

# LOCATION TAGS

The work of creating interesting places and memorable campaign elements can be exhausting to a GM. Even when following the pattern provided in this book, the need to generate thumbnails of a dozen different cities, ruins, wilderness features, or other places of interest can frustrate and weary a creator. It becomes difficult to come up with new ideas about each new place or give them some sense of distinction.

**Tags** are a creative tool meant to ease the GM's burden by assigning each point of interest a pair of characteristic qualities or tropes. These two tags are then blended together and the result gives the GM a better idea of what the place is about and what kind of adventure opportunities are to be found there. Each tag is made up of five different elements, each with three different examples provided.

**Enemies** are antagonists characteristic of the trope. They're exemplary villains or troublemakers that can be responsible for whatever unhappy situation exists that needs adventurers to help sort it out. They may not be the worst or more dangerous denizens of the place, but they're vexing enough to make trouble for the natives.

**Friends** are sympathetic or appealing NPCs that the players might be expected to want to help or cooperate with. They're the locals who are most likely to seek out adventurers for help or otherwise provide the hook for getting involved in a situation. The examples provide likely Friends for each tag, but the GM can tweak them to better suit the known interests and inclinations of the players.

**Complications** are particular twists or difficulties that are characteristic of the trope. They may be partial inversions of the tag, or complexities that it layers onto a situation, or subversions of likely player expectations. Complications are meant to keep problems from being too straightforward and simply resolved without having to deal with the complexities of the place.

**Things** are macguffins, treasures, rewards, or plunder that might be found at the site, objects that the Enemies or Friends might be fighting over or that might be part of a Complication's entanglements. While a pile of loot is usually enough to catch the eye of any adventurer, a Thing is something specific to the tag's theme.

**Places** are archetypal locations or characteristic structures for the tag, the kind of places you'd expect to adventure in were you in such a place. Other Places can be used as thematic backdrops for an adventure.

For each point of interest, two tags are rolled and the results are synthesized together when the GM needs a component for their adventure creation. If the tags for a community are Brilliant Innovation and Lawless Class and the GM needs an antagonist, they might pick "Cruelly indulgent elite" and "Grasping guildmaster" from those tags' Enemies lists and blend them together. Thus emerges Theophilus Crane, the ruthless, selfish Thurian

guildmaster of the Arcanocaloric Guild, whose crucial advances in repairing thermal Workings have made him and his guildmates above the law in his native city. In the same vein, the "visionary supporter of the innovator" and "victim of an unpunishable crime" elements of the Friends lists can be turned into Hubert Wheelwright, Crane's brilliant apprentice and the true originator of the techniques that Crane stole, now hiding in terror from his former master's hired assassins.

Whenever you need some set dressing or adventure components for your points of interest, just go to the tags and mix up something that fits them. Some tags will be harder to mesh than others, of course. You could simply reroll them, or instead take some time to figure out a way in which the results actually do apply. Another option is to read one or both of the tags metaphorically, translating the general concept into terms applicable to the situation.

There are four different sets of tags in this section, each one aimed at a different kind of point of interest. While the sets are all aimed at their particular targets, it's quite possible for a GM to mix and match out of any of the sections, either reading them metaphorically or coming up with novel explanations for a literal interpretation. GMs who have access to other Sine Nomine games that involve tags, such as Stars Without Number, should feel free to mix them in as well if they want additional grist.

**Community tags** are for cities, villages, tribes, subterranean survivor bands, or other broad grouping of people. They give traits that distinguish the community from others like it; they may gesture at its organization or social structure, but the point is to explain what about the place might provide adventure grist for the GM.

**Court tags** are for noble courts, temple hierarchies, business enterprises, dynastic families, insular clans, or other groups where intrigue, personal relationships, and conflicting goals are apt to be found. People in a court want things and they're likely to be looking to recruit outsiders to help.

**Ruin tags** are for classical dungeons, lost cities, Outsider ruins, mysterious towers, or other sites where sneaking down corridors and checking for traps are usual adventurer pastimes. They'll help you add flavor to your holes in the ground or piles of cracked masonry.

**Wilderness tags** are for natural hazards, dangerous lands, remote motherlodes, wild beast territories, and other sorts of encounters or points of interest that might draw an adventurer's attention. They're often useful in filling up a hexcrawl, allowing a GM to plant points of interest in the deep wilderness without having to load it up with an endless parade of villages or minor dungeons.

Each section provides some additional tables and guidance, the better to assist you in using the tags to their full effect. As always, you should take what you need from those tools, using only the ones that you need and adjusting things as your creativity recommends.





# COMMUNITIES

While Courts provide tightly-connected webs of relationships for the PCs to entangle themselves in, Communities serve more as adventure backdrops for the heroes, or contexts in which other adventures occur. The particular heroics of the party might significantly change the Community, and the needs and situations of the place might present immediate adventure hooks to them, but the existence of a market town does not serve as the same blatant predicate for adventure that a lost Deep offers.

Most often, Communities serve as the sandboxes in which urban-focused or intrigue-based adventures can occur. For many players, the default mode of interaction in the wilderness or the underworld is combat; in a city or village, that default instinct is going to be conversation. Sudden, brutal violence is by no means alien to a city, but most PCs will be much less inclined to pull their swords on a surly town guardsman than on an Anak warrior.

The resources in this section include both a list of Community tags and a set of tables that can be used to flesh out and characterize particular settlements. While you could optionally choose to use one, both, or neither, they're built to work cooperatively.

To characterize the Community, decide whether it's best considered a rural village, a significant city, or a tribal or provisional gathering of people. Using the appropriate table, find out the basic rationale for the settlement's ex-

istence first; this will tell you a great deal about the kind of locals you'll be finding in the Community and what their chief employments and interests are likely to be.

From there, you can roll or pick to find out who actually runs the Community. This may or may not be the nominal head. The central government might say that the leader of a farming hamlet is the government-appointed headman, but everyone in the village might know that Mother Orde is the one who decides what they're going to do when a problem arises. Tension between real and nominal leadership can make for useful adventure grist.

The "significant locals" column can be used to generate a few NPC hooks for those occasions when you need a suitable local face for your adventure or an NPC you can hang a hook on. The "current pressing problem" is an immediate situation you can color with Community tags or use straight. If you mean to make an adventure hook out of it, be sure it's something the PCs can reasonably influence with their involvement.

For delivery of adventure hooks, the two bottom tables suggest potential local NPCs who might approach the party and some ideas for what the natives could offer by way of payment. These suggestions will be colored by the Community tags and the Friends or Things that are suitable to the Community's situation. As with all the tables, they should be taken as suggestions for you to shape.



# RURAL VILLAGES

These tools can be used for the typical medieval-flavored village or rural hamlet beloved of many adventures. Such places are at usually at least minimally self-sufficient. Villages in relatively sophisticated nations might have permanent shops or full-time artisans working a particular trade, but most such hamlets have their entire population engaged in agriculture, with specialists doing particular crafting jobs as their neighbors might need them. Coinage is usually scarce and reserved for use with outside tax collectors and hired workers, as the local trade deals in tacitly-understood favors owed and granted.

While such villages are often very poor, it's not unknown for them to have at least some valuable goods or trades hindered by the village's great remoteness, complete lack of fame, or inability to safely get the good to a market that has a demand for it.

## d12 Rationale for the Village's Existence

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Once a garrison outpost of a nation             |
| 2  | A mine or quarry, perhaps now exhausted         |
| 3  | A spot where refugees of a calamity settled     |
| 4  | Holy ground or a temple to a particular faith   |
| 5  | A plant or animal grows very well here          |
| 6  | It's a safe waypost on a trade route            |
| 7  | Refuge for a despised minority or group         |
| 8  | A bandit camp that went legitimate              |
| 9  | A self-ruled home for demihuman residents       |
| 10 | It's a safe base for salvage or ruin plundering |
| 11 | Decayed remnant of an ancient city              |
| 12 | It grew up around a lordly manor or estate      |

## Features of the Village

d12	Who Runs It?	Significant Locals	A Current Pressing Problem
1	A hereditary headman	The village harlot	Vital food stores have been lost or stolen
2	A reeve picked by a lord	The worst local bully	Two families are in a long-running feud
3	A temple representative	A gifted young peasant	A new religion is making trouble with the old
4	A council of elders	A half-savage shepherd	The lord's reeve has been given unreasonable quotas
5	A cruel and feared bully	A charismatic priest	An upstart newcomer is disrupting the native hierarchy
6	A popularly-chosen chief	A major landowner	A socially marginal family is suspected of crimes
7	A dreaded sorcerer	A youth who wants out	A dangerous beast or foe is lurking near the place
8	A pragmatic warlord	Venerable old farmer	A local bully and his friends are causing trouble
9	The richest native there	Criminal in rural hiding	The crops or herds are in very poor condition
10	A traditional squire	Native hedge mage	An ambiguous land dispute is getting bloody
11	A patriarch or matriarch	A noble's local reeve	A curse or magical woe is vexing the people
12	An organization's envoy	Important artisan	Noble quarrels have caused collateral damage

## Village Involvements with Adventurers

d12	Local Likely to Interact with Adventurers	Interesting Things the Place Can Offer Heroes
1	An ambitious local who wants to get to the city	An unusually large amount of saved coinage
2	Social outcast who can't ask any local for help	Valuable local specialty product
3	Gentry who wants no local gossip about their need	Heirloom magic item passed down to the leader
4	Ex-city dweller eager for contact with the worldly	A magical service unique to a local tradition
5	Comparatively rich villager with a need	A map or secret leading to a Deep or plunder site
6	Starry-eyed young local swooning for adventurers	A temple with potent healing magics available
7	Village priest in need of outside help	A secret treasure acquired generations ago
8	Reeve who can't reasonably call on natives for a job	Large amounts of produce or local products
9	Village leader who wants expendable help	Ownership of an abandoned farm or structure
10	Burly local militiaman who watches new faces here	Contacts with rural bandits or criminal rings
11	Shifty native who wants some clueless accomplices	Favors from the lord who's very fond of the village
12	Clan patriarch who doesn't want to use their own kin	Young locals willing to take service with the party





# MAJOR CITIES

A village is largely self-sufficient and organized around the production of basic necessities. A city, whether a market town or a grand megalopolis, is a place that lives off the produce of tributary communities and produces goods and services of a sophistication far beyond that possible in a small village. These tables can be used for modest market centers or major urban sites, with details being scaled to fit the size of the city.

Cities need a constant flow of food from the surrounding countryside, and not uncommonly a constant flow of new citizens from the villages to make up for the death rate brought about by plagues, malnutrition, and endemic diseases. Only the richest and most advanced urban centers can escape this entropic drain, often with the help of still-operational ancient Workings. Cities are the places most likely to still maintain these great edifices.

## d12 Rationale for the City's Existence

1	It's the former seat of a vanished nation
2	It's a trade nexus that has greatly prospered
3	It's an industrial or productive center
4	There is heavy resource extraction nearby
5	It controls a vital defensive point
6	It's built around an ancient Working
7	It's a stronghold of a local subculture
8	It's a sacred city to an important faith
9	It's a shared market for many villages
10	It's a place of great beauty or healthfulness
11	It's a shelter from dangerous environs
12	The natives are somehow bound here

## Features of the City

d12	Who Runs It?	Significant Locals	A Current Pressing Problem
1	Hereditary lord	Sinister crime boss	Raiders are scourging local trade routes
2	Merchant prince	Head of a major temple	Criminals have corrupted the local law enforcement
3	Council of oligarchs	Neighborhood patriarch	Displeased locals are rioting for some reason
4	Allied noble heads	Ethnic group elder	The king or local ruler is making harsh demands
5	Royal viceroy	Rich merchant	Food supplies aren't being received as they should
6	Gentry-elected mayor	Fearful local mage	Urban groups are arming to resolve some dire conflict
7	Major clerical figure	City watch chief	A recent calamity has done major infrastructure damage
8	Occult power wielder	Decadent noble	A disguised monster is feeding on the city from within
9	Criminal group catpaw	Local magistrate	The rulers have gravely offended a local religion
10	Ethnic group's ruler	Outcast group leader	A rebel group denounces the city leader's legitimacy
11	Chief magistrate	Famous courtesan	A private war threatens with another major city
12	Military strongman	Demihuman enclave head	A major local industry is threatened by events

## City Involvements with Adventurers

d12	Local Likely to Interact with Adventurers	Interesting Things the Place Can Offer Heroes
1	City official looking for deniable agents	Large amounts of conventional coinage
2	Wealthy merchant who wants unknown outside help	Expensive urban property
3	Newcomer peasant haplessly looking for assistance	Sophisticated and very valuable local products
4	Demimonde navigator always watching for clients	Formal citizenship and the rights of a local
5	Curious urchin who trades in local news and events	Quiet dismissal of criminal charges or sinister pasts
6	Criminal with a mind to use naive newcomers	Indulgences beyond the power a smaller place to grant
7	Desperate merchant trying to keep their business going	Services of exceptionally skilled specialist professionals
8	Guard chief suspicious of potential troublemakers	Connections with major nobility of the realm
9	Native too infamous for other locals to deal with them	Absentee ownership of rural villages or manors
10	Noble who thinks adventurers will do anything for coin	Rare occult components or magical products
11	Slumming young gentry with a taste for excitement	Blessings from major clergy or high priests
12	Foreigner looking for fellow strangers to help	Business monopolies or tax rights in certain areas

# TRIBES AND EXILES

Not all communities are neatly delineated by fields and city walls. Nomadic tribes, scruffy bandit camps, groups of underground Deep survivors, or Blighted warbands all constitute communities. They may be far poorer and more materially primitive than even a farming village, but they have some sort of social structure and self-identity. While some may be violent by nature or habit, more peaceful interactions are usually possible for PCs.

These tables are meant for the sort of barbarian tribals, desperate bandit dregs, and subterranean survivors that an adventuring band is likely to run into at some point in their travels. The basic dynamics of these societies are usually similar, ones based on raw force, personal charisma, and the prospect of plunder or good hunting. Particular roles or details can be reskinned to fit the specifics of the tribe and its environment.

## d12 Why Are They Staying Here?

1	It's an unusually well-fortified safe place
2	A charismatic leader bound them together
3	The hunting or resources are very good here
4	They were driven here by a dire enemy
5	Seers or shamans said it was ordained
6	The leadership wants to find something here
7	Their herds or prey have led them here
8	They've been trapped here by the situation
9	They're paralyzed by internal dissent
10	They've been paid or induced to be here
11	Tradition requires they come here
12	Here they can do the most damage to a foe

## Features of the Tribe

d12	Who Runs It?	Significant Locals	A Current Pressing Problem
1	Bestially savage tyrant	Best hunter in the tribe	The leader is becoming weak or acting foolishly
2	Wizened elder	Wise man or woman	A settled group is hunting them as mortal foes
3	Magically-gifted chief	Seer or shaman	A curse has been laid on them for some collective sin
4	Holy man or woman	Tribal artisan	They killed someone who had very powerful allies
5	Hereditary chieftain	Skilled scout	They're impoverished and can't reach new resources
6	Outsider or alien lord	Trader with outsiders	A fearsome beast hunts them in the wilds
7	Brutal but cunning chief	Adopted member	Their gods are sending dire but obscure omens to them
8	Foreigner turned ruler	Tribal slave	The tribe threatens to split under some feud or quarrel
9	Council of the elders	Feared troublemaker	Some are seeking a redder, more powerful god to serve
10	No ruler past clan heads	Tribe's most eligible youth	A patron power is using them as expendable fodder
11	Envoy of a patron power	Barely-tolerated wretch	A sickness is raging through the tribe
12	Most charismatic native	Cunning tribal advisor	A rival group has taken over their hunting grounds

## Tribal Involvements with Adventurers

d12	Local Likely to Interact with Adventurers	Interesting Things the Place Can Offer Heroes
1	Raid-taken slave looking for a way back home	Guidance and safe passage through their territory
2	Leader with a natural suspicion about outsiders	Knowledge of a hidden place of wealth
3	Low-status native trying to acquire outside support	Exotic and valuable tribal goods
4	Tribal sage who likes news of the outside world	Plunder taken from a foreigner they've killed
5	Curious young tribal interested in strangers	Inherited relic or treasure they've kept
6	Near-outcast who wants a hand with some revenge	Secret for accessing an otherwise sealed place
7	Envoy of another group suspicious of other influences	Loot won in battle against another group
8	Tribal notable who suspects the PCs as potential rivals	They'll raid the party's enemies for a share of the loot
9	Tribal trader who wants access to outside goods	A magical elixir or substance they know how to make
10	Youth determined to show how tribal ways are best	Tribal membership and a place of respect
11	Eligible native looking for new blood in a mate	Slaves they've taken in raids or tribal wars
12	Reformer or innovator whose kindred won't listen	Some young tribals willing to go with the party

