



The Low Country



Lands in Shadow for Shadow of the Demon Lord

An imperial backwater by almost any definition, Low Country earns its importance by being the Empire's breadbasket. Widely regarded as a sleepy place where little happens, Low Country hides its share of secrets and intrigues, especially now as the Empire unravels.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of halfling settlers, Low Country has shaken off its origins as an uninhabited wilderness to become an agricultural powerhouse. Ostensibly still loyal to the Empire, despite the orc-king Drudge sitting upon a usurped Alabaster Throne, Low Country's hard-working halfling farmers continue to keep the rest of the Empire fed. For how much longer, no one knows.

This entry of the *Lands in Shadow* series, *Low Country*, reveals details about a crucial imperial province and offers a closer look at the peoples, places, and circumstances that make up life here. Whether you use this supplement to expand your knowledge of the continent of Rûl, to draw inspiration for characters hailing from these lands, or to use it as a backdrop for your campaign, *Low Country* proves an excellent resource for your *Shadow of the Demon Lord* games.

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New Roots

As revealed in *Uncommon Courage*, halflings share common origins with humanity and can trace their roots back as far as the First People of Rûl. With the coming of the Kalasans, the halflings migrated west to the northern portion of Endless Steppe, where they settled near the western foothills of the Shield Mountains. The peaceful halflings wanted no part of the Kalasan wars of conquest, either as victims or as allies.

Their settlements west of the mountains persisted for the better part of two centuries until conflicts arose between them and the indigenous centaurs. Less than a generation after relations soured, the halflings abandoned their farms and communities to migrate back over the mountains to lands they had abandoned long ago. Having fled a land once steeped in bloodshed and turmoil, they returned to a powerful empire that had restored order and established the rule of law.

Ever adaptable, many halflings established themselves as merchants or artisans throughout the Empire. Others found places with the imperial armies as quartermasters, scouts, and spies. Inevitably, though, some halflings became entangled with greedy, cruel, or dishonest folk who saw the newly arrived halflings as ripe for fleecing, or worse.

The vast majority of the displaced halflings simply craved a return to a quiet, agrarian lifestyle they had once enjoyed, and looked to find new lands to settle. As immigrants into the Empire, they were careful to recognize and obey all imperial prerogatives and authority in order to curry favor from the Emperor himself down to the lowest minor official and landholder. Because of this obeisance, many were able to obtain grants of land where they could live more or less independently, usually in return for portions of whatever they could produce paid to the Empire as rent.

In the Empire's westernmost lands, however, there wasn't enough suitable land available for the large influx of the smallfolk. It wasn't long before the halfling elders turned their eyes farther east, seeing an opportunity in the unsettled rolling lands between the Lake of Dreams and the eastern slopes of the Shield Mountains, referred to as Low Country.

During their war against the Men of Gog, the Kalasans marched through this uninhabited region of lakes and grassy hills in their drive to seize what would become the imperial capital of Caecras. The warlord Eronymous was quick to recognize the area's potential as a great agricultural resource, but knew that rich farmland wouldn't do him much good unless he defeated the Witch-king first. Setting his eyes on richer prizes to the west, the would-be emperor left several bands of soldiers behind as garrisons to secure the region, as well as forage for food and supplies for his armies.

After the wars of conquest wound down, when the newly proclaimed Emperor Eronymous awarded land to his followers, few sought to claim fiefs in Low Country. The emperor's new vassals vastly preferred holdings much

closer to the seat of imperial power in Caecras, where they could remain close to the emperor in order to obtain a choice office or title, or simply hold their own in the constant scheming and intrigues among the members of the imperial court.

There were practical considerations as well. Rûl remained a dangerous place for the newly minted Kalasan nobility in the Empire's early years. Plenty of the Witch-King's former allies and minions still roamed the lands. The hills and mountains west of Caecras hid legions of deadly monsters, ever eager to pick off travelers or isolated imperial settlements. Farther east and south, the broken country around Heartless Lake harbored considerable numbers of fey folk, very few of whom remained friendly to their erstwhile Kalasan allies after Eronymous turned his back on them to forge himself an empire.

After the defeat of the three Hags and the establishment of the Grand Duchy of the West (see *The Grand Duchy*), many fey fled to Low Country, posing a threat to the few human settlements there, as well as discouraging any new waves of Kalasan emigration.

Consequently, Low Country would remain a mostly unsettled wilderness for the next two centuries. Eronymous and succeeding emperors maintained garrisons there to fend off attacks from the east. Because of its remoteness, the region became widely regarded as a hardship post, suitable only for the unambitious or for any who might have reason to avoid the attention of the imperial court.

The return of the halflings changed all that. Several halfling elders, eager to help their people find a new homeland, wormed their way into and through the imperial bureaucracy. They eventually won an audience with Emperor Frixonos in order to plead their case for lands of their own. A shrewd man in his own right, the emperor realized that this large influx of refugees could be transformed into grateful and loyal subjects, who would in turn transform the wilderness into rich farmland.

Seeing a win-win situation for both parties, Frixonos and the halfling elders swiftly reached an accord. Any halfling not already beholden to an imperial noble or convicted of a crime would receive a grant of land in Low Country, if they so desired. The new landholders would also be provided protection by the existing imperial garrisons.

In return, the settlers pledged to put their newly granted land under the plow, or develop it in some other suitable and productive way. They agreed to give a share of everything they produced to the Empire, paid as an annual tax to their local imperial representative, usually the nearest garrison commander. The settlers would also be required to assist with the defense of the land whenever the need arose.

The arrangement turned out better than either the emperor or the halflings dared hope. The smallfolk quickly moved in and began working the land, gaining a reputation with the human inhabitants of Low Country as hard workers and good neighbors. The halflings even managed to develop good relations with most of the local fey.

In just a few decades, the halflings converted their adopted country from a sparsely settled and dangerous wilderness into what would eventually become one of the most fertile and prosperous provinces of the Empire.

A Varied Land

Most of the Empire believes Low Country to be little more than an unending plain, flat as a tabletop, covered in grassland and grain fields, dotted here and there with a few lakes and a few more halfling villages. While that view has some grain of truth to it, it does not take into account the full reality of what the region has become over the centuries.

Borders

According to the borders defined by imperial records, Low Country extends from the Shield Mountains in the west to the Lake of Dreams in the east, and from Caecras in the north to the Salt Sea in the south. It is a vast and seemingly limitless land, more than 800,000 square miles. The country's northwest corner is the most densely settled, dotted by a large number of halfling settlements on the eastern shore of the Lake of Dreams. The land slowly gives over to large stretches of wilderness south of Heartless Lake and the surrounding badlands. Only the hardest (or most desperate) halfling settlers dare to venture south of the badlands.

Geography

Rolling hills cover most of Low Country, rising and falling like vast, green ocean waves, forming a series of ridges that lie roughly parallel to the Shield Mountains to the west. The hills become wider and lower as they approach the Lake of Dreams and the eastern border. Notable landmarks include:

Central Lakes: This chain of five major lakes, with a network of numerous smaller lakes connected to them, sits in the heart of the region amid rugged, forested hills that supply the bulk of Low Country's timber. All the lakes are narrow, murky, and very deep—at least 600 feet or more—the largest being Heartless Lake, at the northeast end of the chain.

Highsprings: The largest settlement in the Low Country, this walled town is home to more than 10,000 souls, of which most are human. From its location in the southeast corner of the West Riding, Highsprings is the center point for the collection of imperial taxes flowing to Caecras from the West and South Ridings.

Lake of Dreams: Larger than all the Central Lakes put together, the Lake of Dreams is a bountiful fishery. The submerged ruins of an ancient city are said to lie somewhere near the western shore, not far from the village of Bolling Falls. The water in the Lake of



Dreams is much clearer than that of the Central Lakes, and deeper as well, reputedly more than 1,000 feet in some places.

The Serpent's Tongue: The tallest summit in the broken country east of the Central Lakes, this low mountain—a mere hill compared to the Shield Mountains far to the west—has a bare, rocky summit split into a forked pair of stone spires, hence its name. The Serpent's Tongue is reputed to be home to the court of the fey Queen Kayrodil Leafwhite (see the “Major Players” section).

Politics

Low Country is considered a province of the Empire—at least on paper. Technically, all landowners hold their property directly from the emperor, with nearly all halflings tracing their ownership back to the original settlement charter granted by Emperor Frixonos. There are a few human fiefholders as well, most of whom hold titles of nobility as descendants from the original garrison commanders appointed by Eronymous.

Despite the horror of the orc rebellion in Caecras and the threat of continent-wide war to come, the Ruling Council of Low Country has re-affirmed their allegiance to the Alabaster Throne. This decision is pragmatic rather than one based on any real feelings of loyalty or nostalgia. The halflings believe it is best to keep whoever holds power in Caecras happy in order to avoid being considered a target for any potential military incursions—especially from orcs who see little difference between the humans of the Empire who enslaved them and the halflings who work hard to keep much of that Empire fed.

The halflings have likewise maintained fairly cordial relations with the rest of their neighbors. To the south, the rulers in Balgrendia and the March Lands are content to leave the halflings to their farms and fields. To the west, the aristocrats of the Grand Duchy jealously guard their borders, lest any of their disaffected serfs try to escape that bleak land into Low Country's southern wilderness; here, the halflings keep a strong guard in the west, mostly to keep armed parties from the Grand Duchy on their own side of the border. As a matter of policy, the halflings return any fugitive Duchy serfs or slaves caught within three leagues of the border; anyone else apprehended is released unless they are deemed a threat to Low Country.

To the east, there has always been grousing and grumbling from the various autarchs of the Confederacy of Nine Cities, complaining about commerce rights to the resources of the Lake of Dreams. The autarchs' inability to take unified action against the halflings, or for even one of them to undertake anything that involves any kind of risk, helps keep the issue a low-key disagreement rather than a serious matter. For now, that is, as the collapse of the Empire has changed everything.

The forests around Heartless Lake are home to the court of Queen Kayrodil Leafwhite, who rules over a realm of elves and sundry fey creatures. The halflings are content to leave the wooded heights to the queen and her subjects. They conduct limited trade with the Queen's court, consisting mostly of foodstuffs, textiles, and manufactured goods in exchange for luxury items crafted by the fey. Any halfling woodcutters who harvest lumber from the area also pay Queen Kayrodil an annual tithe.

Internal Politics

The basic political unit in Low Lands is the fold. A typical fold is no more than seven miles across, comprised of two to three agricultural villages and numerous outlying farms scattered about. Each fold is home to a few halfling kinships, with several families in each kinship. The folds themselves are organized into three larger units called “ridings,” roughly arranged along geographical lines: the West Riding (nearest the Shield Mountains), the East Riding (nearest the Lake of Dreams), and the South Riding (south of Heartless Lake).

Each fold has a sheriff and an elder elected by the senior halflings of each kinship. Once elected, most elders and sheriffs serve for life unless they are removed by their community. Every seven years the elders of all the folds gather to elect a high elder and a high sheriff for each riding. The high elders and sheriffs are tasked with tending to any matter affecting multiple folds or the entire riding.

The six high officers of the three ridings form the Ruling Council, which meets at least once a year, sometimes more, to deal with any matters that affect all of Low Country. The six councilors elect a Warden to lead the council for the duration of each council meeting. Since the orc revolt in Caecras, the Ruling Council has convened monthly in order to consider and deal with the new and continually evolving state of affairs in Rûl.

Human holdings are also found throughout Low Country, their origins dating back to the original garrisons Eronymous established to secure the lands. Today, most of these holdings have become towns with mixed populations of humans, halflings, and a variety of other ancestries. The human settlements remain independent of the halfling elders and sheriffs, although they are an integral part of Low Country's economy, as most of them have bustling marketplaces where halflings from all over Low Country exchange goods and services.

Society

Social ties in Low Country depend entirely on kinship and locality. Nearly every halfling family can trace its origins back to a settler who was part of the original charter granted by Emperor Frixonos, with many who can trace lineages even farther back. Kinships take full responsibility for all their members, seeing that each member is fed, clothed, housed, and involved in some form of gainful work.

Individual halflings either enjoy a great deal of personal freedom, or very little, depending on how tightly their kinship decides to hold the reins. Even when burdened with an authoritarian kinship, a halfling might still have considerable independence so long as they prove adept at obtaining approval from the kinship elders.

Over the years, most Low Country kinships have spread over multiple folds and sometimes over multiple ridings. Consequently, individual halflings also form bonds with their neighbors in the fold where they live, especially neighbors of their own age.

The Kinless

Halflings who choose to sever their kinship ties (or have them severed against their will) face a life without a home or job in the fold where they live, owning only what they can wear or carry. Outcasts for all intents and purposes, some kinless halflings leave their folds in search of new opportunities; some of these travel beyond the borders, usually to the March Lands, Balgrendia, or one of the Nine Cities. Many kinless find homes and work in the human settlements of Low Country. Those with a true pioneering spirit might choose to live in the somewhat wild South Riding or even seek a place in the court of Queen Kayrodil.

But most kinless halflings who remain in Low Country usually seek out landholders or others of means willing to accept their service as indentured servants. Such arrangements usually last for seven years. The halfling becomes a servant to his or her new master or mistress, receiving bed and board in exchange for labor and service. The indentured servant is essentially a slave, having no voice or vote in any matters affecting his or her master's kinship or the fold. At the end of the seven years, the halfling is released from service, free to take any goods or wealth he or she has honestly accumulated during that time. The halfling can choose to break the agreement and leave earlier, but must surrender half, or sometimes more, of his or her goods to their master or mistress before leaving. More often than not, this is too much for the halfling to bear, so he or she remains until his or her term of service comes to an end.

If the halfling has incurred any debts, he or she must pay them before moving on. If this isn't possible, the kinless halfling must find some way to pay the debts, usually by bargaining for a new term of indenture. It is common for a halfling servant to take up some trade on the side while indentured, earning extra wealth to secure his or her future. An indentured halfling who has accumulated nothing is free to leave, unless he or she has incurred debts. A very unfortunate halfling might become so deeply in debt that he or she never becomes free.

Non-Halflings

Low Country is home to many non-halflings. Most of these individuals dwell in the towns, where they live as free people or as servants to the local human lord. Such people

include artisans, merchants, laborers, or even farmers working land leased or granted from the lord.

Outside the towns, any non-halfling is considered as a kinless halfling unless the individual can claim protection from one of the human lords or as a member of Queen Kayrodil's court. One can find humans, dwarfs, or people of many other ancestries serving as workers in the folds, especially in jobs where muscle is needed, such as smithing, plowing, quarrying, and similar heavy work.

Major Players

The business of day-to-day life is handled easily and efficiently by the kinships of the Low Country. A few individuals, however, stand out as leaders and persons to be reckoned with, especially in these troubled times.

Warden Athalia Underburrow

As soon as word of the orc rebellion in Caecras reached Low Country, the Ruling Council quickly convened to consider the new political reality. Their first act was to elect Athalia Underburrow, High Sheriff of the West Riding, as Warden for all external affairs. Athalia has had a long history patrolling the western borders and keeping the aristocrats of Grand Duchy in their proper place. She is a fierce advocate for maintaining the status quo and believes alignment with the Alabaster Throne is necessary for Low Country's continued survival.

Athalia is an experienced veteran, but still in her prime at 48 years old. She has a reputation as a tough customer in close combat, and as equally tough as a diplomat and negotiator. Her term as High Sheriff ends in just two years, though her reelection seems certain. Nevertheless, Athalia feels obliged to split her time between managing the country's external affairs and maintaining her good standing in the West Riding. Clever and discerning in her own right, Athalia shows little tolerance for fools and charlatans.

High Elder Krassius Gardner

The oft-re-elected High Elder of the South Riding, Krassius fits most people's image of a typical halfling. At the age of 78, he's gone pudgy in the belly and gray at the temples. Hailing from a fold on the south shore of Heartless Lake, he is very familiar and experienced with life on the frontier, as well as with maintaining relations between halflings and Queen Kayrodil's court. In council, he often acts as a sober and subtle counterweight to Athalia Underburrow's blunt and fierce nature.

Krassius agrees that Low Country must actively manage its external affairs, lest someone else step in to dictate the halflings' fate for them. He is very concerned, however, with how matters inside the borders are handled, especially when dealing with the human nobles and the fey court. Despite his opinions, he remains on good terms with Athalia, and savvy observers suspect that Athalia's current efforts to attend to matters at home might be due to advice quietly offered by Krassius.



Krassius is widely regarded throughout Low Country as a fatherly soul, kind and wise, but with a core of steely resolve and a deep well of experience from which to draw. Nobody with any sense would dare to pick a fight with Krassius, or at least not anyone without a very compelling reason.

Baron Drucas Galeron

Widely regarded as the wealthiest and most powerful human landholder in Low Country, Baron Drucas Galeron is the overlord for the walled town of Highsprings (see the “Geography” section). Galeron’s demesne extends for several miles beyond the town walls—the first Baron Galeron, uncaring about his position in the imperial court, was more than happy to settle down far away from the imperial throne, and was given a sizeable land grant from Emperor Eronymous. Galeron’s family has been in Low Country since, longer than any halfling kinship.

Galeron has taken pains, for the moment at least, to stand in solidarity with Low Country’s halfling councilors, and has even kept up his tax payments to Caecras. On the other hand, Galeron is a vigorous man, only a few years past thirty, with considerable wealth and power at his disposal—with the collapse of the Empire, he is now in an excellent position to seize control of Low Country and make it his own kingdom, should he wish. This possibility hasn’t escaped the halfling council’s notice, but so far Galeron has done nothing to indicate he has any intention of doing so.

Queen Kayrodil Leafwhite

Rumored to be a faerie sorceress of great age and power, Queen Kayrodil is seldom seen by any outside of her court’s innermost circles. Legend holds that she lives in a stronghold hidden deep in the dense forests around Heartless Lake where few dare to venture. An ancient song tells of a wandering bard who sought an audience with the Queen. The song describes an opulent court hidden in a cave under the forested slopes of a mountain east of the lake (The Serpent’s Tongue; see the “Geography” section). Guards met the bard outside the forest and ushered him, blindfolded, to Queen Kayrodil’s presence.

Most of Kayrodil’s subjects are elves, but her realm also provides a home to a collection of changelings, assorted faeries, and kinless halfings. Some of her subjects are refugees who fled after Eronymous’s conquest of Caecras, as well as the subsequent conquest of the lands that would become the Grand Duchy. Elves and faeries being immortal, some of the Queen’s subjects remember these events firsthand.

Kayrodil’s influence extends far beyond her halls to every wild or semi-wild area in Low Country, and, reputedly, as far as the Shield Mountains.

The Queen has kept her own council since the orc rebellion, but rumor has it that her envoys have been abroad, especially to the South Riding and to Highsprings. Perhaps she is merely seeking to stay on top of the current political situation—or pursuing some mysterious agenda.

Daily Life

Most citizens of Low Country, halfling and non-halfling alike, rise early each day, eat a hearty breakfast, and spend their mornings at work. There is an extended break at midday for a meal, plus extra time for some kind of communal activity. Depending on the time of year and the needs of the day, this activity might include worship, discussion of the latest news, entertainment, or a little extra rest. Work resumes throughout the afternoon, usually until dusk when everyone pauses for a brief meal. The early evening is spent completing any light tasks that remain from the day (anything from cleaning or mending, to writing or simple craft work). Some form of homespun entertainment fills the remainder of the evening, usually music or storytelling. An ample meal accompanies these activities, with plenty of refreshment to follow.

The pace of their days usually follows the sun, so that summer working days last much longer than those in winter. One day in seven, local conditions permitting, is given over entirely to rest, relaxation, and worship.

Economy

Most economic activity in Low Country focuses on the land. Agriculture and herding top the list throughout the three ridings. The areas near the Lake of Sorrows and the Central Lakes boast substantial fisheries. The higher hills of the East Riding produce more cattle, wool, and dairy than the rest of the country. The West Riding is mostly grain country, while the South Riding produces lumber, stone, and furs, most of which is traded within Low Country instead of being exported.

Outside the towns, the halflings have little use for coin, relying instead on bartering between kinships. Travelers moving through the countryside often experience difficulty purchasing what they need and are often obliged to delay their travels while they trade goods or services with the locals.

Law and Justice

In towns and their environs, the local human lord maintains a court for settling disputes. In most locales, the ruler or a designated subordinate sits in judgment whenever the need arises. In the larger, busier towns, rulers appoint full-time magistrates. Capital punishments is almost unheard of, and convicted criminals are generally required to make some sort of restitution.

Beyond the towns, the halfling kinships handle all matters of justice. Any crime, even murder, is considered an offense against the victim's kinship rather than against the victim. The fold's sheriff and elder usually hear cases at midday or evening, when the day's work is halted. In especially grave matters, the local officers might bring in the fold or riding officers to consult, who might then take over the case or even convene a jury. As in the towns, any justice dispensed is usually based upon restitution rather than punishment.

Defense and War

Traditionally, defense of Low Country falls to the human lords. In keeping with their oaths to the emperor, each lord maintains a unit of soldiers to garrison their towns, along with one or more knights. The original imperial land grants to the halfling kinships oblige them to assist the lords whenever they call for help.

These days, the halflings have taken their own defense in hand. Each fold now conducts military drills at least twice a month. All the ridings have erected a network of signal towers on the hilltops in order to communicate quickly in any emergency. Border patrols, especially in the north and west, have been stepped up.

The human lords have, in turn, taken to drilling their troops and strengthening their defenses. For the moment, they remain unsure whether they will eventually need to take the field against invading orc warbands uncaring of Low Country's pledge of loyalty to the imperial throne—or maybe even against the halflings, should the smallfolk decide to declare their independence from the Empire.

Thus far, Athalia Underburrow and the Council have made it clear that they regard the human lords as important allies; however, they have also made it clear that Low Country is halfling land, and that anyone, even old allies, who challenges them for control will be treated as foes and driven out or killed.

Gods and Superstition

Most of the people of Low Country have a casual view toward religious tradition and practices. The Cult of the New God hasn't taken root except in some of the human towns, with Highsprings as the center of the faith. The faithful there have built a substantial temple as a center for missionary work. Out in the countryside, many of the most miserable kinless individuals have found solace and material assistance from the New God's missionaries.

Beyond the towns, the Old Faith remains strong among the halfling kinships. Most folds observe a number of annual celebrations and holidays honoring the old gods. In many locales, the halflings practice witchcraft, with the most accomplished practitioners serving as fold officers.

In the wilder areas, especially near Queen Kayrodil's court and throughout South Riding, many halfling folds maintain mysterious cults. Some of these cults conduct wild bacchanals that sometimes become ecstatically violent. These gatherings draw in the local fey, often resulting in the production of at least a few fauns and, sometimes, changelings when the faeries steal away a child.

The fishing village of Bolling Falls, located on the western shore of the Lake of Dreams, has a sizeable cult that ventures into the lake's depths each month during the dark of the moon. This cult is unusual in that it includes many non-halflings, in keeping with the village's mixed population.

Adventures in Low Country

On the surface, Low Country seems like a pleasant, sleepy land oozing with bucolic charm. The chaos in Caecras, however, has thrown Low Country's future in doubt, and the region hides a few long-simmering resentments, both large and small.

- On some nights when Tarterus shines through the clouds, ghostly figures can be seen weaving though a circle of weathered stones in a frenzied dance. Though the dancers themselves make no sounds, some folks as much as three leagues away hear evocative music. Many of these poor souls are driven utterly insane by dawn.
- Bands of savage humanoids (beastmen or worse) have made raids into territories that haven't seen violence in more than a century. No one knows from whence the raiders come, or where they take their spoils—everything from household goods to slaves—when they withdraw. The sheriffs have pursued some of the raiders, only to see them kill themselves to avoid being captured.
- A town's annual merchant's fair becomes the site of a series of violent robberies and grisly murders.
- A trio of aristocrats from the Grand Duchy make it known that they'll pay a substantial reward for the return of two fugitives, a young man and young woman, who stand accused of a serious crime. The couple is assumed to be in hiding somewhere in the countryside.
- All the residents in an isolated fold have gone missing. They appear to have hurriedly abandoned their work and homes and left with nothing but the clothes on their backs.
- A winding section of road has become the haunt of a mysterious knight who rides forth at dusk astride a fiery steed. The knight challenges all passers-by and charges at them. A few survivors have managed to outrun the knight, although anyone suffering a wound from the knight's lance dies soon thereafter.
- Someone has broken into a human lord's hall and looted the treasury. The thief left only a few traces: pick marks on a couple of locks, a broken saw blade, and the bodies of several guards, all stabbed in the back.
- An elderly looking prospector whose ancestry is not entirely clear at first glance appears at a fold or in a town with several bags of gold dust and nuggets. After several rounds of drinks, this individual lets it slip that the gold came from the shores of Heartless Lake and the lower slopes of the Serpent's Tongue.
- A fold has suffered an extended string of mishaps and hard luck. Everything from stubbed toes to broken bones, to beer gone sour and flour gone moldy, and even a major fire. Everyone agrees that the streak began abruptly when some cattle wandered away from the settlement and the herders who went to look for them came back empty-handed.
- Rumor has it that there will be an attack on the Ruling Council elders the next time they meet. The attackers aim to kill or capture the councilors.
- The elders from two rival families search for younger relatives who have gone missing. It is also said that one of the youth's friends has admitted that the pair are making their way to someplace where they hope to build a fortune together far from any influence from their kinships.