

C6



5TH EDITION

ADVENTURE

ENDS MEET



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ENDS MEET

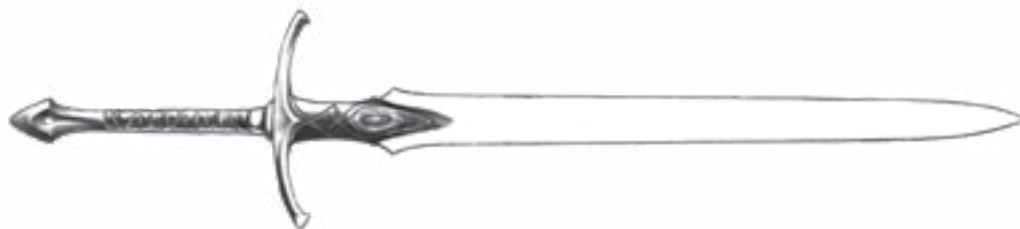
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Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the sixth installment of the Darkenfold Adventures. It is designed for 3-5 characters in the mid-level range. The party has found their way onto the Post Road to the east of the town of Ends Meet. The adventure takes place along the northern banks of the Muddy Wash, the Post Road, and Valley Springs. It reintroduces the party to the people and village of Ends Meet.

This adventure is a set piece adventure, involving a small treasure unearthed by the violent attack of a Grindlwere. The adventure can pick up after **C5 Falls the Divide**, however it is not necessary to play that adventure to enjoy **Ends Meet**. **Ends Meet** is playable in any campaign or setting. However, if you are playing in the world of Aihrde as portrayed in the **Codex of Aihrde** or the **Fifth Edition Player's Guide to Aihrde**, the adventure takes place in the Uplands region of the Darkenfold.

BACKGROUND

The Muddy Wash is a small creek whose headwaters lie just south of the Post Road. From here, one can access the whole of the Uplands. The Meadows to the south, Valley Springs to the north, Paladin Walk Wood and the Fodius Bridge in the east, and to the west, the small town of Ends Meet. The Uplands is a wild country filled with feral beasts, hunting trolls and fey who frolic in the many streams and pools. The weather here is violent and unpredictable, the Anvil Wind bringing in warm water from the south that runs afoul of the cool air coming from the western mountains, bringing rain and wind to all the region. It is a land of reckless abandon and adventure, and one that begins with the baying of a dog.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

This is an open-ended adventure, meaning the Castle Keeper is given a great deal of latitude to adjust it and make it their own. Nominally, there is a casket that the characters are driven to encounter, and it summons the vampires from Petersboro who come hunting in the area. The area consists largely of the town of Ends Meet and its inhabitants and the surrounding environs, including the cemetery to the north of town that the vampires occupy. The townsfolk are detailed, with personalities and statistics as well as their role in the town itself. Several adventurers staying at the inn, but who have nothing to do with the vampires or casket, have their own adventuring hooks that may be of more or additional interest.

Suffice it to say, this in no way means that the adventure needs to unfold as written. The vampires can be there for entirely different reasons than violating the casket. The CK can develop their own adventure given the personalities and setting involved.

In short, Ends Meet is a town of small intrigues at the end of a wide world, but one whose very presence at the end of the road draws all manner of interested parties.

REGARDING NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Because Ends Meet is a fully-realized town, it is full of non-player characters with whom your PCs are meant to interact. For the most part, these NPCs are not given full stat blocks, as they are not intended as enemy combatants. Enough information will be provided, however, for the Castle Keeper to create statistics quickly if necessary. Generally this will include the class levels and ability scores for each, allowing the CK to improvise specific abilities as needed.

THE FINAL BATTLE

It's worth noting that the final battle in this adventure is quite brutal, even for upper mid-level characters. It comprises an XP budget of roughly 7,500 XP (two Challenge 5 creatures and a Challenge 8 creature). This comprises a hard encounter for a standard group of five, 8th- or 9th-level characters. As such, it may be advisable for the Castle Keeper to spread the three monsters around; each of the monsters will comprise a solid, battle for a group of lower mid-level characters.

That being said, numbers aren't everything in an RPG (a statement that may make the math wizards among you twitch), and individual characters and their resources can make a big difference. The converter of this module once faced a powerful vampire lord in a Fifth Edition game with a group of 8th level characters, and took him out in four rounds.

In the end, it's important to keep in mind the resources your players have available and as the Castle Keeper, you know what they're going to face in the end. If they don't have the resources to level the playing field, scattering additional consumable resources such as potions of healing, vials of holy water, spell scrolls dealing radiant damage and the like amongst the treasure in this adventure can enable your group to take on the threat without unduly powering them up for future adventures.

Another, simpler option is to replace the vampires with lower challenge creatures such as wights or mummies. Simply equip such creatures with the weapons and treasure possessed by the vampires (or allow such items as part of the treasure horde maintained by the creatures) and go. Using a mummy with two wight servants (or a wight with two mummy servants) will reduce the XP budget to 2,100 XP—a medium encounter for a standard group of five, 5th level characters.

CHARISMA SAVE

Before play begins, require each character to make a DC 16 Charisma save. Mark down their scores, whether they succeeded or not. This save will be used later in the game.

COMING FROM "FALLS THE DIVIDE"

If you have played through **C5 Falls the Divide** and the characters are coming from Gurthap Castle, the easiest way to bring them into the following adventure is to allot that they traveled north along the Watchita River and have come out at the head waters of the Muddy Wash. The CK could play this 4-5 day journey through with overland encounters, or simply



advance time, allowing that the party has navigated its way through that part of the forest known as the Meadows and arrived at the headwaters of the creek.

THE MUDDY WASH

The Muddy Wash is a creek that begins 20 or so miles to the east of the village of Ends Meet. Its headwaters are about 300 yards south of the Post Road at the foot of a small ridge. The road is visible until it begins to climb the ridge where it vanishes into the woods. The creek itself is small for the first 4 miles. The water is clean and clear. However, at the four mile point it passes through a broad, flat area that is covered with constant run-off from the ridge above. The run-off consists of dirt and clay which muddies the water, hence the creek's name. Here, the waters broaden to about 5 feet and range in depth from 1 to 4 feet. It continues along its course, serving as the boundary for Ends Meet, until it spills into the Mistbane River.

Begin play at the headwaters of the Muddy Wash where the characters have pitched a camp after their long trek through the woods. They are headed toward the town of Ends Meet where they know there is warm beds, fresh food and drink, and shops to replenish their supplies.

It's late in the afternoon, about time for an early dinner.

The creek bubbles up from a small mound of rocks and tumbles off and down into the forest. A small meadow of loamy earth and green grass surrounds the headwaters, offering travelers a comfortable place to camp. From the meadow, the Post Road is visible as it snakes its way east through the forest or climbs a low ridge west on its way to the small town of Ends Meet and the mountains beyond.

Soon after the characters have made their camp the weather turns cooler. Rain begins to fall, slow at first, but after an hour or so thunder rumbles, shaking the trees and drawing great groans from the earth, and the rain begins picking up. Soon, the rain is falling in sheets.

NOTE: The storm is coming from the east, as almost all wind patterns in the Darkenfold are part of the Anvil Wind (see *Codex of Aihilde*) and travel in an east - west direction.

The storm houses a Grindlwere, an aberration that forms in the bosom of violent storms. The creature spies the party hunkered down in their camp and as they take great joy in chaos, it attacks.

The Grindlwere manifests in the meadow to the east of the headwaters and the camp. It is almost utterly invisible and appears only as a dark, swirling mass in the storm. The mass forms on the ground, however, and begins driving toward the party. Anyone keeping watch has a chance to detect the

creature because it is moving contrary to the storm. Allow anyone keeping watch to roll a DC 16 Wisdom (perception) check, or use passive Perception 16. If successful, they note the swirling mass of darkness.

The Grindwere attacks by rolling over the party in a giant blast of wind, using its windblast attack and its darkness at the same time. It then pounds on the party, debris from the forest floor flying everywhere.

NOTE: Allow as many Grindwere as necessary to make the encounter challenging.

GRINDWERE (CE Large Aberration) HP 52(HD 7d10+14), AC 14, Spd Fly 30 ft. Str 12 Dex 18 Con 15 Int 2 Wis 10 Cha 6. Perception 10(+0). Stealth +6. Lightning Fist +6 (2d8+4 lightning) Lightning Burst recharge 5-6 Creature moves up to 90 ft, all creatures in area 10 ft wide and length of the move take 10d6 lightning, half on DC 14 Dex save. SA 30 ft darkness around creature, all creatures within 60 ft at disadvantage on Strength, Dexterity and Concentration checks Has advantage on stealth checks. Can move as mist through tiny spaces.

THE CASKET & THE MULE

The violence of the Grindwere's attack has turned over a large flat stone just above the creek. Beneath the stone is a small casket containing the remains of a child, about 5 years old. As the characters take note of this, they hear a mule braying in the forest on the ridge.

As the wind subsides, the rain slackens as if its own power was bound in the rage of the Grindwere, now dead. The meadow and headwaters are battered and scarred, debris from the forest floor scattered everywhere. Most notable of all, torn in the earth just above the creek, is a small cavity where a large flat rock once stood. In the hole is an ornately carved chest, covered with mud. Even as you take this in, you hear a mule braying not far away. It's clearly in pain and scared.

THE CASKET

A simple investigation and cleaning in the creek waters unmasks the fact that the box is a casket, 3 feet long and perhaps 18 inches wide. It has two hinges on the back side but is riveted shut with six rivets on the front. A flower is carved on the lid of the casket. If it is carefully cleaned, small flecks of gold are seen in the carving.

The casket is very heavy, far heavier than any normal casket would be. Its weight is largely because of the gold and gems within.

If the party digs up the area, looking for any other signs of the burial, they will find the tombstone. Long ago it fell and was buried by the forest. It lies half a foot above where the casket rests and is under a few inches of dirt and grass. A PC has a chance of detecting the presence of the tombstone without digging with a DC 14 Wisdom (survival) check.

If unearthed, it is a stone, cracked in two, cut like a flower petal and on it are the words: "Rest Little Princess, My Flower."

Opening the casket is difficult as it is riveted shut. A knock spell will not open it. Tools are required, pliers, pry-bar or something similar. There are plenty of these items on the overturned cart from the mule encounter underway (see below).

THE MULE

The mule that is braying belongs to a peddler who was attempting to make the Muddy Wash camp site before the rain fell. He did not do so and his two-mule cart slid off the Post Road and turned over, gumming up the harness, and landing on him, crushing his spine. The tangled harness pinned both mules. The peddler, now dead, was able to pull out his knife and cut one of the mules loose. This mule bolted, heading up the Wash for Ends Meet (a town it knows well). The other mule remains pinned and the peddler, with outstretched arm and dagger, lies a few feet away, clearly in the act of attempting to cut the mule loose.

Any character can determine what happened and the peddler's drive to free his animals upon a successful DC 13 Wisdom (survival) check. Anyone else may surmise what happened, but clearly the man's dying breath was meant to cut his mules free.

The cart is broken. Once it overturned, the axle snapped and all the contents spilled out, much of them scattered down the slope and into the woods, as they were picked up by the rain.

The remaining mule is still alive and desperate to get free. Upon seeing the characters, it strains toward them, attempting to draw their attention for its rescue. If approached, it attempts to nuzzle any character within reach; if freed the mule will stay with the characters until driven off.

CONTENT

If the party attempts to salvage any gear, they find the items listed below. All is wet and much of it dirty:

- 7 pairs of boots
- 4 shirts
- Cloak
- Broad Hat
- Belt Buckle
- 3 Sewing kits
- 120 feet of rope
- 50 feet of rope
- Grapple hook
- 5 poles (fishing)
- 200 feet of line
- 12 fishing hooks
- Small barrel of oil
- Lantern
- Crow bar
- Rock Bar

- Large pliers (for removing horse shoes)
- 4 iron skillet
- 1 large cook pot
- Ladles

OPENING THE CASKET

The casket should offer an interesting item of curiosity to the party. It has no traps or visible signs of rigging, but does rattle a bit if it is shaken. The rattling is the necklace on Petal's neck, sliding back and forth between the bones. The casket is ensorcelled.

It is bound both with spells of longing, cast upon the child who lies within, and a summons spell, cast by the child's mother.

LONGING: Anyone who approaches within 10 feet of the casket is struck with a desire to open it. They must make a successful Charisma save to resist. Refer to the Charisma save already made at the beginning of play. By using that save it doesn't allow the players to associate a failed save with the longing they feel to open the casket. For those who failed their previous save, the desire to open and see what lies within is powerful, and they will eventually open the casket.

NOTE: Attempt to avoid railroading those who failed their save when it comes to this. Try to convince them that it is their idea to open it. Something along these lines "You know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that if you do not open that casket that something horrible will befall the character." That, or something along those lines.

A MOTHER'S CURSE: If the party opens the casket it unlocks a curse set upon it by the occupant's mother long ago. It was her intent to guard the casket for all time, keeping the child safe in death, even though she could not in life. When it is opened, it alerts Geoffrey and Meta immediately.

Even though you've mastered the rivets the casket struggles to deny you entry, as if the lid is clinging to the base. A little more effort frees the lid. Air, long pent up, explodes from the casket, rushing out to a freedom long desired. The smell is sharp and cold, but whether from the wind or the occupant is hard to discern. Within, lying upon a bed of velvet are the skeletal remains of a small child, 5 years old. She is dressed in a long gown and wears a silver crown on her brow, topped by a white diamond. Around her neck is a similar silver and gold necklace. It too, is studded with several diamonds and rubies.

The air is the trigger for the child's parents. It alerts them to the casket's opening and both are suddenly aware that Petal's rest has been disturbed.

PETAL'S TALE

Petal was born to doting parents, both nobles of the realms of Kayomar, whose father's fathers fought in the bitter Winter Dark Wars. He was Lord Geoffrey of Sinsich, scion of one of the 18 families of the realm. She was an Erlangen, a daughter

of one those houses. Their marriage was a happy one and they lorded over the whole of the lands between the Powder and the Watchita Rivers. Geoffrey built them a castle on the banks of the Westerling River and there they all lived comfortable and happy lives.

Petal's full name was Johanna Magdalene Edith of Sinsich, but her father called her Petal, for to him she was as a flower of singular beauty. There, they doted upon their daughter, showering her with gifts and love. Her early years were happy ones for the three of them.

But the Darkenfold is a hard place, even in those days, when it was called the Ethvold. It is filled with many fey, both foul tempered and easy of thought. Petal had an affinity for the fey, and she often talked with them in her small garden, befriending them whenever she could. Eventually, word of this spread so that an evil-minded sprig came to her and lured her into the forest. He did this by casting spells of longing upon her. He brought her on a wild adventure, one of which she could hardly comprehend. Eventually, he settled in a meadow and teased little Petal mercilessly.

Upon learning his daughter was missing, Geoffrey went mad with rage and grief. Gathering his rangers, he hunted far and wide for the child. Petal's mother, Meta Magdalene, did not let grief cloud her mind, but she turned to sorcery to unravel her daughter's location. She made sacrifices to Let the Hart, god of hope and new beginnings. Her call was not answered by the Hart, but rather by Narrheit, Lord of Chaos. He told her what she wanted to hear and set her on the path of rescue.

Meta sent word to Geoffrey to meet her upon the Fodius Bridge and they would rescue their daughter. They crossed the bridge together and entered the Meadows. Soon, the rangers picked up the trail and they found the sprig with Petal, but the fey would not give her up and threatened her life if approached. Meta did not hesitate but attempted some sorcery to spirit the child away. It served to provoke the sprig and he killed the child and Geoffrey fell upon him in a blind rage and rent him apart with his hands.

They grieved over Petal's death and buried her there upon a small hill. They ordered up a casket made of gold and fine cherry wood, set the child in her favorite gown and decorated her with a crown and necklace. They lay her in the earth and set a ring of stone about her. But before the casket was sealed, her mother set a spell upon it, making the breath of the casket a message that would summon her and Geoffrey both if the child was disturbed.

Unbeknownst to the either Geoffrey or Meta, the child, even in death, retained the curse of the evil sprig and all about her was the lust of longing. It infected both her parents and would infect any who came near the casket.

Meta would not leave the grave and sat there in grief for many long weeks. Geoffrey could not move her, so he set a watch over her and left. He traveled the lands about, hunting the fey, slaying those he could not capture and torturing those he could.

He took pleasure in his vengeance and, if there had been good in him, it was lost to his new-found hobbies.

In time, Meta wasted away until there was nothing left but the mean exhaustion of grief. Thus, it was that a vampire found her. Slaying her guardians, he took her in his arms and drained the goodness, leaving only a shell of evil and spite, rage and guilt. Meta met her end and fled into the wilds, passing from the story.

Soon after, Geoffrey learned of Meta's fate, and his vengeance knew no bounds. He hunted the vampire as he hunted the fey, finding its minions and slaying them until at last he unearthed its tomb. They fought, and Geoffrey slew the beast but not before he became infected with the creature's very disease.

So it was that little Petal's parents became vampires and came to haunt the land far and wide. One, mad with loss, the other, mad with hate.

JOURNEY TO ENDS MEET

It is assumed that the characters will travel on to Ends Meet, whether they have opened the casket or not. It is roughly a day's travel from the headwaters of the Muddy Wash to the town, whether they follow the course of the creek or head up to the Post Road.

The mule, if they rescued it, will not slow the party but rather help them move along quickly. It is a stout mule and not afraid of much. In the coming encounters with bats and wolves, it is stout enough and will fight if pressed. It will become very loyal to the party if they rescue it.

As they approach the town, they come to the remnants of the old walls (now mostly gone, see below) and the small houses and mill that are sprinkled around the stone bridge that spans the Muddy Wash.

The road straightens out and enters a narrow meadow, flanked on both sides by tall, dark oak trees. Two stone walls, each only 4 feet high and 20 feet long sit on either side of the road. They are weathered, covered in thick vines and of little use to anyone. A bridge spans the broad waters of the Muddy Wash and leads to a small town nestled in the forest. Buildings, stone and wood, are evident here and there, spread out but in some numbers. The smell of cook fires and the sound of laughter comes to you from some quarter, clearly the sign of stout drink and warm food.

The full details of the town of Ends Meet are below. It is assumed that the party will head for The Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern.

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

It is about a day's travel from the campsite to Ends Meet, though it is assumed that the characters will pick up their journey the next morning.

Both Geoffrey and Meta are alerted when the casket is broken, though Meta is no condition to do anything just yet. Geoffrey,

on the other hand, dwells in the town of Petersboro, roughly 60 odd miles north of the gravesite. Petersboro is an old town, founded even before the Winter Dark and houses many hidden layers, buried beneath the more recent construction. Several centuries ago Geoffrey found a way into this under-city and there built his lair, which in time became a den of horror. He dwelt there in darkness, dragging his victims into the dark to feast upon them.

In time, he grew in power, and he bound other vampires to him, or created them from his victims. He and his folk live inconspicuously, always hiding in the shadows, preying on those no one will miss, dressing in the garb of the day and blending with the township. Thus, they have dwelt in safety and horror for many long centuries.

Geoffrey, lost in the filth of his own weakness, has not thought of his daughter for many years, so it is that the summons spell catches him off guard. He resists it at first, preferring to see what or who has disturbed his daughter's rest. To this end, he summons a swarm of bats and sends them south. Possessed of a supernatural drive the bats fly at amazing speeds and altitudes. They arrive at the site of the grave some 8 hours after it was disturbed.

THE BATS

The bats arrive at the campsite at about 1 in the morning. If the characters are there, the encounter begins immediately. However if the party has trekked off into the woods or along the road the bats fly around, seeking the scent of the party and follow after them. It won't be long before the party encounters them. They are seeking the casket, its burial site, or those who disturbed it.

Geoffrey is watching all this through the eyes of the bats.

The bats arrive in a swarm, flying above but around the party as they all arrive. This takes about a round or two before they begin descending on the party and attacking. They are ravenous, carnivorous bats and spare no one.

BAT, GIANT X 21 (*Unaligned large beast*) HP 22 (HD 4d10), AC 13, Spd 10ft, 60ft (fly). Str 15 Dex 16 Con 11 Int 2 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 11(+1). Bite +4 (1d6+2). SA Blindsight 60ft, Echolocation (can't use blindsight if deafened), keen hearing (advantage on Wisdom (perception) based on hearing).

THE WOLVES

Geoffrey, upon seeing the casket, all the loss of Geoffrey's past life is brought home to him, and he is overcome with grief and sorrow. He slaughters several of his minions and all those who are kept in his pens. Everyone else flees from him.

The next day, as the characters are traveling to Ends Meet, Geoffrey slowly recovers. Then, at night fall – roughly one day after the casket was unearthed – he travels to the outskirts of Petersboro and summons more of the Children of the Night. He calls on one huge, evil-minded beast,

Ourlbern, who has served him in the past and tasks him with picking up the trail and hounding those who took the casket. In a series of horrific howls, the wolf gathers his pack even as he passes into the south. They come from miles around, slowly gathering in one group as they pass down the Post Road, south the grave site.

If the characters happen to be headed to Petersboro and not Ends Meet, they will encounter the wolves on the road.

If not, and they have gone on to Ends Meet, it will take the wolves all that night and the rest of the next day to get to the gravesite, pick up the trail, and arrive at Ends Meet. Much like the bats, they are possessed of Geoffrey's supernatural drive.

The wolves do not enter the town. Ourlbern is well acquainted with the people of this place and knows their quality. However, he does spread the pack out and circle the town in groups of one or two. They seek to pick up the trail of the characters if they have left town. If they have not, the wolves watch the town and wait for the arrival of their master.

KILLING NATHAN

This encounter occurs outside of town. It is assumed that the party has come to Ends Meet after their encounter at the headwaters of the Muddy Wash. They should have arrived and be set up in town when this encounter happens.

As night falls, the wolves arrive and spread out. Two of them find a child along the banks of a dry creek bed just to the west of town. Nathan is out with his sister searching for frogs. The wolves cannot pass up such a tasty meal and attack the boy. The girl runs off screaming into the town. The boy is carried down the creek bed, fighting all the way, stabbing one of the wolves with his dagger.

Whichever character is nearest spots the child first. She is screaming that her brother has been taken. As the alarm goes out, the child is screaming that Nathan was alive when the wolves carried him off.

The trail is easy enough to find. The wolves are barely a quarter mile from town in the dry creek bed; there are six in total, including the two that attacked Nathan and his sister. The characters can easily track them.

WOLVES X 6 (NE large monstrosity) HP 26 (HD 4d10+4), AC 13, Spd 50ft. Str 16 Dex 13 Con 13 Int 7 Wis 11 Cha 8. Perception 19(+4/adv.), darkvision 60ft. Bite +5 (2d6+3). Keen senses (Advantage on Perception), trip (on successful bite, victim knocked prone; Str DC 13 neg.) Nathan is still alive, though mangled and bloody.

Note that one of the worgs should see its hit points reduced to 18, the result of the stabbing inflicted upon it by Nathan.

In the aftermath of the battle, if the characters engage any townsfolk, they quickly learn that there are almost never wolves in Ends Meet. If there are they are usually loners, driven from their packs and desperate for food. The town is too dangerous

and generally protected by several rangers. Two wolves this large, this close and this bold is unheard of in the past lifetime.

KEEPING WATCH

Despite the loss of the two wolves, Ourlbern keeps tabs on the town. He calls to his pack and instructs them to watch and to not engage. If pursued, they are to lead any away from town, keeping an eye out for the casket. If it leaves, the wolves follow.

The wolves partially obey the old worg. They taunt the town, hunting dogs, chickens, cats and, anything else they can get their jaws around. They do not engage unless cornered.

This goes on for another few days until Geoffrey arrives in town.

COME THE VAMPIRE

On the night that Geoffrey summons the wolves, he begins preparations to travel to Ends Meet. He cannot travel safely during the day time, so he plans on leaving Petersboro on the following night. Roughly the same time that the wolves arrive in Ends Meet, Geoffrey departs Petersboro. He rides a large, black horse and has two of his vampiric spawn with him.

Geoffrey has conferred with Ourlbern, asking the wolf to find him a safe place to stay during the daylight hours. The wolf has found him an open crypt in the cemetery which is to the north and east of town. The cemetery is visible from the Muddy Wash, and the characters may have seen it coming in.

Once there, Geoffrey stables his horses in the old barn and takes up residence in the cellar, planning on using the house as his base of operations to visit his vengeance on the party.

TABLE 1: TIME LINE

DAY	TIME	EVENT
1	Afternoon	Casket Unearthed. Geoffrey and Meta alerted.*
2	1-3 AM	Bats Attack.
	5 PM	Party arrives in Ends Meet. Geoffrey begins preparing.
	7 PM	Wolves depart Petersboro.
3	5 PM	Wolves arrive in town, attack Nathan. Geoffrey departs Petersboro.
4	5 AM	Geoffrey arrives in Ends Meet.

*For the stats on the vampires refer to the "Cemetery" below.

PLAYING THE VAMPIRES

The vampires take up residence in an open crypt to the north of town. Geoffrey calls off the wolves, though keeps them in close quarters. Rats begin to gather in the house, until a good six swarms of them are living about the place. He watches the party from afar for a day or so, studying his options and how best to kill them without raising the whole town against him. He is aware that some of the town's inhabitants are not people that one willingly picks a fight with.

Whatever he does, he takes a gaseous form and explores the town, seeking the characters and the casket.

OPTIONS

The Castle Keeper must determine the final approach that Geoffrey takes in retrieving the casket. The only things to keep in mind are that he wants the characters to suffer for their transgression and to retrieve the casket.

The following list contains some of Geoffrey's options. Use them together, separately, or not at all. You may create your own series of actions that Geoffrey takes to achieve his goals.

1) Outright attack. This option is the least likely and is more of a last option as it may rouse the town against him.

2) Send his spawn to the Cockleburrr where they assume the guise of travelers, check into the Inn and set themselves up. They are, of course, restricted in their movements and spend most nights drinking, talking, and gambling. The day is spent hidden in their rooms. Their objective would be to size up the party, locate the casket, and lay the foundations for a trap.

3) The minions join the wolves and stalk the village, waiting for the characters to be alone or in small groups of one or two, so that they might kill them and weaken the overall party. This is a dangerous option for Geoffrey for the minions are blood hungry and may decide to feast on someone that might draw attention.

4) Geoffrey might send in his spawn to steal back the casket. They would have to locate it of course, and then find and fight their way to it.

Separating the minions from Geoffrey could be an ideal way for the CK to split up the vampires and make the battles with them less deadly for lower mid-level characters. It might also serve to alert the PCs of the danger posed by the vampires, and that there is a greater conspiracy against them at play.

NOTE: It should be important to note, that even if the party reburied the casket and baby that Geoffrey still wants to punish them.

Statistics for all of the vampires can be found near the end of this adventure, in the section entitled "The Crypt."

ENDS MEET

The scent of fresh baked bread becomes heavy in the air as you tramp along. The dark overhang and the gloomy forest give way to the quiet houses of Ends Meet. Nestled in the forest, behind an old moss covered wall, the town seems to blend with the world around it in comforting shades of green and brown. Solid wooden cabins with high roofs, open windows, and open doors promise a comfort you have not felt in days. The village is clean and orderly. Deep green grass grows along the road and footpaths which lead to various doorsteps. The hedges are thick and lush and, in places, mingle with

the overhanging branches of oak trees. Where the forest ends and village begins is confusing. A small bridge crosses a creek which flows through the town, and as you cross it, a few inhabitants come out and watch. On the other side of the creek stands a very large building, the Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern.

The small village of Ends Meet is located on the Southern Way, a few miles south of where that road intersects the Post Road. Not so very long ago, the village sprawled along the Southern Way, north toward the Post Road. Recent years have seen Ends Meet shrink in size so that it is technically no longer where 'ends meet' but rather where ends once met. The village now consists of several dozen houses built close together along the road and others nestled deeper in the forest.

The Muddy Wash Creek marks the northern edge of town. The remains of an old stone wall mark the southern edge, but the wall is so disused that many of the rocks have gone into local chimneys. Its western edge is marked by Fair Weather Creek, though few houses actually go that far. The town has no real boundary in the west as the town once extended deep into the forest, but all that remains now are a few inhabited houses and the ruins of older, dilapidated ones. The houses still occupied are low, thick-beamed structures with wooden shingle roofs. Heavy shutters and doors help keep out creatures of the night.

A small stone bridge arcs over the Muddy Wash, an iron gate mounted on its southern end helps guard the village.

Ends Meet is a clean and simple town where the people live in relative peace. There is a mill house, not really usable anymore. Though the old water wheel still turns, there is little now left to grind. There is a small general store, a tanner's shop, blacksmith and the well-known Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern.

The inhabitants of Ends Meet are a peculiar bunch. The town is far from any beaten path. No caravans, no armies, no patrols make their way to western eaves of the Darkenfold. There is nothing there, or so all are led to believe. What does attract the few visitors who come and those who choose to stay is the quiet. Ends Meet is the end of the road. It is where a weary traveler can find repose, where no one would think to look for him or her and where no one in Ends Meet would ask questions. Consequently, several of the inhabitants are very powerful and known adventurers (not known in Ends Meet, obviously). They are retired, of course, and have little intent to rouse themselves from their retirement unless the village itself comes under direct attack. Beyond these few, most of the folk here are stout, sturdy hands who have long grown accustomed to the harsh world within which they live. Like the folk of Greenbriar, they are friendly but cautious. They help travelers, but only after they have learned their quality.

It has become, in recent years, a destination for adventurers: knights, rangers, rogues, wizards, and the like. They come to Ends Meet to heal from their escapades, to plan greater ones, to pick up rumors and other information, or simply to get a warm meal, cold drink, and a soft bed at the Cockleburrr.

Total Population: 500 (extended)

Human: 500

Gnome: 0 +/-

Halfling: 20 +/-

Dwarf: 10 +/-

Elf: 30 +/- (visiting)

GOVERNMENT: There is no real government in Ends Meet. In general, people defer to Otto the owner of the Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern, as well as the herbalist Ennith. Beyond that the locals govern themselves. There are no taxes, nor any attempt to do anything for the town itself beyond individual interests.

MILITARY: There is a local militia, led by Otto and two local mid-level rangers. In all, the militia includes about 80 men and women relatively well armed.

ECONOMY: The villagers subsist on hunting and farming. Some minor trade occurs with Petersboro to the north.

RELIGION: The people here generally worship the Og Aust.

LANGUAGE: Vulgate

MAJOR GUILDS: There are no guilds in Ends Meet.

COMMON TRAVELERS ON THE ROAD

- Charl Sands (see Area 6 below)
- Paul Soreun (see Area 9 below)
- Wagons from Petersboro (2-3 wagons)
- Rangers of the Knot
- Treasure hunters, adventurers
- Hunters (from town, Petersboro or the wilderness)

TOWN GUARDSMEN (MILITIA GENERAL STATS) (CN Human Warrior) HP 20 (HD 4d8), AC 16, Spd 30. Str 15 Dex 13 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 8. Perception 11(+1). Athletics +5, Intimidation +1. Sv: Str +4, Con +2. Long sword +4 (1d8+4). SA Fighter abilities (Dueling, Second Wind (1d8+2; 1/rest), Action Surge (1/rest), Crit 19-20). Challenge 1 (200 XP). They wear chainmail and carry longswords. They may have up to 20 sp in jewelry and coin.

BOAT RAMP

Though Ends Meet is not on the river, it is very close. The Mistbane, despite its dangers, is home to many traveling merchants who use flat bottom boats to navigate the river down to Haverstraw from Petersboro. Though they are not frequent, all manner of goods and people move up and down the river.

If one follows the Muddy Wash for about 1 mile, they come to the Mistbane River and Merric's Ford. Just below the ford is a boat ramp. A portage trail exists on the eastern side of the river, allowing the small boats to be hauled out of the water, around the ford and put back in.

There is no pier or dock proper, only a smooth area that slides back into the river, allowing one to move up or down.

There is a 10% chance a boat will be at the ramp, unloading cargo and preparing for portage up or down river. Boats usually spend a few days near Ends Meet to pick up trade goods and sell or barter. The crew is usually 2-8 people, generally humans and halflings.

If one is waiting for a boat it, could be days or weeks as there are no set schedules. Boats are more frequent in the spring and early fall than summer and winter.

RANGERS OF THE KNOT

Ends Meet has no official protection aside from the militia, commanded by Otto, that is called out from time to time. However, there are two brothers and their comrades who have dwelt in the town all their lives and keep an eye on the two. Though they do not live in Ends Meet. They do remain in the area and frequent the town constantly.

They are both Rangers of the Knot, a guild whose purpose is to protect the forest and its denizens. At any time they can call on 3-6 members of their organization.

ATHRYN (*Athryn is a chaotic good, 8th level, human Ranger whose vital stats are strength 16, dexterity 14, constitution 15, intelligence 14, wisdom 13, and charisma 17. He wears +1 leather and wields a +2 longbow and a normal battleaxe. He has 14gp he keeps in a belt pouch.*)

ANDACE (*He is a chaotic good, 7th level, human ranger whose vital stats are strength 15, dexterity 16, constitution 15, Intelligence 12, wisdom 15, Charisma 10. He wears leather armor and an enchanted ring of speed. He has a +2 short sword, a horned bow with 12 arrows, and a belt pouch with 5gp.*)

AREA 1: BARN

This long, tall barn is the only building north of the Muddy Wash that is still used by the locals. It is a long, wide building with a loft that spans the whole distance. The lower floor is covered in bales of hay and some swing blades - idiot blades as Charl calls them - and bailing wire. Some other odds and ends lay about.

It is usually filled with hay cultivated in the areas north of the Wash where the grass grows deep. No one owns the barn, but Charl Sands (see below) and Otto (of the Cockleburrr) use it more than most. Charl manages the harvest. Hiring locals, usually Igrus the Weaver's children, they cut and bail the hay, stacking it in the barn. Charl sells it in his store. Anyone who pays for it has to go get their own bail as he has only a few bails in the shop, and these are reserved for the elder people in town.

The barn is also used as a drunk tank of sorts. Anyone tossed out of their home or whom Otto throws out of the Cockleburrr is allowed or sent to head up to the barn and sleep it off. There is a 1 in 4 chance that someone will be in the barn sleeping. Either pick a likely candidate or use Reinfrid.

REINFRID (This neutral good human 2nd level rogue's vital stats are strength 13, dexterity 17, constitution 14, intelligence 12 wisdom 13 charisma 10. He has a +2 boot dagger, dirty clothes, and some old thieves tools. His portable wealth consists of 12gp. However, in a small chest he has buried on the south corner of the southern wall, he has 212gp and a potion of healing.)

Reinfrid is from Petersboro. He was arrested some few months ago for burglary and was sentenced to loss of a hand and 6 months breaking rocks. He managed to escape, fled south with his pot of gold, and took up residence in Ends Meet where he began to drink out of boredom. He has spent many nights drunk in the Cockleburrr, on the street, creek bed, in his own bed, and in the barn. He knows little of Geoffrey or his family, but has heard rumors, and believes them, that vampires haunt the alleys of Petersboro.

There is nothing peculiar about the barn other than a huge, half-feral cat that sleeps and mouses here.

AREA 2: OAKDALE BRIDGE AND GATE

As noted, the town's northern border is marked by the Muddy Wash. Here the creek has grown to a good 30 feet wide and anywhere from 1-6 feet deep. It is bridged by the Oakdale Bridge.

The Oakdale Bridge is very old, built by unknown hands. Its footing was set on solid piles of stone so that it has not shifted in all its long history. The deck sits on an arched superstructure of stone and is covered in broad, thick flagstones, worn smooth by the many years of traffic. The railing is short, only a foot or so on either side.

The southern end of the bridge is blocked by a large iron gate set into two stone pillars on either side. The pillars are about a foot wide at the base and are, in turn, flanked by a 4-foot wall that extends a dozen feet out along the southern bank, preventing anyone from easily jumping from the bridge to the bank.

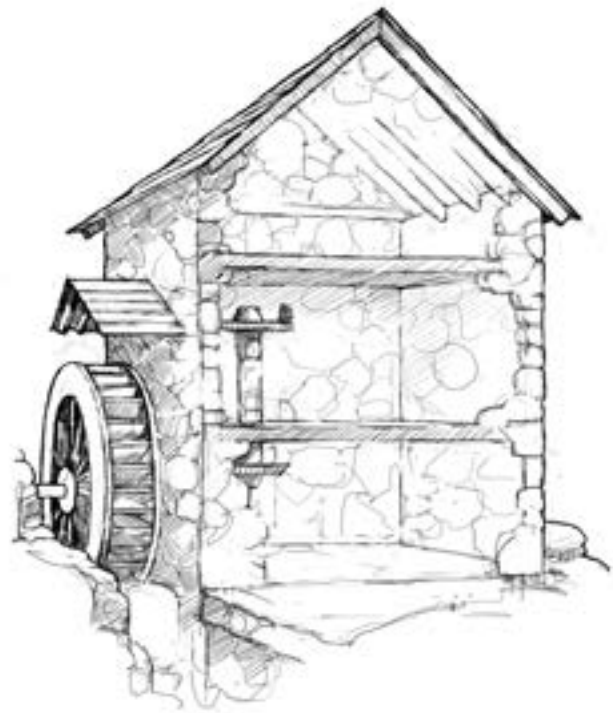
The gate is open during the day and, on occasion at night, but at night is normally locked. Ends Meet has a regular watchman who wanders about at night, poking his head into anything that seems odd, but as often as not, he is found sleeping on the porch of the Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern.

PRIM, WATCHMAN (This neutral 2nd level human fighter's vital stats are strength 15 dexterity 16 constitution 14 intelligence 12 wisdom 13 charisma 10. He carries a dagger and a heavy, knobbed club that does 1d8 points of damage. Under his clothes is a chain shirt. He has a shield he rarely carries, keeping it hanging on one of the pillars.)

Prim lives in a small cottage on the outskirts of town where he sleeps during the day.

AREA 3: THE OLD MILL

The Old Mill is built in a crook of the Muddy Wash. It once housed the good family Olthorp who ground rock to gravel for



the engineers who worked so hard on the Old Post Road. When that business dried up, it was used to grind meal, but this did not last long as the arable land in and around Ends Meet is scant.

Eventually, the Olthorps' six children left Ends Meet for greener pastures to the north, and after Windy Olthorp was killed by wolves, Willep went mad. At first those who came by would try to talk to him, but he would only stare blankly or mutter something about working. He didn't work anymore, however. Instead he puttered around with no purpose.

After some months, he locked the doors and shut the windows. He wouldn't talk to anyone and would have starved to death had not some of his neighbors brought him food and set it outside the door.

Old Man Olthorp lived in the Mill for many years, mad as a hatter, until a beam from the collapsing top floor fell and crushed him. He lay there for several days before he was discovered. By that time, the crows had eaten a goodly portion of him. He was buried in the cemetery by his friend, Otto Wagner. To this day, his grave is easily discerned by the number of black-hearted birds that gather around his marker.

The mill itself is still in fair condition. The top floor has sagged and portions of it collapsed. The remaining two floors, though are in good shape. They have not been occupied since Willep Olthorp's death. It is largely empty, a few sacks of gravel, old barrels and whatnot occupy the main grinding room, and the second floor has a few tools on it. The adjoining one room house is empty, given that Old Man Willep burned most of what he owned after Windy was killed.

If the characters were to occupy the mill, no one would question it or really care. Some, like Otto, would encourage them to restart the mill and perhaps bring a little bit of life back to the little village on the Wash. There are three floors to the Gristmill.

BIN FLOOR

This is the floor where the unprocessed grain was collected. It is empty now. Only a few very old grain sacks, long since eaten through, are laying about. The center of the room has sagged a great deal and part of it collapsed into the stone floor beneath. The machinery, on this level, though still intact, is in need of servicing and has no ropes left.

STONE FLOOR

This is the floor the grain was milled on and where the huge grind wheels are set as well as part of the spindle, gears, and other apparatuses. Though intact, the whole of the machinery has suffered from years of neglect. Cracks have appeared in the grind wheels and the spindle due to constant swelling. The ropes are gone, and the chutes are rusted.

A trap door leads to the Spout Floor. No rope or ladder is available to offer easy access.

Olthorp died here, next to the millstones. A beam from the collapsing floor struck him in the back, knocking him to the floor. When he fell, he split his head on the millstone, and his arm got caught between the millstones. As the wheels turned, they slowly twisted him around, ripping through ligaments and muscle until his arm was shredded to pulp. Like an animal in a trap that gnaws its leg off Olthorp slowly pulled his arm from the millstones. With each turn, he pulled it out a little more. Once freed, he dragged himself across the floor, battered and bleeding. Curling up in a ball, he died. That is where Otto found him.

Olthorp died mad and in pain with few to cast blessings upon him. When it came time to judge him his broken spirit could not find its way to the Arc of Time and Heth did not judge him one way or the other. Trapped in the material world, his spirit lingers, haunting the mill.

The spirit of Olthorp takes many forms, but most commonly that of a ghost. He does not immediately attack, nor is he evil. If someone enters the mill the spirit is roused. At times he may be undetectable and harmless, or he may be aggressive, behaving like a poltergeist. If *turned* by a cleric he is driven to the cemetery where he rises again, drifting his way back to the Mill. It is possible to have a conversation with him, however, he is lost in a mindless world and remembers little of his past life or where he is.

If any undead enter the town, their presence rouses him, whether for good or ill, is anyone's guess.

GHOST OF WILPEP OLTHORP (N Medium Undead) HP 45 (HD 10d8), AC 11, Spd 40ft fly. Str 7 Dex 13 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 17. Perception 11 (+1), darkvision 60ft. Withering Touch +5 (4d6+3 Necrotic), Horrifying Visage (all who see frightened (DC 13 Wis neg.) Failing save by 10 also ages 1d4x10 years), Possession (Recharge 6; Ghost possesses target (DC 13 Cha neg.). SA *Etherealness* (action), *Ethereal sight* (60 ft), *Incorporeal movement*, *Damage Resistance* to acid, fire, lightning, thunder and bludgeoning, piercing and

slashing from nonmagical weapons, Damage immunity to cold, necrotic, poison, Immune to charmed, exhausted, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained.

SPOUT FLOOR

Here, the processed grain was dropped into a chute and collected in sacks, ready for transport. The large spin wheel that connects to the water wheel outside is here as well. It spins gently, round and round as it has for many years.

The mill's exit is here.

Hanging on a chain, off the side of the water wheel, in the Muddy Wash, is a small iron chest. Within, are Olthorp's worldly wealth: 14pp, 140gp, a +1 dagger with ornate carvings on it, and a small necklace with deer horns on it. This is the holy symbol of Let and wearing it grants the bearer +1 to all saving throws.

AREA 4: THE TANNER

A tanner and his family live close to the bridge. The Merridoos, Luth and Olivia, are an elderly couple who make a fair living off the rangers who come in to have all manner of leather garments made or repaired. They are friendly people and welcome strangers who appear honest.

Olivia is quite a drinker and was no doubt a looker in her day. She is forever at the Cockleburrr, drinking the brew of the master and flirting with travelers. Luth is far more serious and rarely drinks much, and as soon as he sees his wife heading 'down river' (as he calls it), he meanders on home.

Both are well acquainted with the rangers who come and go from Ends Meet, and for this reason are usually well informed about what goes on in the Darkenfold, both near and far. Olivia is far friendlier and when 'down river', is very liable to talk about anything and everything she may know.

Olivia is well versed in all the local lore. She is well acquainted with the casket and the loss of the child, though not the curse that came with it. She believes that both the parents died long ago, the mother broken by grief, and the father gone mad and fled into the wilds.

Luth is part of the militia and accesses a suit of +1 leather armor. He carries a glaive in battle. Neither he nor Olivia have much money put back, but do brew beer and entertain friends from time to time.

LUTH (LN Medium Human): HD 2D8+2 (HP 12), AC 13, Mv 30ft. Strength 12 Dexterity 12 Constitution 12 Intelligence 10 Wisdom 10 Charisma 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. He has +1 leather armor, glaive, and a dagger.)

AREA 5: THE WEAVER

The weaver's clan is the largest family in Ends Meet, sporting fourteen children. Igrus and Matilda are in their 40s and still enjoy a good drink at the Cockleburrr, where they are found most evenings. Igrus is forever bragging about his oldest

daughter, who went away as a soldier to the wars in the east. She never returned. They make a good living trading their skills in repairing clothes or spinning new material for the town and the rangers.

Only a few of the children work for the weaver himself, others find work around town, hunt, or make a living as best they can. One of the middle sons, Gardith, works at the blacksmith shop as an apprentice to Benjamin (see below). Gardith is well versed in all that goes on in town.

Igrus, Gardith and 4 of the other children are part of the militia.

IGRUS FAMILY X 5 *(These neutral humans are commoners with average ability scores across the board. They wear leather jerkins and carry shields in battle. Each has a short sword and dagger, though Gardith prefers a large hammer.)*

AREA 6: ABANDONED HOUSE

This older, run-down house is partially stone and partially wood. Its narrow porch and door front the lane and a side door faces south. It is long, with a high-shingled roof. Grasses, shrubs, and smaller trees grow close to the house. Within is a large hall, small room, and a loft.

No one has lived here in a while. It used to belong to a fisherman named Emon, but he was killed by an ogre several months back. The house has stood abandoned since, though it has largely been cleaned out by Charl Sands who sold the man's possessions to cover the small tomb they had made for him. He sent a letter by courier to Emon's daughter who lives in the town of Haverstraw on the edge of the Darkenfold, but she has not answered.

If anyone occupies it, Charl will question them to discover their motives and will press them to find Emon's daughter if they want to buy the house, or at the very least to let her know that he has died. Otto and Charl will not allow long-term occupation without some attempt to pay the daughter.

Charl has no address for the woman, only her name and the occupation of her husband. The message he sent was written out, sealed with a simple wax seal and sent to a merchant friend of his, Murl Carp, in Haverstraw. Her name is Lucie. She is about 19 years old. She moved to Haverstraw some 5 years ago and has only been back to Ends Meet twice to visit her father. Charl knows that she was married with at least one child. She married a blacksmith. Charl thinks that a payment to her of 100-200gp would be more than sufficient to purchase the house.

NOTE: This task could easily lead to an adventure that sends the characters down the Mistbane River, past the adventure written in **C7 Castle on the Hill** and into direct conflict with the Green Wizard.

AREA 7: THE COCKLEBURR INN AND TAVERN

Ends Meet's most famous inhabitant, (known even in the plains of Kayomar) is Otto Wagner, owner and proprietor of the Cockleburr Inn and Tavern. He is a jolly fellow who came to Ends Meet years ago, or so the locals say, after quitting a



mercenary troop which served in the far-off lands of Aachen. His beer is famous for its stout taste and flavor. "I never liked a beer I couldn't chew," he has been known to say. He welcomes any and all to his tavern, charging a fair price for room and board. He has rooms for rent in the lodge, but the tavern serves for most folk willing to pay three silver to curl up in front of the great fire.

Otto serves as the de facto mayor of Ends Meet and the captain of the militia. He lives in the main inn building in a room behind the kitchen. Valuables are kept in a secret room off the larder.

Otto knows everyone in town and many travelers who come and go. He has close contacts with suppliers in Petersboro to the north. He is a good friend of Reinfrid, the town drunk, who he often takes up to the barn to let sleep off his evening's drunk.

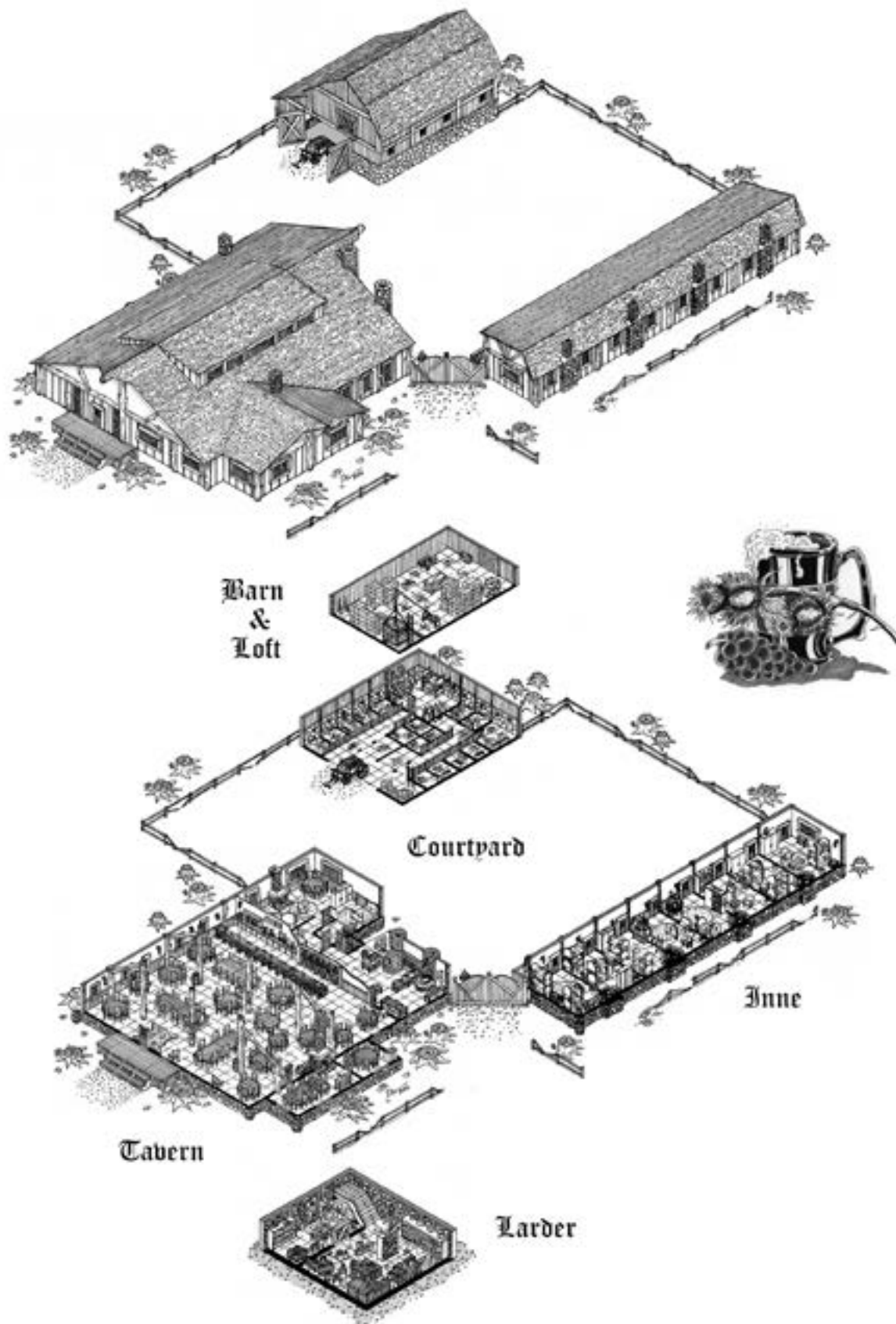
Otto is a large fellow, standing over six feet tall. He has black hair, sprinkled with gray. He wears it short, but is slow to get a haircut and it is often longer than he desires. His eyes are brown and face and body rounded with retirement. He is often red faced as he talks a lot, eats a lot, drinks a lot, and moves around from the kitchen to the main floor a lot.

His large feet always sport the best in high soft, leather boots. A wool shirt rolled up at the sleeves and pants round out the ensemble. He has a ring of keys on his belt. Though normally jovial, Otto has a quick temper and will toss someone out of the tavern in a heartbeat.

OTTO WAGNER *(lawful good, human 10th level fighter whose vital stats strength 18, dexterity 17, constitution 16, intelligence 14, wisdom 12, charisma 11. He wears +3 splint mail and wields a +2 broadsword.)*

Otto has a stash of gold, ranging anywhere from 2200gp to 3000gp that he keeps hidden in the brick facing behind the main hall's fire place. He uses this money to help those in need.

Cockleburr Inne & Tavern



In his room he has good clothing, cloaks, extra boots, and hats. He has also has a small library of books he has gathered over the years, mainly stories and tales of the old days.

He worships the Og Aust. The god Let is his special patron.

NOTE: For Otto's tale see **C2 Shades of Mist**, Areas of Interest.

There is one cook and three bar maids that serve the Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern. Two stable boys keep watch on the yard and barn, and one scullion cleans the lodge house.

ELSBETH, BARMAID: The oldest of the barmaids, Elsbeth is about 30 with a broad figure and long hair. She is always laughing and enjoys her job immensely, taking a sizable amount of her pay in drink. She enjoys joining customers and flirting with them, pocketing tips, and drinking beer. She is the brewmistress, and brews all the Cockleburrr's beer in several large vats in the yard.

LIESL, BARMAID: Liesl is younger than Elsbeth by 10 years. Small and a bit shy, turning red at the slightest bit of attention. She lives with Dorathea on the outskirts of town, does not drink at all, and spends only a little time here. She is wickedly smart (intelligence 18) and able to retain vast amounts of information that she picks up in the tavern. She has a natural aptitude for magic and frequently accidently casts 0 level cantrips around the bar. Any wizard or illusionist who encounters her has the chance of realizing this. She lives in Area 16.

DORATHEA, BARMAID: Dorathea fled a bad marriage in Petersboro, arriving in Ends Meet some years back where she lives a rather simple life. She is in her 20s, though she doesn't know her actual age. She is a little tired looking but is a comely woman who carries herself with pride. She is a bit grumpy and frequently grumbles about customers. Those who know her find this endearing and often provoke her to listen to her cutting remarks. She is very close friends with the Illuminator Paul (Area 9). She lives in Area 16.

RENATA, COOK: Renata is an older woman, probably in her mid-50s and rather attractive. However, she does not keep herself well and works extremely hard. Her hair is often disheveled and clothes stained with her cooking tasks. She has no fear of gutting an animal, draining it, skinning it, and cooking it. She is quite affable when not working and enjoys flirting with patrons. She is part of the militia.

RENATA *(neutral human commoner with average ability scores, except she has Dexterity 17. She attacks with a dagger for 1d6 points of damage. She has saved up a nice sum of 27gp and 5sp.)*

EAN, HEAD STABLEBOY: Ean is in charge of the stable and the horses. He is about 18 years old, but not sure of his own age. He is very confident, polite, and loves both his job and horses. He is a member of the militia.

EAN *(neutral human commoner with average ability scores. He attacks with a spear for 1d6 points of damage or a dagger for 1d4 points of damage. He has 1gp and 5sp.)*

COLWYN, STABLEBOY: Colwyn is much younger, being about 11-13. He does not know his age either, as he was orphaned as a youth. He dwelt as a scullion in a castle somewhere (he does not remember where) and lived in Petersboro as a child. He fled a harsh master, arriving in Ends Meet about a year ago where Otto took him in and gave him a job. He, too, is a member of the militia.

COLWYN *(neutral human commoner with average ability scores. He attacks with a wood chopping axe for 1d4 points of damage. He has 3gp and 15sp. He wears a signet ring on his left pinky finger that bears the symbol of a noble house of Kayomar.)*

KITCHEN

The kitchen is large and possesses two large kilns, cook tables, and the like. It is fully stocked with everything needed to make meals of many sizes. It is well supplied by the larder, accessed by a door in the back of the room.

LARDER

The larder, or cellar, is directly underneath the kitchen. The larder is cool, protected from above by thick floors and all around by stone walls.

The primary room is stocked to overflowing with all manner of food. Barrels of dried and fresh fruits (depending on the season), spices including salts for drying meat, yeast, sugar, flour, wine, and beer. There are often loaves of various breads, dried meats, cheese and the like.

The second chamber possesses more of the same, but has more hanging meats and long-term storage foodstuffs, extra plates, flat ware and so on.

OTTO'S CHAMBERS

Otto lives a very good life, possessing a two-room apartment off the kitchen. His large double bed has the finest linens and pillows. A wardrobe and trunk hold his many clothes and other odd and ends. A large living area serves as a place to dine and visit. It is here that he has all his meetings.

No one is allowed in Otto's private chamber.

THE TAVERN

The tavern is a large, open affair able to sit a good hundred souls, though it is never so full. A small host of pillars are arranged evenly about the great hall, holding up a large wooden ceiling. The walls are stone and crafted well so that the room is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The room used to be dominated by several large fire pits, but those are covered up and devoted to table space. Now, a large brick fire place keeps the room warm. Food is now cooked in the ovens in the kitchen and served up to order. Meats, breads, cheese, fruits, nuts and the like abound. It is a warm and friendly place.

The tavern is mostly frequented by townsfolk and travelers, or adventurers out to earn a name. It is almost never rowdy as the locals are unassuming people and all know each other.

Occasionally, a large group of merchants or such come in and raises the noise level, but Otto always keeps a quiet bar and asks them to tone it down, which they inevitably do.

The room itself is lit by hosts of lanterns hanging from the ceiling. Patrons sprawl about, talk, joke, play cards, or enjoy whatever form of entertainment, if any, is on the docket.

One of the many frequent patrons of the Cockleburrr is Relyt Nosirrom (Area 21), a bard of some repute. He is often in the tavern spinning yarns or reciting poetry from the east. He loves to talk and will talk to anyone, anytime about almost anything.

Occasionally, a wood elf comes in to sing and dance and enjoy the more mundane company of humans. The Rangers of the Knot occasionally stop by. Leoanor the Wizard (see Room 6 below) is often in the tavern and will, if asked, recite poems or songs she has learned in her studies.

Trophies line the walls and hang from the wooden beams. Many of these are Otto's, some belonging to patrons. A large, battered and old bastard sword hangs on a rack behind the bar. This is Otto's as well and he only pulls it down under the most-dire of circumstance. It is a +2 *vorpal blade* and protected by a number of *wizard lock* spells, *explosive runes* and other magical devices. Castle Keepers should feel free to be as creatively brutal with these magical traps as they wish, should an enterprising and unscrupulous character get it in their mind to five-finger discount the sword.

NOTE: Stealing the blade is next to impossible. It was bound there by a demigod wizard and anyone who does not have the pass words, known only to Otto, suffers from several traps set by the mage. All saves against these traps are DC 30, and all should be assumed to be in play using 9th level spell slots, where applicable.

BOARD

Though sometimes seasonal patterns change the meat offered, the general menu stays the same.

TABLE 2: MENU

MEAL	COST
Light Meal (fish, breads, fruit, cheese)	1sp
Heavy Meal (meats, vegetable, breads, butter)	3sp
Extravagant (meats, puddings, cold fruits)	1gp
BEERS	COST
Pale Ale	2cp
Dark Ale	5cp
Lager	1sp
WINE	COST
Red/White, Goblet (Brindisium Wine)	5sp
Red/White, Bottle (Brindisium Wine)	5gp
Kathy's White, Bottle (local, Caphryna)	1gp

LODGING

Otto charges 3 silver pieces for anyone using the floor of the tavern to sleep, otherwise he rents rooms in his lodge. If it is overcrowded he'll give people room in the hay loft.

TABLE 2: LODGING

TYPE	COST/BED	ROOM COST	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
Tavern Floor	3sp	—	—
Barn	1sp	—	—
1 Bed (Rooms #4- 6)	2gp	2gp	+ 2gp per person
4 Bed (Rooms #1-3, 7-8)	8sp	2gp	+ 15sp per person

ROOM COST: This is simply the cost to rent the entire room.

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY: The inn's rooms can comfortably accommodate a number of persons equal to the number of beds at the prices listed. In an emergency, each room can handle a maximum of twice the number of persons with a loss of comfort. For every person without a bed, the cost increases by the amount given in the Double Occupancy column of the table.

The rooms all have their own fireplaces with a stack of wood replenished each day. They have chamber pots as well, some type of animal skin rug on the wooden floor, and small trunks for belongings. They each have a wardrobe as well. The 1 Bed rooms have 1-2 sitting chairs, a four-person table, and a shelf to store goods.

Room 6

This room is permanently occupied by the wizard Leoanor. She has dwelt here for over a year and turned the room into her home. Her shelves are lined with a small collection of books, most of them poetry, ballads and the like. She has one book called *Places of Interest in the Darkenfold*.

She is a kind woman whose companions all died along the Pigs Trail the previous year. She alone escaped, returning to Ends Meet to recuperate from her wounds. She settled into her room and has not left since, becoming something of a fixture in the tavern where she recites poetry or songs once or twice a week.

If the characters befriend her and it comes up she willingly lends them the Darkenfold book. Allow the character's access to the book "**Codex of Aihrde Expansion: The Darkenfold.**"

LEOANOR OF KURTENGRAF (She is a neutral 6th level human wizard whose vital stats are strength 8 dexterity 16, constitution 12 intelligence 18, wisdom 17, charisma 10. She wears a +4 armband of protection on her left upper arm. She has two healing potions that heal 1d8 per drink. She has a hat of disguise and a ring of shooting stars. Her spell books are kept in a bag of holding she wears attached to her armband by an unbreakable magic chain. She has 1,000gp in coin and jewels, the bulk of which is kept in Otto's care in his own room.)

Room C

Horst of Lundshut has rented a room, though he will not stay long. He has come down from Kayomar to discuss business with Karen, the ranger (see Area 13). He feels that she needs to know how much she has earned and he wants to invest her earnings. He spends as much time in the bar as he can, hoping of news from her.

Each day he goes to her mansion, Area 13, to see if she is there. He will pay anyone who volunteers to seek her out the handsome sum of 100gp per person upon successfully finding the woman.

Horst is an older man, in his 60s. His gray hair is cut short and his beard is neat and trim. He is always cold and wears heavy wool pants and shirts, high hard boots and a heavy fur-lined cloak. This last and the several rings on his fingers are the only real sign that he has wealth. The rings are each worth about 100gp. They are gold with intricate carvings on them. One is a *ring of invisibility* that he activates in dire circumstances. He carries a long sword, though it is hard to see in the many folds of his cloak. Though not a warrior by trade, he is an experienced duelist and able to wield his blade as a 9th level fighter. See image below.

HORST (This chaotic neutral 4th level human fighter's vital stats are strength 16 dexterity 16 constitution 15, intelligence 13 wisdom 11 charisma 9. He has a ring of invisibility and a +4 arm band of protection (worn under his clothes). He travels with 200gp in coin and ten 10gp gems. He has four rings, each worth 100gp.)

Horst has brought two retainers with him, both experienced caravan guards. One is with him at all times. They are friendly, but not very talkative and not very intelligent. Their horses are stabled in the barn. They are of the finest stock and quality.



GUARDS, GERD AND VEIT (These chaotic neutral 3rd level fighters vital stats are strength 15, dexterity 12, constitution 12, intelligence 10, wisdom 10 charisma 10. They wear chainmail and carry maces along with 40gp in jewelry and coin.)

COMMON VISITORS

The following are more often than not sitting in the tavern.

- Athryn
- Andace
- Olivia, the Tanners Wife (Area 4)
- Thadious (Area 11)
- Irmgard Crews (Area 11)
- Horst of Lundshut (see Area 13)
- Horst's Guards
- Heana Geat, Female Cleric (see Area 15)
- Basil, Male Cleric (see Area 15)
- Wilfred, Male Cleric (see Area 15)
- Davinia, Female Cleric (see Area 15)
- Torvald the Dwarf (Area 17)
- Asey, Human Rogue (Area 18)
- El, Human (Area 18)
- Ut, Human (Area 18)
- Benjamin, Human Male (Area 19)
- Katrina, Human Female (Area 19)
- Jenna (Area 20)
- Relyt Nosirrom (Area 22)

TALK OF THE TAVERN

For all its quiet, Ends Meet sees a great deal of foot traffic: merchants from Petersboro, villagers from Greenbriar, adventurers aplenty, the townsfolk themselves, coal burners occasionally coming in to buy goods, rangers, and other forest folk. The tavern usually has 2-3 people in it who are not from Ends Meet. They bring with them rumors and stories of their travels. Being a small town, these rumors tend to linger far longer than their actual value might deserve. Many of course are half truths. Here are a few:

1) Much of the southern Darkenfold has fallen to the machinations of the Green Wizard. Ruling from his castle on the hill, he has spread his evil into the Wingnut Bottomlands where he captures Eschl children and enslaves them. He has begun bringing in orcs, some giants and other foul creatures to augment his army. People from Willowbreak to Haverstraw are fearful.

2) Karen the ranger (Area 13) has not been seen in Ends Meet for six months. Because her story is so tragic, people bring her up in conversation all the time. Her absence is odd. It was known that she was ranging down through the Wingnut Bottomlands and along the northern bank of the Mistbane, still looking for her sister. Some speculate that the Green Wizard killed her or the wild Eschl adopted her into their tribes. Others believe that the elves finally took her and slew her.

3) The Lake of Nunt, to the south in the Low River Country, has become the home of an Umbrian (lawful evil) wizard who has fled the halls of Aufstrag and the persecution of his order. He lives upon the eastern shores of the lake in a tall hut built on stilts to avoid the flooding waters of his chosen home.

4) The Stonemason's Guild of Petersboro has been pushing to pave a road to Ends Meet, but there are rumors they are doing so in order to set up a toll road and tax the inhabitants who come and go from this town and Greenbriar.

5) Orcs have again infested the lands around Mount Hermitage and run rampant along the Mistbane River.

6) Word has come from Haverstraw that the paladin armies of Kayomar are set to conquer the towns of Elne and Haverstraw, making the Valley of Oth effectively their own. This will choke off the people of the Darkenfold. It is said that the Green Wizard is secretly driving this in order to destroy the people of Elne and cement his control over the southern Darkenfold.

7) Asey, owner of the Stump, has gone into league with the Green Wizard and some other crew, wresting money from travelers. A woman comes from the south to regularly meet him and confer about setting up banditry or targets.

8) Boat traffic in the south has slowed down (this is fact, no rumor), and the Castle Upon the Hill is the main reason. Many of the boatmen have been kidnapped. In fact, the town's very own Arad Butlin was taken and enslaved by the Green Wizard. His mother, Jenna is seeking aid (see Area 20).

9) The small town of Willowbreak is protected by an avatar of Heth, an old crone who speaks freely to all but is an ardent follower of the Og Aust. Her power keeps the people safe.

10) There are vampires who stalk the hills around Petersboro. Creatures old and foul, they dwell in the catacombs beneath that ancient town, rising at night to hound those unfortunate enough to be out and about. The town does nothing to stop them for they are wealthy and pay the governing guilds a tidy sum.

11) Horst the merchant is seeking experienced guides and hunters to help him open up trade with Greenbriar to the east and even to Elne at the forest's far edge.

BARN

There are sixteen stalls in the barn and it can hold up to 32 horses, two per stall. The hay loft is accessed by a ladder and loft winch. There is a private room in the back of the barn where the stable boys stay.

The cost to stable a horse is 3sp a night. That includes a stall, rub down, saddle and harness cleaning, feeding, and watering.

AREA 3: FARMSTEAD

This large L-shaped house belongs to Dag, the woodsman, and his family. Dag and his wife, Laila, have four daughters and one son. A huge bay hound lies about the yard keeping watch over

the house while Dag and his son are out cutting wood. They usually go south and east of town, cutting and gathering wood, loading it into a cart and selling it for money or goods from their front yard. They also deliver. There are usually 2-3 ricks of wood in the front yard.

The dog is not necessarily aggressive unless someone makes sudden or threatening movements toward the house or one of the family members. They have little wealth but both father and son are part of the militia, fighting, alongside their dog. They carry spears and axes into battle and wear hide armor.

DAG & DAGSON (These neutral humans neutral human commoner with average ability scores. They attack with a spear or axe for 1d6 points of damage. They have little wealth, only a few silver coins.)

DOG, GUARD (unaligned M beasts): HD 2d8+2, HP 11, AC 13. Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6. Perception is 13 (+3). Survival +2, Stealth +2. Bite +4 (2d4+2 plus Trip. DC 11 Str. neg.); SA Advantage avoid surprise, hearing and smell.

AREA 9: ILLUMINATOR'S HOUSE

The house sits on the edge of town and has a large fenced in yard behind it. An old mule stands in the yard looking out over the fence. The house itself is old but in decent shape. However the yard is filled with finished and half-finished sculptures of various designs of animals, monsters and people. Panes of stained glass stand against the houses' out water as well.

Paul Soreun lives here alone with his mule. He is an older gentleman and a bit eccentric. He sports a long, thick, well-groomed gray-white beard, has bushy eyebrows and a broad face. He is jovial but quiet. Paul rises several hours before the sun comes up, works until noon, takes a short break and then again until the afternoon. He takes an early meal at the Cocklebur around 4 to avoid the evening's dinner crowd. There he sits alone and eats quietly before returning home.

His is an illuminator, sculptor, and general artist. A long career in Kayomar ended many years ago, and he retired to Petersboro and eventually to Ends Meet. Here he works on designing and illuminating stained glass windows. Once a month he loads his works up on his mule and takes them north where he has a contact that sells them.

He takes commissions and is able to work in most mediums from wood to paper to glass. He generally charges 50gp for a small project and 100gp for a larger one.

The inside of the house is not much better than the outside.

Paul is not part of the militia but he does pay a small stipend to arm several of the towns folk.

AREA 10: GENERAL STORE

This is a long, narrow building. It is Ends Meet's only general store and grocer. Owned and operated by Charl Sands, it has

most of the supplies adventurers need: food, flasks, rope, spikes, poles, packs, clothes, boots, etc. He has some weapons, though not many, and very little armor, though he does have a few iron and wooden shields.

Charl lives in an apartment in the back of the general store. A wide porch on the back gives him a view of the forest and when closed, he is often found there, sitting and smoking a long-stemmed pipe. When he invites company over, they usually eat here, weather permitting of course.

Sands is a reasonable man and will take trade goods for payment. His prices are fair and are as listed in the Players Handbook. He has lived his whole life in Ends Meet and is well acquainted with all the town's history, gossip and the like. He is talkative and will join anyone for a drink at the Cocklebur, and he isn't shy about inviting people to his table to share in his goodwill. If, by chance, one of the characters should query him about the town of Alice (see **Shades of Mist** above), he'll remark, "Ah, thrice-cursed Alice - now that's a town of ghosts and weirds." He is a member of the militia.

Charl is tall and thin with gray hair that is always wild and unruly. He cuts it himself so that it looks a bit disheveled. He is meticulous about his clothes and always has fresh shirts to wear with his pants and work boots. He sports a ring on his finger that marks him as a member of the Merchants Guild out of Petersboro. He has been a member for 30 years and can call on up to 1-8 merchant brothers to help him if need be. Although it should be noted it will take several days before any can get word and cross down the road to Ends Meet. Charl has hired Relyt Nosirrom (Area 21) to work for him part time. Relyt is an extremely friendly salesman and generally talks anyone's ear off who enters the General Store.

CHARL SANDS (This 2nd level human fighter's vital stats are strength 15, dexterity 13, constitution 10, intelligence 10, wisdom 12, charisma 8. In battle, he wears a suit of ring mail and carries a heavy +1 iron mace.)

His wealth is kept in a small trunk in his room, hidden in the board beneath his bed. It consists of about 120gp in mixed coin, and 5 25gp gems. He also has a small jade case, about 4 inches across containing a set of Troll Knuckles dice carved in ivory.

AREA 11: HOUSE ON THE LANE

The house fronts the road, with a nice lawn, shaded by several large trees. It is a two-story affair and made of stone and wood with a broad porch. A swing and several chairs sit on the porch. This is the home of Thadious Barrend and his sister, Irmgard Crews. They are often on the porch, sitting, smoking long-stemmed pipes and greeting those who wander down the lane.

Both are retired adventurers. Originally from the Gelderland, they traveled north and plundered the Great Massif. They were joined by others until they had a tight knit group of friends. However, in the Dugrur Hollow they unearthed a particularly nasty black dragon. The fight ended poorly and all died but for Thadious and Irmgard. He lost his arm, burned off at the elbow.

Irmgard drove the dragon back into its lair and sealed it. After, she buried her companions and took her brother away.

They traveled to Kayomar but no magic could restore it, and the pain tormented him so that he could find no peace. Eventually, Irmgard heard of Ends Meet and they came to the town hoping for peace if nothing else. Buying the house on the lane, they settled into a life of comfortable retirement.

They are both friendly and welcome visitors, happily exchanging stories with any and all. They are well informed of the area and the many people who come and go. They remember well where the dragon is and, if pushed, Irmgard will make a map to its lair.

They have a great deal of wealth stored on the property. It is hidden in a magical trunk, invisible to all that do not know the password. It is in one of the inner bedrooms, hidden beneath the floor. Within are over 5000gp in assorted coin and jewels. They have notes worth another 25,000gp kept in Kayomar.

Thadious is 5' 7" high and weighs about 180 pounds. He has become portly in his older years, enjoying a bit too much of the beer at the Cocklebur. However, he is always well groomed and dressed, combing his short black beard and keeping his shoulder length black hair drawn back in a short tail. He is missing his left arm at the elbow and often keeps the stump tucked into his shirt.

THADIOUS BARREND (This chaotic neutral 5th level human fighter's vital stats are strength 16 dexterity 15, constitution 12, intelligence 10 wisdom 15 charisma 10. He wears a suit of chain mail and carries a mace of disruption in battle. However, he is generally in pain so all attacks are with a -2 penalty.)

Irmgard is an inch taller than her brother, muscular, with very clean features. Her eyes are blue and sharp, her facial features follow the same pattern, reminding one of a hawk. She has a birth mark that covers the greater part of the left side of her face, but it serves to enhance her beauty rather than detract from it. She prefers to wear a long dress without belt or buckles. She is often bare foot or in sandals. Her dress reflects her approach to life, keeping it simple.

IRMGARD CREWS (This chaotic neutral 6th level human fighter's vital stats are strength 15 dexterity 17 constitution 12, intelligence 10, wisdom 10, charisma 12. She wears a suit of +2 chain and a +1 shield in battle. She carries a long handled +2 battle axe as well.)

Both Thadious and Irmgard are members of the militia.

AREA 12: HERBALIST

This small, one-room shack is owned by Ennith. She is a young woman of some passing beauty who trades in herbs, spices, ointments and the like. She is a morose woman and is often in Gaitlun the dwarf's company, drinking or eating with him. She is well-versed in all the forest's growth and its ability to hurt or help someone, and the shack is filled to overflowing with jars, bags, and boxes filled with her concoctions.

She will sell items for a fair price to strangers who are of a good alignment or who at least seem to be helping the forest. A salve, able to heal 1-2 hit points generally costs 10gp. Other requests should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Castle Keeper. **Gary Gygax's World Builder** (Troll Lord Games, 2003) is a tremendous resource for herbs and their properties.

Ennith is, in fact, a dryad whose tree was killed by the orc Mrodox and his band of orcs some years before they joined Quagmire (see **C1 The Mortality of Green**). She was found and nursed back to health by the dwarf Gaitlun. She found some solace in Ends Meet, where no questions were asked of her, nor demands made. Few, if any, know what she really is, but some, like Otto, suspect.

DRYAD, ENNITH (N Medium Fey) HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 11/16, Spd 30. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 14 Wis 15 Cha 18. Perception 14 (+4). Stealth +5. Club +6 (1d8+4; shillelagh). SA Darkvision 60ft., magic resistance, plant/beast speak, tree stride, fey charm (24 hrs.; DC 14 Wis neg), innate spellcasting (save DC 14): At will – druid craft; 3/day – entangle, goodberry; 1/day – barkskin, pass without trace, shillelagh. Her spell abilities are inactive, however, for she needs the symbiotic relationship with a tree to foster them. Until reunited with her tree, its seedling, or somehow another tree entirely, she cannot use any of them.)

It has been on her mind lately to return to her home in the forest and see if any sprout or seedling from her old tree host has come to life. Unbeknownst to Ennith, this is indeed the case and its growth, slowed some by the dryad's absence is what is calling her and conjuring these thoughts. She is too dispirited to go it alone, but if chance should dictate she would lead others to her tree to help bring her home or it to her in Ends Meet, of which she has become very fond.

AREA 17: MANOR HOUSE

A trail follows the south bank of the Muddy Wash, passes by Ennith's house (the Herbalist, Area 12) and cuts through a field to an old, abandoned house. It was once occupied by a prosperous stone mason, Rupt Elias, whose family made a living working on the Post Road. But with the collapse of the old world there was no work. He spent through what savings he had and eventually passed away. He is buried now in the back yard.

His family moved north to Petersboro some years ago and left the house. They still nominally own it, though they have not returned since they abandoned the house.

Otto knows the Elias' and is in contact with them from time to time. He keeps an eye on the place. He would be more than happy for anyone to move into it and keep it up. They could do so rent free so long as they cleaned it and repaired it.

The house itself has one large front room and four small bedrooms. The front room served as the kitchen, dining, and living room. All the shutters are gone or broken, the chimney clogged with bird nests, the furniture long since rotted or hauled off, only a large dining room table and a cupboard remain.



AREA 14: HUNTER'S HOME

Two interconnected log cabins mark the home of Lenz and his family. The cabins are built of cut logs, cured and sealed with pitch. They are roofed with cut shingles. Lenz built the cabins, one connected to the other by a dog trot (an open porch area). It is a rustic set up, blending with the forest environs. However the yard has all the signs of a hunter's cabin, with several pelts strung up for drying, large cook pots, and other sundries.

Lenz and his wife, Adelina live here. They have five children, ranging from 5-16. The oldest are twins, a boy and girl, and they hunt with their father.

Lenz makes his living by hunting. He ranges out hunting deer, bear, fox, wolf, and other animals as well as setting traps for beaver and otters. He sells his pelts to Charl, who in turns sells them in his store as well as to merchants in Petersboro. Lenz is very skilled at curing and combing the hides so that those that come from his farm are smooth, soft, and preserved.

Lenz is a larger man with bushy beard and eyebrows. He wears animal pelts and hides, as do most of his family. He carries a short bow with broad tipped arrows and a boar spears.

LENZ (This chaotic neutral 0 level human commoner has average ability scores. He attacks with a short bow for 1d8 points of damage. He gains a +3 to hit while using the bow. He also carries a broad-bladed dagger and wolf spears. Lenz hunts and tracks as a 5th level ranger.)

TWINS, ARNDT (MALE) AND ANJA (FEMALE) *(These chaotic neutral 0 level human commoners have average ability scores. They attack with a short bow for 1d8 points of damage. They also carry a broad-bladed dagger and wolf spears. They hunt and track as a 1st level ranger.)*

They have little wealth, but are well-versed in the countryside around Ends Meet. All three serve in the militia.

AREA 15: A FRIAR'S HOUSE AND CHURCH

This L-shaped building is dedicated to the worship of St. Luther and was built sometime during the latter years of the Winter Dark Wars. The building is a bit run down with a slight sag in the roof. The walls still possess their old, chipped plaster. The doors and shutters are all old as well, needing little more than some sanding and a fresh coat of paint. A large symbol of the god St. Luther stands above the lintel of the main door. The symbol is 3 crossed swords on a horizontal plane.

It is now occupied by a priest of that religion, Heana Geat. Along with her came two male acolytes, Basil and Wilfred, and a female acolyte, Davinia. They traveled here some years ago, arriving from Kayomar as an advance party to help spread the worship of St. Luther into the Darkenfold. The religion did not take, however, as most here worship the Og Aust in one form or the other. Nevertheless, the delegation stayed and has aided the town as best they can.

There are precious few who worship St. Luther, so the church has few, if any, donatives coming in. They do receive a monthly stipend from the churches in Kayomar that totals some 50gp. The clerics earn a little money by healing the sick and wounded, but in all the church is a bit poverty stricken. This is made worse by the habits of the clerics, who frequent the tavern too often.

HEANA GEAT *(She is a lawful good 5th level cleric whose vital stats are strength 13, dexterity 16 constitution 10, intelligence 11, wisdom 16, charisma 12. She wears leather armor and a +2 cloak of protection, and carries a +2 mace, scroll of curse, potion of healing, and 240gp worth of jewelry and coin.)*

ACOLYTES (BASIL, WILFRED, DAVINIA) *(These are lawful good 1st level clerics whose vital stats are strength 10 dexterity 10 constitution 10 intelligence 10 wisdom 14 charisma 11. They wear leather armor and carry maces. Each has about 10gp in mixed coin.)*

All of them are friendly and helpful and serve in the militia.

Heana is aware that the habits of the church are running it down. She is unhappy in her present post and looks for any opportunity that might take her away from the church. She has lately been trying to put together a group to root out the Green Wizard in the southern Darkenfold. To this end, she will press the characters to help her. If the adventurers are in need of a cleric and inquire, and the job has some type of nobility about it,

Heana will offer her services. She demands in payment an equal share of the treasure, all of which to be given to the Church here in Ends Meet.

If she does leave with the party she will place Basil in command of the church.

NOTE: Jenna Butlin (Area 20) is frequently here, praying to St. Luther or talking to the clerics, hoping for some help for her son. If she is not here, any one of the clerics will tell anyone who asks about the area of Jenna's plight hoping to help the woman. They promptly set up a meeting with the mother of the enslaved son.

THE TEMPLE

A set of double doors opens into the main hall or sanctuary. The back of the upper L is given over to a private sanctum and private rooms for the priest and acolytes.

SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary is long and open. There are several stone benches along the walls and a few stained-glass windows manufactured by Paul the Illuminator (Area 9). The area is given over to people who wish to come and pray to St. Luther or to visit the clerics here. There is always a member of the temple clergy here.

The front of the sanctuary is adorned with a large altar upon which are set the three crossed swords and horizontal bar. A collection plate is set before this upon which people can set their sacrifices of coins or small pieces of blue cloth. The coins are put into the church funds, but the small pieces of blue cloth are sewn into a blanket used to heal the sick and wounded. See the sanctum below.

PRIVATE CHAMBERS

There are three rooms in the back of the house. These are devoted to the priest and the acolytes. The two male acolytes share a room, but the priestess and the female acolyte have their own rooms. All the rooms are sparsely furnished with a bed and trunk. The trunks hold the clothing, holy vestments, armor, and weapons of the occupants.

SANCTUM

Set aside from the private chambers is a small sanctum or chantry where the priests worship. The holy items are kept herein and people who make large donatives are allowed to pray for St. Luther's blessings. The room is small and adorned with a smaller altar and symbol of the god. Beneath the altar in a clearly visible trunk is the temple's only holy item. It is a patchwork blanket, sewn of the many pieces of donated cloth. Use of the blanket requires a 5gp donative at least, though to any who worship St. Luther or Durendale, it is free.

BLANKET OF ST. LUTHER: The blanket is about 4 feet wide and six feet long. Anyone who completes a short rest beneath the blanket immediately recovers any hit dice they spend during the rest, at the end of the rest. Completing a long rest beneath the blanket provides the effects of both a *lesser restoration* and *greater restoration* spell. Resting under the blanket for 4 days straight provides the benefits of *heal* and *cure disease*. Only one

person may rest beneath the blanket at a time; attempting to rest more negates the item's magic.

AREA 16: BARMAID'S HOUSE

This is the home of Dorathea and Liesl, who work as barmaids at the Cockleburrr Inn and Tavern. The house is set just off the road with a large fenced-in back yard. It is a simple affair, with a long, broad porch along the front. It is clean and well kept. Three rooms inside allow for two bedrooms and a common area. The women share the chores, including a large garden in the back yard as well as a chicken coup and a milk cow.

The younger of the two, Liesl, is very intelligent (18) and quickly mastered the nuances of gardening; for this reason it produces an abundance of food, some of which they sell to Otto. The milk cow, Tess, produces a bucket's worth of milk every morning, which is also delivered to the Cockleburrr.

The women do not entertain many guests, though Paul the Illuminator is over on occasion.

Liesl has a small collection of books in her room, mostly histories of magic and language books, including a primer to the dwarven language, which she speaks fluently but with an odd accent. She has a spell book as well that a patron, Tolvar, gave her some months back. It has 14 1st-3rd level spells in it. In the margins of the first page are written the words: "note for reference: the trunk was dropped at the river crossing where the Amenut watches over the Pigs Trail. This is a direct reference to the large statue of the Frog God that stands in the Mistbane River where the Pigs Trail begins (see Alice in *Shades of Mist*).

AREA 17: TORVALD'S HOUSE

This broad, stone house with slate shingles sits off the main lane and not far from the creek. A well off the backside of the house is the only noticeable out building. There is a small yard, neatly kept, with a rick of wood and cutting axe to round it off. The shingles themselves hang far over the house walls, allowing Torvald to sit on his narrow, wooden porch when it's raining.

The house belongs to the dwarf, Torvald. He is a grizzled veteran who obviously made his mark in the world by skill of arms. Few know it, but he fought in the Winter Dark Wars, including the horrible Trench Wars fought beneath the feet of Aufstrag. Torvald has spent many years learning and perfecting the craft of engraving and etching. He has earned a reputation as a master engraver, specializing in weapons. His engravings add a great deal of value to any weapon, costing about 25 times the going rate of an item, and worth every coin. The engravings are often lined with gold or silver and are exquisite.

He is close friends with Benjamin the smith (Area 19) and the dwarf, Gaitlun (Area 21). However, the closest of his friends is Relyt Nosirrom (Area 21). Torvald is often seen upon the bench in front of Relyt's house drinking water or beer, talking and enjoying a good yarn. He enjoys playing horseshoes and darts, and anyone up for such a game wins a little bit of his affection. He is not particularly good at horseshoes, however, having a natural aversion to mounted creatures and all that they entail.

He is a stout dwarf whose body is covered in scars gained in many a perilous fray. His gray hair is cropped close to his head, and his long beard is braided and held with cunningly forged platinum clasps. Normally, he carries a hand axe. If given cause, he takes up arms in enchanted chain mail with his huge bearded axe in hand, all of which was crafted by his own hand.

TORVALD (*He is a neutral good, 9th level fighter whose vital stats are strength 16, dexterity 17 constitution 16 intelligence 10 wisdom 11 charisma 10. He wears a +4 full chain suit and wields a +3 bearded axe in battle.*)

Torvald has little wealth as he kept little from his adventures. He earns more than enough by making the occasional engraving. What money he does have hangs in a magical chain bag inside his fireplace. It amounts to 250gp.

Torvald knows a great deal about the Rhodope Mountains to the west. He spent years crisscrossing them when adventuring. Though he will not serve as a guide, he'll happily map out paths to ruins he knows or has heard of, monsters he'd like see killed and the like. The price is a pint of beer at the Cockleburrr Tavern.

AREA 18: THE STUMP

This squalid hole is located in the bottom floor of a split-level house, built on the side of a hill on the west side of town. Entering from the front, one feels as if they are entering a one-story home, but the rickety steps lead them down to the bottom floor where the tavern is.

The tavern room is a foul place and reeks of stale urine and rotten food. It is dark and dingy with all manner of scraps of garbage lying about. Bones, broken barrels, glass, and other junk lie about in no discernible order. The bar is a few planks of wood held up by rocks on either end. The whole affair is a nasty, dank, disgusting hole in the ground.

The owner is Asey "Pick Axe" Ficke. Asey is a squirrely-looking man who always wears loose shirts and knickers. He is always barefoot. An unassuming dagger hangs at his side. He sports an old wound on his leg, which forces him to hobble around with a terrible limp. If asked, he'll call himself 'gimped' by an orc's cleaver: "Not so many years ago, that rummage sale of a brigand gimped me with a meat cleaver. Took all the muscle from my bone and left me for the crows. But no mill wright am I, I dragged myself back here, and El and Ut sewed me back up!"

El and Ut are his two employees. El is a lanky man with no remarkable visage, being plain in all respects. He is quiet and never talks as his tongue was cut out by goblins some years before. His wife, Ut, is a brutish woman about 6' 4" weighing in at about 260 lbs. She is not fat but is rather large, her hands are massive, as are her arms and legs, waist and hips. She is hairy as well, having the hairiest knuckles in town. She is always wearing a bloodstained smock. The bloodstains range from the old rusty colored to fresh crimson. Asey owns a number of pigs, and she slaughters them for meat to sell to the villagers.

Asey is a murderous cutthroat and is in league with most of the tribes of humanoids in the region. He is good friends with Coalen

Feril, a barghest of unusually mean and nasty temperament. In recent years, he has joined a thieves guild called the Choir. They specialize in smuggling and hijacking. To this end he has made connections with the Green Wizard and become involved in the nefarious traffic coming out of the southern Darkenfold.

NOTE: Though he works with the Green Wizard, he has never met him. Asey meets one of the Green Wizard's servants regularly to impart news of Ends Meet to her. The meeting usually takes place in Asey's bar, though the servant sometimes requires that Asey meet them outside of town. Her name is Failenn Uasal. She is tall and lithe and hides her beauty behind her armor. If encountered, she is aloof, but if pressed she speaks of the forest, its beauty and power and little else. She is altogether evil.

NOTE: For more on the servants of the Green Wizard see **Castle on the Hill**.

ASEY "PICK AXE" FICKE (He is a chaotic evil, human 5th level rogue whose vital stats are HD 5d6, HP 25, AC 15. His primary attributes strength 11, intelligence 14, dexterity 17, constitution 15, and charisma 12. He wears +1 leather armor and wields a +2 sharpened brick hammer in battle (1d6 damage; finesse; choose between slashing or bludgeoning depending on end used). Asey has a pile of gold, silver, and other coin hidden beneath the rocky column of the bar counter. Within are 642sp, 384gp, 31pp, and a bag of 5 10gp gems. He also has a wand of color spray and a +2 battle axe.)

UT (CE Large Giant) HP 59 (HD 7d10+21), AC 11, Spd 40. Str 19 Dex 8 Con 16 Int 5 Wis 7 Cha 7. Perception 8 (-2). Great club +6 (2d8+4) or slam +6 (1d8+4). SA darkvision 60ft.

EL (He is a neutral human commoner with average ability scores.)

AREA 19: THE SMITHY

Ends Meet sports a blacksmith shop owned by Benjamin and his wife, Katrina. They live on the lane, in the southern part of town. They are kindly people and work most jobs brought to them.

Just off the lane you see a long, low, stone building. It is built into the ground, its roof only a scant four feet above the turf that surrounds it. A host of barrels and stacks of crates line the wall on the outside or stand haphazardly about the yard. Three chimneys mark the slate shingled roof. From one, a thin, white cloud of smoke rises. A set of steps lead 6 feet down into the turf and to a door set in the wall. The door is open. Next to it are several half-finished swords that have clearly not been touched in a while. A sign with an anvil on it hangs from the front of the building.

The smithy is long and wide and consists of one huge room with the forge set in the center. There are a host of smaller stalls filled with all manner of impedimenta from raw materials to water barrels. Some of these stalls are work stations, others for storage. The whole area is one of unmitigated chaos.

The back of the smithy is large a spacious and is where the two live. A large porch off the back of the house reflects the neat and manicured approach to living that Katrina pursues. They are welcoming to visitors and often have customers over for beer and potatoes, the latter of which she grows in abundance in her garden.

Benjamin did not earn his fortune blacksmithing. Though a good smith, he was a better soldier. He served in the armies of Kayomar for 25 years, from the age of 9. He fought in many campaigns, rising in the ranks to that of Master of Arms. But in the end, he wearied of the slaughter and retired, first to the borders of the Darkenfold, and later to Ends Meet where he met and married Katrina. He learned the trade from the town's previous smith and has been happily doing it ever since.

Benjamin is a good smith and works on most anything from repairing barrels and wheels, to making hoes, pick axes, and replacing hafts of tools and weapons. He can do minor repairs on armor, but has no skill in replacing damaged engravings or etchings. His work on weapons is roughly the same. He can fix and repair, but to make a weapon from scratch takes him an inordinately long time. For such work, he usually calls on either Torvald (Area 17) or Gaitlun (Area 21).

BENJAMIN (He is a neutral good, human, 8th level fighter whose vital stats are strength 17, dexterity 15, constitution 17, intelligence 10, wisdom 14, and charisma 10. He wears +1 chain mail and carries a +1 shield. In combat, he wields a +1 longsword. Benjamin serves as the town sheriff.)

Benjamin is part of the militia.

They have accumulated a bit of wealth. Over 1,000gp in mixed coin and gems. Benjamin receives a stipend from Kayomar each year as well, about 50gp in uncut coins.

NOTE: Benjamin is well connected to lords of Sinsich, whom he served for many years. And if he desires can give someone papers of recommendation, allowing them easy passage through the Paladin's Kingdom. He still has friends throughout southern Kayomar.

AREA 20: BUTLIN HOUSE

This small, unassuming house just off the lane has a large fenced garden behind it and a wide, covered porch in front of it. There is always a rocking chair on the porch. The yard itself has the normal tools of any village, wood cutting axe, small well, trough and so forth. It is quiet and peaceful.

Jenna Butlin lives in this house, and she did so with her only son. Her husband, a boatman, was killed down on the Powder River by bandits. Her son took up the trade. She has received word from the Rangers of the Knot (see "Andace" above) that her son's boat was waylaid by the Green Wizard and enslaved. He is in the pens even now, and what his fate can be after that anyone's guess. The rangers have done their best to keep people safe from the wizard's depredations but to no avail.

Jenna is in her mid-30s, comely but time and worry have taken their toll. She wanders about mostly, hoping that somehow the gods will send her aid. She frequents the house of St. Luther (Area 15) seeking aid as well as the Tavern. She cannot pay any gold but will give her house if need be for anyone to go to the Castle Upon the Hill and rescue her son, Arad.

AREA 21: GAITLUN'S HOUSE

By the southern wall, along its eastern edges lies a low, long stone house with a shingled roof. The shingles are peculiar to Ends Meet as they are green, slate and imported from the town of Frieburg many hundreds of miles to the east. There is almost always smoke rising from the building's centrally located chimney, and the grounds about the house are filled with all manner of broken, half-repaired equipment from plows to wagon wheels, hammers to hoes, axes and so on.

This is the home of the dwarf Gaitlun, a smith by trade, but one who only sets his skills to items beyond repair. Gaitlun is an unassuming though stout dwarf whose most distinguished feature is his beard, which is cut to the chin down the center, marking him as one of the Bartigtot, the dwarf survivors of that horrible battle of Olensk where so many thousands of their kin were slain.

He is friendly and welcomes company. He brews his own beer, though he is often at the Cocklebur to enjoy pint after pint of his good friend's "masterful brew," as he calls it. He regales any who will lend an ear with all manner of stories about the days of his youth when he adventured across the wide world and fought in the long wars of the Winter Dark. His tales are outlandish and involve all manner of magical items, treasures, and wild monsters, as well as kings, princes, and wizards of immense reputation.

Whether true or not only Gaitlun will tell, but those who spend any amount of time with him cannot help but to recognize in him an unknown quality and a bearing that makes him seem fearless and powerful beyond measure. He is a masterful smith, and there is no item, magical or mundane, that he cannot repair.

NOTE: There are many tales that speak of the fate of Dolgan the Forge King, of the Val Tulumph (lesser gods) of Aihirde. His long and tragic history is fully recounted in the lays of his people. He is best known for fighting the Horned God long ago. Many tales speak of his end and how he cast off his crown and mantle and retired to a quiet life in the country where he lives in the dark folds of a comforting forest, in a village with little to offer the world but stout brew and good conversation. Whether this Gaitlun be the very Forge King is anyone's guess.

AREA 22: RELYT NOSIRROM'S HOUSE

A small, well-kept cottage stands just off the main road, near the south gate. The yard is well kept and clean, with little adornment, except for a stout wooden bench which sits in front of the house and a closed water barrel with a couple of battered tankards on it. This is the house of Relyt Nosirrom, a one-time adventurer. Relyt works for Charl Sands on occasion, but spends

a great deal of time in the Cocklebur Inn and Tavern, drinking and spinning yarns. He is often in the company of Torvald, either at the tavern, or on the bench in front of his house playing horseshoes and talking. Relyt offers anyone passing by fresh water if they'll spin him a yarn or listen to one of his own. He is friendly to a fault.

A bard of some repute in the east, Relyt is in his mid-late 40s. His long red hair has darkened over the years, and his lengthy beard is unusually grey and white, save for a few streaks of red. His slightly receding hairline is perhaps the result of many years of adventuring. Early in his career, he traveled in and around the Blacktooth Ridge, freeing the town of Malforten from the tyrannical grip of wild orcs and their kin. Eventually, he made his way through the Slag Heap, fighting the Witch Queen's people. His journey would take him to the hills of the Blighted Screed, the marshes and pools of The Grausumland, and even to the Ahargon Den, the Mouth of Darkness...the gates beneath the shadow of Aufstrag. Relyt lost numerous companions, and barely survived his time in the Fetid Morass. Rather than push on to Aufstrag alone he took to the open road, traveling into the west.

Relyt faced some dangers along the way, but embraced his skills as a storyteller, musician, and singer. He played his drum, stringed instrument, and told stories of his time in the Blacktooth Ridge to all who would listen. His travels eventually took him to the Elkhorn Deeps, and into the Rhodope Mountains before heading east into the Darkenfold. He eventually settled in Ends Meet. He continued to perform, but found himself working in the local trading post. Relyt's verbosity serves him well. He's never short on words, and could sell a broken pick axe to a veteran miner. His reputation as seller and trader is unparalleled.

RELYT (*He is a neutral good, 9th level bard whose vital stats are strength 10 dexterity 17 constitution 10 intelligence 11 wisdom 11 charisma 16. He wears +2 chain mail and carries a +2 longsword in battle.*)

He arrived in Ends Meet with little wealth, spending most of it along the way. However, he does have a small lock box with 13 platinum and the famed bard's *Ring of Khan* in it. He rarely wears the ring, though it increases the wearer's charisma by 3, it requires him to wear the finest of Kareelian leather and he can rarely find it.

He is well versed in the stories and histories of the east, but knows only a little about the Darkenfold. He did have a run in with the Green Wizard's minions, claiming to have "fought a druid with a foul temper" and barely escaped with his life.

AREA 23: MANOR HOUSE

Off the main lane, but at the end of a long path, stands an old manor house, occupied by the ranger Karen.

A small path leads off the main road, heading east. It is lined with old willow trees, the branches of which sway gently to and fro, casting about in their struggle to reach the ground, a goal both close yet so very far away. The

lane ends in a wide clearing dominated by a small hill and two giant chestnut trees, beneath the broad leaves of which stands an old, three-story stone building. It has a wide veranda, though the porch roof has fallen in, and most of the one-time pillars lie in ruin in the deep green grass. Dark, hollow apertures serve the building as windows. Two each flank the front door and five run the length of the second, though there are only two on the third. They are broad, with sills, but for the middle second floor window, which has a balcony. The whole facade of the building is covered with vines, and brush grows along the length of the building's foundation.

This is a manor once owned by a prosperous trader and his family, the Craddocks. Thom and his wife, Loretta, had two beautiful daughters, Jill and Karen. The whole family was well liked in Ends Meet and known to many in the areas about, humans, elves, gnomes and the like. They had business in both Greenbriar to the east and Alice to the south.

Tragedy struck when the elder girl, Jill, reached maturity at sixteen. While traveling with her father to Alice, they were waylaid on the road by a small band of wood elves, whose chief had long been enamored of the girl. In the ensuing argument, Thom was slain and Jill carried off into the woods, never to be seen again. Karen, fourteen at the time, took up her father's arms and set off into the wood to find her sister's kidnappers. For many months, she wandered the forest path, so long that most thought she was lost. When she returned, it was with no news of her sister and only in time to bury her mother. After Karen's departure, Loretta lost her mind and ran the length of the road from Ends Meet to Alice in her evening gown. Once there, she threw herself off the rocky bluffs to the south and died.

Karen is seen in town from time to time. She is twenty-four now and is well known for her fiery red hair, beautiful form and

fierce visage. She hates elves with a passion, is well versed in all the lore of the forest and will offer some aid to the party if they request it. There is a one in twenty chance that she will be in town, and if so, she is always at the manor house.

The manor house itself is filled with beautiful, if old, furniture that is largely undisturbed. It is locked though easily accessed as the windows are long since broken and the shutters rotted away. The roof is intact but leaks horribly. Where it does leak, the floors are rotted and furniture ruined. No one plunders the house nor occupies it in fear of rousing the animosity of Karen.

KAREN *(This is a lawful good, human 8th level ranger whose vital stats are strength 16, dexterity 17, constitution 15, intelligence 13, wisdom 12, charisma 9. She wears a +1 chain mail shirt and wields a +1 longsword or a +2 elven bow. Karen has little wealth, leaving wealth where she finds it. Aside from her magical weapons, she has a pair of boots of elven kind, 12 +1 arrows, 24 normal arrows, a long dirk, and a small harp.)*

NOTE: Karen is not a member of the ranger order "Rangers of the Knot."

Her family was well off and died with the money unspent. Karen has not touched any of this, gathering what she has off the road and on her adventures. There is a trunk in a vault in the cellar with 500gp in mixed coin and notes worth 2500gp from various merchant houses in Kayomar. Karen also owns part of a merchant line of wagons that caravan goods across that great realm. It is managed by her father's partner in the firm, Horst of Lundshut, and earns her some 50gp a month. This money she has never spent, nor even collected. Horst, an honest man, keeps it for her. It amounts to some 7,000gp.

THE VILLAGE BEYOND

The remaining villagers make their living from the forest. In total, there are about 30 houses inside the village proper and another score or so on the outskirts. Most of these are to the east of town, some to the south, and few north of the Muddy Wash. These are left entirely to the CKs development, they should be filled with normal people or retired adventurers. And as with all people, some are good natured, others less so, but most just want to get by without strife or suffering.

CEMETERY

The people of Ends Meet bury their dead upon a high hill a half mile from town. A small road leads to the burial ground where several hundred people lie interred. More are actually buried there for the settlement of Ends Meet is extremely old, but time has seen graves sink and fade away and new ones built over them. Those who presently occupy the cemetery are all buried within the last hundred plus years.

The hill is largely cleared, though some trees grow here and there. Most of the markers are stone, small affairs carved with names and dates. Others are wooden, though these don't last long. A few are mausoleums. From the hill, the Muddy Wash is clearly visible, as is the cemetery from the creek.



Read or paraphrase the following if the cemetery is viewed from the creek or road.

The trees give way to a large dome of a hill. The sky stands out in marked contrast to the deep forest that rings it like a sea of green. Spotting the hill's flanks and top are scores of gravestones. Most of them are stone, though some few are wooden, and they are set in no discernible order. Three large mausoleums stand out from the rest. Clearly, this is the cemetery of Ends Meet.

The vampires have taken up residence in one of the large mausoleums. Wolf tracks lead up to and around it. It faces to the north.

There are a 9 worgs lingering here.

WORGs X 9 (NE large monstrosity) HP 26 (HD 4d10+4), AC 13, Spd 50ft. Str 16 Dex 13 Con 13 Int 7 Wis 11 Cha 8. Perception 19(+4/adv.), darkvision 60ft. Bite +5 (2d6+3). Keen senses (Advantage on Perception), trip (on successful bite, victim knocked prone; Str DC 13 neg.)

CRYPT

The crypt that the vampires have occupied stands upon the northern flank of the cemetery. It is large and ornate, bearing the names "Adlar Mund" and "Hild Gisel" upon the lintel. The carving is long stained and weathered, marking the whole as being extraordinarily old.

Everything around the tomb entrance is trampled, showing tracks of wolves, bare-foot humans, and booted humans; all of it is recent.

ROOM 1: ENTRANCE

The door to the crypt is shut, though it is not locked for the vampires were forced to break the lock to gain entry. It is large, stone, and decorated with the horns of the god Let. It opens to a narrow stone staircase that leads down into the darkness. The stairs are slick with moisture and an odd smell prevails.

Anyone who takes a moment to listen, smell, or try to ascertain what is below has a chance of detecting fresh blood on a successful DC 15 Wisdom (perception) check.

One of the spawn has taken up residence in the antechamber below and, if there, will undoubtedly hear anyone entering the staircase above.

ROOM 2: ANTECHAMBER

This large chamber once held a variety of grave goods. Casks of food, barrels of beer, a chariot, armor for a horse, weapons, and other sundries. It is all scattered now, broken and ruined. The carnage is the result of Besnik's wild nature. He clings upon the high ceiling, some 12 feet above the floor, watching the door and ready to pounce on any who may threaten his master's sleep.



He is difficult to see and can only be spotted with a DC 16 passive Perception (or DC 16 Wisdom (perception) check if people are actively looking). Of course, any detect evil cast in his direction will reveal him.

BESNIK, VAMPIRIC SPAWN (NE medium undead) HP 82 (11d8+33), AC 17, Spd 30ft Str 16 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 13 (+3); Stealth +6. Short swords +8 (1d6+4); claws +6 (2d4+3 or grapple target); bite +6 (1d6+3 and hp maximum reduced by same until target finishes long rest; willing or grappled, restrained or incapacitated creatures only; target dies if hp max = 0). SA multiattack (2 attacks; one can be bite); resist necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical weapons; darkvision 60ft.; regeneration (10 hp start of each turn if not in s unlight or running water; holy water or radiant damage negates this turn); spider climb; vampire weaknesses (must be invited in; 20 acid damage from running water; stake through heart while incapacitated destroys; sunlight deals 20 radiant damage and causes disadvantage on attacks and checks). He wears a suit of +2 leather armor and two +2 short swords. He has 100gp in mixed coin and a jade carved in the likeness of the god Narrheit worth 250gp.)

Besnik is younger than Anselina and not very bright. He survived his master's rage through no natural intelligence but rather through absence, being away on some minor errand. He is short, thin, and wiry. His smile is twisted and makes up for a wicked scar that marks his cheek across his unshaven face. His hair is stringy, long, and often dirty. He carries two short swords, both at his hips and wears a leather shirt. He talks in a quiet voice, and when not conversing, tends to stand with an idiot's smile on his face.

There is little of value in the room but for a suit of magical +1 chain barding for a warhorse. Also Besnik's blades and armor are magical, see stat block above.

NOTE: Any battle here is likely to raise enough noise to alert Geoffrey in his tomb in the next room.

Room 3: ANNEX

The annex was used to store all manner of grave goods, mostly furniture. This remains, piled in heaps set there by the grave masters long ago. Much of it is ruined and of little value.

Room 4: BURIAL CHAMBER

Here, the bones of the lord and his lady were laid to rest. They were placed in the same coffin, a large black stone piece standing on four legs. Their bones are scattered across the floor now as Geoffrey tossed them out to give himself a place to rest. Scattered amidst their bones are various pieces of equipment including a +2 broadsword and a *helm of comprehend languages*.

Geoffrey keeps Anselina with him almost constantly, unless he sends her to town. If he is here, she is in the tomb with him.

The tomb is easy to open, requiring a DC 12 Strength (athletics) check. However, if Geoffrey hears the party's entrance to his tomb, he waits until the party is close and hurls the lid off and at them. They must make a successful dexterity save or suffer 1d12 points of damage. After that, he falls upon the party with a vengeance.

If the battle goes against them, Anselina attempts to flee.

GEOFFREY, VAMPIRE (LESSER) (LE medium undead shapechanger) HP 112 (14d8+42), AC 17, Spd 30ft Str 16 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 16 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 13 (+3); Stealth +6. Unarmed strike +7 (1d8+4 or grapple); sword of wounding +9 (1d8 plus victim takes 1d4 necrotic per wound per turn; DC 15 con at end of each turn to end effect); bite +7 (1d6+4 plus 2d6 necrotic and hp max reduced by necrotic and vamp regains necrotic in hp. Target recovers end of long rest. If hp max=0, target dies and rises as spawn). Charm (one creature within sight; DC 15 wisdom save or charmed for 24 hours; new save each time target takes harm); children of the night (1/day; summon 1d4 bat or rat swarms or 1d6 wolves; arrive 1d4 rounds; stay for 1 hour or till vampire dies); SA Multiattack (2 attacks; one can be bite); Regenerate (20/round unless in sunlight or running water; holy water or radiant damage negates this turn); Reroll failed saves (3/day); shapechange (bat/mist; mist incorporeal/fly 30ft/take no actions but move); spider climb; vampire weaknesses (must be invited in; 20 acid damage running water; 20 radiant damage and disadvantage in sunlight; stake through heart destroys if incapacitated). LA (takes 2; end of another's turn) move, unarmed strike, bite (costs 2). Challenge 8 (3,900 XP). Geoffrey wears a suit of +1 chain mail and uses a +2 sword of wounding. He also has a vial of unholy water. He carries on his person 400gp.)

Geoffrey is much as he was when he fell to the vampiric curse. He was roughly 50 years old, and now stands just shy of six feet, has long dark hair with strands of white in it (a trait shared by all the Ethrum, whose hair turns white with age as opposed to gray). His features range from gaunt to soft, depending on how much he has fed upon the blood of his prey. He has a strong,

clean build and walks with a certain grace. His eyes are deep and dark and have no discernible color to them. He wears faded traveler's clothes, pants, and high hard boots with a thick wool shirt, that he wears tucked in. A longsword hangs at his side and a dirk on the other. When outdoors, he wears a broad-brimmed hat and a large floor-length cloak stained dirty from travel. He fidgets a bit.

ANSELINA, VAMPIRIC SPAWN (NE medium undead) HP 82 (11d8+33), AC 18, Spd 30ft Str 16 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 13 (+3); Stealth +6. Frostbrand +9 (1d8 plus 1d6 cold); claws +6 (2d4+3 or grapple target); bite +6 (1d6+3 and hp maximum reduced by same until target finishes long rest; willing or grappled, restrained or incapacitated creatures only; target dies if hp max = 0). SA multiattack (2 attacks; one can be bite); resist necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical weapons; darkvision 60ft.; regeneration (10 hp start of each turn if not in s unlight or running water; holy water or radiant damage negates this turn); spider climb; vampire weaknesses (must be invited in; 20 acid damage from running water; stake through heart while incapacitated destroys; sunlight deals 20 radiant damage and causes disadvantage on attacks and checks). She wears a suit of +1 elven chain and a +1 ring of protection. She has a +3 frostbrand longsword and 200gp in mixed coin. She wears a necklace beneath her mail with a large ruby on it worth 1000gp.)

Anselina is the older of the two and far more in tune with Geoffrey's moods. Her experience with him saved her life when he slew the rest of his spawn. It does not hurt that they are lovers. She is a little taller than he is, about 5'9". Her hair is long and, though plain of color, is always woven in one design or the other. Her features are long and angular and her skin a cold white. Her eyes are light blue, bordering on gray. She is a skilled warrior and carries a long sword belted to her side. Her clothes are loose and cover her magical chainmail.

TREASURE: Aside from the treasure that Geoffrey and Anselina have, there is the aforementioned magical sword and *helm of comprehend languages*. In the tomb itself, undisturbed by Geoffrey, is a small ornately carved chest with 25pp in it, a golden dagger, and a small, ornately carved boat. The boat is a magical folding boat.

Room 5: OSSUARY

This room was originally set aside for the lord and lady's fallen retainers. Their bones were laid here on several biers; there are 12 of them in all. Upon his command, Geoffrey can raise them all from the dead.

SKELETONS X 12 (LE Medium undead): HP 13 (HD 2d8+4), AC 13, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 6 Wis 8 Cha 5. Perception 9. Short sword +4 (1d6+2) or short bow +4 (1d6+2; 80ft/320ft). SA bludgeoning vulnerability, immune to poison / exhaustion, darkvision 60ft.

There is little of value in the room as the gear and equipment of these 12 buried souls have long since fallen into disrepair.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTER

GRINDLWERE

The grindlwere is a fiend that comes to life in the bosom of giant storms. Born of the chaos embodied in the violent conflicts of the elements, the creature manifests as a living entity without discernable shape or form. They appear only as a darker mass in the deep dark clouds, for this is where the creature comes to life, drawing the power of the storm within it. They express themselves through the forked tongues of their lightning, which they hurl constantly. This is the most visible form the creature takes; a rush of thick cloud that follows the arc of its own energy as it strikes those around it. The cloud assumes an almost tangible shape as it follows the arcing electricity.

CLOUDS WITHIN CLOUDS. The grindlwere possess no physical form beyond that of the storm which gives them life. They do not eat or need any sustenance; they draw their energy from the storms itself. Their life ends when the storm passes and the magic that gave birth to it fades. These creatures are almost impossible to detect until the storm itself brews, at such times those experienced enough may detect the creature as a ball of lightning or strange undulating darkness in the clouds.

MINDLESS DESTROYERS. These creatures thrive on violence and attack by thundering down upon their victims with a massive bolt of lightning. This is often the first hint that someone has they are being attacked. They are unreasoning creatures without the ability to speak or understand for they hardly recognize that they are alive. On rare occasions, encounters with more than one occur, but these happen only in the midst of massive storms. At such times the grindlwere never act in concert or for that matter, even recognize that another grindlwere is present.

GRINDLWERE

LARGE ABERRATION, CHAOTIC EVIL

ARMOR CLASS: 14 (see description)

HIT POINTS: 52(7d10+14)

SPEED: 30 ft Fly

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
12(+1)	18(+4)	15(+2)	2(-4)	10(+0)	6(-2)

SKILLS: Stealth+6

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES: Lightning, Thunder, poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES: Exhausted, frightened, grappled, petrified, poisoned, prone

DAMAGE RESISTANCE: bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

SENSES: Tremorsense 90 ft

LANGUAGES:

CHALLENGE: 4 (1100 XP)

Special Qualities

DARKNESS. The dark swirling clouds that surround the Grindlwere should be treated as magical darkness in a 30 foot radius around the creature.

WINDBLAST. A storm surrounds the creature at all times. Creatures within 60 ft of the creature are at disadvantage to all Strength and Dexterity ability checks as well as all concentration checks. Any creature of Small or smaller size must make a Strength save (DC 10) at the end of each turn it is within the cloud. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone.

CLOUDFORM. The creature is almost entirely a cloud and is surrounded by clouds. It has advantage on all stealth checks while in an area of clouds or fog. The creature can pass through any crack that normal fog could get through.

Actions

LIGHTNING BURST (Recharge 5-6). The Grindlwere infuses itself with electricity and hurls itself as a bolt of lightning. The creature travels in a straight line up to 90 feet. This creates a bolt 10 feet wide and as long as the creature's move. Each creature in this area must make a Dexterity Save (DC 14). On a failed save, they take 35(10d6) lightning damage, or half on a successful save.

LIGHTNING FISTS. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. Hit: 13(2d8+4) lightning damage.

IN AIHRDE

The grindlwere is a creature of Narrheit, borne of his contemplated rage upon Unklar during their great battles in those lands that came to be known as the Frozen Salt Flats. That black-hearted god of chaos did not surrender his power easily and hurled all manner of devilry against the dark lord. Naarheit summoned great storms, hurling them upon the Horned One, some bore these creatures within their bosom, others did not. The Horned One was confounded, and raged his power against any storm that he saw. Though the grindlwere failed to carry the battle for Naarheit and he fell into ruin, they lived on, manifesting in storms all over the world. For chaos once unleashed is difficult to contain.

They plague all the lands of Aihrde. Some of the learned scholars and magi, clerics and druids, attempt to harness this power, to summon them. Their efforts sometimes meet with success, and others in failure; for these creatures are indeed of Narrheit's fashioning and he has set his memory of them aside and left them to their true natures of unrepentant chaos.



OGL

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IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA