

WELCOME TO PALEBANK VILLAGE

PN THE FROSTY EXPANSE OF THE colder reaches of Wildemount, in the Greying Wildlands south of the Islands of Eiselcross, lies the haphazard cluster known as Palebank Village. It is a place more cobbled together than planned, with just over a hundred cabins and shacks pressed against the northern cliffs that rise a mere fifteen feet against the lapping rhythms of the icy harbor waves. The docks, busy with the absence of departing ships, whisper tales of neglect and wariness.

On this frigid day, the village is subdued, gathered in mournful procession for the unfortunate Urgon, a dwarven adventurer whose final journey is to the graveyard west of the harbor. There, encased in a casket more suitable for a relic than a beloved friend, he lies suspended in a state of frozen eternity. Villagers whisper tales of his return from a year-long venture into Eiselcross, burdened with treasures and a chilling affliction. Despite countless efforts, Urgon was never able to find warmth. Eventually, blue streaks marred his pallor, snaking through his veins, until his entire being succumbed to the grip of frost.

The adventurers follow the procession, taking note of the landscape dotted with quaint inns and supply shops. Amongst the mourners stands a weathered elf adorned with the insignia of a "Glassblade." Introducing himself as Elro, he shares that the usual voyages to Aeor have ceased, a silent testament to the mystery shrouding Urgon's demise. Elro seeks their help in unveiling the source of this insidious curse, admitting that Urgon's home remains unexplored.

Word reaches the adventurers quickly that another villager named Tulgi shows similar symptoms— her fate seemingly entwined with Urgon's. Fortuitously, their cabins stand in proximity.

BEER WITH THE LOCALS

In the heart of the village, a jovial dwarf Arl Bortock tends bar at the local tavern. Elara, ever inquisitive, engages Arl in conversation about Urgon's recent exploits. A night's rest is negotiated— two rooms for eight silver pieces— before the adventurers are served beer by the bucket and a meal of squid rolls.

Bill, a stalwart Glassblade at one of the tavern tables, emphasizes that due to the danger of the curse, all boats are being warned off from Palebank's docks. Meanwhile, the adventurers learn Tulgi is a solitary trapper, her life a mystery to most.

THE CABINS OF URGON AND TULGI

With this knowledge, they venture to Urgon's cabin where another Glassblade vigilantly stands post. Halite leads them inside, where chaos has left its mark. The mounted head of a snowy beast with gray horns seems to oversee the search. Books are strewn about, gear tossed aside as if someone has desperately sought something. Scarlet's keen eyes catch sight of a grappling hook, swiftly claiming it. Meanwhile, with a sharp mind for details, Halite discovers a receipt within a book. Dated two months prior, it records the sale of Aeorian items at the local Pelc's Curiosities for a handsome sum of one thousand gold pieces. Among the items: a dagger, a scroll case, a jade statue, a quiver of arrows, a jasper-set silver ring, and two blue glass vials.

Their eyes trace tracks leading to Tulgi Lutan's snow-burdened cabin. The warmth of a fierce fire belies the untouched exterior and shuttered windows. Scarlet's knock brings a curt response, followed by Elara's soft words which coax the door open. Tulgi's face, marked

by the same blue streaks that have doomed Urgon, is a testament to her shared affliction. She admits her illness, confessing that she and her sister Hulil, newcomers from Shadycreek Run, are in league with a crime syndicate. They have been sent to pilfer Aeorian treasures. It is they who have ransacked Urgon's home, and Tulgi now surrenders a finely wrought dagger into Kragor's keeping.

She says that her sister Hulil holds the remainder of the treasures in Croaker Cave, though Tulgi has not seen her in weeks.

ONWARD

With their next destination clear, the adventurers hike to Pelc's Curiosities. They find the shop marked by a dragon-gilded "P," where the front door sags invitingly open, beckoning them into the next chapter of this unfolding tale.