MYST FORT:
A crumbling fort at the edge of the Beryl Wilds. The inhabitance are the Myst Warriors, a red haired people who crush the feral-berry that grows on the walls of the Myst Fort to wear as war paint. The fort, though in disrepair, stands as a bastion of honour in the Quarter Lands, and the Myst Warriors who are trained here uphold the Starlit Council and the Empress' laws.

[2] - SHINING VALE OF ÁINE:
A fissure in the earth, accessible by a cave in the cliff side. This crystal vale serves as the seat of the Starlit Coven, who by day are merged with the strange crystal walls, becoming sleeping bodies as if frozen within, and by night, recharged, these witches come forth and walk the vale beneath the stars.

[3] - SHARDPLAINS:
Across the grassland of the Beryl Wilds strange crystal structures grow with unknown properties. It is said the Starlit Coven draw power from this crystal as the light of the sun, moon and stars passes through it.

[4] - COLLEGE OF THE UMBRA COVEN:
Here stands the eerie building where those gifted with the Glint of shadow converge. Here the witches are taught shadow magic and join their Starlit sisters in their fight against the ritual magic of the Boundless Coven. The graves of fallen witches litter the grounds before the brown brick and twisted roof of the college. Myst Warriors guard the gates, and the Umbra witches walk the grounds.

[5] - HENGE OF DANANN:
An ancient henge dedicated to the goddess Danann. Here the spirits of the Aos Sí roam. It is said to be a place of passage.

[6] - FORGOTTEN WATCHERS:
Where the path from the Beryl Wilds meets the lands of the Wraith's Range two great statues tower. They watch over the lands with a stone gaze. None alive can remember the meaning of them.

[7] - DAMPHOLT:
The town of Dampholt is a rickety place, full of criminals. The marshland is flooded about it and small boats rock in the weeds. The slick board-walks give way to rotten jetties and shutters on the homes stay shut. Outsiders are watched closely by the guild of Alchemists that reside here.

[8] - STILTED OUTBUILDINGS:
In the deep fen these outbuildings climb into the sky, ladder rungs rotten, inhabitants long gone, newer inhabitants now moved in, scaled and vicious.

[9] - THE SUNDERED TREE:
This humongous dead tree rises from the mist and waters of the Whispering Fen. Here the Boundless sleep and plot. They crawl across the bark, long fingernails raking runes into the surface. Within the husk of the tree they practice their forbidden magic.

[10] - TETHRA, THE BYGONE CITY:
Strange, hollow towers rise in a mountainous clump amidst Wraith's Range. The city has long been uninhabited, its hundreds of stairways long collapsed. But the shrine of mythical lost warriors still lingers below, waiting to be found.

[11] - ORNA, SWORD OF DANANN:
A stone sword, said to have once been held by a god, is buried in the mountainside here, the hilt climbing higher than the mountains themselves.

[12] - HENGE OF ELATHA:
This henge sits an almost unreachable place, long lost to the Quarter Lands. It is the counterpart to the Henge of Danann, she the goddess and saviour of the Quarter Lands, and Elatha the destroyer. It is not somewhere any sane person would spend the night.

[13] - RITUAL STONE OF FAYG BAS:
An unsteady bridge leads to a forested location, at the centre of which lies a great ritual slab of stone. It is said the demon Fayg Bas, known to the commoners as the Sallow Lady, was birthed here by the Boundless Coven.

Weather

Roll a 1D6 against the correct area table each morning to determine the day's weather, unless a location is stated to have its own specific weather condition.

1] Clear skies	4] Thick Mist
2] Light Rain	5] Cold Winds
3] Heavy Rain	6] Thunder Storm

1] Clear skies	4] Sunny
2] Light Rain	5] Dry Winds
3] Light Snow	6] Crystal Storm

1] Clear skies	4] Thick Mist
2] Light Rain	5] Damp Winds
3] Monsoon	6] Frothing Bog

1] Clear skies	4] Low Fog
2] Light Snow	5] Ice Winds
3] Heavy Snow	6] Blizzard

Factions of the Quarter Lands

WARRIORS OF MYST:

At the Myst Fort, those who are not born with the Glint but show strength and loyalty to the Starlit Coven can be trained to become fierce warriors. This faction upholds the laws of the land and polices the roads, protects the common folk and loathes the Boundless Coven. They have no magic, but use instead wooden shields and iron swords. Although they are allied with the Umbra Coven, and protect and fight alongside the witches of shadow, there is a tension between them, as the Warriors of Myst believe the Starlit Coven to be superior. Those Warriors of Myst who prove themselves most trusted and valuable can become one of the Empress' Own, an elite team who guard the Starlit Council and the Empress herself.

Faction Location:

- Myst Fort.
- Across the Beryl Wilds and Ashen Heath.
- Sometimes venture out on a mission to Dampholt or the deep swamps of the Whispering fen.

Faction Goal:

To protect the Quarter Lands from forbidden magic and uphold the law of the Starlit Council.

THE UMBRA COVEN:

Upon the Ashen Heath sits the college of the Umbra Coven. These witches study the magic bound within shadows, and although the charms and spells they produce may seem dark or evil to an untrained eye, their motto is 'Shadows cannot exist without the light', and so they serve the Starlit Coven and are, in fact, well intentioned. They are the front line in the battle against the Boundless Coven and the malice that seeps across the lands. The college is mainly made up of young women who were born beneath a starry sky and gifted with the power of the Glint. Within the college walls they hone their craft.

Faction Location:

- College of the Umbra Coven.
- Across the Ashen Heath.

Faction Goal:

The Coven's main goal is to rid the lands of the dangerous Boundless Coven, and to continue their study and research of the shadows, and pass on that knowledge.

THE STARLIT COVEN:

The Starlit Coven is made up of witches born with the gift of the Glint and the power of light. They use crystals to refract light and create spells. The Starlit Council, a select group of witches, alongside the Empress, create the laws of the Quarter Lands as they see fit. Some follow them in their endeavour for peace, while others think it misguided or nothing more than a craving for power. Beneath the sun the energy is too great, and so they sleep by day and recharge, then venture out beneath the stars. Some can merge with crystals.

Faction Location:

- Shining Vale of Áine.
- Across the Beryl Wilds.

Faction Goal:

To continue a solid rule over the Quarter Lands and create a world of balance between the Covens and their powers.

THE BOUNDLESS COVEN:

These wild witches come from many ancient covens, some even being traitors of the Umbra Coven. Their dark magic has deformed them, turning their skin grey and covering them in warts and other such ailments. But their sickly forms are in contrast to the power they harbour. They have awakened an ancient demon in the form of the Sallow Lady, Fayg Bas, whose otherworldly knowledge guides them. They abhor the Starlit Coven and their laws. Far from the eyes of the Quarter Lands they plot, deep within the Whispering Fen. They practice foul ritual magic and conjure monsters from beyond.

Faction Location:

- Tree of the Boundless.
- Across the Whispering Fen.

Faction Goal:

The Boundless Coven's main goal is to destroy or consume all other covens, and merge all dimensions so as to soak the power from them at once. Only then will the demon god they conjured within Fayg Bas be able to truly walk on the corporeal world once more.

DRUIDS:

These masked men from wild places are obsessed with the magic they cannot use. They were not born with the Glint. No man can become a witch, and so they perform false rituals and have allied themselves with the Boundless Coven, becoming servants to the feral witches. They carry weapons made of sharpened bone. Together they call themselves the Forlorn, allies beneath the banner of Fayg Bas, the Sallow Lady, she who is the demon's host and servant of Elatha.

Faction Location:

- The Whispering Fen.
- Sometimes venture out across the Quarter Lands at the bidding of the Boundless.

Faction Goal:

They wish to serve the Boundless Coven and hope one day, that they themselves will be gifted with the power of the Glint

ALCHEMISTS OF DAMPHOLT:

Within Dampholt the Alchemists reside, a group that refuse a name and wish to study the Glint scientifically, rather than spiritually. The Alchemists believe there is no goddess Danann, and that the Glint is simply something some are born with. They strive to find logical meaning in all things. Some call them the Eolaí Coven, though they refute it.

Faction Location:

- Dampholt.

Faction Goal:

The Alchemists' goal is to find meaning through science, and prove that the Starlit Coven are not voices of Danann, and therefore should not hold sway over the laws of the Quarter Lands. Though they do not consider themselves enemies of the Starlit Coven.

Alliances & Enemies

Within the Hex Crawl setting of Shadow & Ash there are the six main factions: Warriors of Myst, the Umbra Coven, the Starlit Coven, the Boundless Coven, Druids and the Alchemists of Dampholt. There are also two other groups: The Aos Sí (Highfolk), and the Fomóiri (Lowfolk). Although the Highfolk and the Lowfolk are not considered 'factions' as such, as they are otherworldly and their goals and needs too abstract for the minds of mortals, they have been included here to give an understanding of their inherent nature and actions toward the mortals of the Quarter Lands.

This table shows the alliances, neutrality and enemies of certain factions in regards to one another, and the main locations of their numbers.

Key

A - Allies	- Ashen Heath
E - Enemies	- Beryl Wilds
N - Neutral	- Whispering Fen
- N/A	- Wraith's Range

	Warriors of Myst	Umbra Coven	Starlit Coven	Boundless Coven	Druids	Alchemists	Aos Sí (Highfolk)	Fomóiri (Lowfolk)
Warriors of Myst		A	A	E	E	N	N	E
Umbra Coven	A		A	E	E	N	N	E
Starlit Coven	A	A		E	E	N	N	E
Boundless Coven	E	E	E		A	N	E	N
Druids	E	E	E	A		N	N	N
Alchemists	N	N	N	N	N		N	E
Aos Sí (Highfolk)	N	N	N	E	E	N		E
Fomóiri (Lowfolk)	E	E	E	N	N	E	E	

NPCs of the Quarter Lands

ROWAN IARLA:

Red haired Rowan grew up in the Myst Fort. She was not born with the Glint, and so was trained as a warrior, eventually passing all tests and receiving her shield, painted with the crest of her family, the branch of a holly tree. Rowan witnessed a witch use her Glint on livestock as a child, showing off her power and killing the cattle. Ever since she has had a distrust of those of the covens, although it is her sworn duty as a Warrior of Myst to serve the Starlit Council. Her family shield was taken from her when she dishonoured the Myst Fort by striking a Starlit witch who spoke ill of the Warriors of Myst. She was conscripted by Blathnat, regardless of her dishonour, to guard the borders of the College of the Umbra Coven.

Locations:

- Guarding the College of the Umbra Coven.
- Occasionally visits her family at the Myst Fort.

Goals and Secrets:

Rowan Iarla's goal is to regain her honour and get to carry her family shield once more. Though she has a distrust of those with the Glint, she is secretly growing fond of the witches of the Umbra Coven who she guards, especially Wynne Cuttle, the newest student of the college.

CAPTAIN BLATHNAT:

After the death of her former captain and tutor, Úna, Blathnat was voted to take her place as Captain of the Empress' Own. These warriors are a small group from the Myst Fort, chosen for their advanced skills, who protect the Starlit Coven. Blathnat is broad and she has met none who can best her with a sword. She carries Úna's Bracken Blade, a sword made of green metal. Blathnat, more than any other, has seen the Boundless Coven at work, and she gives warning to the Council that a war is coming, and so conscripts Warriors of the Myst to protect the College of the Umbra Coven, because she believes this to be the place the Boundless will first attack.

Locations:

- Shining Vale of Áine.
- At the Myst Fort or across the Quarter Lands, tracking bands of Druids.
- She occasionally travels to the College of the Umbra Coven to visit Aedan, the boy she saved from the rituals of the Boundless in the Whispering Fen. She now sees him as a son.

Goals and Secrets:

Blathnat is secretly wary of the Starlit Council, and she worries that they no longer voice the laws and wants of the Empress, but their own. She wishes nothing more than to see peace between all covens and peoples of the Quarter Lands.

AEDAN:

A young boy who bunks with the Warriors of Myst in their camps around the College of the Umbra Coven. He was saved by Blathnat and Úna, who gave her life for his, and is deeply grateful. He looks to Blathnat as the mother he never had. Aedan has no memory of his life before the dark ritual in which he was nearly sacrificed. Whether this is because of the effects of the ritual itself, or his own mind, none know. The warriors and witches of the College have grown extremely fond of the boy, and his skill with a bow has impressed them all. Aedan hunts alone in the woodlands south of the Ashen Heath, and brings back rabbit or fawn most days for the warriors and the witches, especially Wynne Cuttle, for whom he has a fondness. He is keen of sense and knows the woodlands better than most.

Locations:

- College of the Umbra Coven.
- Woodlands to the south of Ashen Heath.

Goals and Secrets:

Aedan has no desire to remember his past. He wishes only to grow to be as strong as Blathnat, and fight beside her to avenge Úna, who had died to save them both. Blathnat, however, will not allow him to leave with her on patrols, and frustration grows in him.

WYNNE CUTTLE:

Wynne Cuttle was born beneath a starlit sky to a poor river-fishing family and gifted with the Glint. Her parents died of a fever when she was young and so an elderly lady took her in. The people of her hovel were a superstitious bunch, and her strange shadow magic that started to spring from her caused them to believe she was cursed. One night, a man of the hovel branded her with a rune symbol, to stop their bad fortune. Wynne's anger formed a shadowy astral protection to appear and the villagers fled in fear. Wynne became distant after the incident and so the old lady helped her to leave that place. She travelled the Quarter Lands until she found the College of the Umbra Coven, who accepted her with open arms. She finds it difficult to control her shadow powers, but her Glint is the strongest the College has seen in years. She has now begun a friendship with Rowan Iarla, the Warrior of Myst, who at first was hostile towards her. The young boy Aedan visits her most days and interrupts her studies and annoys her with constant questions, though she sees herself in him, as he is also lost and pained.

Locations:

- College of the Umbra Coven

Goals and Secrets:

Wynne wants nothing more than to feel accepted and to be able to control her powers. She seeks to soak in all knowledge of the Umbra Coven, but has no desire to fight in their wars and has no loyalty to the Starlit Coven, though she will protect her new friends with her life.

Further NPCs...

MISTRESS GWENETH:

Mistress Gweneth is a beautiful, golden haired witch that teaches shadow magic and is the head of the College of the Umbra Coven. She was born beneath a starlit sky on a burial mound of Ashen Heath. She is loved by her students, but has a terrible wrath if pushed or threatened. Though she does not have the strongest Glint, her knowledge of crafts, rituals and the covens is unmatched. She frequently tells the story of the four original covens of the ancients, two of which were placed in the Quarter Lands by Danann, and the other two by Elatha, the dark god. A perfect balance was kept between light magic and the dark, the Aragonite Throne of the Dual Witch long lost beneath the snows of Wraith's Range. She teaches students to find that balance within themselves, a teaching which the Starlit Coven opposes.

Locations:

- College of the Umbra Coven

Goals and Secrets:

Mistress Gweneth's main goal is to pass her knowledge on to as many students as she can, so that the Starlit Coven's watered down histories of the Quarter Lands may continue to be disputed. Though a pacifist at heart, she has vowed to take up her Glint in battle against the Boundless Coven should they threaten her students and the College.

BALOR:

Balor is leader of the Druids. He is seven feet tall and broad, his hair and beard both reaching his waist. He wears a mask of bone that covers his eyes entirely. It is said among the Druids that Balor no longer needs his eyes for vision, as he is possessed by a Fomóiri that guides him from the low plane of the dark god Elatha. Balor heals tremendously fast and wields a large bone club. Even the witches of the Boundless Coven, who he serves, tread carefully around him.

Locations:

- The Whispering Fen

Goals and Secrets:

Balor wishes to serve the Boundless, but he wishes more for the power of the Glint, and will betray anyone to posses it.

SPIRIT DRUANTIA:

Druantia is a spirit child who was rumoured to have been born in the Sundered Tree to Balor and a Boundless Witch, but in truth she was ripped from her home onto the plane of the Quarter Lands as the Boundless rituals created a rift between dimensions. She is now bound by Boundless craft and hangs chained by magical bonds deep in the trunk of the giant tree. The Boundless seem to be drawing other-dimensional power from her.

Locations:

- The Sundered Tree

Goals and Secrets:

Druantia wishes to return to the fields of Mag Mell from where she was taken. She is a servant of the goddess Danann, and watched over the souls of the true Druids of old, who were at balance with nature and so were gifted the Glint.

FENELLA OF THE STARLIT:

Fenella is the voice of the Starlit Council. She is white haired and pale of skin. Fenella translates the sleeping Empress' laws to the Quarter Lands and controls most of the Council, though there are those who would rather see her abdicate her position on the Council. It is almost impossible for an outsider to receive an audience with Fenella, though possible if Captain Blathnat of the Empress' Own wills it so. Fenella of the Starlit spends most of her time encased in the crystal walls of Áine, though occasionally she will walk barefoot through the fields before the Vale's entrance, soaking in the warmth of the stars. When she takes these rare walks in the night, she thinks of her Empress, and of the childhood they had spent together on the Shardplains.

Locations:

- Shining Vale of Áine

Goals and Secrets:

Fenella is in fear. She no longer hears the voice of the Empress, but does not wish to incite panic across the lands and so has told no one. She attempts to convey orders and information the Empress would have given herself. Her goal is to awaken the Empress or find out why she slumbers so quietly within the crystal walls of Áine.

THE EMPRESS:

The most powerful of the Starlit Coven. It is said the words and laws of Danann come to her and the future can be glimpsed within her dreams. When she was younger she spent most of her time with the people of the Sharplains in the Beryl Wilds, until it was realised that her Glint was beyond anything that came before. The sun, too magic filled to bear, beat down on her day in, day out, and so she merged with the very crystals of the land to find respite from her harrowing powers. Now her body sleeps within the Shining Vale of Áine. But her mind, her soul, is perhaps somewhere else entirely...

Locations:

- Shining Vale of Áine, trapped and sleeping in the crystal walls.

Goals and Secrets:

The Empress' body in the Vale is no longer her. The power she bore weakened her physical form so much so that the dark god Elatha corrupted her and snatched her very essence. Now the Boundless have drawn that essence from another plane, and planted it within the Sallow Lady, Fayg Bas.

OGMA:

Ogma, the Alchemist of Wood and Stone, as his peers call him, resides in a rickety lab in Dampholt. He studies sciences and attempts to build strange constructs with wood and stone and potions, rather than using the Glint. He does not believe in gods and immortals. He is a grumpy, unbearable man, bespectacled and white bearded. He will tinker away with his experiments for days on end without sleep and can be delirious at times. The other Alchemists love him dearly though, and they treat him as some kind of father figure and mad teacher.

Locations:

- Dampholt

Goals and Secrets:

Ogma has no secrets. He is upfront and blunt in all cases. His goal is to prove that science bests magic and the Glint in all areas, and that these sciences can prove the Glint and the gods to be nothing more than natural occurrences such as the winds and the rains.

Monsters & Enemies

HAGGARD ONES:

Witches of the Boundless Coven who have been tainted by the dark magic of other planes. They are grey of flesh and hair, their faces covered in warts, though they do not always appear so. These Haggard Ones can appear as beautiful young women who lure young men into the Whispering Fen with the promise of love, or lure children with the promise of sweet pastries and wooden toys. The Boundless Witches do not like to confront their enemies, they would rather send the Druids to do that kind of dirty work, though if in a corner they will use evil magic to defend themselves.

Haggard Ones Traits:

- Can craft any spell of the Boundless Coven.
- Will beg for their life convincingly when defeated.

THE FLESH-MERGED:

Poor creatures and people who have fallen prey to the Boundless craft. Each Flesh-Merged is made up of two beings, blended together into an abomination of twisted limbs and flesh. Some serve the Boundless Coven, as the witches promise to return them to their former selves. The sobbing of the Flesh-Merged can be heard across the Ashen Heath on windless nights.

Flesh-Merged Traits:

- If human, they may beg of you to take their life to end their suffering.
- Whenever you kill a Flesh-Merged it alerts the Boundless Coven of your whereabouts.
- They scream and wail in agony which causes a deep, rotting fear.

BONE WIELDERS:

These Druid Bone Wielders carry swords and clubs of carved bone. They serve the Boundless Coven and will die for the witches and the promise that their children's children will hold the powers of the Glint. The Druid Bone Wielders wear masks to conceal their faces so they may still infiltrate towns and villages if commanded to do so. They patrol the Whispering Fen and sometimes venture across the Ashen Heath in small bands.

Bone Wielder Traits:

- They take no care for their own defence.

FOMÓIRI:

The Fomóiri are the dark spirits of demons from another plane. They serve the dark god Elatha and hate anything the goddess Danann touches. The Fomóiri appear in the Quarter Lands as the shadowy spectres of hunched men. As they move they become as black smoke, and they are never entirely visible. The Fomóiri cannot be killed in the mortal sense. Swords and magic will have no effect on them, but they themselves can have no physical effect on their corporeal enemies in the Quarter Lands, so instead they possess people and play tricks on them. Their influence is felt throughout the lands, and though they leave the Boundless and the Druids alone, as their goals are somewhat aligned, they have no tolerance of mortals. Mostly, they prefer the cold, and linger in the Wraith's Range, as it reminds them of their former plane.

Fomóiri Traits:

- They can possess any living creature, though they prefer humans.
- The Fomóiri will play tricks on people at night, giving them nightmares or calling to them from the dark in the voice of a companion.
- They cannot be killed in the usual way. They can, however, be banished. The magical rune drawn above can be scratched on the ground. If a Fomóiri passes over it they will disappear.

POSSESSED COMMONER:

These common folk of the Quarter Lands have a dark Fomóiri dwelling inside of them. If you look close enough, you'll see it watching you from within their eyes. A Possessed Commoner can go about their daily lives for weeks not knowing what lurks within them. Once the Fomóiri decides to take control, they can do anything from play tricks on neighbours, to murdering their entire family. This possession is caused by the decisions of the Fomóiri, though a Boundless Coven spell named 'Dark Master' can force a Fomóiri into the body of a person. To save the Possessed Commoner an exorcism must be performed, using sunlight passed through a crystal, and dew drops taken from around the home of the possessed. Most do not survive.

Possessed Commoner Traits:

- They can appear entirely normal one minute, and evil the next.
- They will seek out and attempt to kill any who wish to banish the voice of the dark god Elatha from the Quarter Lands.

CRAZED FEN-THING:

Deep in the Whispering Fen the Fen-Things live. They used to run from humans and hide in the marshlands, hunting for toads, fish and deer who wander too far into the swamps. They are humanoid, but entirely animalistic in nature, their hide made of slimy scales and their jaw bone-like. Recently these creatures have become vicious, pushed from their homes by the dark magic of the Boundless, driven mad by the restless spirits of the Fen. They have begun to attack travellers and venture nearer to the town of Dampholt, a place they once feared. Some have made nests within the old Stilted Outbuildings out on the marshes.

Crazed Fen-Thing Traits:

- If they pick up your scent they will begin to track you in a pack of 1D6.
- They fear the witches of the Boundless Coven and will flee if one is near.
- If you near their nests they become rabid and cry out for more of their kind to help them.

FAYG BAS

(The Sallow Lady)

BIRTHED ON A COLD SLAB OF STONE
TO THE BOUNDLESS AND THEIR KIN
SHE WALKS THESE LANDS ALONE
THE SALLOW LADY OF SIN

THROUGH MISTY NIGHT SHE TRAVELS
AS PALE AS THE MOON THAT SHINES
WHILE THE RIFT BEYOND UNRAVELS
SHE STEPS BETWEEN THE PINES...

Birthed in a dark ritual of the Boundless Coven in the Whispering Fen, Fayg Bas is thought to be a demon within the body of an unknown lady. Her skin is ashen and shines beneath the moon. Strange metal pieces of armour seem to be a part of her flesh, and her hair hangs to her knees. She wavers as she walks, expressionless, as if her mind is split between separate worlds.

Fayg Bas is secretly the soul of the Empress, whose body lingers in the crystal of the Shining Vale of Áine. The Empress' soul can connect to other planes, and she now unwillingly channels the voice of Elatha, the dark god. The Boundless serve this voice. In essence, the Sallow Lady is a puppet of Elatha, a combination of his voice and the soul of the Empress. Unknown to the Council, the Boundless draw power from Druantia of Mag Mell, and the Starlit Coven themselves, and feed Fayg Bas with this energy.

Though Fayg Bas commands the Boundless Coven, her wants and needs are otherworldly, and she leaves the Whispering Fen at will to wander the Quarter Lands, becoming fixated on those who may oppose her. She will stalk those she deems worthy without confrontation, to study them and watch from the shadows of the forests and hills. They may even glimpse her form on occasion.

Time to Fayg Bas is different to those of the mortal world, and she seems in no hurry to merge the worlds, but the Boundless Coven are impatient. When Elatha's voice and the Empress' power are released in combat, her skin becomes dark as shadow, unseen in the night.

COMBAT TRAITS

- At night or in dark places, while in combat, Fayg Bas becomes shadowy and is hard to see. Torchlight will illuminate her form.
- If Fayg Bas has been watching the party, she will call out their names or the names of dead loved ones in battle, causing fear.
- No form of magic can harm Fayg Bas, as she feeds on it all. She will consume any magical attack and then release it back at the caster. The party can only bring her down with physical weapons, such as steel, iron, stone or wood.
- If any member of the party uses a healing spell, it heals Fayg Bas instead.
- Fayg Bas can shimmer and disappear onto another plane, then reappear quickly, to get behind the party or to flee.
- When close to party members, Fayg Bas will swipe at them with her long, clawed hands.

Spell Book of the Covens

UMBRA COVEN

SHADOWGUARD:
When Shadowguard is cast, your shadow becomes sentient for a time. If anyone touches your shadow they receive damage. The stronger your shadow, such as in bright sunlight, the more damage it inflicts. The shadow of someone beneath the moon, in contrast, will be weaker. Be careful, Shadowguard does not differentiate between friend and foe. Shadowguard can only be cast if the caster has a shadow, so it will not work in pitch black places.

GLOOM PUPPET:
When Gloom Puppet is cast on the remains of a dead animal, the corpse or skull is filled with a flame of shadow. The caster can manipulate the 'puppet', either using it to scare weaker minded people or hurl it at enemies. One must be wary of the Gloom Puppet spell. There is a chance the spell can break from the caster, leaving a dead thing to forever float and torment the living. If this happens, only light magic can stop the wayward puppet.

PENUMBRA:
When Penumbra is cast a shadowy rune circle appears on the floor about the caster. The lines of the rune seem to shimmer with dark light. Cast on its own it has little effect except to stave off weaker creatures of the night, but when used as a shadow casting point, it makes all other shadow spells more powerful.

SHADE-HAND:
When Shade-Hand is cast the caster's hand turns into a flame of shadow. This can be used to block out or dim the light in a confined space. When cast after casting Penumbra, and still standing within Penumbra's runic circle, Shade-Hand allows the caster to fire balls of shadow at enemies. The shadow projectiles cause temporary blindness and confusion.

STEAL SHADOW:
When Steal Shadow is cast on a person or an enemy, their shadow disappears forever, and in return any wounds the caster has recently received are healed. The caster will, however, pick up certain traits of the person or creature whose shadow they heal from.

BLACK AURA:
When Black Aura is cast the caster is engulfed in shadow, as if their entire body, except the eyes, is in deep, dark shadow. This can be used for intimidation or stealth and assassinations, hiding the caster against the night. When cast within the runic circle of Penumbra, the caster actually becomes shadow, and whilst in the circle any physical object will simply pass through them. Black Aura almost always causes the caster to lose speech for a day or two when the spell wears off.

CONGEAL DARK:
Congeal Dark can only be cast when hidden in shadow. When cast the shadows surrounding the caster disappear, but they can then be formed into a small item, such as a key or a shadow dagger, which can be used only once before the item disperses and the shadows reappear.

COAL STALKER:
To summon a Coal Stalker the caster must first cast Penumbra and be stood within the runic circle. Once the Coal Stalker is summoned the caster's own shadow leaves the circle and can be controlled as a dark astral projection. The caster can see what the Coal Stalker sees but cannot interact with physical objects, only light sources, such as torches or lanterns.

FOE'S BLIGHT:
When Foe's Blight is cast on a single enemy, the enemy's own shadow turns on them and causes their movement speed to slow to a crawl as the shadow wraps itself about them like a dark, clawing cloak. When cast from within the runic circle of Penumbra, the caster can target 1D6 enemies instead.

OVERSHADOW:
When Overshadow is cast, darkness falls around the caster. If inside, it will entirely fill any size room, blocking out all light sources. When cast after Penumbra, Overshadow will cause an entire eclipse of all light sources, including the sun. When an eclipse is caused by the caster, they progressively become weaker the longer the spell is held, having to strain to hold the eclipse in place.

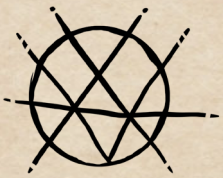
STARLIT COVEN

STAR HARVEST:
When Star Harvest is cast on a clear night, the caster may choose a star from the sky, then draw its light to where they stand. This light stops any curse or black magic from taking effect. Once the spell has ceased, that star will never shine in the sky again.

INHALE LIGHT:
Inhale Light can only be cast on a sunny day, and once cast causes the caster to fall into a deep sleep for three hours. The light of the sun is breathed and stored within by the caster in their sleep, then can be released when the caster wakes, used as a source of light in dark places, or to ward off evil spirits. When Inhale Light is cast, and the light is kept within, it makes all other Starlit spells more powerful.

CONGEAL GLOW:
Congeal Glow allows the caster to steal any refracted light beam, such as light through a crystal, window, or the surface of water, and mould it into any long and

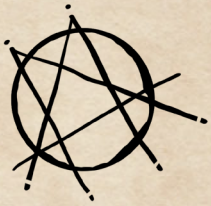
Shadow



Flesh

Rift

Crystal



Light

thin item, such as a spear of light, a staff, or a gleaming oar. This item lasts as long as it is fed by natural light sources, such as the sun, moon or stars.

CRYSTAL AURA:

For Crystal Aura to be cast, the caster must meditate before a large crystal for an hour, then when the meditation is complete, the caster's body is covered in a glowing sheen of crystal which protects from all physically harmful magic for an entire day. Once the spell wears off, however, the caster becomes terribly feverish. To recover they must rest in warm sunlight.

RAY OF DANANN:

When Ray of Danann is cast, a powerful beam of light leaves the caster and can be directed and controlled. This light causes no physical harm, except momentary vision impairment. The light ray does, however, cause fear in the hearts of those who are truly evil, and hope in the hearts of those who are good.

BRILLIANT SIGHT:

When Brilliant Sight is cast in a dark indoor or underground location, all nearby light sources become the caster's eyes. They will be able to gaze through the flames of a torch in the next room, for instance. If used outside beneath the moon, the caster becomes extremely dizzy. If used beneath a bright sun, the caster is instantly blinded. This magical blinding is irreversible.

LUCENT BOND:

When Lucent Bond is cast the caster may pass through translucent objects as if they are made of light. This includes crystal, glass and ice. Because water shifts and moves, Lucent Bond has no effect when wading or submerged. If the caster is not rested or badly wounded, they run the risk of becoming encapsulated within the object they pass through. This will not kill them, as they will enter a meditative state, but it will take several days for them to heal and break free, unless others can smash them out of their transparent prison.

THE GIFT OF LUSTRE:

When the Gift of Lustre is cast on a truly evil being, they see the errors of their ways and become conflicted for an entire day. They also glow like a faint star, which can warn their evil allies that something is amiss within them. If cast on a being that is already good at heart, they simply glow and feel warm.

BOUNDLESS COVEN

FLESH-MERGE:

To cast Flesh-Merge a circular rune must be scratched into the side of a black candle, then the candle must be lit and the wax dripped onto the two beings the caster wishes to merge. Then the words of the spell are chanted. If two animals are used, for example, they will become a strange abomination of joined limbs and features. Some have used this on themselves and merged with beasts to gain feral strength.

WITHERED NO MORE:

To cast Withered No More a fresh apple must be picked then boiled in the blood of bats. Then the words of the spell are chanted. When the apple is consumed by any person or creature with magical properties, their scars disappear, wrinkles fade and beauty and youth return. This lasts only nine days, and when the spell fades the consumer of the apple appears to age further than before, warts appearing on their hands and faces.

DARK MASTER:

To cast Dark Master a sacrificial pawn is needed, and a ritual table of some kind aids the process. If the one to be sacrificed is willing, the spell may be cast, but if they are unwilling they first must be put to sleep with the use of magic or a potion. When Dark Master is cast, the sacrifice is possessed by a Lowfolk. The Fomóiri will writhe within them and can sometimes be seen in their eyes. The Fomóiri will force them to do bad things to those they love, and if an exorcism is successful, the host dies or loses a part of who they once were.

ETHEREAL LEECH:

When Ethereal Leech is cast, the caster must be near a source of magic. This can be anything from a portal, another magic user, or a magical creature or plane. The magical essence is sucked inward by the caster, leaving the magical source weaker. Ethereal Leech causes the caster to become bursting with magical energy, but it is twisted and when they cast another spell there is a chance it could cause a planar rift. This rift could be a doorway to another world, or it could leak black magic into the world.

FALLOW CHANT:

When two or more casters chant these ancient words on fertile ground it causes a rot deep in the earth. The once fertile land can never be farmed again. If one tries it produces black, shrivelled fruit that is deadly to any who eat it. It has been said that some have used the Fallow Chant on people or creatures, and that they become infertile or give birth to abominations.

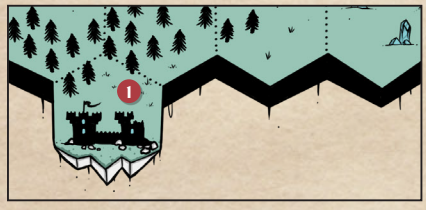
BANSHEE'S WAIL:

This screeching chant can be performed by a single caster. Banshee's Wail must be cast at night, while the intended target makes ready to sleep. If the intended target hears the terrifying wailing and chanting of the spell, someone they love will die within the year from unexplainable causes. This spell can only be broken if the target kills the caster. If the caster is killed by anyone else or dies in any other way, the spell in unbreakable.

ATHAME OF YOUTH:

For Athame of Youth to be cast, the caster must have an athame (a ritual dagger), and a living sacrifice. Athame of Youth differs from Withered No More because when the sacrifice is made and the spell cast, the caster's body stays the same, but the vitality of the sacrifice is received. An old witch who casts Athame of Youth and sacrifices a baby goat, for instance, will have the strength, speed and clarity of mind from her younger self, but still be in a withered body. The spell lasts for a single day, but it is said if the goat is replaced with a human child, the spell can last far longer...

The Myst Fort



[1]- OUTBUILDINGS
A small village where commoners of the Beryl Wilds live. Most are the families of the Warriors of Myst.

[2]- ARCH / GUARDROOMS
The walkway of the fort's battlements arches over the open gateway here. Beneath the arch are two wooden buildings that serve as guardrooms.

[3]- WARRIORS' BARRACKS
The Barracks are where the Warriors of Myst eat, sleep and train. The building is full of cots and the walls are adorned with wooden shields. There is a stairwell within that leads up to the fort battlements.

[4]- ARMOURY
On the courtyard of the Myst Fort sits the armoury. An unassuming building which holds racks upon racks of swords, bows and arrows within.

[5]- OFFICE OF THE EMPRESS' OWN
This building contains ledgers and documentation on the goings on of the Quarter Lands, and is where Captain Blathnat can be found should she visit the Myst Fort.

[6]- SUPPLY HOUSE
Here the food stores are kept. Grain, dried meat and fruit fill barrels and cover shelving. It is distributed between the Warriors of Myst and the commoners who live just beyond the fort.

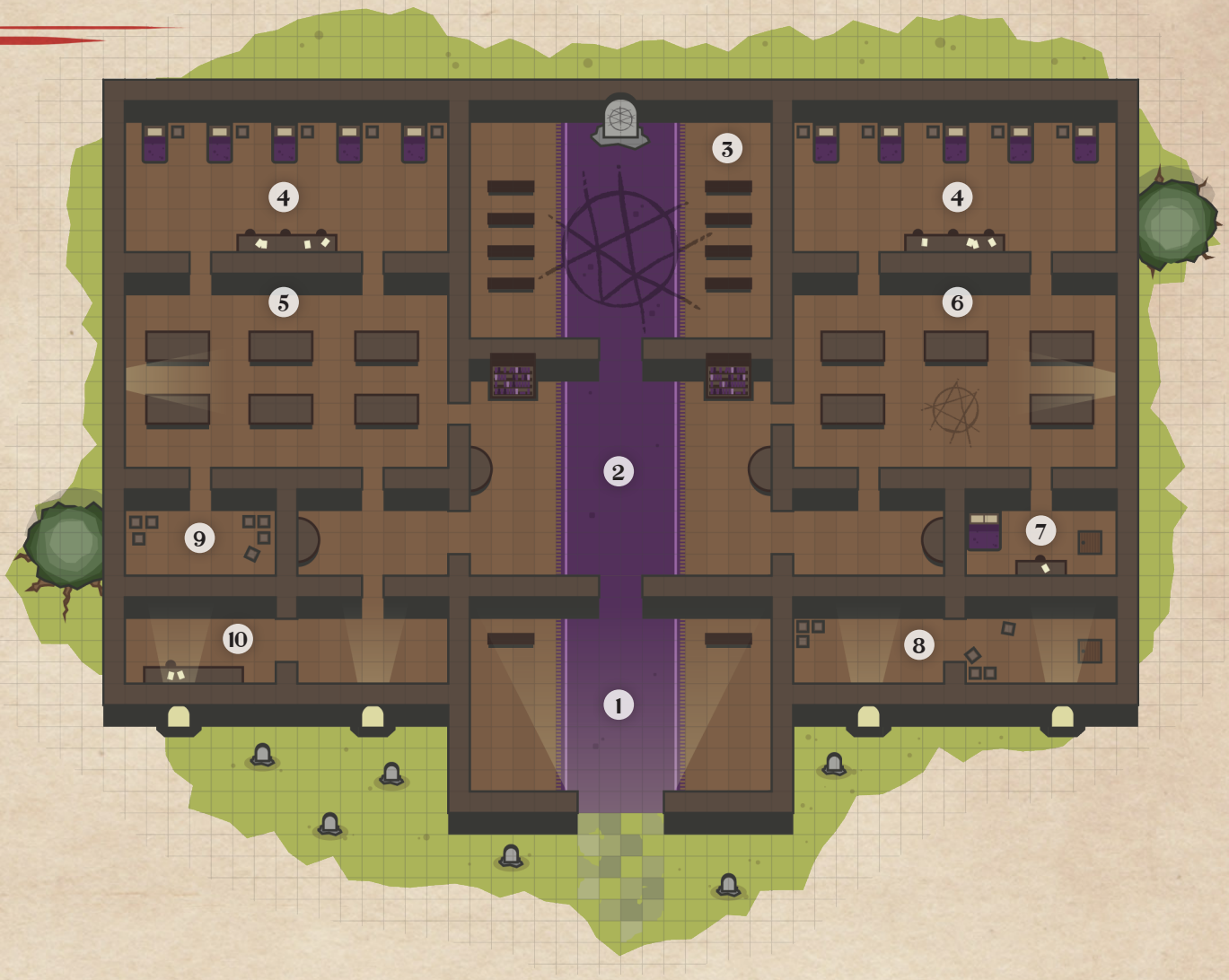
[7]- TRAINING YARD
A yard tucked away behind the barracks and the office. Here the Warriors of Myst train vigorously with sword and shield. The floor is covered in a thin bed of sand.

[8]- ENCAMPMENT
The south east section of the Myst Fort has long been collapsed. The Warriors of Myst are too few in number and too low in resources to rebuild it. Because of this weakness, where the wall has been breached, a group of rotating guards camp in the woodlands and keep watch.

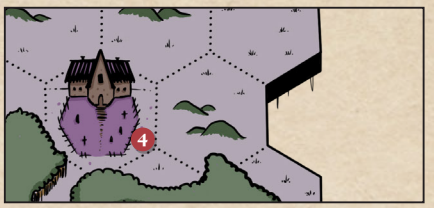
[9]- THE FOUNTAIN
In the centre of the main courtyard of the Myst Fort rests a freshwater fountain. For miles around, this is the main source of water for the Warriors of Myst and the commoners of the village.

?

If the party join forces with the Warriors of Myst, they can store their belongings here and rest in the barracks. Perhaps a large band of Druids have travelled from the Whispering Fen, and hide in the forests just north of the fort, preparing to attempt a breach of the walls to destroy the food sources and poison the fountain?



The College of the Umbra Coven



[1]- ENTRYWAY
Warriors of Myst patrol the graveyards before the doorway to the College. Within, a large room is full of chattering students who stand around and sit on benches, and vendors who bring supplies.

[2]- COMMUNAL AREA
Here books on the history and magic of the Quarter lands line the walls, and tables rest either side, littered with melted candles and crystals.

[3]- THE UMBRA SHRINE
Initiation ceremonies and spiritual gatherings are performed here. A Starlit idol heads the room, and the witch word for 'shadow' adorns the purple carpeted floor.

[4]- DORM ROOMS
The dorm room for younger or less experienced Umbra Coven witches is in the west wing, the more advanced students in the east. They are full of dishevelled beds and desks littered with exam papers.

[5]- CLASS OF THE UMBRA CRAFT
Here the witches study and perform their craft, practicing simple shadow magic and taking tests on the history of their Coven.

[6]- CLASS OF ALTERNATE CRAFT
Within this classroom the witches of the Umbra Coven study the magic of the other Covens, though they cannot perform it, to better understand their allies and enemies. Crystals and old tomes cover the desks here.

[7]- MISTRESS GWENETH'S ROOM
The private bedroom of Mistress Gweneth is off limits to all. There is a hatch in the floor that leads to sealed off rooms of the College.

[8]- SEALED ROOMS
These sealed off rooms are no secret to the students, as they can be seen through dusty windows from the outside. They contain boxes of artefacts considered too dangerous to leave lying around the classrooms.

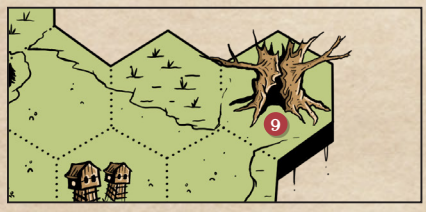
[9]- STOREROOM
Crates of vials of ink, parchment paper, crystals, candles and purple robes fill this room.

[10]- TEACHERS' OFFICE
Here the teachers of the College of the Umbra Coven mark papers and plan lessons.

?

Maybe a magic user in the party is initiated into the Umbra Coven in a ceremony? They can then begin to study the strange shadow magic of the witches, and learn the secrets and histories of the Quarter Lands.

Within the Sundered Tree



[1]- THE SUNDERED GATE
It is said a great tree grew from the tears of Danann, and the dark god Elatha struck it dead with lightning. The split in the trunk serves as a doorway to the inside of the tree. It is flanked by large braziers and bone wielding Druid guards.

[2]- SACRIFICAL STONE: ONE
Here the Boundless Coven sacrifice goats and other such animals.

[3]- THE MAP ROOM
It seems the Boundless are not as feral as first thought. Plans for and maps of the Quarter Lands lay strewn across tables. Druids slumber on the earth and drink ale here.

[4]- THE RIFT SHRINE
Here ten of the Boundless haggard ones kneel in two rows before a shrine carved with the witch word for 'rift'. Their eerie chanting echoes through the innards of the Sundered Tree.

[5]- STORES AND SQUALOR
Barrels of rotten apples and murky water litter the place. From the right side of the room a stench floats. It is here the Boundless witches twitch and squirm in their slumber. A hidden hatch leads to the rear of the Sundered Tree.

[6]- SACRIFICAL STONE: TWO
Here the Boundless Coven sacrifice willing Druids and their enemies.

[7]- THE HOLLOW
The Hollow is a deep pit of black, crossable only by using the rickety, rotten rope bridge. A Boundless Witch, one of the oldest of the coven, sleeps on the ledge here. The bridge creaks loudly when walked upon.

[8]- SACRIFICAL STONE: THREE
Here the Boundless Coven sacrifice the children they steal from across the Quarter Lands. Several children are tied up, still alive, and sat around a large brazier.

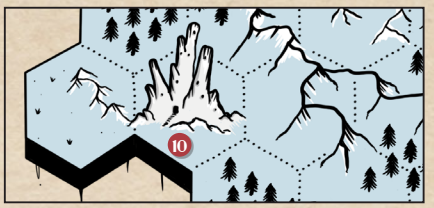
[9]- DRUANTIA'S ARCH
A stone arch sits the centre of the room, the rift word scratched into the floor around it. The spirit Druantia is chained beneath the arch, her skin glowing as the High Priestess of the haggard ones draws power from her.

?

To stop the witches of the Boundless Coven from drawing power from other planes, the rift shrine must be destroyed by a spell of light, and each Sacrificial Stone must be broken somehow. The High Priestess should also be slain, and the spirit prisoner Druantia set free from her chains. Only then will the power of the Boundless wane. Careful, Druids patrol within the tree, and the Boundless slumber or chant.

The Tomb Under Tethra

Secret Ice Hallways



[1] - The entryway to the tomb is covered in thick ice. This will have to be melted in order to enter. Once inside, 1D4 Fomóiri awaken at both locations marked [7]. If they pass over the rune in this first room, or another drawn by the party, they are banished.

[2] - This eerie tomb has ice fluttering on the air. 25% chance that each coffin contains a Draugr.

[3] - The tomb here is backed by huge columns that disappear into the darkness above.

[4] - Cracks in the walls of this room release a gaseous odour, enough to make you pass out.

[5] - The crates in this room contain the belongings of ancient warriors.

[6] - An icy wind blows so harshly here that it causes cold damage.

[7] - These are the Arches of Elatha, where dark Fomóiri pass through. To destroy them, one must cast light magic upon them.

[8] - This cold library doesn't seem part of the tomb. You realise you are now in a lower part of the ancient city of Tethra. A hidden room lies above in shadow, reachable only by climbing the bookcases. There is a corpse in a bedroll here, and a book on the Dual Witch of balance, a ruler of old.

[9] - Columns climb high here, icy spikes protruding from them, and the floor is slick as glass with slippery ice.

[10] - A frozen garden. This place is still and serene. You are sure you hear the whispering sound of distant flutes playing.

[11] - A long, columned room that is dappled with blue frost. At its end a shrine of light casts a healing glow.

[12] - The stone slabs of this old walkway shift as you step on them. Some begin to fall.

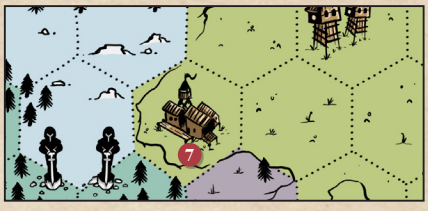
[13] - From here you can see into a dark distance, where the ancient city of Tethra's underbelly crumbles away into nothingness. To the north, across a great chasm, lies the Aragonite Throne. You see it faintly, shimmering in the dark.

?

By destroying both Arches of Elatha [7], then standing on the edge before the Aragonite Throne [13], the spirit of the Dual Witch floats across the chasm to you, and in thanks for closing the gates grants only one of the party the gift of the Glint; the power to harness and cast coven magic.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

The Town of Dampholt



The town of Dampholt lies to the south west of the Whispering Fen. It is the last stop before the marshlands become a dangerous tangle of weeds, and the deep bogs threaten to swallow one whole. If a party is planning to venture into the Whispering Fen, Dampholt is the place to stock up on last minute supplies. Rain cuts through the fog here, the ghostly silhouettes of stilted buildings and wooden board-walks sway before the vastness of the wetlands. The criminals and alchemists who reside here, on the edge of the civilised world, shamble about in thick cloaks, moving from one building to another, never lingering in the open for too long. Scaly things move in the waters beneath the board-walk, and the faint chanting and the screeching of swamp things echo from deep within the fen.

[1]- BOARD-WALKS
The Main board-walks connect the town of Dampholt, though some places are reachable only by rowing boat, or by wading in the murky waters that are in most places 3ft deep, and at their deepest 5ft.

[2]- THE GATOR'S TOOTH TAVERN
This is the only tavern in Dampholt. The air within is stale, the residents hooded and wary of strangers. Most here are criminals hiding from the gaze of the Starlit Council. The floorboards squelch with wet and rot beneath booted feet. A lyre player occasionally takes the centre of the room, the sound ominous and not at all comforting. The upper floor has three beds and a wash-room, nothing more than a bucket of boiled swamp water.

[3]- OGMA'S HOUSE
Ogma, the great alchemist, lives here. The place is full of books stacked almost to the ceiling, the lower ones wet and ruined by mould. Cats creep about the shadows and strange painted symbols and charts litter the floors. Ogma is rarely here, but when he is, he very much dislikes visitors.

[4]- MOMMA GREY'S STORE
Momma Grey is an elderly lady who claims to have been born in the Whispering Fen, and has never left. She remembers the first wooden post of Dampholt being hammered into the swamp. She sells supplies in her store, such as basic food, lanterns, inaccurate maps and cloaks. The store itself is shabby and poorly lit. Momma Grey loves nothing more than prying into the business of strangers.

[5]- ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY
The largest building in Dampholt. The windows and chimney glow with a strange light. Alchemists keep watch on the doors and will not let just anyone enter their place of science. Within, long tables are covered in glass tubes of bubbling potions and stuffed animals. Alchemists mutter to themselves in their work and build strange constructs with wood, iron and stone. Ogma has his own study here and spends more time in it than at his own home. Most of the other Alchemists sleep within the sanctuary of the Laboratory.

[6]- THE BOATMAN'S ABODE
The Boatman, a mysterious figure, resides here. If you wish to hire a rowboat to venture into the Whispering Fen, this shadowy man is the person to see. His home is open to all, but he resides behind a wall of iron bars, snatching coin through it. The Boatman wears a wooden mask carved in the shape of a skull. If you gain his trust, he can give you valuable information about the Whispering Fen, as none know the swampland better than he.

[7]- THIEVES' HIDEOUT
A group of child thieves who stole crystals from the Starlit Council lives here. They are in hiding from the Council and the Warriors of Myst. The crystals are hidden in a chest beneath the floorboards of their stilted home. The children sometimes venture south to steal from the people of Ashen Heath, dressed in the scaly skins of Fen-Things. They are extremely mischievous and will attempt to pickpocket any strangers who visit the town of Dampholt.

[8]- ABANDONED BUILDING
This building appears to be abandoned. It is full of crates containing disused vials and tools of the Alchemists. Occasionally drunkards or wanderers can be found sleeping here. The abandoned building would be a great place for a party to setup a base within the town of Dampholt.

[9]- MORASS ISLAND
Here a mossy, slushy island sits amidst the swamp. Sinewy trees grow from the damp earth, and an old standing stone has fallen beside it, covered in algae growth and roots. There is a hidden trap door on the island, beneath one of the trees. The door leads into the island, to a candlelit hole. Jars filled with animal parts cover makeshift shelving and a Haggard One of the Boundless Coven is in some ritualistic, eternal sleep here. She is an 'eye' of the Boundless, her power connected to by those within the Sundered Tree to watch the goings on of the borders of the Whispering Fen. If awoken she attacks. If slain in her sleep the 'eye' is broken, but her presence was keeping away the Crazed Fen-Things. When she dies, the Fen-Things begin to attack the town of Dampholt.

?

Perhaps the party are setting out into the deep fen, wishing to finally free the Quarter Lands from the clutch of the Boundless Coven. They may stop at Dampholt to rest and resupply. In doing so they might attract the attention of locals who do not agree with their cause. Maybe they will become allied with the Alchemists, and defend the town from a surge of Crazed Fen-Things which attack at nightfall, using the Alchemists' glowing potion-bombs to ward off the scaly advance. In thanks, the thieves and people of Dampholt may aid the party in their endeavours, providing a boat and maps of the Whispering Fen.

Whatever dangers Dampholt brings upon you, it is doomed to one day rot and sink into the fen, becoming nothing more than a memory.

Encounters Across the Quarter Lands

Ashen Heath.

1	1D6 Possessed Commoners terrorise a hamlet just off the beaten path.	11	A Lowfolk spirit glides across the Heath, looking for a human to possess.
2	You see Highfolk laying spirit weapons within a burial mound.	12	Insects begin to crawl from the ground in their thousands. You feel a magical energy in the air.
3	A child weeps atop a rock structure on the Heath, blood on his hands.	13	An injured witch of the Umbra Coven calls for help. She is at the bottom of a deep well.
4	You come across a dead horse. Strange footprints lead away into thickets of heather.	14	You enter a low field, covered in Boundless witch runes, burned into the grass of the Heath.
5	1D4 Druids track you across the Heath.	15	1D6 Druids spring from behind a rock formation and attack. They are all bloody and injured.
6	A Warrior of Myst confronts you on the road. She wishes to know your business.	16	You come across a camp. The fire is still lit and the food warm, but no one is around.
7	A family search frantically for their daughter, who was picking wild flowers.	17	You find a dead witch of the Umbra Coven, and several bodies of the Warriors of Myst beside her.
8	You begin to come across dead deer, killed by shadow magic.	18	Thirty Highfolk spirits walk in a procession across the horizon, pale mist trailing them.
9	You pass a small group of standing stones which glow with an eerie light.	19	The Heath beneath your feet crumbles and you fall into a dank system of caves.
10	A forager offers you food and gives you directions. He warns of a bear nearby.	20	You hear the magical chanting of the Boundless Coven on the winds.

Beryl Wilds.

1	A witch of the Starlit Coven wanders the Shardplains. She seems lost and confused.	11	A giant crystal structure on the Shardplains shatters as you near it, sending shards flying.
2	You come across 1D4 Warriors of the Myst in combat with 1D10 Druids.	12	A man has fallen down a deep split in the earth. His leg is broken and he cries for help.
3	A great storm of pollen blows on the winds, impairing your vision.	13	A hunter bids you help him feed his family, as he has caught nothing for days.
4	A farmer tells you not to venture north, as he has seen Lowfolk spirits on the horizon.	14	A masked group dances around a crystal structure whilst consuming strange blue mushrooms.
5	A fire in the distance burns so bright you know it to be caused by magic.	15	A member of the Starlit Council tracks you down. She gives you a mission to kill a nearby traitor.
6	A herd of deer run in fear from a copse of trees near the roadside.	16	You come across an abandoned homestead. A notice tells of a spreading sickness.
7	An old, stone arch lays fallen in the grass.	17	You see a thief stealing from a sleeping farmer's wagon of vegetables beside the road.
8	You hear the sound of running water nearby, but the source is not visible.	18	1D6 feral dogs bark and snarl up a tree. A young girl clings to the branches above.
9	Warriors of the Myst pass you while on patrol. After a time you hear one scream.	19	A strange man claims to be the new Captain of the Warriors of Myst and commands you to join him.
10	You pass a hovel, and the commoners instantly take a disliking to you.	20	A Starlit witch crafts light magic in a field to ward off Lowfolk who are attempting to possess her.

Encounters Across the Quarter Lands

Whispering Fen.

1	1D4 Alligators circle your position.	11	You hear, faintly, the whisperings of madmen from the mist of the Whispering Fen.
2	You find a broken ritual stone, stained with blood. A chant rises nearby.	12	You find an old stone platform hidden by dead trees. A perfect place to camp within the swamp.
3	1D6 Druids track you through the Fen.	13	Upon a rotting stump a little girl sits, singing eerily. Why is she out here alone?
4	A man from Dampholt wanders, lost in the marshes, crying for help.	14	Cackles of laughter echo across the marshland. 1D6 silhouettes of witches appear from the reeds.
5	You come across a sunken rowboat. Something shines beneath the murky water.	15	A dead tree sits to the east in the mist. You see something in its branches.
6	1D4 Haggard Ones of the Boundless Coven are chanting ahead.	16	A Warrior of Myst rests, injured, beside a stone in the swamp. He calls to you.
7	Tall reeds block your view in every direction. Something moves toward you...	17	You find a dead witch of the Boundless Coven beside a cage of starving children.
8	The ground begins to suck at your legs, and the swamp means to swallow you whole.	18	1D6 Crazed Fen-Things swim toward you, screeching and splashing.
9	You come across a dead Druid. His mask and outfit are intact.	19	Barrels begins to float past you on the waters of the Whispering Fen.
10	Firelight on the bog illuminates strange ritual happenings in the distance.	20	Standing stones appear from the fog before you, each carved with runes of the Boundless Coven.

Wraith's Range.

1	1D4 Lowfolk follow you through the snow. They do not need sleep, as you do.	11	Sharp shards of ice begin to fall from a cloud above, sticking into the ground like arrows.
2	You come across the frozen bodies of ancient travellers.	12	You walk beneath a blue arch of stone, it seems to whisper to you of your past.
3	You hear a great rumbling, then snow drifts toward you, 12ft high and moving fast.	13	A starving pack of wolves begins to track you.
4	The floor begins to crumble, spines of ice jutting up from below.	14	A cold front hits you, its icy sting is enough to cut flesh.
5	Old statues of those long forgotten seem to whisper to you from their snowy graves.	15	1D6 Lowfolk stalk the forest ahead.
6	Above the Range, you witness the spirit of a god trying to lift the stone sword, Orna.	16	To venture forth you must cross thin ice.
7	1D4 Draugr are woken when you near their burial ground.	17	A stone shelter holds the bones and diary of a witch from an unknown coven.
8	You find a band of dead Druids. What were they searching for on the Range?	18	An old hermit offers you shelter in her tent, only to reveal that she is of the Boundless Coven.
9	Pieces of gold glisten beneath a frozen stream. It is thick and hard to break.	19	You meet a traveller on the road who is hiding from the world, due to a shame they cannot bear.
10	A rune of blood has been splashed across the snow before an icy grotto.	20	A powerful Draugr, a tall and armoured warrior, bids you venture no further.

Flora

	Name	Description
1	Purple Ash Heather	Purple Heather grows all across the Ashen Heath. Its pollen blows like ash across the land. When brewed it has healing properties.
2	Shadow Shroom	The Shadow Shroom allows the consumer to see the spirit world for a time. Be careful, too much can drive you to insanity.
3	Oh Sweet Widow	A flowering plant which grows near burial mounds. When eaten raw you can communicate with Highfolk spirits.
4	Bilberry	These royal blue berries grow on the edges of the Ashen Heath. They are a main food source of the Quarter Lands.
5	Foxglove	A pink, bell-like flower that grows around the southern woods of the Ashen Heath. They are used in Umbra Coven ceremonies.
6	Sky Shroom	These small blue mushrooms, when consumed, cause the feeling of flight and a great urge to dance. Can enhance sight when worn off.
7	Crystal	The crystals that grow across the Shardplains of the Beryl Wilds are living entities and provide magical sustenance to the lands.
8	Feral-Berry	This vine berry can only be found growing on the Myst Fort. When crushed and worn as face paint it gives battle hardened confidence.
9	Star Shrubs	These pale, dry shrubs glisten like stars when the moon shines upon them. A field of them can be enough to light the way.
10	Lowfolk Thistle	These thistles look like the dark spirits of Elatha, hence their name. Boiled in tea they will make you sleep for days.
11	Black-Fruit	This hairy fruit born of dark magic grows on dying trees. If consumed you pass to the world of the dead, and return sickly.
12	Swamp Shroom	When these green mushrooms are consumed the earth seems to speak to you, and you are immune to all poisons for a time.
13	Tall Reeds	These tall reeds grow across the Whispering Fen. When dried they become strong and can be woven into rope.
14	Swamp Root	These roots can be pulled from the dirt of the swampfloor. Chewed raw they give you heightened hearing, but cause headaches.
15	Haggard Bush	When the wind whistles through the hollow stems of this bush, it sounds like the crying of an elderly woman.
16	Honey Pine	When charred over a fire, these pine cones are sweet to the taste. They make you feel warm. Can cause spontaneous fainting.
17	Snow Shroom	Snow Shrooms grow in cold climates. When consumed you are visited by a being made of ice who guides you.
18	Rune Leaf	These wild flowers, when brewed into a tea and consumed, cause any spirits to pass by without noticing you.
19	Stonepeak	These shrubs grow so coarse and grey that they appear to be rocks. If cracked open, they contain fresh water that heals wounds.
20	Winter's Breath	A translucent vine that chokes trees to death. When burned, Draugr and other undead flee from the flame.

Fauna

	Name	Description
1	Mangy Bear	It is rare, but bears sometimes venture onto the Ashen Heath. Here the climate affects them and they become aggressive and diseased.
2	Heath-Hare	Heath-Hares are insanely fast, but if enough are caught and skinned, their pelt makes for the warmest clothing.
3	Falcon	Large, grey winged falcons soar the skies above Ashen Heath.
4	Vole	Tiny Voles burrow across the Ashen Heath. They are a main source of food for the falcons and people alike.
5	Umbra Butterfly	This butterfly changes from black to purple depending on the light. Their presence can rejuvenate magic users.
6	Shard Beetle	Large beetles with crystalline growth on their backs creep across the grasslands. They are said to bring good luck to households.
7	Red Fox	The Red Fox is considered a sacred animal of the Beryl Wilds. They hunt across the plains and like to visit the Starlit Coven.
8	Deer	Deer are plentiful in the Beryl Wilds, especially surrounding the forested and woodland areas. They can also be found on the Heath.
9	Cryst-Spider	These spiders make their home, and web nests, within the crystal structures in the Beryl Wilds. Their skin shimmers like ice.
10	Field Mouse	The endless fields of the Beryl Wilds hide straw nests containing families of field mice. These critters can chew through leather.
11	Alligator	Large, scaled and with a mouth full of razor teeth, you don't want to tangle with an alligator of the Whispering Fen.
12	Blight-Fish	Blight-Fish are the main source of food in the Whispering Fen, but don't eat one raw, you'll come down with a fever and warts.
13	Croaking Toad	The deep croaks of these animals can be heard all over the swamplands. They are used in rituals and potions.
14	Marsh Eel	Marsh Eels can grow up to fifteen feet long. Though not aggressive, if you go near their young, they'll drag you beneath the water.
15	Black Turtle	The Black Turtle is an extremely rare and mythical animal. Their shells are almost indestructible and shield from all magic.
16	Wolf	They hunt in packs across Wraith's Range. Though somewhat scared of humans, if food is scarce, they will attack.
17	White Bear	Huge bears of the Range. They are solitary creatures and stay near rock pools and caves. Do not antagonize one if you wish to live.
18	Owl	Owls can be seen fluttering between the trees of the forested regions of Wraith's Range. Their feathers fetch a pretty price.
19	Muskox	On the snowy flats the Muskox graze, pushing their horned heads beneath the snow to find long covered grass.
20	White Stag	The White Stag is said to warn of dark spirits nearing.

Mysteries and Goals: How to conclude 'Shadow & Ash'

How do you end this journey of shadow and ash? Certain mysteries across the Quarter Lands can be uncovered, and the balance of the Covens and the wilds can be put back in check by performing certain tasks. You can, however, invent your own mysteries of the Quarter Lands or implement elements from your current campaign here.

Mysteries

[1] - THE GIFT OF GLINT:
How does Coven magic work? Can the Glint be learned, or is it something you are born with?

The many spells of the witches of the Covens are sought after by the Druids and others. Can an outsider use the ancient craft, or is it only gifted to those women who were born beneath a starlit sky? There are prophecies of an ancient Witch Queen, the Dual Witch, who balanced dark magic with light, and some say her spirit can gift the Glint to someone she deems worthy.

[2] - ELATHA & DANANN:
Do these old gods still play their hands in the mortal world? Does Elatha wish to merge the worlds?

Ancient stories of the battle between the dark god Elatha and the goddess of light, Danann, can be heard across the lands. It is said Elatha wishes to merge the spirit worlds, such as Mag Mell, with the physical world, so he may control all at once. Danann is said to oppose this, as she wishes for the mortals to stay free and not be governed by dark magic.

[3] - THE EMPRESS:
Does the Empress rule the Starlit Coven, or has her voice been silenced?

Some fear the Empress to be dead, or worse yet, possessed. The Starlit Council may be using their power to control the lands, and falsely claiming they do so in the name of the Empress. Perhaps the Starlit Council do not know of the Empress and her weakening soul?

[4] - FAYG BAS, THE SALLOW LADY:
Who is this demon that walks in the pale body of a tall lady? Is she born of the Boundless entirely, or does the Empress' soul reside within her? Does she carry the voice of Elatha through the Quarter Lands, its echo reverberating from the dark, forgotten places of the wild?

The Sallow Lady is said to stalk the wild, watching, waiting. She commands the Boundless Coven but perhaps is using them only as puppets to achieve the goals of the dark voice within her.

[5] - THE BOUNDLESS COVEN:
Why did these witches break away from the laws of the Starlit Coven, were they coerced by evil, or did they begin to mistrust the witches of light? How can the Boundless dark magic and blending of worlds be stopped?

The Boundless Coven believe in their cause, and are willing to let their corporeal bodies wither so as to achieve their goals and follow their dark master.

[6] - DRUANTIA, THE SPIRIT:
Do the Boundless draw power from the fabled spirit of Druantia? Where does this spirit reside, and if set free will the Boundless magic wane?

An ancient spirit of Mag Mell, pulled into captivity through a rift by Elatha and the Haggard Ones of the Boundless Coven. When set free the Boundless magic may shatter, and she may gift her saviours with otherworldly knowledge or spirit items.

[7] - THE MYST FORT:
Can the Myst Fort and its warriors withstand a Druidic invasion if the Umbra Coven should fall? Can they protect the Starlit Council, and will they, if they find out hidden truths?

The Druids plan an attack against the Myst Fort to weaken the Starlit Coven's power across the lands. The Warriors of Myst who serve the Empress so loyally may falter in this loyalty if they were to find out where the Empress' soul now resides; within Fayg Bas.

[8] - THE UMBRA COVEN:
Will these witches accept an outsider?

The College of the Umbra Coven will fight against the Boundless no matter the cost.

Song of the Father of the First Witch

"Across an ashen heath,
where the mares did bray so loud

There came a brazen warrior,
tall and broad and proud

To protect his unborn daughter,
to whom he was now bound

The bones of that old warrior
bore no flesh and no decay

Stripped bare of burden,
'neath the heath he lay

To never taste the fruits above
nor see the light of day

Dead fingers touched the hilt
of some old rusty sword

Not for love nor honour did he die,
but for the whims of one foul lord

Five men he killed,
of the clan that wished him dead

But then froze upon the field,
a coward, some had said

But the truth,
only that old warrior knew

Lost family he saw,
then his brother ran him through

Now that old warrior waits beyond,
for his kinfolk all to die

He waits not for love nor honour,
but to simply ask them why?

And hence, his daughter birthed,
beneath a starlit sky..."

Goals

What goals do the party wish to accomplish? A goal may be known before reaching the Quarter Lands or may develop overtime. These are some goal examples that can push the narrative forward and alter the conclusion within the Hex Crawl.

- Learn the Glint magic of the Covens.
- Defeat the Boundless Coven.
- Prevent the merging of worlds.
- Find ancient spirit relics for the party.
- Join the Warriors of Myst.
- Protect the innocent commoners.
- Learn the secrets of the city of Tethra.
- Somehow find a way home.
- Explore the Quarter Lands for treasures.
- Solve the mystery of the Starlit Council.
- Defeat Fayg Bas for wronging you.
- Save a friend (NPC) from a ritual.
- Get rid of the Lowfolk who possess you.
- Free the spirit Druantia.

Conclusions

Depending on the initial goals of the party, and more importantly the journey, the conclusion of their time in the Quarter Lands could vary. Listed here are some short paragraphs alluding to possible endings. These endings are not set in stone, but if you find one may be specifically emotional to your party, you can work the narrative and mysteries towards these end goals.

A SPIRIT FREED:

The innards of the Sundered tree flicker with firelight. You and Captain Blathnat, who is mortally wounded, approach the great stone arch and Druantia, who hangs, chained there, her pale complexion glowing faintly. With the craft you learned from the College of the Umbra Coven you break her free. Her eyes open and she floats as if beneath the waves, shadows growing darker within the room. She thanks you all and images of ancient wars and worlds long past flash before you, the knowledge of runic languages and plane gates flooding your mind. It is almost unbearable, to take on this much information at once, so you close your eyes and scream. After a time, calm fills you. A drifting sensation. You now find yourself standing in the Whispering Fen, swamp water to your knees, the Sundered Tree and the chains and Druantia gone. Blathnat places a hand on your shoulder, and clutches her wound. "We have banished them, the Boundless. All of them. Their dark rituals will never plague our lands again. Thank you, all of you." You find the rowboat and enter. Captain Blathnat's blood pools on the floor of it. She raises the Bracken Blade to your hands and you grasp the hilt as her eyes shut forever.

ON WALLS OF MYST:

The battle is over. A cold fog rolls in. Dead Druids litter the village before the walls of the Myst Fort on which you stand. All of you are wounded. Wynne Cuttle, witch of the Umbra Coven, your friend, steps up beside you. Her breath is heavy, her hair matted with the blood of her enemies. You see the boy, Aedan, crawl out from cover in the courtyard below where he had been loosing arrows during the fight. Many of the Warriors of Myst fell, but victory is theirs. The High Priestess of the Boundless Coven screeches amidst the battlefield, attempting one last feat of dark magic. Wynne Cuttle raises her hands, mutters old words, and commands the Priestess' own shadow to crush her into nothing but ash. "Well, that ends it," she says. Wynne turns to you. "All we have endured. The horrors we have faced," Aedan climbs up to the ramparts and embraces Wynne. "Together. Aedan. All of you. My family." A single tear runs down her cheek. You hear mutterings below as the villagers and warriors who survived begin to come out into the open, some weeping for the dead, others speaking in prayer to the goddess Danann. The crushed Feral-Berry is now dry on your faces, the blue inky stains mirroring the Warriors of Myst. Those warriors close to you begin to bow, one by one kneeling in thanks to your party and Wynne and Aedan for all of your bravery. You are a part of them now, a Warrior of Myst each of you. On the distant horizon you can still see the faint tower of smoke that is all that remains of the great College of the Umbra Coven. "We must rebuild here," Wynne says. "We must endure."

SOME STRANGE POTION:

The body of the great Druid Balor lies before you on the walkway of Dampholt. You slew him while the Alchemists held back the Haggard Ones with explosive vials. "You see," Ogma the Alchemist says with heavy breath. "Science beats magic, every time." The Fen-Things which were attacking both sides, dragging Druids, Boundless Witches and Alchemists beneath the swamp alike, seem calmed now, and they drift away into the rain covered marsh. Despite the thick downpour, Ogma's house still burns. "Never liked that place anyway," he grumbles. "I suppose you'll be wanting that potion now, will you?" Ogma hands each of you a vial of black liquid, the plane-jumper chemical he promised to brew if you were to defend Dampholt from Balor and his army. The thieves guild of children approach you, begging you to take them with you. The sound of rain beats about the place, the flickering of flames, the smell of the Whispering Fen rising like wet earth. Ogma reveals more of the foul smelling liquid and the child thieves jump up and down with glee. "It has been many years since a miserable old man like myself has called anyone a friend..." Ogma seems to mull it over. "Farewell," he says. "Farewell, friends." You drink the potion and strange shadows engulf you, your bodies breaking apart into infinite pieces, then re-emerging within lands you are familiar with, the Quarter Lands now seeming like a faded memory. A moment later a shadow appears and through it run the child thieves. They pull on your clothes and giggle. "Where to?" they ask. "Where to?"

THE GIFT OF GLINT:

Fayg Bas had been stalking you for days. Beneath the ancient city of Tethra you closed the Arches of Elatha, disallowing the Lowfolk to pass into the Quarter Lands, and did battle with Fayg Bas before the Aragonite Throne, throwing her sallow body into the abyss. The spirit of the Dual Witch came to you then, and deeming you worthy gifted you with the power to harness Coven magic. Now you have trekked across the lands and finally returned to the College of the Umbra Coven. The Empress' soul is restored and the dark power of Elatha has been held at bay because of your actions. Now, having been gifted with the Glint, you have been accepted into the ranks of the Umbra Coven. The ceremony is led by Mistress Gweneth, who tells tales of the first witches of shadow and the Dual Witch, and Fenella of the Starlit is present to personally thank you. You don the purple robes of the Coven and walk the aisle with the other apprentices. All of the onlookers chant in unison and the room fills with a tangible energy. Before the Umbra Shrine you kneel and feel the presence of shadow magic all around. As you stand you put out a hand and see that it is burning with black flames. "Witches of the Umbra Coven, use this darkness to provide light," Mistress Gweneth says. The shadows are now yours to command, and there will always be a place for you at the College. What mysteries and magic does it hold?

Realm Fables

Preformed Settings: Volume One

from

SHIELDICE STUDIO.

Pre-built System Neutral Settings for your favourite fantasy tabletop RPGs.

Your Next Adventure?

1	A group of hunters bring a dead beast back to your village, its mother tracking them.	11	The seas and oceans of the world run dry overnight. The cause is perhaps an old relic of power.
2	You follow the trail of a friend, who left to save their estranged son from a warlord.	12	Horned men crawl from a fissure in the earth. Do they mean harm, or are they simply lost?
3	An ancient library is hastily locked and guarded for unknown reasons.	13	The days have become black. The water bitter. The land is beginning to reject all life.
4	A famous warband tracks the Prince on a forest highway. Do you intervene?	14	A cloaked stranger wanders into town. He promises you great glory in another land.
5	A member of your party is cursed by a dark nun to never feel warmth.	15	The tavern-keep is murdered. The townsfolk claim they saw you kill him. The guards come after you.
6	A guild of scientists create a menacing machine that threatens the religious orders.	16	Longboats are seen on the watery horizon in their hundreds. The drums of war begin to beat.
7	A dam bursts and floods the capital city. A lost princess is thought to be the culprit.	17	A dark wave of magical energy falls across the city, causing children to sleepwalk into the wilderness.
8	The jungle vines grow rapidly and threaten to choke civilization from the world.	18	You wake to find your camp surrounded by chanting spirits. They call a name you recognise.
9	You accidentally awaken an ancient sentinel of the god of the underworld.	19	The most skilled assassin to ever live hunts you, but for what reason, you do not know.
10	A group of skilled archers train in the desert to assassinate the Emperor.	20	The head of a mountain clan seeks your help to slay a rival tribe leader who has been possessed.

shieldicestudio

shieldicestudio@outlook.com