

CORE BORN

BANDITS OF PIPERS WHISTLE

A PEN AND PAPER ADVENTURE



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INTRODUCTION

The world of Tormentosia is in great danger! An all-devouring army threatens to wipe out every existing kingdom and the inhabitants, and the only plan to avert this crisis is about to fail. Now it's in the hands of brave adventurers to somehow turn the tide of the world.

This medium-length adventure is very beginner friendly and provides you with detailed maps and all the lore information you need to play an atmospheric and immersive story.

Before the journey starts, the Game Master should read through each chapter in detail in order to get a better understanding of the story. This will make running the adventure much easier as you will be able to build a lot of tension by using foreshadowing.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

In this paragraph the technical terms are explained and insight is given of how to run the adventure.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

COREBORN

The world of Coreborn is a distinctive setting that works differently in some aspects than you are used to from classic fantasy settings. There are no gods to speak of, and true magic is reserved for a few creatures. There are fantastic technologies that set no limits to creativity and facilitate you entering into a unique world.

STAT BLOCKS

A creature's detailed statistics can be found in appendix A. When a creature's name is written in **bold**, it's a visual cue pointing to the appendix.

DIFFICULTY

Combat encounters are tailored for 4-5 players who are relatively new to the game, but the Game Master is of course free to adjust the difficulty for their party.

ABILITY CHECKS

In the adventure it is sometimes necessary for the players to do ability checks. These serve as a guide to help new Game Masters get a feeling for checks. Don't be afraid to improvise, there will often be spontaneous situations where the Game Master has

to choose a suitable ability check and difficulty. If a player is particularly smart or acting unfavorably, you can always adjust the difficulty of a check to make it easier or more difficult.

LEVEL UP

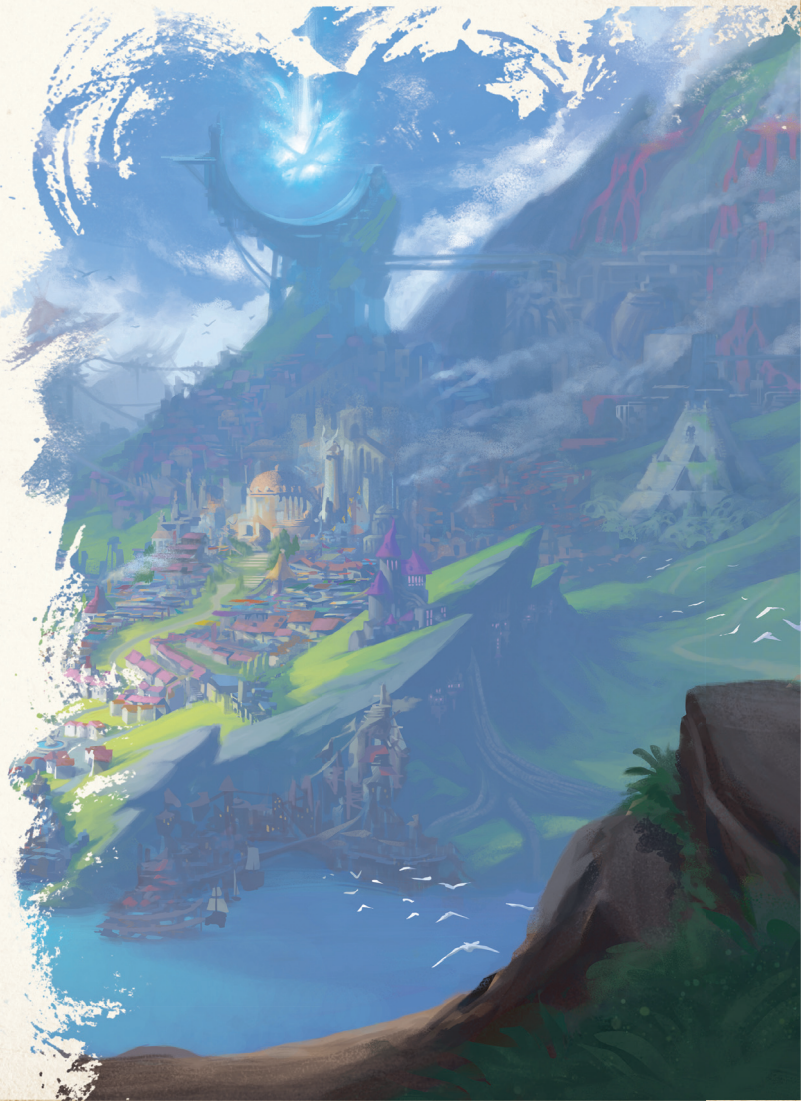
Player characters start at level 1 and gain a level after each completed chapter. At the start of chapter 2, they should be level 2, and level 3 at the start of chapter 3.

MAPS

Various maps were created to bring locations and atmospheres to life. Most have two variants. One is intended for the Game Master's eyes only, as it displays detailed locations. You can find these all over the adventure in the associated chapters. The other ones are spoiler-free variants that can be used as battle maps and are included in the adventure download as separate files.

ARTWORKS

Several artworks of locations and creatures are included in the adventure download as separate files. They can be uploaded to any virtual tabletop website of your choice, so the game master can show them to their group at any time. They can also be used for creature tokens.



THE WORLD OF TORMENTOSIA

Since the beginning of time, the kingdoms and people of Tormentosia have been fighting for wealth, territory, or simply power. Conflicts and wars were so omnipresent and plentiful that one could speak of “The Eternal Wars”, but that all changed abruptly 25 years ago, when a new threat emerged. A threat so dangerous it could wipe out everything and everyone.

As the southern sky darkened, a moon fell onto the world. From the fires created by the impact rose a figure that would later be called “Sorgoth the Devourer of Worlds”. With it came the Gothkin, an army of half-digested creatures it spat out to ruin the world. The entity and its army obliterated most of the thirty-six existing realms, leaving the rest to fight a slowly losing battle.

Only six kingdoms remained and these agreed on a truce to focus on the common enemy and protect what was left of the world. They formed the Core Nation and built the city of Coreheim which sits in the center of the remaining territories. This city became a hub for all other kingdoms and offered people shelter who once lived in now destroyed parts of the world. It also served another reason: The construction of the Ultracore. A shield-pulse-generator that is capable of creating a protective energy wall that can extend over vast distances around the remaining realms. A technology originally invented by the Nosmerians to defeat the other kingdoms and thereby emerge victorious from the



Eternal Wars. However, they never managed to finish it, because essential components and work steps were still missing. With the help of the other kingdoms these steps can finally be accomplished. Consequently, every nation is doing their part for the completion of the Ultracore, in order to save what is left of the world.



THE SIX KINGDOMS AND THEIR RACES

Tormentosia is a world of whimsy and wonder. There are countless beings, races and factions. Electricity is existent, and nifty mechanisms and energy sources are available and treated more like mana or magic. They are available in many unique shapes such as steam engines, firearms or individual customizable contraptions. The different types of technologies are linked to specific realms, making them available only to certain races. In the following the remaining kingdoms and their dominant inhabitants are described.

AMBROS

Ambros, the kissed land. The home of wealth, yield, and the most fertile soil of all empires. Crystal clear rivers wind their way through evergreen valleys. Thereby, passing fruit trees and endless fields, tilled by people with velvety skin, who might not be the ones who enjoy this abundance. Ambros is the Hedonists' home, they rule this realm and in earlier days many others with their wealth. In Ambros, there is nothing that makes your days appear idle. To the east, it borders the Liquid Meadows and in the north the emerald prairies of the Litikal Planes.

HEDONISTS

A nation of people who put lust and pleasure at the center of their being. The Hedonists live their days in pure bliss and should problems arise, they surely can be solved by throwing money at it. Even the low-ranking workers among them are rich enough to indulge in luxuries that the inhabitants of the other realms could only dream of. Certainly, such opulence attracts envy, which is not really welcome in Ambros.

To ward these people off, the top Hedonists chose the most noble within their own ranks to be Praetorians; elite warriors who dedicate their lives to fighting with the two-handed sword against anyone who threatens the improving lifestyle of the higher-ranking Hedonists. Additionally, since the Ultracore pact, they have been responsible for its protection and the order in the Core Nation. When the World Ender robbed uncounted people of Tormentosia of their homes, the troops of the Praetorians were increased at the request of Queen Julia of Ambros and common people were also allowed to join their ranks.

The Hedonists live in a clearly hierarchical society that attaches tremendous importance to nobility, ancestry and generally descent. Other nations are treated in a rather derogatory manner. They see the Ultracore pact as more of a necessary evil than something they value.



ASCILIATH

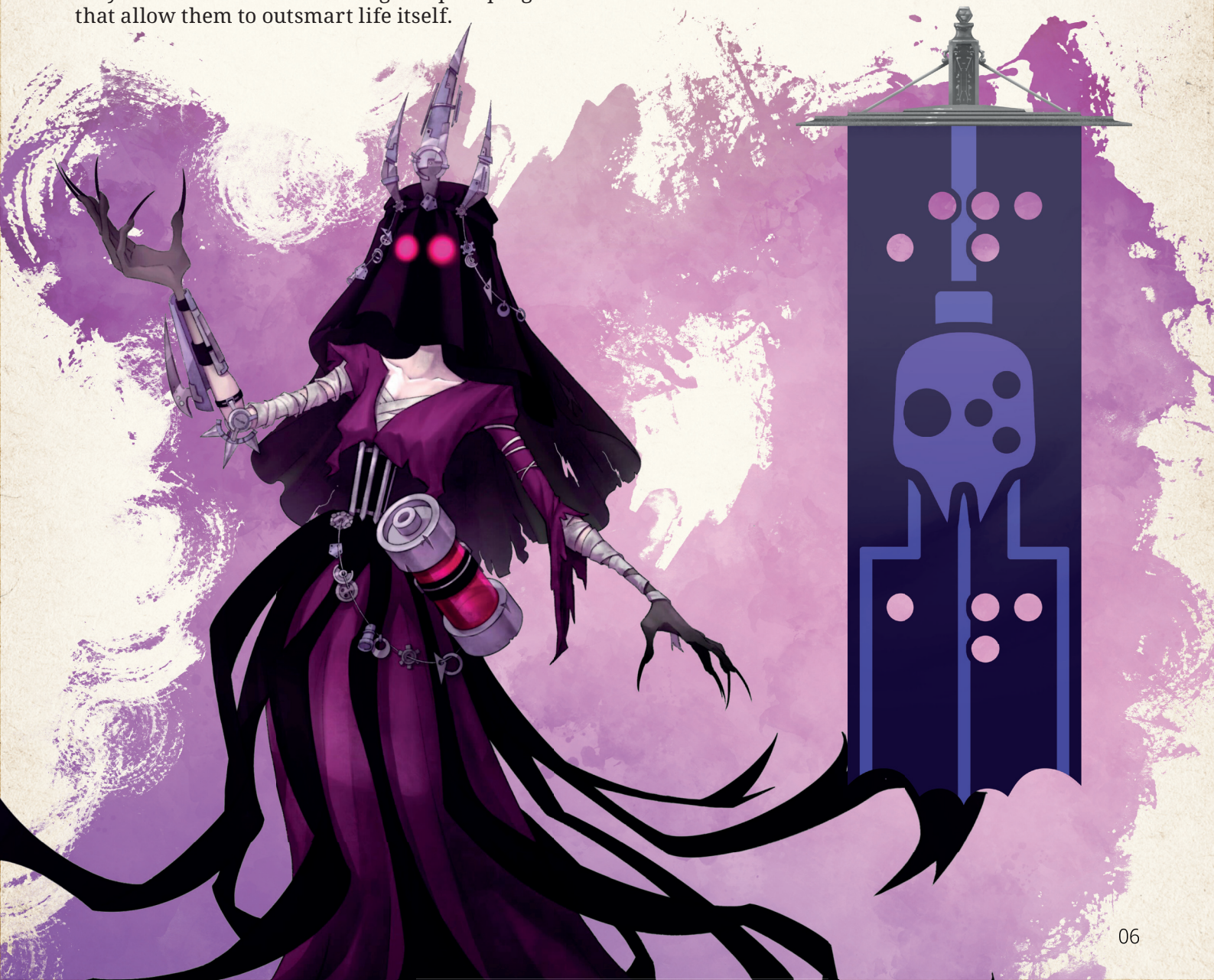
Asciliath is an ancient realm, buried under snow and shrouded in never ending darkness. Its high, razor-sharp mountain peaks keep the clouds firmly under their control, so that hardly any light reaches the damp, swampy plains of the country. Moss-covered creatures roam its plains, avoiding the light and the caves. For in the caves of Asciliath live the Nosmerians. They built their capital, Habitat 001 deep within the caverns right on top of the ruins of the old world and its remains. This was a choice made not least because of the Rudiments who ply their strange trades in the caves of Asciliath. Creatures half alive, half dead, half flesh, and half machine, controlled by an ancient logic that the Nosmerians hope to understand one day. Asciliath borders the Jungles of Initos to the north and shares a border with the Liquid Meadows to the west.

NOSMERIANS

Nosmerians are Vampire-like beings that feed on the blood of the unfortunate souls who get lost in the depths of their caves. Nosmerians may not be numerous, but they are nonetheless one of the most powerful races in all of Tormentosia. Through ongoing studies of the ruins of ancient civilizations, they have succeeded in writing complex programs that allow them to outsmart life itself.

They have developed a technology known as “Brio Harvesting” which allows them to literally suck the life force out of their poor victims. Due to this, they managed to unnaturally prolong their own lives. Once drained of their life force, their sucked-out victims are equipped with a central processor and then fight as mindless Rud-ghouls, following the will of the Nosmerians. All other races condemn and fear this practice.

In the Eternal Wars the Nosmerians initially seemed outnumbered, but then they plundered the battlefields and let their enemies fight their former comrades. The Nosmerians live in deep caves to protect their skin from sunlight. If they leave their burrows, they wrap their pale bodies in occult-looking wide robes in which they carry their punch cards. These contain the valuable programs that the Recountants have designed. In the Habitat-001, as they call their capital, they communicate with Cobol - the Timeless Ruling Algorithm. This program is a vast collection of punch cards that the most remarkable Recountants created and uploaded into a former ruler's lifeless body. It is constantly being expanded and makes all the crucial decisions for the Nosmerians.



ASH MOUNTAINS

Barren and dreary, the Ash Mountains lie in the north of Tormentosia. Since the beginning of the war and even in the period before, they have defied all attempts to conquer them. No tree or bush has grown wild since the great dragon Ardorcor engulfed the mountains in flames over 5000 years ago.

Flora and fauna has adapted to the inhospitable landscape, altering their previous forms to survive in the harsh environment created by the dragons' fire. Hardly any inhabitant of the free world, who does not belong to the folk of the Steam Dwarfs, dares to set foot in this country. However, everyone who has war in mind is sincerely welcome. The capital of the empire is the machine city Par; some also disparagingly tend to call the town Smoulderborough.

The Ash Mountains, due to their cauldron-like location with three borders facing the outer shield, have been subject to constant attacks from the Devourer of Worlds and his army. The Steam Dwarfs fight an impressive defensive against the never ending flood of enemies but their power is slowly dwindling.

STEAM DWARFS

What is certain is that their technology, which is almost exclusively based on fire and steam, benefited from the lava and hot springs in the Ash Mountains, and so they settled there for good. Their society is rough and based on customs and rituals so old that no one can remember where they once came from. Carved into stone, they adorn the Kinetic Throne in the capital of Par from which the sixty-fifth supreme Steamgeneral Cromankus Steel-splint leads his people. He is a strict but just ruler who honors the Ultracore agreement, but has not forgotten that it is concluded with former enemies.

The Steam Dwarfs rely on their machines and mechanisms. They have made nature subservient to themselves, and with the help of elaborate systems, they use the nutrient rich ashes to cultivate mushrooms, which they solely live on. They brew Sporebeer out of it, which also functions in its more potent version as fuel for their machines. They honor what steams and smokes, and are skeptical of everything else.



THE JUNGLES OF INITOS

The name of this infested area is almost misleading. Little has remained of the jungle that gave Initos its original name since the Genetics settled here. Now decaying scrub and contaminated water mark the landscape. You can only cross the country on its paved paths, and within the gnarled forests, marauders and mutated animals are up to no good. Legends say that Initos once held the largest and most impressive human settlement. From these times, however, only ruins and wreckage remained, in which now the strangest creatures lurk. Even deserters from Sorgoth are said to rove about here. Today the capital of Initos is Moloch - the mutant city. From here, the Supreme Modification Czar Putrascha the Great reigns over her subjects.

GENETICS

All the nations of Tormentosia fear the Genetics. They are the only ones who go into battle with the World Ender without any dread, while still bringing it into the hearts of their enemies.

With boundless cruelty and no scruples, these former humans experimented on their bodies to „modify“ themselves to be this way. Their society is based on strength and violence. Thus if you have superior eyesight, thicker legs, or even a bone blade instead of a forearm, you will rise rapidly within their ranks. Over the years a society has emerged, in which not always the wisest, but instead the strongest would rule.

The Genetics fight with relatively primitive weapons. You don't need more than that if you can swing a third mace thanks to an additional arm or if you are simply three meters tall. Even bows are too complex for most representatives of these people, so they tend to be close combatants. Only the Tonic Tossers throw poisonous fuming tinctures at their enemies or spray them from their Vaporators. With their Vaporators, the Tonic Tossers shoot burning gases that scorch enemies with mutagenic toxic mist that weakens them, or even healing clouds that strengthen their allies. Protected by the piles of muscle and meat in their front ranks, they complete the Genetics army.



THE LIQUID MEADOWS

No place in Tormentosia is anywhere near as famous for its beauty as the Liquid Meadows. Emerald, moss-overgrown meadows are interrupted by broad rivers, which often cascade and flow into lush valleys. Water stairs as far as the eye can see and in the middle temples, statues and settlements. The inhabitants of these planes call themselves Children of the Source and nothing is more sacred to them than water and life. Thousands upon thousands of plants grow here, and even the most well-read scholars cannot name them all.

The country has no capital. Instead, small settlements cover the area as the inhabitants of the plains are plentiful and love peace. However, decisions are still made by a queen. Her name is “Jalkassa the Roaming”, and she travels the country constantly with her court. She also chose this way of life because of the stabilizing power of the Aquanopticum, the sacred source of magic. It is no longer capable of keeping the land and its endless falling waters in balance if it remains in one place. Therefore, it must be frequently carried across the country to supply all corners with its force. Otherwise, everything will collapse, and devastating floods would be the consequence.

To the east, the waters of the Liquid Meadows run into Asciliath, and to the west, they approach the numerous gardens of Ambros. In the south, the great falls protect the country from attacking enemies, and so its inhabitants are the only nation that does not live in constant war.

CHILDREN OF THE SOURCE

Blue-skinned, peaceful humanoids who have settled in the southern Liquid Meadows. They care little about the concerns of other nations and even their role in the Eternal Wars was surprisingly marginal. Through clever trade agreements and diplomatic solutions, they avoided invasions or unnecessary battles and instead devoted themselves to the persistent exploration of the Aqua. They can now store and release this essence of water. Due to this, they can use magic that no other being of Tormentosia can even imagine and have founded a religion around this magical resource that dominates their society.

They live in small communities that are spread across the country. With boats they call Wind Daggers, which are also equipped with wheels, they travel quickly through the vast landscapes using the lush winds of the plains as propulsion. Even their ruler “Jalkassa the Roaming” constantly travels through the country and visits her subjects.

In recent history, the Children of the Source have continued their research on the Aqua and now are even capable of using it as a weapon.



THE LITIKAL PLANES

This vast but fertile land lies in an enormous crater. In the north, it borders on the Ash Mountains, in the south on the rich country of Ambros. A constant cold wind blows across these lands and thus prevents the growth of larger plants in wide parts of the tundra plains. However, this unique nature made it possible that the most giant creatures of all of Tormentosia originated here - the dinosaurs. These mighty reptilian beings roam the extensive lands of the Litikal Planes.

Whoever makes their way to the capital of the kingdom Megalospoli, should ensure their protection by a Sauromancer escort beforehand, because they can find the wandering city, which is carried on the back of the mighty lizard Megalos. Only, the Sauromancers know all of the sometimes-terrifying creatures wreaking havoc throughout the plains and are able to safely navigate around them.

SAUROMANCER

Sauromancers pride themselves as the oldest nation of all of Tormentosia. Even among the first cave paintings discovered by the Recountants of the vampires in Asciliath there were images of Sauromancers on their monumental riding beasts.

Dinosaurs are honored but also tamed and used for different purposes. Their entire economy and society revolve around these beasts - either as working animals, machines of war, or, last but not least, as homes. This is the reason why during the Eternal War they were particularly feared. They could breach hostile defensive lines and, with constant reinforcements from their capital, let chaos rain down on their enemies.

They are humanoids with tough skin that appears to be almost scaly. Hissing and screeching are how most strangers would describe their language. Their society has no definitive leader as they live in independent tribal associations. All significant tribes send representatives to Megalospoli, from where they make decisions together. They mostly rely on spears, razor staves, and the occasional sling when it comes to armament - everything you can operate from the back of a dinosaur.



PREPARATIONS AND PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

Before you can play, the Game Master should work through the following steps with their group in a session zero.

1. EXPLAIN THE SETTING

Read into the world lore and explain the state of Tormentosia to your group. Players should have a rough understanding of the world's structure, that an entity called "Sorgoth" is attacking the remaining kingdoms and the world is about to collapse.

2. PRE-GENERATED CHARACTER SHEETS

There are six pre-generated characters available for this adventure, which are included in the adventure download as individual PDF files. They are adapted to the world of Coreborn and bring individual abilities tailored to their race. Show them to your group and let each player choose one they like.

ROLL ATTRIBUTES

If you prefer to roll the attributes of the characters, you can do that too. After rolling, each race can increase one of their ability scores by 2 and a different score by 1.

3. FINALIZE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The character sheets specify abilities and talents, but not personalities. Who do they want to embody? What is the character's name, how do they think and act? Tell your group to think about their characters in more detail, so that they can end up playing a role that they enjoy.



CHARACTER NAME		Race		1 LEVEL		PLAYER NAME	
STRENGTH	10 +0	DEXTERITY	16 +3	CONSTITUTION	12 +1	INTELLIGENCE	8 -1
WISDOM	13 +1	CHARISMA	16 +3				
ARMOR CLASS	16	HIT POINTS	/11	TEMP HIT POINTS	13	PASSIVE PERCEPTION	13
				PROFICIENCY BONUS	+2	INSPIRATION	
				30FT.	+3		
				SPEED	INITIATIVE		

SAVING THROWS

- ☐ STRENGTH
- ☒ DEXTERITY
- ☐ CONSTITUTION
- ☐ INTELLIGENCE
- ☐ WISDOM
- ☒ CHARISMA

SKILLS

- ☒ ACROBATICS (DEX)
- ☐ ANIMAL HANDLING (WIS)
- ☐ ARCANA (INT)
- ☐ ATHLETICS (STR)
- ☒ DECEPTION (CHA)
- ☐ HISTORY (INT)
- ☒ INSIGHT (WIS)
- ☐ INTIMIDATION (CHA)
- ☐ INVESTIGATION (INT)
- ☐ MEDICINE (WIS)
- ☐ NATURE (INT)
- ☒ PERCEPTION (WIS)
- ☐ PERFORMANCE (CHA)
- ☒ PERSUASION (CHA)
- ☐ RELIGION (INT)
- ☒ SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX)
- ☐ STEALTH (DEX)
- ☐ SURVIVAL (WIS)

PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

Languages: Common

Proficiencies: Simple Weapons, Hedonist Greatsword

HIT DICE

☐ D6 ☐ D8 ☐ D10 ☐ D12

NAME Hedonist Greatsword

ATTACK +5

DAMAGE 2d6 + 3

RANGE

AMMO

USED

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

As a Hedonist adventurer you have proficiency with the Hedonist greatsword. You can wield it with Dexterity instead of Strength. Additionally, compared to other adventurers, you are considered wealthy and all your gear is of the finest quality. Your starting equipment includes an extra 40 gold coins, a breastplate and fine clothes.

Overwhelm.
Thanks to your training you excel in fights when you outnumber your enemies. Your attacks deal 1d6 additional damage if the number of your allies within 5ft. of you is equal to or greater than the number of your target's allies within 5ft. of them.

Eloquence.
You have honed your skills with words in the Hedonist society. You have proficiency and expertise in the Persuasion and Deception skill. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of these two proficiencies.

FEATURES & TRAITS

- 1 backpack
- 1 bedroll
- 1 mess kit
- 1 tinderbox
- 10 torches
- 10 days of rations
- 1 waterskin
- 50ft. of hempen rope strapped to the side of the backpack
- Hedonist greatsword
- 2 daggers
- Breastplate and fine clothes
- You start with 50 gold coins

INVENTORY & EQUIPMENT

4. HOW DOES IT START?

Tell your group that the adventure starts with their characters being passengers in a caravan, that is used to evacuate refugees from all kingdoms to Coreheim. This way they can already start thinking about how they got into this situation. Did they lose their home to the war? Are they hoping for a fresh start or work in Coreheim? Are they a guard accompanying the caravan? An initial motive is very helpful in order to make it easier to get into the role-playing.

DO IT YOUR WAY

The instructions above should serve as a starting aid for you to get into the adventure quickly and easily. However, the following motto applies: whatever you do, do it in a way your group enjoys it the most. You don't have to follow every single instruction if it's more fun for your group. If a player would like an instrument, tool, or anything else for their character that isn't already on their character sheet, feel free to allow that. You can also swap skill proficiencies and other proficiencies to better suit a character's individual talents and their previous life experience.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A Nosmerian named Cyrian Kresge has left his homeland Asciliath to complete an important mission. He was tasked with bringing important technology needed to activate the Ultracore to Coreheim: A Nosmerian punch card (see “What is a Punch Card?” below). Unfortunately, his carriage is ambushed on the way through Ambros and Cyrian is severely wounded and the punch card stolen.

The culprits are the Nyx Bandits, a gang led by a cunning woman named **Nyx** (see appendix A). She is the main antagonist of the adventure and the cause of numerous problems. Until a week ago, she was part of a larger bandit group, called Twiceborn Bandits, a group that was formed from deserted soldiers that now survive through pillaging (more info in “Chapter 1: Pipers Whistle”). However, she betrayed the group because she lost faith in her leader at the time, **Dyonis Brentwood** (see appendix A), for not sharing her vision of independence. Nyx expects that all of them will eventually be held accountable for deserting and wants to build up financial resources over time in order to buy her way out of the consequences. Dyonis, while pursuing similar goals, believes that they must be off the radar and ordered that plundering should be kept to a minimum. This decision seemed foolish and short-sighted to Nyx, so she decided to take a different path and keep stealing.

The fact that she never thought much of him anyway made her decision easier. First, she persuaded like-minded bandits to join her cause and formed the Nyx Bandits. Then one night they stole some of the Twiceborn’s equipment and disappeared into the woods. They wandered for a while before making camp in the Moss Seas (more info in “Chapter 2: The Moss Seas”). The place is dangerous and overgrown, and Nyx knows Dyonis wouldn’t follow her here.

Then fate played straight into Nyx’s hands. Just as they were setting up camp, she stumbled upon a hidden Ranura, a mystical Sloth-Juman (Jumans are creatures that are half-human and half-animal), whose species is known for its prophetic dreams. Nyx immediately disturbed the creature’s rest in order to take advantage of the said fortune-telling abilities. Its vague prophecies indicated that she would find life-altering treasures at crossable rivers. Nyx interpreted this in the only way a greedy thief could; ambush travelers at bridges. So she went and set a trap on the first bridge she found. This is the same bridge that the Nosmerian Cyrian Kresge would soon cross, before she then robs the punch card and gets the adventure rolling. This is the exact moment when the adventure begins for the players.

The adventure is written in such a way that players are most likely to encounter Nyx later in the story, as she continues to enact new plans from the

shadows. In order to understand what Nyx is doing while the group is on their adventure, you can find more detailed information in every chapter, which will help you to not get confused.

Read the next chapter “Start the Adventure” to understand how the player group gets involved in the scenario.



WHAT IS A PUNCH CARD?

Punch cards are electronic data store devices and the Nosmerian weapon of choice. By strategically punching holes into the numerically marked card, they store digital data, which can either be understood by the Nosmerian race or read out by hardware they choose to command. This not only includes strictly technical devices but also creatures like Rhud-Ghouls and such.

The stolen punch card is a very specific card with an encrypted code that only works for the Ultracore. Should a Nosmerian decide to insert this particular punch card into their punch card reader, the reader will suddenly emit electronic flashes and display an error message. The Nosmerian must make a [DC 20 Constitution saving throw](#) and is stunned for 1d100 seconds on a failed save.



RANDOM LOOT

During their journey, the group will find many goods and loot. Some are defined, some you can make up on the fly, and occasionally in the adventure it is suggested that the players roll a d10 on the random loot table.



1D10	LOOT
1	Fishing kit with a high-quality rod made in Ambros.
2	Snow globe filled with aqua showing a surfing Child of the Source.
3	Nosmerian pair of sunglasses which protect particularly well from the sun.
4	Steam Dwarf alcohol test to check the quality of beer.
5	An almost 2 meters long back scratcher from the Jungles of Initos.
6	Lute with beautiful Ambrosian decorations.
7	Folding ladder with three steps made of metal.
8	Disguise Kit with a fake beard, contact lenses and incredibly large glasses.
9	Steam Dwarf wellness kit including several oils for skin and machine.
10	Extra-large chewing bone for dinosaurs, which squeaks when you bite on it.



STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure starts during a carriage trip in Ambros. The players are passengers of an Ambros caravan, that transports refugees and workers (both **commoners**, see appendix A) to Coreheim. They each have individual motives, but soon must work together to ensure their own and the world's survival.

The caravan consists of a total of 3 wagons, all of which would look magnificent if they weren't enormously overloaded. Boxes, bags and even furniture are stretched across the roof and peek out of open windows, making it clear that the refugees on board, hastily packed what they could.

To get things rolling, read the following introductory text to the players:

For the past few weeks only one thing dominated the thoughts of everyone across the realms: Sorgoth, Devourer of Worlds. A beast fallen from the sky bent on destroying the World you know as 'Tormentosia' and its inhabitants forever. Much of the world has already been annihilated, and Sorgoth seems to grow stronger by the day as he reshapes the bodies of each devoured civilization from within, to later spit them out into an army of half-digested human-like beings. Only six of the once 36 empires remain, but their borders are on the brink of being invaded as resources are running low and the morale of their defending forces is getting weaker and weaker.

Faced with impending doom, these six realms, which had been enemies for decades, had no other choice than to work together for a chance of survival. They founded the Core Nation and built the City of Coreheim which sits in the center of the remaining realms. This city has become a hub and offers people who once lived in now destroyed parts of the world shelter, but it also serves another purpose: the construction site of the Ultracore. This is a shield-pulse-generator that is supposedly capable of creating a protective energy wall across vast distances. All of the realms are giving it their all to complete this machine as fast as possible, as they see it as their last hope of defending themselves against the ever-growing forces of Sorgoth.

Like many other refugees, you too are on your way to Coreheim. Huddled together in an Ambros caravan with people who lost almost all they had and much needed materials for the city, you begin your journey in the world of Tormentosia.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

After the introductory text, you can describe the carriages and the path in more detail using your own words. Sensory details like temperature, smell or sounds can help with the immersion process, for example the rattling of the carriage when it drives over a rock.

Afterwards, the stage belongs to the players. Have them introduce their characters one by one so they can smoothly transition into roleplaying. For convenience, they can all sit together in the same carriage. If they are a bit overwhelmed at first, you can ask them to focus on describing their character's appearance and what they are doing in that moment. If they need an extra push, feel free to come up with an NPC (non-player character), probably a refugee, that sits in the same carriage and engages in conversation by asking questions about their journey and destination.

CALL FOR HELP

When some time has passed or the role-play goes stale, present them with an action step:

Suddenly a bat flutters in front of the carriage window, tapping the glass several times with one of its wings. Each of its movements seem oddly precise and is accompanied by mechanical clicking sounds. In addition, you can see a note that seems to be attached to its ankle, it is slightly covered with red spots, that look like half-dried blood.

The bat is a **Nosmerian Robo Bat** (see appendix A) and was sent by a wounded Nosmerian to seek help (see "Nosmerian in need" below). Although these bats are mechanical, they can express themselves and adapt their behavior in a similar manner to normal bats. It is stressed but not aggressive and behaves in a friendly way towards anyone who is willing to help.

Characters interested in learning more about them can make a **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** check in order to learn, that these mechanical bats are used exclusively by Nosmerians, mostly for errands to transport either important messages or blood. Characters who have traveled through other realms before can make the same check against a **DC of 10** and Nosmerians don't need to roll.

The group will most likely let it inside the carriage to look at the note but in case they don't, let the NPC open a window and read the contents of the paper out loud. If a player character takes the note show them the following handout.



Characters who want to investigate the letter can make a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check in order to determine the authenticity of the letter. It uses expensive paper and although written very hastily, the handwriting looks very noble. It doesn't appear to be a trap.

The group now needs to talk about how they should proceed. In the best case, they show themselves to be helpful and want to follow the bat. You can always provide further information through NPCs, such as rumors about bandits trying to rob people fleeing to the city of Coreheim. If they are absolutely not willing to help, make an NPC offer them their last belongings of 20 gold pieces to accompany them to save the author of the note. This can be the refugee sitting in the carriage, the driver himself or any other character you see as fitting.

If the group chooses to follow the bat, their coachman agrees to take a detour and drive them. The rest of the caravan will then move on without them, since they are urgently expected in Coreheim.

NOSMERIAN IN NEED

The bat leads the group down a cobblestone path into a wooded area near a river. After a short time, they arrive near a bridge with an overturned carriage, there are dead Ambrosian guards lying on the ground and a few gruff-looking people seemingly searching for something or someone. At this point, the bat flaps its wings in panic, alerting the group that they are approaching their target. The coachman sees this as a sign to proceed carefully and stops the wagon. He then advises the group to continue without him, since a carriage is very conspicuous and wants to wait for them until they return.

WHAT HAPPENED?

The dead guards were part of an important Ambros transportation tasked with bringing the Nosmerian Cyrian Kresge (**commoner**, see appendix A) safely to Coreheim, as he was carrying an incredibly important punch card which is needed to activate the Ultracore (explained in the Introduction, "What is a punch card?"). The rugged people are part of the Nyx Bandits (**bandit**, see appendix A) who have been causing trouble and raiding the area for the past few days. They had damaged the bridge in such a way that a wagon that doesn't brake soon enough will most likely tip over while crossing. And that is exactly what happened, thereby allowing the bandits to ambush the passengers without too much resistance. The guards only managed to buy some time for the injured Cyrian Kresge to hide in nearby bushes. Cyrian then sent his bat messenger to get help as quickly as possible, hoping the bandits wouldn't find him first as they didn't seem the type to leave any witnesses behind.



WHAT IS NYX'S PLAN?

Originally, the whole Nyx-gang, 10 bandits in total, were involved in the robbery. However, when **Nyx** (see appendix A) found the valuable punch card, she thought that the card must be the life-altering treasures the Ranura spoke of (explained in the Introduction, "Adventure Background").

She recognized its worth and came up with an idea to make herself financially independent. Without hesitation, she gave the punch card to her second-in-command, **Finnigan Spruce** (see appendix A). She ordered him to return to their hideout in the Moss Seas and to keep a low profile, while she needs to do some "stuff", so they can make the most of their lucky find. Then she divided the bandits into three groups. Five of them had to go with Finnigan to protect their precious loot. Three were to stay behind to look for the wounded Nosmerian. And she herself went to Pipers Whistle to initiate her plan (explained in "Chapter 1: Pipers Whistle - The Golden Grain Inn").

LOCATION DETAILS

This map is for the Game Master. Use the spoiler-free variant as battle map for your group and let them start on the street below on the left.

1. WOUNDED GUARDS

A total of 4 dead Ambrosian guards lay scattered around the bridge. A **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine)** check reveals that they were slain by deep stabs, inflicted by swords or daggers. Each of them carries 1d6 gold coins, that have not yet been stolen.

2. NOSMERIAN IN NEED

Cyrian is hiding in the bushes at this location. He was hit by a bolt and tries not to make a sound despite the pain he is suffering. He only comes out when the bandits are no longer a threat.

3. OVERTURNED CARRIAGE

The carriage is badly damaged and needs repairs to be roadworthy again. Its magnificent decorations with treble clefs typical of Ambros raise no doubts that it was an important Ambros transportation. Broken boxes and crates are scattered around the area. They were all broken open and looted.

Any character who takes the time to examine the crates closely can make a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find if something is left behind. If successful, let the player roll once on the random loot table (see "Introduction - Random Loot"). After that there is nothing left to find.



HOW TO HANDLE THE SITUATION?

The party will probably choose one of two options at this point. They will either try to stay hidden and sneak up on the bandits, or they confront the bandits directly, either verbally or with weapons.

...If they choose to sneak, have them roll a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** Group check and see if they succeed. If they are unsuccessful, let the bandits catch and attack them, thereby starting a fight. If they are successful, have them overhear a conversation between the bandits who laughingly exchange the following information:

- It's incredibly lucrative to rob the streets of Ambros, they should have split from "the others" sooner.
- They are searching for a Nosmerian survivor. They want to kill him so as to leave no witnesses.
- "Nyx" was very pleased with today's loot. Once she comes back things will change for good.

These snippets of information indicate what is currently happening, without revealing too much right away. In this way your players will be curious and rewarded later in the story once they can grasp the big picture. After that, the bandits continue to search for the Nosmerian, forcing the players to act.

...If they confront the bandits directly, the bandits will threaten them by suggesting that they leave the area before it gets ugly. If the party does not comply with this threat, the bandits will start a fight without hesitation.

THE FIGHT IS ON!

When the fight starts, roll initiative for each bandit individually. If the player group had previously successfully sneaked and are still hidden, they can make their initiative roll with advantage. There are three Nyx Bandits (**bandit**, see appendix A), spread out on and around the bridge. They don't necessarily have to fight to the death, if they realize they're losing, they will try to flee. A successful escape affects the adventure later, as the same bandits can then be found in their hideout.

Meanwhile, the **Nosmerian Robo Bat** (see appendix A) tries to find its master and fly to him. It will only attack the bandits in extreme emergencies, when the players are in dire need of help.

This fight serves as a tutorial fight for beginners. If you're playing with veterans, feel free to add another bandit or two to adjust the difficulty.

AN IMPORTANT MISSION

After all bandits are defeated, the wounded Nosmerian drags himself out of hiding to thank the players and send them on an important mission. This conversation serves as a story hook for the adventure. Prepare well in order to give your group a sense of urgency and importance.

When the Nosmerian comes out, read the following:

A limping figure emerges from nearby bushes, almost losing his balance. He wears a large black robe with white trimmings, which is severely dragged through the grass due to his limp. The end of a bolt is sticking out of his chest and he is about to collapse.



ROLEPLAYING CYRIAN KRESGE

Despite being badly wounded, Cyrian hardly seems to care about his injuries. All he can think of is that the stolen punch card must be retrieved at all costs and that there is no time to waste. He wants to recruit his helpers to complete this mission for him. For an immersive portrayal of Cyrian you can paraphrase the following information, which he utters in a weak and trailing voice, unless he is healed.

- “My name is Cyrian Kresge. I am a Nosmerian from Asciliath and I thank you for saving my life.”
- “I was on a mission to Coreheim. I was supposed to bring important technology to the Ultracore - a punch card to be more specific.”
- “But hollow-headed Bandits were stupid enough to steal it from me. Not the ones you fought though, those were just leftovers. The main group has already disappeared into the forest.”
- “I only caught a glimpse of their leader. He had a slim build and long silvery-blond hair.”
- “Although I am in your debt, I am forced to burden you with the fate of Tormentosia.”
- “You must not waste time, you must find their hideout and bring the punch card to Coreheim.”
- “Travel to Pipers Whistle. It’s only half an hour from here. Someone there will surely know more about local bandits.”
- “Once you have retrieved the punch card, travel to Coreheim and search for Cromankus Steelsplint. You must only give it to him, no one else.”

FORESHADOWING

The bandit leader Cyrian describes is actually Nyx. After the accident, he was only able to see her briefly and now incorrectly assumes that it must have been a slim man.

If saving the world isn’t incentive enough, Cyrian promises a rich reward, which they will receive from **Cromankus Steelsplint** (see appendix A) after handing him the punch card.

Unless the party uses healing magic or otherwise treats his wounds, Cyrian will succumb to his injuries in 1d10 minutes. The simplest solution for his recovery is to offer him blood to drink. Give your players some time before Cyrian asks for it himself. It’s more fun for your group if they manage to find a solution themselves. If a player offers his blood to drink, Cyrian will bite their neck without second thoughts. The player then takes 1d4 piercing damage and Cyrian heals for half of it. His life is no longer in danger.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If Cyrian is still alive, he will insist on traveling to Coreheim to inform Cromankus of the robbery. The coachman who brought the group here is ideal for this, since he also wants to travel further to Coreheim and can take the Nosmerian with him on his journey. If Cyrian is dead, the Coachman will continue to Coreheim without the Nosmerian and wish the group well on their journey.

The fate of Tormentosia is now up to the players and there is no time to lose. The group should now travel to Pipers Whistle to find out who the bandits were and where their camp is located. Continue with “Chapter 1: Pipers Whistle”.



CH. I: PIPERS WHISTLE

Amid golden wheat fields and rolling hills lies Pipers Whistle, an apparently idyllic village that attracts little attention in these troubled times. Once located on a lucrative trade road, the town had enough resources to build a comfortable standard of living, by selling Daylight Wheat, which is exclusive to the area. However, a more popular trade route was established some time ago that doesn't go through Pipers Whistle, which negatively impacted all businesses in the area. And as if that wasn't bad enough, a while back the so-called Twiceborn Bandits settled in Pipers Whistle. For these reasons, many residents feared for their future and hastily left the village. However, the remaining villagers recently came to terms with the bandits and found common ground.

In Pipers Whistle, two parties are in charge. On the one hand, the citizens of the town are mainly led by the Holcomb family (see "Holcomb Mansion" below), who are also the wealthiest and most influential residents. On the other hand, we have the numerous Twiceborn Bandits (see "Twiceborn Windmill" below) who decided to cooperate with the townsfolk since they share the same aversion towards the kingdom and monarchy of Ambros.

In order to advance to the next chapter, the group must first talk to residents and follow several clues, until ultimately they speak to the Twiceborn Bandits. They are the only ones who can deduce Nyx as the culprit, even suspecting that her camp is in the Moss Seas. This will most likely prove to be more difficult than would reasonably be expected, since most farmers like the Twiceborn and don't want to rat on them. Depending on what questions they ask, the group will get very different answers (see "Roleplaying Residents" below).

ROLEPLAYING RESIDENTS

As Hedonists, the residents (**commoners**, see appendix A) of Pipers Whistle put their lust and desires first. Most have been able to sustain an extraordinary lifestyle until recently. Problems like hunger or restraint are absolutely surreal for them. When bread runs out, there's always expensive cake to feast on instead. However, since the new trade route and due to Sorgoth's attacks, the flow of money has decreased significantly. Not to mention that less money is also flowing through the land already, since Queen Julia of Ambros is donating enormous sums to the other nations. Some might say that her contribution is essential for the construction of Coreheim and the Ultracore. However, the residents of Pipers Whistle, instead only see wasted money stuffed into foreign pockets. A thought that shakes them to the core.

Upon first arrival, the players have no way of

knowing that the mood in the village is so rebellious and would likely expect derogatory comments towards the queen to be punished. If the party behaves in a supportive manner towards the queen, they will quickly be thrown pejorative looks. However, if they share the dislike, they will be warmly welcomed by most residents.

It makes a difference if the group meets a farmer just standing around doing nothing, or going about their normal day. Add descriptions of their mundane tasks to make the scene more alive. In addition, you can use the following rumor table to spread gossip and to foreshadow encounters.

1D6

RUMOR

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The harvest was plentiful this year and the villagers are looking forward to the big harvest festival in a few weeks. |
| 2 | People joke about the arrangement with their new "friends" (the Twiceborn Bandits) and that they're not as bad as expected. |
| 3 | People praise the Holcomb family and their demeanor and fairness towards people. |
| 4 | The marketplace in Coreheim is said to be larger than all of Pipers Whistle, mostly because all nations are represented there and the strangest creatures roam around. |
| 5 | The Ambrosian borders can't be defended much longer. Supplies are running low and soldiers are losing their morale. |
| 6 | A few days ago there was a loud argument at the windmill. They said something about missing equipment and a mischievous woman. |

ASKING AROUND

If a player's character simply asks for directions, most villagers will react in an arrogant and reserved manner, before pointing to the local tavern. Characters who start friendly small talk can make a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, in order to learn that the market place is a good place for rumors and that townspeople speak to Caster Holcomb if they have a problem.

If they ask about bandits, most villagers will assume they are looking for the Twiceborn, unaware that a small group has betrayed them. They will pretend they don't know anything and try to change the subject. A successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Insight)** check indicates that they are dishonest.

From here on, the party will most likely head to the Market Place, Tavern or Holcomb Mansion. Each of these locations is associated with specific encounters, as described in the next section.

PIPERS WHISTLE OVERVIEW

This map is for the Game Master. Use the spoiler-free variant as map for your group and let them start on the street on the top left. Players are free to explore Pipers Whistle as they please. Most houses are farmhouses, but there are few exceptions which are listed and explained below. Two additional maps named „On the Road“ and „In the Forest“ are included in the adventure download and can be used for random encounters in Pipers Whistle.

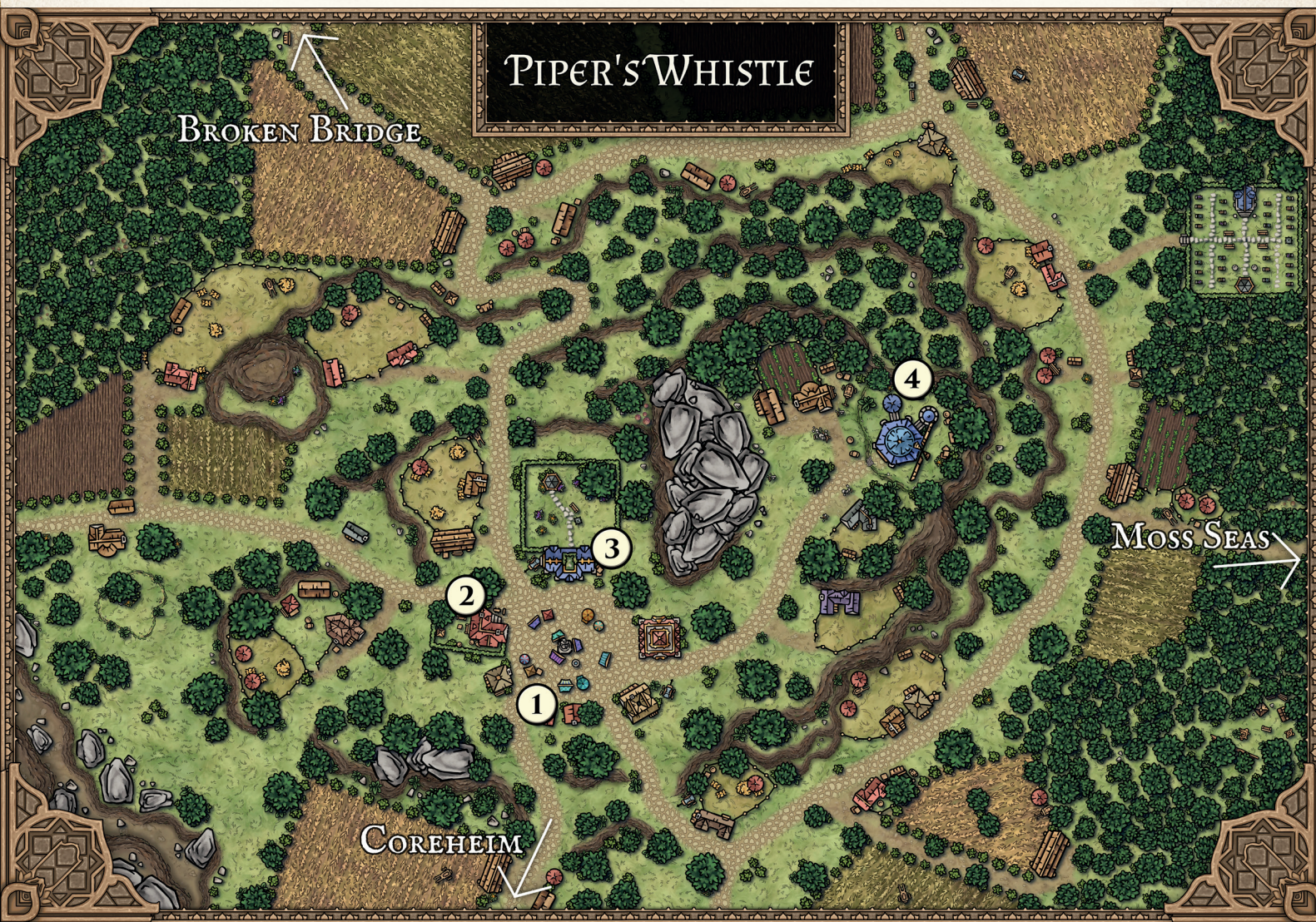
FIRST ARRIVAL

When the party arrives in Pipers Whistle, you may read the following text:

You travel for a while until you leave the wooded area and arrive at open farmland. Golden fields of wheat grow everywhere, gently swaying in the summer breeze. The smell of freshly cut grass wafts in your direction while the faint buzzing of cicadas grows louder step by step. Hardworking farmers take care of their fields sweating in the sun or pull carts loaded with crates along the dirt roads. One or the other looks at you skeptically, as you pass them. You come across several wooden buildings of Ambrosian architecture that look like they have seen better days, and are seemingly abandoned and empty. The sounds of cackling chickens and mooing cows can be heard from all directions and as you continue, small pieces of conversation, seemingly coming from a big hill in front of you, grow louder, hinting to it being the center of the village ahead.

1. MARKET PLACE

There are several market stalls in the center of the village. The party can do all sorts of shopping here that one could normally do in a small town, but mainly food and wooden tools are sold. If they ask for weapons or armor, they will be told that there is no blacksmith in town.



When the group arrives at the market, you may read the following text:

An array of colorful booths and tables are scattered around a small plaza of trampled earth. A few people stand in small groups chatting and laughing, while others try to fetch good prices for the presented goods. You can see big bulky hemp sacks filled with grain and crates overflowing with carrots. A few chickens cackle loudly from within a small cage to your right, while a big burly man with a scimitar on his hip feeds them a handful of seeds. He is talking to a woman who is carrying a crossbow on her back while leaning against a table. A catchy tune drowns out the constant murmur of the town square and you can spot a group of musicians with a flute, drums and a hand-held harp playing in front of a big stone statue in the center. A few heads turn in your direction and more than one conversation continues in a hushed tone.

Characters looking at the statue in the middle, can make a **DC 11 Intelligence (History)** check in order to realize that it resembles queen Julia of Ambros. A character born in Ambros recognizes this immediately. Any character examining it closely, can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check in order to notice various damaged spots.

TWO TWICEBORN MEMBERS

The two armed people belong to the Twiceborn Bandits (**bandit**, see appendix A). Being the only ones with weapons makes them stand out from the crowd, and being engrossed in a private conversation might catch the curiosity of the players.

...If a character tries to eavesdrop on the conversation, they must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** check to avoid being caught. If they are successful, they overhear the following conversation:

"I swear they almost bit me! Do you think you'll turn into a rat if they do?!"

"No, I don't think it works like that. But it sure would hurt."

"Yeah, I bet. I was so nervous on my way back and I wasn't even that far into the moor!"

"Just go hunt on the other side of town, they're really not worth the trouble."

The conversation points to the Rukz living in the Moss Seas (explained in "Chapter 2: The Moss Seas - Who are the Rukz?"). One of the two bandits ventured too far into the forest, thereby ending up on the edge of the Moss Seas and encountering an aggressive Rukz. The conversation then continues about trivial things.

...If a character approaches them directly, they can start a conversation. The two bandits will be wary but not unfriendly. Since few travelers have been passing through the village lately, they may even be a little curious. Should the group tell them about the robbed Nosmerian, they will be irritated and ask for more details. They will immediately assume that Nyx is behind this, but are instructed not to mention her to outsiders.

A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that they are indeed irritated and also angry, although they try to hold it back. If the conversation continues to go well, have the player who has talked the most roll a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. If successful, the bandits introduce themselves as part of a vigilante group and invite them to meet their leader, because he might know more. They offer to go immediately, or meet the group at the windmill later.

2. THE GOLDEN GRAIN INN

A welcoming inn stands to the left of the market place, and offers food and lodging to travelers and villagers. The owners are Isabel and Hektor, two Hedonists who have been happily married for 23 years. Usually, Isabel greets guests at the counter, while Hektor and a few helpers prepare hearty dishes in the kitchen. The inn is best known for Hektor's traditional beef steak, which tastes particularly aromatic thanks to a homemade spice mix. Nowadays most of the guests are local villagers, as travelers rarely stop by. The group will most likely attract curious looks. A simple room costs 5 silver coins per night, and the only double room costs 1 gold piece. Since they haven't been used for a long time, Isabel has neglected to clean up a bit. Should the players need a short or long rest, this is the perfect place.

As the party approaches the inn, you may read the following text:

You see a large house with a lovely, rustic facade and flower pots resting on the window sills. The door is open and you can hear faint metal clattering and murmured voices from inside. Behind the building, several pigeons flutter upwards and fly away.

CAMOUFLAGE APPEARANCE

As the group first approaches, they will encounter Nyx (see appendix A). She just mailed several blackmail letters to Cromankus Steelsplint via carrier pigeons, demanding ridiculous amounts of money in exchange for the punch card. She leaves the tavern at the exact moment a player character enters. Have this character make a **DC 11 Dexterity saving throw**, in order to avoid falling, as they run into each other.



The villagers didn't recognize Nyx, because she wears a black-haired wig and a long cloak that covers her gear. To keep her disguise, she takes on the role of a friendly merchant lady. If a character fell down she will help them up while giving a fake smile, before urgently trying to move on.

This encounter only serves as a foreshadowing moment, as players are bound to run into Nyx again. It's meant to be short-lived and should be impossible for the group to unmask her at this point. If they still manage to do so, Nyx uses her electro glove to create a shock wave around the group, stunning them long enough to flee.

ENTERING THE GOLDEN GRAIN INN

When the party enters the inn, you may read the following text:

You step inside a spacious hall with round tables and a polished hardwood floor, with the smell of grilled meat and beer floating through the air. At the far end of the room, you can see a middle-aged woman with long curly brown hair behind the counter, smiling at you as you enter. Aside from her, several people are sitting inside, enjoying warm meals, playing cards or chatting. As you walk a few steps further, you notice two elderly gentlemen seated at the first table next to a balustrade to your left, seemingly deep in conversation as a few words reach your ears.

Have your group overhear the following conversation:

"And now she's announced even more help to build this damn machine, can you imagine?"

"Oh please, we have sponsored this whole operation all by ourselves anyway. Our hard-earned money disappearing into this great new nation and what do they have to show for it? Nothing! It's a scam, I'm telling you."

"The queen really needs to get her priorities right, she disregards her own people completely. Let me tell you something"

Then, the two take a look at the party and lower their voice before continuing their conversation. Any player trying to eavesdrop on the conversation can make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check to hear the following:

"I hid my best cabbages from this year's harvest from the queen's collector. He gets my second best at most."

The two men then continue to converse about their dislike of Queen Julia of Ambros. They sound judgmental and their conversation regularly escalates into contemptuous laughter. Players can now explore the tavern. The following room explanations provide more information.

LOCATION OVERVIEW

This map is for the Game Master. Use the spoiler-free variant as battle map for your group.

1. GREAT HALL

A large hall where guests can eat and drink. On the wall facing the balustrade is a bulletin board that villagers use to advertise sales and jobs. At the moment there are hardly any notes hanging there due to the difficult times. If you want to add your own quests into the adventure, this is the perfect place to do it.

1A. ELEVATED SITTING AREA

A staircase leads to a raised balustrade area overlooking the tavern. The two gentlemen are still sitting here, enjoying a delicious pumpkin pie while their conversation continues. If they are confronted with their derogatory comments, they deny everything. However, if a character also expresses displeasure towards Queen Julia, they become friendlier and might even invite them to a piece of cake, before telling the stranger why most of the village dislikes the queen. Lying to the gentleman requires a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception)** check. If unsuccessful, they react arrogantly, giving the stranger a piece of gold so that they can buy their own cake, before shooing them away with a disrespectful gesture.

2. COUNTER

Isabel takes orders at the counter and pours beer. She is a kind-hearted soul and reacts in a very friendly manner if she is spoken to. Every time she receives an order, she yells it to the kitchen with incredible force so that her husband Hektor can hear, in stark contrast to her otherwise calm demeanor. If the group seems exhausted, Isabel will waste no time in offering them several rooms - after all, they haven't been rented out for quite some time. She also recommends her husband's traditional beef steak.

If she is asked about the latest events, she will give special praise to the farmers and their harvest this year. She will be a bit reluctant when asked about bandits, but can be persuaded with a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check, and will mention their hiding place: the windmill. She will also warn about their rough nature and suggest asking the Holcombs for help if they encounter any problems. If the group has previously ordered something or rented a room, this roll can be made with advantage.

3. KITCHEN

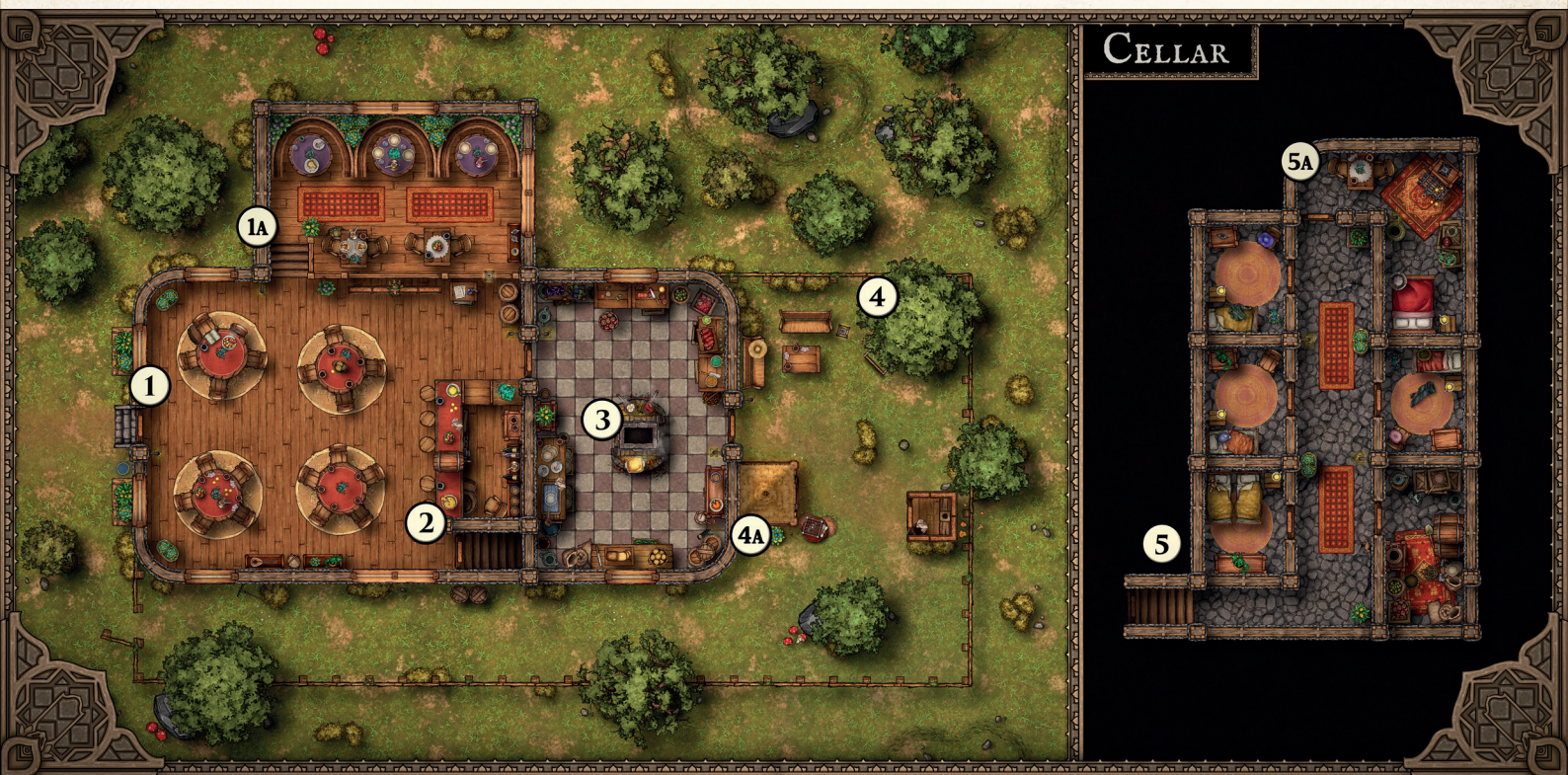
The kitchen is large enough to cook multiple orders at the same time, so it never takes long before the guests can be taken care of. Chef Hektor traveled throughout Ambros in his young years and is able to cook a wide variety of dishes. However, he is semi-deaf and almost never understands Isabel when she yells a dish in his direction. On some days he has to shout "What?!" 5 times, before he finally understands her answer.

4. BACKYARD

The beautiful garden is mainly used by Hector and his assistants when they want to take a break and cool off a bit. At the back by the fence is a toilet shed that hasn't been cleaned for a while.

4A. PIGEON HOUSE

The inn owners also offer the possibility to send carrier pigeons. They expect a small fee from strangers, but the villagers usually don't have to pay, as they are friends with the owners. If the group asks about the previously sent pigeons, they will receive the following information:



- The lady who sent them was in a hurry, she didn't exchange a word with anyone inside.
- She seemed very private, she sat down in a corner where nobody could see what she was writing.
- She did everything with her right hand, while her other arm always stayed under her cloak.
- She put seven silver coins on the table and walked straight to the exit without looking anyone in the face.

5. BASEMENT

A big basement offers space for storing goods and rentable rooms. If a player character rents a room and enters it for the first time, roll a dice. If the result is even, the previous renter forgot an item of value: let the player character roll once on the random loot table (see "Introduction - Random Loot"). If the result is uneven, nothing has been forgotten.

5A. ISABEL AND HECTOR'S ROOM

At one end of the basement is the owner's bedroom. Isabel usually carries the key, but she sometimes leaves it on the counter. The room offers enough space for a table, a bed and a cupboard. In front of the cupboard is a chest with 75 gold pieces in it.

If a character has a lock pick, they can attempt to open the chest with a **DC 11 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** check. If they don't have a lock pick, they instead can try other methods. For example, brute force: **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check, or opening it with a hairpin: **DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check.

If characters are caught stealing, Isabel will heartbrokenly ask them to return any stolen items before throwing them out.

3. HOLCOMB MANSION

This noble house is owned by the Holcomb family, who grew their wealth primarily through trade. They are the wealthiest family in Pipers Whistle and have a good reputation. Many residents turn to the Holcombs with their problems and concerns.

As the party approaches the manor, you may read the following text:

A substantial building sits at the end of a cobbles-toned entrance path. It's partly concealed through tall bushes surrounding the property but you can see the roof covered by bright blue shingles and an intricate emblem carved out of wood sitting right in the middle of the facade. The hedge is broken only by a closed metal gate, flanked on both sides by guards in leather armor with swords dangling from their hips.

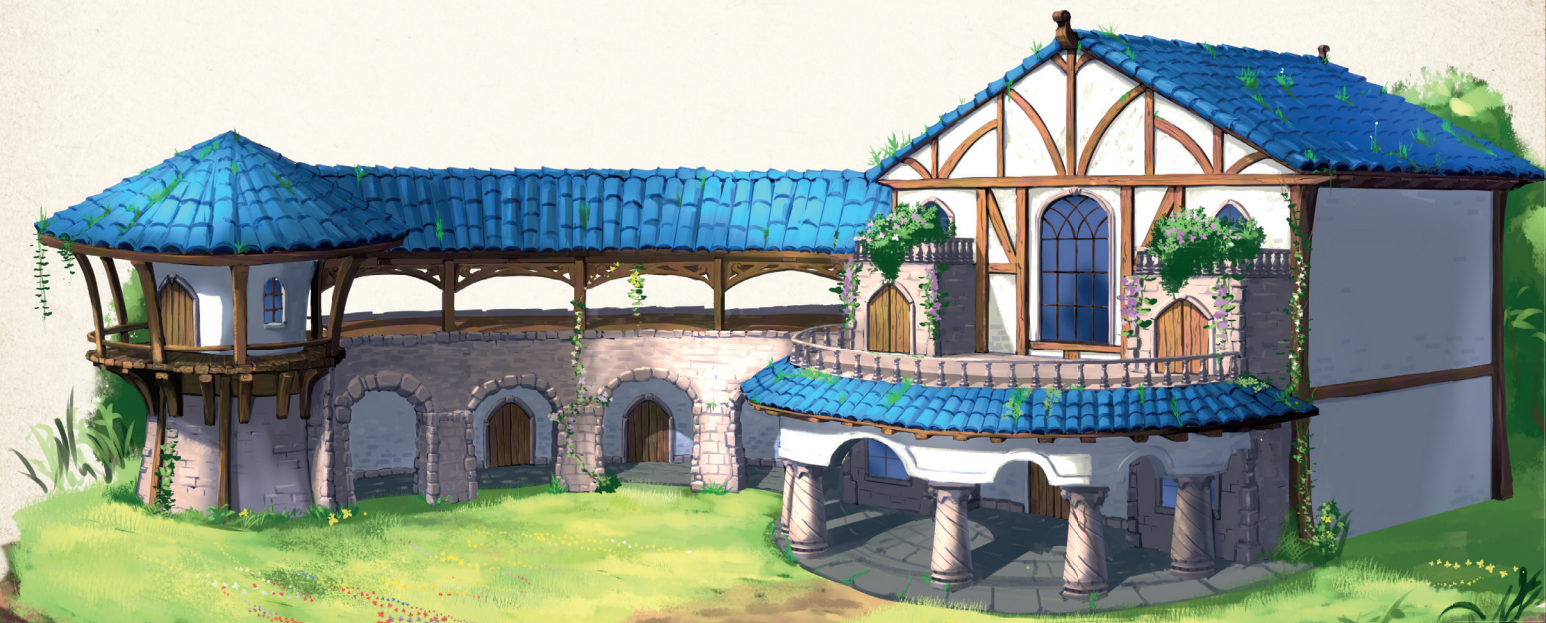
If the group seeks the Holcombs' help, they will be greeted by two **guards** (see appendix A) at the front door. The guards will behave in a very posh and pompous manner. In order to be taken seriously, the party must do the same, articulating their concerns politely and persuasively. Player characters who attempt this, can make a **DC 12 Charisma (Performance)** check to try to live up to the expected etiquette.

If they succeed, they are granted an audience with the landlord, Caster Holcomb. If they fail or behave inappropriately, they will be asked to leave the property but are allowed to try again at a later time.

AUDIENCE WITH CASTER HOLCOMB

The party is led inside the opulent building and left to wait in a luxuriously decorated waiting room, as the guards attempt to fetch Caster Holcomb (**noble**, see appendix A). He makes them wait an extra-long time in order to demonstrate his importance. Roll 3d10 to determine how many minutes the players must wait, before Caster Holcomb enters accompanied by six guards and asks about their inquiry, read:

After you've waited a while, a tall man with slicked back graying hair enters the room. He is dressed in a very formal attire and moves almost majestically with perfect demeanor.



Caster has maintained his wealth through stinginess and selfishness, and his top priority will always be his own money. He is not in the best of moods and slightly embittered, because his earnings have drastically suffered from the new trade route. And the fact that Queen Julia of Ambros spends his tax money on other nations, instead of looking after her own people was the last straw. He only expresses his sharp criticism of the nobility and the kingdom of Ambros to close confidants, including the Twiceborn. This ultimately led to his fraternization with the bandits, with whom he not only shares his dislike of royalty but also his love of money.

The conversation with Caster can turn haywire very quickly and the group must be very careful about what they mention to him.

...If they only mention a robbery near Pipers Whistle, Caster takes it very seriously and tries his best to solve the issue, because robberies are bad for business. He will share important information that will help the group. For an immersive portrayal of Caster use the following information, which he declares with determination and self-confidence:

- There are bandits in the village: the Twiceborn, but they aren't the problem. He has a deal with their leader and keeps them under control, so they don't plunder nearby.
- However, a small group recently betrayed them. Maybe those are the culprits.
- The Twiceborn can be found at the windmill, right up the hill.
- Their leader is called Dyonis Brentwood. His sense of humor is very crude and he hates people who think they are smarter than him.

After the conversation, Caster asks a butler to get him something to write with and hands the group a signed note, asking for the bandits' cooperation. If a player character asks for additional financial support, they can get Caster to help with a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Caster then gives them a small golden snake statue, which he has grown bored of. It can be sold for 50 gold pieces or be given to a merchant named Yatszehsi later in the adventure (explained in "Chapter 3: Coreheim - Merchant Yatszehsi's Stall").

...If they mention a Nosmerian or punch card, Caster loses his composure and immediately gets upset about the queen, because she is putting tax money into these "wicked Nosmerians". Now the group has to come up with convincing arguments to calm him down. Persuading or lying to him to defuse the situation requires a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** or **(Deception)** check, which must be rolled with disadvantage. If successful, Caster will slowly regain his composure. Proceed after this as described in „If they only mention a robbery near

Pipers Whistle“ above.

If unsuccessful, Caster remains unreasonable and orders his guards to remove the strangers from his mansion. He would even willingly ignore the invading hordes of Sorgoth rather than admit the expense is justified. As the group is being kicked out, one of the guards whispers the following in a player character's ear: "Speak to Dyonis of the Twiceborn, if anyone knows more, it's him". After that, they are no longer welcome and must continue elsewhere.

4. TWICEBORN WINDMILL

The windmill and surrounding houses are territory of the Twiceborn bandits, the largest bandit gang in the area. They are all deserters who have lost their faith in Ambros and the queen. Outwardly, **Dyonis Brentwood** (see appendix A) is the leader. A guy with a big mouth but little actual skill to support it. His right hand, **Arcas Farnley** (see appendix A), is the group's muscle and a pretty bright mind. He is much more capable than Dyonis and would be a better leader by far, if it wasn't the case that he was too lazy and uninterested in leading this bunch of deserters. This is why they are often rather disorganized, despite having good equipment. Aside from the two, there are 14 other **bandits** (see appendix A) spread across and inside the windmill when the group arrives. Most of them are in low spirits, due to Nyx's betrayal, but they try not to let it show.

Since they have an agreement with the Holcombs, they do not plunder nearby areas and are therefore not a threat to the residents. In fact, most of the villagers even like them because they share their hostile intentions towards Queen Julia of Ambros.

As the group approaches the windmill you may read the following text:

Even from afar you can already see a bright white pennant fluttering in the wind. It sits atop a mast with wooden bird ornaments flanking it. Two long half-torn sails of linen cloth wrapped around an intricate frame within spiral downwards, ending in a flat circular house that sits atop a light gray stone tower. Around the tower sit two smaller ones at a 90-degree angle to each other connected to the big one with solid bridges. Underneath those bridges a bricked ascent coils around the central spire ending in an elongated entrance house that protrudes out of the base of the whole building. Red banners and crossed swords hang from all sides, giving the windmill an uninviting look.

ARRIVING AT THE WINDMILL

After the group has asked around in the village, eventually all the clues will point to this location. Depending on how much information they have previously collected, they will find it much easier to talk to the bandits.

...If the group arrives without any clues, they will be met by two bandits lounging around the building, casually guarding it. They will openly express their distrust to outsiders and will ask the group to leave their territory because they have internal matters to sort out. If they mention the robbery and the other bandits, one of them will ask if there was a woman involved. After that, however, they cannot help further because their leader is not available at the moment. The bandit will try to send the group away one more time and recommends that they should ask around in the tavern, contact Caster Holcomb or come back later.

...If the group arrives accompanied by bandits, they can easily follow them inside the windmill. If they agreed to meet the bandits from the market place here, they will either be waiting for them outside, or come out shortly after their arrival, see “Dyonis and Arcas” below.

...If the group arrives with Caster Holcomb’s signed note, they can show it to the bandits on watch, neither of whom can read and think it’s a bad joke. However, if a player character makes convincing arguments or threatens them with consequences, they can make a **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation)** check to convince the two. They then fetch a third bandit from inside the windmill, who reads the note aloud very slowly and with bad intonation. Afterwards they escort the group straight to Dyonis, see “Dyonis and Arcas” below.



DYONIS AND ARCAS

The group has managed to make their voices heard and are about to speak to Dyonis. However, before they are brought to him, they must hand in their weapons at the entrance to the windmill. When they are ready to comply and enter, describe how they are escorted by 6 bandits to a battered terrace. When they get to the door, a bandit will open it after knocking loudly twice, read:

Behind the door is a medium sized terrace that has seen better days. There are barrels, sacks and crates lying around everywhere. Standing in front of a bare tree are two conversing figures who turn as you enter. One of them has long blond hair, which he pulls back from his face with a swift movement, while circling a knife around his fingers with the other hand. The other one is of particularly muscular build and stands still, and an iron helmet covers almost his entire face. Only a single hole can be seen, behind which an intensely scrutinizing eye stares at you. He carries a massive greataxe on his back.

Dyonis and Arcas have most likely heard from a bandit or villager that strangers are asking about bandits, so the group is already somewhat expected. If Dyonis is treated with respect, he will prove immensely helpful. The group just has to be careful not to upset him, which is what happens when they don’t take him seriously or don’t share his views of Queen Julia, as he is strongly opposed to her money-sharing.

His top priority is that he and the Twiceborn aren’t pursued by higher authorities of Ambros, and since robberies bring attention to Pipers Whistle, it’s only in his interest to prevent further incidents. So far he’s gotten away with small coups, because the kingdom is preoccupied with the war, but that could change as more and more assaults are reported.

During the conversation, Dyonis will mainly do the talking, while Arcas takes on the role of his intimidating right hand. Dyonis is not the brightest candle on the cake, but firmly believes that he and his ideals are a gift to mankind. For an immersive portrayal of Dyonis use the following information, which he shares in a very arrogant and smug manner, after the group tells him about the robbed Nosmerian.

Don’t share all the information at once, put yourself in the shoes of a greedy bandit enjoying his superior position. He will always try to get something in return for his answers, no matter what - as long as it is clear who is in charge. And every once in a while he will look to Arcas to see if what he just said is actually true, who then simply nods or shakes his head.

- The Twiceborn didn't rob anyone. In fact, they are even very popular with the citizens.
- Dyonis explains how popular and talented he is in order to prove his point.
- Dyonis blames Nyx as the culprit and suggests jealousy towards him as a motive.
- Nyx is a traitor who betrayed the Twiceborn a few days ago and sweet talked others to join.
- She stole equipment and left into the woods.
- Dyonis then claims that the group doesn't have to follow her, because she is nothing without his lead.

After the group has asked all their questions, Arcas will take the first possible opportunity to speak for the first time, read the following in a very deep voice:

Nyx left with 9 other bandits. The only dangerous one is Finnigan, a big guy with an even bigger axe. I assume he's her right hand man. They are most likely hiding in an ancient temple in the Moss Seas. You need to head east of Pipers Whistle into the woods until you reach bog-like terrain. Try the closest temple. To get there you have to turn left at the first fork, then go deep into the terrain, past the starfish shaped stone and the frog ponds until you run into the Mosdir - mossy hoofed animals. Then you're almost there. Be careful not to get lost. The area is dangerous and so is Nyx.

After that, the giant man falls silent again and Dyonis feels validated as a leader because his subjects have learned so much from him.

TROUBLEMAKER

Should things escalate because the Twiceborn are repeatedly insulted or provoked, Dyonis will lose his temper and eventually send Arcas forward to deal with the troublemaker. If no one draws a weapon, Arcas will not draw his weapon either and will duel bare-knuckled until the troublemaker apologizes or falls on the ground. If someone else interferes in the fight, all Twiceborn will interfere. Dyonis will retreat as far as possible and shoot bolts from afar, while shouting insults.

The group should be unable to win this battle, because the difference in strength is too big. They can always try to apologize and hope for Dyonis' mercy. Should things get completely out of hand and all party members fall unconscious, the Twiceborn will tie them to the statue of Queen Julia of Ambros in the market place in order to teach them a lesson. They also steal 1d10 gold pieces from the group in the process.

If the group is kicked out in one way or another, Dyonis shouts insultingly:

"You should go and join that wicked wench in the moor! You'll fit in perfectly with those traitors and rats!"

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

With the new information, the group can now advance into the Moss Seas. There they must find the bandits' camp and get hold of the punch card. Many dangers lurk in the Moss Seas, be prepared to offer your group a **short rest** if they don't come up with the idea themselves once it becomes necessary. When they leave Pipers Whistle, continue with "Chapter 2: The Moss Seas".

Since they successfully completed the first chapter, they get their first level increase and should now reach **level 2**.



CH. 2: THE MOSS SEAS

The Moss Seas stretch beyond the woods of Pipers Whistle. It is a vast area consisting mainly of dense forest and deep bog water. The Hedonists of Ambros have often attempted to colonize these wild forests. Unfortunately, the swampy, mossy area is not at all suitable for building. As a result, there are only a few houses in this area, fewer still inhabitable, and even these are already half buried and swallowed up by the swampy land.

TRAVELING IN THE MOSS SEAS

When the group leaves Pipers Whistle to travel to the Moss Seas, they can navigate a forest trail within the first 15 minutes. After that the terrain becomes more and more uneven until the forest path ends and there is almost nothing more to orientate yourself with.

GETTING LOST

When the party continues, you may read the following:

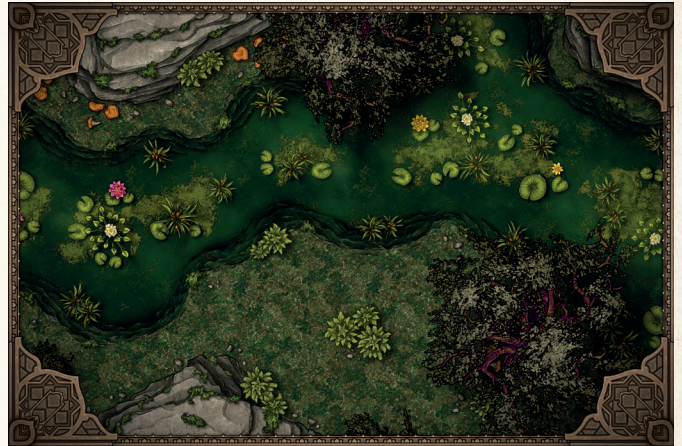
With every step, the flora around you changes into a wilder version of the forest you just walked through. It doesn't take long before moss-covered trees are sprawling everywhere, with branches growing wild in all directions. From now on your legs have to work hard to move forward, as the ground becomes more and more uneven. Between these rugged hills you can see large areas of water, all of which are almost completely covered by moss. Mosquitoes and dragonflies swarm around and buzz loudly, and an occasional frog croak is heard. The path you followed before has now been swallowed up by nature, leaving you with little orientation.

Since there is no longer a path, have the player leading the group roll a **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** check to determine if the party becomes lost. Other characters who are proficient in survival can support this check, if they do add +2 to the result.

...If they find the right way, the group can orient themselves using natural features such as unusual rock formations and trees previously described by Arcas Farnley. In this case they encounter a Mosdir herd (see "Mosdir Encounter" below).

...If they get lost, they wander around for about an hour before stumbling into a young Webmonger's territory (see "Webmonger Encounter" below).

This map serves as an atmospheric map and can also be used for the Mosdir and Webmonger encounter.



1. MOSDIR ENCOUNTER

A wild herd of 2d4 **Mosdir** (see appendix A) are grazing nearby, with 1d4 young fawns sleeping next to them. They are peaceful unless provoked or startled. If the group wants to pet a Mosdir or approach the young, they must first gain the herd's trust. A successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check calms the animals enough so that they no longer sense danger and are safe to approach.

MOSDIR HERBS

If they befriend the animals, have player characters with proficiency in nature roll a **DC 11 Wisdom (Nature)** check. If the result is successful, they will notice that the moss on the back of the largest Mosdir has grown particularly dense and has a slight glow to it. These are Mosdir Herbs that have healing properties. In order to harvest these herbs, a character must carefully pick them, which works fine on the first try. The second attempt requires a successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check, and each subsequent attempt requires an additional check, each increasing in difficulty by two. Each successful attempt yields enough herbs for one application, which release their healing properties when applied to open wounds or when prepared and consumed. One application heals for 2d4 +2 hit points. After five bundles have been harvested, the animal has hardly any moss left on its back and there is nothing left to get.



If an attempt fails, the Mosdir flinches and is no longer in a good mood. If characters keep trying, the creature will become more and more angry until it finally starts an attack - roll initiative! Only the adult animals get involved, while the young ones try to hide in the surrounding thicket.

HIDDEN TREASURE

A single Mosdir's horn, half overgrown with moss, is lying on the ground and can be found by any character with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score of 13 or higher. They are considered special by some traders and can be sold in Pipers Whistle for 10 gold pieces or in Coreheim for up to 25 gold pieces.

The Mosdir are the "mossy hoofed animals" Arcas spoke of before. The group is on the correct path and should be very close to the temple. If they go further, they will reach the bandit camp in about 10 minutes (see "Nyx Bandit Camp" below). Now is a good opportunity for a short rest, if they are seriously injured.

2. WEBMONGER ENCOUNTER

A **young Webmonger** (see appendix A) patiently lurks beneath a nearby layer of water covered in moss. The creature perceives the group and tries to lure them with an insidious trick, read the following:

As you wander through the bog, you suddenly see a shimmering blade floating on a moss-covered sea nearby. It appears to be a precious sword that, although covered in moss and floating in the lake, is still in good condition.

WEBMONGER TRAP

In truth, the sword is in very poor condition, but the Webmonger's saliva made the metal shine, so that it appears more valuable than it is. The weapon doesn't actually float on water, it just looks like it does. In reality, this is another trick of the Webmonger that previously stuck the sword to its back using its webs and now lurks just below the surface of the water under the moss.



At this point make a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check for the young Webmonger in order to determine how good it is hiding. If a player takes a closer look, have them make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check. If the result is higher than the Webmongers stealth check score, they can spot the Webmongers eyestalk sticking out of the mossy water. Any character with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score higher than the Webmongers stealth check score also sees this.

FIGHT

If one of the characters naively gets closer or tries to run away, the monster will jump out of the water and attack - roll initiative! Any character who hasn't seen the eyestalk before is surprised.

TREASURE

After slaying the Webmonger, the group can examine the collected items on its back for treasure. Let them roll once on the random loot table (see "Introduction - Random Loot") to determine what they find. In addition, they find an iron shield that is still intact, two intact short swords and a backpack containing 1d4 healing potions, which each heal for 2d4 +2 hit points. The backpack is half grown together with the creature's back and can only be detached with a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** check.

The type of equipment points to the previous owners: bandits. Despite the small detour, their camp seems to be in the immediate vicinity. The group can reorient and if they go further, they will reach their camp in about 15 minutes (see „Nyx Bandit Camp“ below). Now is a good opportunity for a **short rest**, if they are seriously injured.

NYX BANDIT CAMP

An old Ranura temple serves as a secret hideout for the Nyx bandits. They are deep in the Moss Seas and don't expect to be found. Now that the group has arrived at the bandit camp, a difficult task awaits them: they must find and obtain the punch card. However, this is not so easy as many potential enemies lie ahead. There also is a hidden encounter here that's easy to miss (See "4A. Hidden Ladder" below).

There are a total of seven to ten people in the camp. With Nyx still absent, **Finnigan Spruce** (see appendix A) is in charge of at least five other **bandits** (see appendix A). If at the beginning of the adventure one or more of the three bandits who were looking for Cyrian escaped, they are now also in the camp. If they didn't escape, they are now missing. In addition, there is one **Rukz warrior** (see appendix A) who wanted to speak to Nyx about future plans on behalf of his people. But since she isn't there yet, Finnigan invited the rat-man in order to wait with them and have some beers to celebrate their successful robbery.

WHO ARE THE RUKZ?

After the Nyx Bandits escaped into the Moss Seas, they quickly realized that they were in the middle of a Rukz pack's hunting ground. Rukz are a subspecies of Jumans (Jumans are creatures that are half-human and half-animal), but prefer to consider themselves a different race. They are rat-humanoids, but will turn aggressive if anyone dares to call them that. They're not particularly popular and often devote themselves to shady business, but also pursue respectable crafts. Nyx saw this as an opportunity and made them an offer: instead of fighting each other, they could work together and rob larger villages. An offer that the Rukz gladly accepted.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

When the players arrive, Finnigan, the Rukz warrior, and all but one bandit are sitting around the campfire getting drunk. One of the bandits regularly messes up his lute playing, while the others accompany him with crooked singing. At this moment the celebration is in its early stages, so that most bandits are still on high alert and would be able to tell if something was wrong. The only bandit that isn't there is working on „Grinder Island“ (see “4. Grinder Island” below).

ARRIVAL

When the group arrives, you may read the following text:

As you move deeper through the bog water, you suddenly hear several people singing. The sounds appear to be coming from atop a 15-foot hill, so one can only guess what is happening there. Rising smoke can be seen from the same direction. Then all of a sudden, you hear a loud burp followed by several laughing noises.

The player group will now probably choose one of two options. They will either try to hide and wait to get more information, or they will confront the bandits directly, either verbally or with weapons.

...If they choose to wait, the drinking can continue undisturbed and small escapades will occur regularly. Roll once on the “Party Mishaps” table for every 10 minutes that pass. The players can take advantage of these mishaps to continue their mission with a clever plan. Whether they sneak into the temple, steal armor and pose as bandits, or wait for all the drunks to fall asleep is entirely up to them. Be open to creative solutions and enjoy the unfolding scenario. Feel free to make up mishaps yourself.

1D6

PARTY MISHAP

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | A bandit wanders into a player-accessible location and relieves himself. |
| 2 | A bandit is so drunk that he falls asleep in front of a tent, almost knocking it over. |
| 3 | Finnigan pulls out the punch card and triumphantly flashes it around, before placing and forgetting it on a log by the campfire. |
| 4 | A bandit thinks it's a good idea to light his cigar at the campfire, he burns his face and tries to cool it in the moss water. |
| 5 | Finnigan orders one bandit to check on the Ranura (see “Ranura Encounter” below) He slips on the ladder and is too drunk to find his way back up. |
| 6 | A bandit provokes Finnigan. They start a fistfight until one is unconscious. |

...If they confront the bandits directly, describe how the overall mood suddenly changes as they didn't expect someone to find them out here. As long as none of the player characters draws a weapon or behaves suspiciously, the situation will remain tense, but won't escalate. Then Finnigan will ask pointed questions to figure out who these strangers are and what they are doing in “his” camp. In his current mood, he will probably shout intimidatingly instead of asking normally. Above all, he is interested in whether they know Dyonis or, worse yet, work with him.

...If one of the three bandits from the start is present and recognizes a player character, he will approach Finnigan and whisper that information to him. Finnigan then gives a hand signal to circle the strangers before attacking - Roll Initiative!

...If Finnigan catches the group lying or if they dodge his questions, he becomes increasingly angry until he finally orders his men to attack - Roll initiative!



THE FIGHT IS ON!

When the fight starts, roll initiative for Finnigan, and the Rukz warrior individually, while the bandits share their own roll result. If at least two party mishaps happened when combat starts, the bandits' weapons will be out of reach, as they are scattered everywhere. They now have to fight with anything they find. If you look closely at the map, you will notice some items specifically placed for this purpose: a hot soup plate, a frying pan, cutlery, a lute, a broken bottle, a pork knuckle etc. Attacks with these items count as improvised weapon attacks and deal 1d4 damage plus the appropriate modifier. The bandits are all proficient with these weapons.

PUNCH CARD

If the players don't already have the punch card, it's either in Finnigan's pocket or where he last left it.

LOCATION DETAILS

This map is for the Game Master. Use the spoiler-free variant as battle map for your group and let them start on the bottom left, near "1. Moss Water".

1. MOSS WATER

The group arrives from here and must trudge through mossy water to move forward, which is considered difficult terrain. Creatures that pass through stand knee-deep in the water.

1A. FALSE FRIENDS

If you look closely, you can see darker water in some places. Characters stepping on these spots must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** in order to maintain balance. If they fail, they fall forward and sink up to their necks. Strange plants then wrap about their body and they feel small creatures such as crabs or fish biting them, causing 1d4 piercing damage.

1B. DEEP MOOR

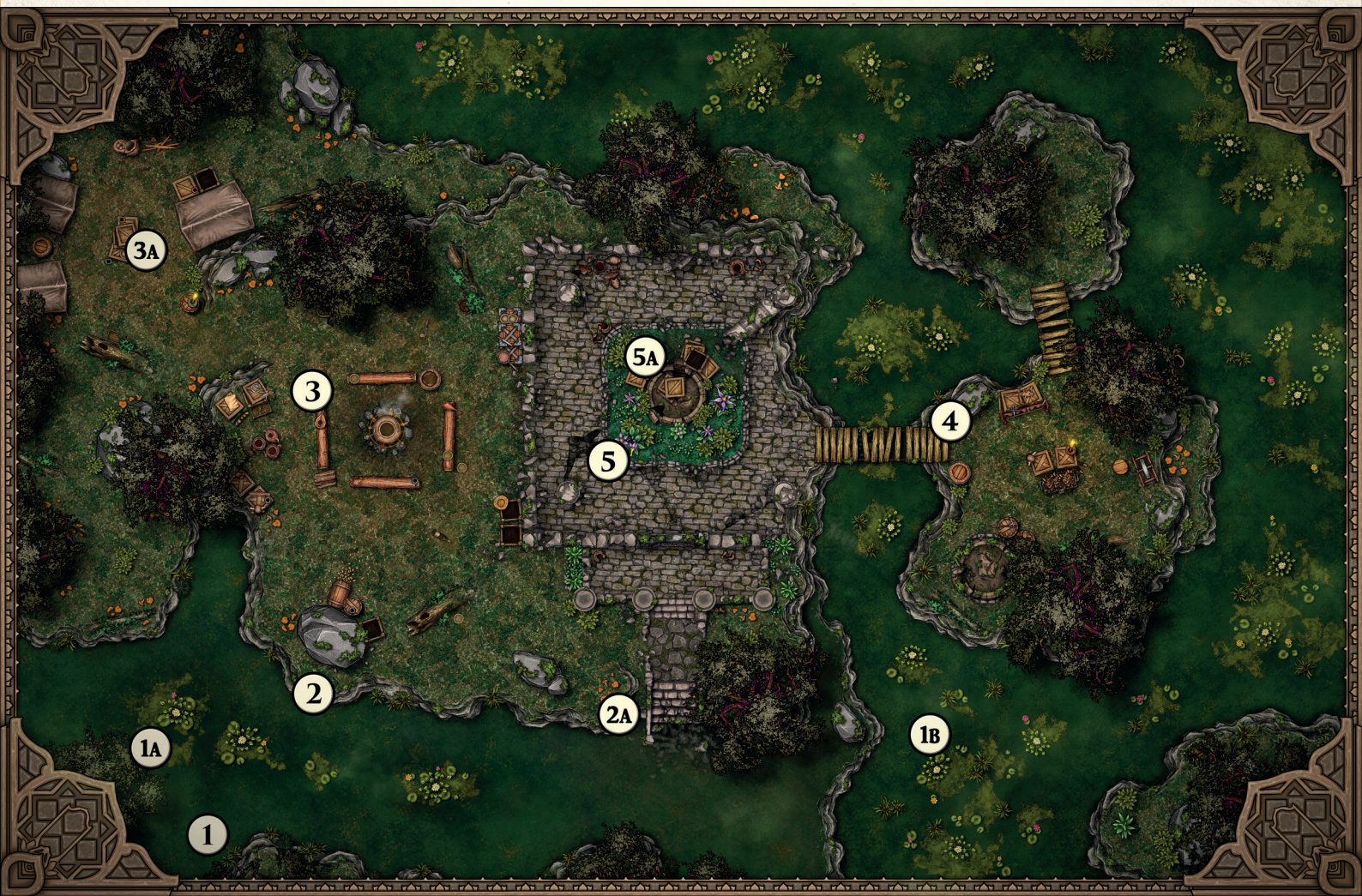
A larger moor lake spreads out under the hill, which is significantly deeper than Moss Water. Characters who fall in here can no longer feel the ground beneath their feet and have to swim to get around.

2. NATURAL HILL

This hill is about 15 feet high and climbing it requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check. If a character fails, they fall ten feet down and hit the mossy ground. Normally they would suffer from 1d6 bludgeoning damage from this height, but the ground is so soft, that they only take half damage from the fall.

2A. COLLAPSED STAIRCASE

An old staircase once led up the hill to the temple. It is easily accessible from the bottom of the ledge, allowing characters with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check to pull themselves up.



3. CAMPFIRE

A campfire serves as a cooking place for the bandits. All around are various boxes with plundered food.

3A. TENTS

If a character searches the tents, they will find dried meat, a full bottle of Ambrosian wine, a half-eaten apple, and an item of value: let them roll once on the random loot table (see “Introduction - Random Loot”). Any character who searches the tents thoroughly can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a hidden wallet with 50 gold pieces inside.

4. GRINDER ISLAND

A hill that juts out of the deep mossy lake bears the odd name “Grinder Island”, because all the bandits equipment is stored, repaired and sharpened there. One bandit is always there, fixing things and mostly using the whetstone to sharpen blades. They will still participate in drinking games and they get a new beer every few minutes before going back to the whetstone.

All kinds of equipment, mostly shortwords, scimitars, clubs, light crossbows, torches and leather armor are lying around, or are scattered in crates and chests. The equipment is easily enough for ten people and offers a good opportunity for the player party to create a disguise as a bandit. Additionally, in one of the crates is a single splint armor in very good condition.

5. RUINED TEMPLE

The temple collapsed years ago due to land shifts and only a vague version of its former glory remains. The roof collapsed completely and most of the surrounding walls fell with it. The best-preserved elements are a large door and massive stone pillars at the front.

If a character examines the temple more closely, they can make a **DC 11 Intelligence (History)** check to learn the following information: The architectural style of the building reveals that it is a Ranura temple, built by Hedonists long ago. Ranura are mystical Sloth-Jumans said to possess the gift of prophecy. In order to please them and win their favor, several temples have been built throughout history. Most of those built in the Moss Seas have fallen into ruin over time.

5A. HIDDEN LADDER

A secret encounter awaits the group here. If they find it, they should feel like they’ve discovered an easily overlookable secret.

A garden, or what remains of it, stands at the center of the ruins. Although it has been neglected for a long time, magnificent flowers still bloom around an old moss-covered fountain, that was formerly used to draw water. Several boxes are stacked on top of it, blocking the view of a ladder leading downwards.

If a character takes a closer look at the well, they can find the ladder with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check. When a character looks down the ladder, all they see is darkness, and when they throw something in, it falls for much longer than expected.

If the group doesn’t find the hidden ladder, you can give them additional hints, such as the loud snoring of the sleeping Ranura, which booms up from below the temple. If a character chooses to go down, they enter an underground cave (see „Ranura Encounter“ below).

RANURA ENCOUNTER

Several decades ago, the landscape around the temple looked very different. The building stood proudly on a hilltop and was regularly visited by Hedonists. They left gifts and planted all sorts of beautiful flowers in the hope of attracting a Ranura in order to benefit from its fortune-telling. And indeed, over time, a single Ranura has made itself comfortable here. It liked the flowers and gifts, but didn’t want to deal with annoying questions. So it dug a big cave under the temple, so that it only had to come out when no one else was around. It brought more and more gifts, and beautiful plants to the cave and made it its home. This worked well for decades, until the landmass shifted, causing the hidden cave entrance to collapse. The Ranura was henceforth trapped beneath the temple. And although it could dig itself free at any time it had no more reason to do so, because it now had everything it ever wanted: presents, undisturbed silence and a private garden from which it could eat and drink when feeling hungry or thirsty.

CLIMBING DOWN

When the group climbs down the ladder into the cave, you may read the following text:

You climb down for a while until you finally reach the end of the ladder. There are no more fountain walls surrounding you, instead it seems to go straight into an underground cave. You hear increasingly loud and disconnected rumbles echoing in your direction.

There’s no light source burning down here so it’s going to be hard to look around without a torch or darkvision. The booming sounds are due to the Ranura’s snoring sounds. To get to it the group has to go around two corners and deeper into the cave, until they finally stand before the huge creature. It is more than five times larger than an average human, but the actual size is hard to tell as its body occupies most of the cave.

You may read the following text as your party discovers the Ranura:

The cave is covered in the strangest and most beautiful greenery and flowers you have ever seen. The exact shape and size of the cave is lost in thick patches of moss and puddles of water, lianas growing down from the ceiling above and huge flower blossoms sitting on top of thickly leaved bushes. Some of these being even bigger than a head. The leaves and petals rattle and shift as another booming snore echoes through the space. It originates from a sloth like creature half hidden beneath the wilderness and nature of this room. A peacefully sleeping giant whose shape and mossy fur disappears far above your heads into the wall of green.

WAKE UP!

Since Ranuras are deeply relaxed creatures, it takes a little more than a simple nudge to wake them up. Consequently, the whole group will be needed. To wake it up, the party must successfully use four different methods. Each method is a [DC 13 Skill check](#). Give each character one attempt before anyone gets a second try. It's about being creative and working together. The following skill checks serve as examples, but ultimately anything that makes sense should be a valid attempt. If the same skill is used twice in a row, the difficulty for that roll increases by +2.

- Athletics: Shake the creature as hard as you can.
- Dexterity: Tickle its nose hairs until it sneezes heavily.
- Performance: Sing a beautiful melody to gently wake it up.
- Nature: Find a fragrant flower and hold it under his nose.

With each successful attempt, the creature shakes itself briefly and after four successful attempts, it finally wakes up. The creature avoids fights and tries to protect itself if attacked. It has 120 Hit Points and an Armor Class of 17, thanks to thick skin with plants growing onto it. Its prophecy ability only works once per day and only if it had a good sleep beforehand.

ROLEPLAYING THE RANURA

The group might get the impression that the creature is trapped down here and wants out, but that's not the case. In fact, it's doing very well and would love to spend a little more time sleeping. However, since it's already awake, it takes five minutes to talk to the strangers. For an immersive portrayal of the

creature, speak very slooooooowly and weaaaaaarily and include plenty of yaaaaaawning noises whenever it speaks.

Assuming they are here for its fortune telling talents, it says:

"Ooooooh. I have never seen you before, but I still knew you were coming. I know why you are here. And the answer is yes. I shall grant you one question. Just one little question, before I go back to sleep and continue my little nap".

After a question is asked, the Ranura has a brief daydream and answers as best it can. Its fortune telling skills are vague, so the answer should be very cryptic. It should still be helpful, but leave room for interpretation. It's impossible to predict what they will ask, so this is where your creativity comes into play. If they ask about Cromankus or if they will find him without problems, the creature might talk about the following things:

Cromankus is in a colorful place where everything collides. A greedy snake is pointing the way. And a dark shadow is trailing a peaceful future. Time is running out.

The colorful place could hint to Coreheim, the snake is merchant Yatszehsi who knows where Cromankus is and the shadow could be a reference to Sorgoth's army or to Nyx. The Ranura can't explain the vision any further, but all of these clues should make more sense to the group later. After the question, the whole group feels inspired and everyone gains inspiration.



They can have a brief conversation before the creature gets too tired and falls asleep again. If they want to free the Ranura, it will laugh and thank them. You can use the following quotes as a guide:

- “Thaaank you for shooring away those pesky huumans. They were loud and aaangry. Now I can finally relax in peeeace again.”
- “I looove my cave. I haaave everything I need and mooore.”
- “Do be caaaareful with those floowers. A man from far away brought them here a long time ago and I am fond of their sceeent.”

After the conversation, the creature falls asleep again and the players will have to exit the cave.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once the players have obtained the punch card, there is no time to lose. They must travel to Coreheim to return it to Cromankus Steelsplint. To get there, they must travel through Pipers Whistle again. At this point you can narratively describe the journey back to the village. On the way to Coreheim waits an opportunity for a [long rest](#), continue with “Chapter 3: Coreheim”.

Since they have now successfully completed the second chapter, they get their second increase in level and should now reach [level 3](#).

HOW DOES NYX REACT TO THAT?

After sending blackmail letters in Pipers Whistle, Nyx shadows the Twiceborn Bandits for a while before heading back to the Moss Seas. She arrives at her camp shortly after the player party has traveled on with the punch card and is beside herself with anger.

If there are no survivors in camp, Nyx will visit the Rukz, who tell her what happened at the temple as one of their scouts saw the group leaving the scene. They also want revenge for their fallen comrade and so they band together. Nyx then takes a group of Rukz warriors and pursues the players. The two groups will meet in a final clash in Coreheim.

If there are any survivors in camp, they will tell Nyx everything that happened. After that everything happens as described above. In this case, the survivors will most likely remain in the camp to rebuild it.



CH. 3: COREHEIM

Coreheim once was an endless desolated land where nothing but rats and other wild animals lived. With the initiation of the Ultracore plan, a place had to be found for it - a place in the center of the other six remaining realms. At this location a colossal tower, the Core Boom, was constructed to protect the Ultracore Project and the town of Coreheim was established around it. The city is still in the middle of construction in many places and serves as a hub for all other nations that do their part to build the city and the Ultracore. Ambrosian guards are responsible for law enforcement, but they are often overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle within the city. Coreheim is a significant contrast to their beautiful homeland and guarding here is a lot more stressful. Some guards are very motivated to keep order and others loathe their new post and hate being stationed in Coreheim.

The final fight takes place in this chapter when Nyx catches up with the group and sets a trap for them. Read the chapter beforehand to understand what is happening in parallel, while the group is looking around the city, so that neither you nor your group end up overwhelmed.

RELAXING JOURNEY

To get to Coreheim, the group must travel through the mountains south of Pipers Whistle. While they are at Pipers Whistle planning their trip, they will most likely notice several carriages driving along the road to Coreheim. These are farmers who are forced to offer their goods in Coreheim due to the bad trade in the village. They are more than willing to take the group for a small fee, which is an offer that the group should definitely accept so as not to be on the road any longer than necessary. Nevertheless, the journey takes several hours, but there are no dangers awaiting them and since they will most likely be sitting in a wagon with hay or vegetables, they can rest appropriately and gain the benefits of a [long rest](#).

When the party arrives in front of Coreheim, you may read the following text:

After several hours of a carriage ride, the screeching of seagulls can be heard. A slight taste of salt pervades the air and accompanies you as you reach the top of a large hill, at which point a beautiful sight reveals itself. In the distance lies the large city of Coreheim. It was built in the midst of pointed mountains and, as in the tales, borders on all the other kingdoms. In the west, the seemingly endless Litikal planes stretch out into the distance. To the east reigns the fertile wilderness of the Liquid Meadows. And behind them, the gigantic Ash Mountains rise as high as the cloud tops. Cold winds prevail up here and it seems much cooler than in Ambros. The sky is obscured by heavy clouds, portending a storm. A long bridge over a wide river leads directly to the great gate of the city.

The party must now drive down the hill and pass the city gate. As they approach the gates, they see a caravan about to enter the city. It is strongly reminiscent of the refugee-caravan highlighted at the start of the adventure. The gate is open and it's not difficult to get into the city. Ambrosian guards stand at the entrance and glance at the goods being brought in, but rarely stop anyone. After the group arrives, you can bring the city to life with exciting residents.

If the party tells the guards about their mission or even show the punch card, the guards will initially think they are being tricked. Ambrosian guards are not the brightest and are mostly completely unfamiliar with Nosmerian technology. They would most likely think they are being shown a random punch card in order to just gain valuable information about the Ultracore. However, a successful [DC 13 Charisma \(Persuasion or Intimidation\)](#) check convinces them and they recommend the group to speak to the Steamgeneral Cromankus Steelsplint.



ROLEPLAYING RESIDENTS OF COREHEIM

In Coreheim, all those who once lived within today's destroyed areas can find shelter and a new home. All kinds of species, people and creatures can be encountered in the city. In particular, Jumans can be found in large numbers. They are best described as half-humans. They come from the former western realms, areas that were all destroyed by Sorgoth's army. They are humanoid hybrids made up of humans and animals, but would never want to be referred to as such. They are proud of their species and ancestry, and are all characterized by special abilities that are as diverse as the species of Jumans itself.

Most residents try to stick together in times of destruction and would behave in a friendly manner towards anyone who supports the construction of the Ultracore. But since many have hardly any belongings left and have traveled from far away, kind words are often the only thing they can offer these times. Residents from the remaining six kingdoms can also be seen throughout the city. It's a place where anything can happen and anyone can be encountered. With so many cultures clashing, a colorful crowd is created. A crowd your players shouldn't miss. Therefore, let wild scenarios arise and live out your imagination to the fullest. You can add these encounters anywhere, but also make sure that your group is progressing and doesn't feel like just walking around.

You can come up with any NPCs you like to bring the city to life. If they are ordinary citizens you can use a **Commoner's** (see appendix A) statistics, but you can also customize them and give them race-specific abilities. For example, if the party encounters an Eagle-man (Juman), it only makes sense to give him a flight speed of 30 feet and a beak attack that delivers a bit more damage than a basic unarmed attack.

You can use the following encounter table as a guide and inspiration:

1D6 RANDOM ENCOUNTER

1	A drunk Steam Dwarf collides with a player character and pours beer on them.
2	A Juman (Orca-man) protests against the consumption of fish, in front of an annoyed fish merchant.
3	A Child of the Source mother sits by a fountain with her children and tells them a story while magically shaping the water into the characters of her story.
4	A beggar (any race) grabs a player character by the arm and shouts "They are here. I can smell them from below. Can you all not smell them?!" Then they stumble away into the crowd.
5	A guard gives a Sauromancer a fine, because his pet velociraptor isn't wearing a muzzle.
6	A Juman (Hippo-woman) wants to draw a picture of the group. If they let her, she will paint a masterpiece and give it to them, because they touched her heart.

CROMANKUS STEELSPLINT

All that remains is to find **Cromankus Steelsplint** (see appendix A). He is the fifty-sixth supreme Steamgeneral, leader of the Steam Dwarfs, and oversees the construction of the Ultracore. Unfortunately, it won't be easy to find him, although one might assume otherwise given his high rank.

When the group arrives at Coreheim, Cromankus has just had an exhaustive meeting with the representatives from the other kingdoms, who are concerned because the last needed punch card has not yet arrived and worry about the possible cause. Cromankus, however, knows exactly what the cause is because he has already received Nyx's blackmail letters and spoke to the Nosmerian Cyrian Kresge, who arrived in Coreheim some time ago (only if he survived at the start of the adventure). Cromankus decided not to tell anyone about the blackmail attempt to avoid causing panic. Everyone's lives are at stake and he fears that spreading this information would drive all nations into turmoil. While the player group searches for him around town, he is already at the port welcoming his closest confidants, all high-ranking Steam Dwarfs, whom he has called to Coreheim due to the state of emergency. They are the only ones he fully trusts to advise him, without spreading rumors. Afterwards he wants to take them to a Steam Dwarf only tavern so they can talk completely in private, without anyone suspecting anything.

In order to find Cromankus, the players must follow his trail and question certain witnesses who have seen him a while ago, as described below (see "Ask Around" below). If they ask a citizen why he's so hard to find, they'll have different answers. Some believe it is because of the numerous duties that he must attend to and others that he just never stays in one place for long, because he is then pestered with questions about the Ultracore by concerned townsfolk. If your party prefers to wait for the Steam Dwarf rather than searching for him, remind them

that they are running out of time. The easiest way to do this is as a passing citizen to spread rumors that Sorgoth's army is about to overrun the borders and that there is little time left to turn on the Ultracore.

ASKING AROUND

The group has to wander around the city for a while before they get any useful information. Everyone knows who he is, but almost nobody knows where he is. Every time the party asks a citizen, they get answers like: "I heard he hangs around there" or "I'm sure the people there know more", while each refers to random locations in the city. It doesn't matter whether it's a tavern, bakery, cemetery, lighthouse or a shady alley, Cromankus is always absent and the group is just sent to a new location. However, after asking three different people, either from the encounter table or made up by yourself, they are recommended to talk to the Athletic Onggur. If the group shows the punch card during a conversation, the residents of Coreheim will react differently. Most are completely unfamiliar with Nosmerian technology and would most likely be very skeptical. However, there is a shared fear of Sorgoth's invading hordes, so anything that brings hope is easily believed and embraced. If a player character acts in a particularly empathetic and believable manner, consider giving them some advantage on Charisma checks for that conversation - after all, it's in the best interest of the residents to support any cause that helps activate the Ultracore.

ATHLETIC ONGGUR

This young Juman (Snail-man) is determined to break the stereotype of his racial group and become

the fastest Juman of Coreheim. He can be found on the main street all day long because he constantly runs along it in order to train his running speed. Therefore, he is the ideal source of information. If anyone saw which alleyway Cromankus turned into after his meetings today, it was Onggur. In order to meet Onggur, the group must wait 1d10 minutes on Coreheim's main street before a cloud of dust approaches from afar. That will be him, about to sprint past the party at a rapid pace. He is so fast that it takes a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** check to hold him down. The difficulty is reduced by five for each additional character trying to hold him.

If they succeed, Onggur is so surprised that he collides with the group, resulting in everyone falling to the ground. If they fail, Onggur will race past them and it's impossible to catch up with him. If that demotivates the group, a passer-by can call out that he'll be right back here anyway, because he runs the same route several times a day. They can then try again in 1d10 minutes. When they start talking to Onggur, he'll be nervously jogging around the player characters all the time, desperate to keep training. He tells the group that he last saw Cromankus near the port and that they should try speaking to the fisherman Sorkrakhan, who usually sits on one of the piers.

FISHERMAN SORKRAKHAN

This chubby Juman (Lion-man) spends most of his time fishing at the harbor. If anything happens at the port, Sorkrakhan will know. The group can find him on a small pier away from the ships after looking around for a while. Since the pier is a bit hidden, a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)**



check might help to find him faster. When the group arrives, he concentrates on fishing and growls angrily when distracted. Any mention of a punch card or important mission doesn't interest him as long as he's still hungry, and Nosmerian technology just confuses him. If he is left alone for 1d10 minutes, he will manage to catch a fish and is then in a good mood for a conversation.

If he is spoken to again beforehand, he will angrily drop his fishing-rod and roar at the top of his lungs before accusing the group of making too much noise and scaring away all the fish. He then demands compensation for the uncaught fish. If the group compensates him appropriately, he agrees to help them. However, he only accepts edible items.

Alternatively, they can try to help him. Sorkrakhan is not the smartest and doesn't realize that his screaming scared away most of the fish, but he is eager to learn. If a character tries to explain this to him using only words, let them roll a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** check and see if they succeed. If that fails, describe how it looks like Sorkrakhan's head is about to explode from too much thinking. If a character instead tries to explain it demonstratively let them roll a **DC 11 Charisma (Performance)** check, because Sorkrakhan understands gestures much better. If they succeed, he calms down and is more than willing to help.

Sorkrakhan then claims that he observed Cromankus with four other Steam Dwarfs about 30 minutes ago. He waited for them on a secluded pier until they docked with an inconspicuous ship. They were dressed far too refined for the ship they were traveling on and seemed a little stressed. Then Cromankus talked about going to the „Spore Forge“ in order to be able to talk privately. Sorkrakhan has no idea what they meant by that, but they disappeared in the direction of the marketplace. Subsequently, Sorkrakhan recommends talking to the merchant Yatszehsi, who knows about everything that happens on the market streets.

Now, the party will most likely head to the Market Place. Describe how they go through several alleys with houses very close together. This is a good opportunity to roll on the random encounter list once before they arrive. You can skip this if you feel that your group would rather like to move forward and have already spent enough time talking to random citizens.

COREHEIM MARKET

In the center of Coreheim is a large marketplace that is filled with a number of market stalls and traders. It's so crowded that traders who didn't get a market stall squeezed themselves onto carpets in between. It is one of the most colorful areas in Coreheim, as a number of goods and cultures meet here. Not only

are there traders from the 6 kingdoms represented here, but also a number of Jumans who have found a new home in Coreheim and sell various hand-crafted cultural goods. Almost everything Tormentosia has to offer can be bought, from simple household items such as vegetables and clothing, to exotic fabrics, hand-carved statues and octopus arms on a skewer. If your group is looking for interesting items, you can get inspiration from the map (see below) or just freely come up with anything that you want to be purchasable. It's a noisy and busy place where bargaining is popular and new offers are constantly shouted at the crowd.

NYX AND THE RUKZ WARRIORS

When the group arrives at the marketplace, Nyx and the Rukz warriors are already there. While the player party searched for Cromankus, Nyx was able to catch up incredibly quickly thanks to her rat-companions. As soon as they entered the city, they contacted the shady Rukz of Coreheim, who make their living selling information and smuggling illegal goods through the city's underground sewers. From them they learned that Cromankus was last seen near the market square and that if anyone knows where he is, it's probably the merchant named Yatszehsi.

By assuming that the punch card thieves have found out about this too, they will probably visit the merchant sooner or later. Therefore, **Nyx** (see appendix A) has prepared a trap and wants to ambush them at the right moment, using panic as a distraction. Her group has split into three parts in order to prepare for their ambush. She and a **Rukz warrior** (see appendix A) are hiding in the crowd, while the Rukz scout (**Rukz-Throw-It-All**, see appendix A) who saw the thieves back in the Moss Seas hides on a rooftop and tries to spot the punch card thieves as soon as they approach the square. Four other warriors are hiding in the sewers under the square, armed to the teeth. Each of them lurks under one of four individual manhole covers, ready to climb up and attack at Nyx's signal.

DANGEROUS ARRIVAL

When the group arrives at the market, you may read the following text:

A colorful market is spread out over a large cobblestone square. Merchants from all across Tormentosia stand behind their stalls or sit on carpets, displaying a variety of wares. Even at first glance, it can be seen that almost all species of the continent are represented. Most jostle through the busy crowd, trying to acquire fresh food or more exotic goods. The first market stall that catches your eye belongs to a fish and octopus merchant who is discussing the price of an octopus arm on a skewer with his customer. The customer loudly insists on a reduction of the price from one silver coin to five copper pieces.

Depending on how the player characters behave and look, two different scenarios can now unfold.

...If they look like they did back in the Moss Seas, they are immediately recognized by the Rukz scout hiding on the roof, who then lets out a loud bird-like caw in order to warn Nyx and the other warriors. Nyx then blends into the crowd, pulling her hood far over her face, and the Rukz that is with her attempts to lure away the guards stationed on the market square. He has previously given his weapon and armor to the other warriors in order to look like a simple Coreheim refugee and is now going to a market stall nearby to start a scene. At this point read the following:

After walking a few more steps, you suddenly see a small inquisitive crowd forming around something. Then four Ambrosian guards push through the crowd and a loud scream is heard, followed by several insults.

The scream comes from the Rukz warrior. He got caught stealing on purpose and now continually insults the guards, calling them all incompetent. If a player character approaches a bit closer, they can see what is happening. Describe how a noisy Rukz-Man is surrounded by four offended looking Ambrosian guards who hardly give him room to move. Nearby stands a disgusted Hedonist trader in front of his market stall, pointing to the male Rukz, blaming him for attempted thievery. Then the Rukz is taken away by the guards, who disappear into an alley with him, so that the market is now unguarded.

If a player character tries to stand up for the thief, the thief will insult the guards again, so that they don't change their minds about the arrest. Any character watching the Rukz-Man closely can make a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check. If successful, they will see a brief smile when he returns the player character's gaze and is led off into the alley. After that, the crowd will dissolve and everyone goes about their everyday lives. The group will now most likely be looking for merchant Yatszehsi, who is fairly easy to find. With there being no guards, Nyx created the perfect conditions for an ambush (see "Final Showdown" below).

...If they look different than they did back in the Moss Seas, the Rukz scout fails to recognize them and they are exposed at the latest when they talk to merchant Yatszehsi (see "Merchant Yatszehsi's Stall" below), because the Rukz Warrior who was supposed to distract the guards is nearby, eavesdropping on conversations. Nyx fears that the group will move on soon and her plan to distract the guards has failed. She didn't create perfect conditions for the ambush but must strike anyway (see "Final Showdown" below).

FINAL SHOWDOWN

Nyx and the Rukz wait for the right moment to strike, and will most likely not attack until the group is close together and distracted. An optimal time for this would be right after the conversation with Yatszehsi the merchant. The fight could start right after the group learns the whereabouts of Cromankus. That way, it starts right after the party's success, thus creating an epic twist and momentum for the fight that is about to start. If there is a better opportunity for starting a fight with your group, you can of course choose to take it, in order to make the start of the fight as exciting as possible.

When the fight starts, you may read the following:

Suddenly a loud bang is heard, followed by frightened screams. All around you people start running as if they are terrified of something. In the ensuing chaos, people are pushed aside and market stalls knocked over, so that the items on them are now flying wildly through the area. One person gets spices in their eye and screams, another slips on a smashed melon, others run towards the alleys and some stand in shock, pointing at a creature on a nearby rooftop. From there a muscular Rukz makes a throwing motion and tosses what looks like a glass bottle into the marketplace. The bottle shatters on the wooden table of an overturned market stall, and green liquid spills out and rapidly etches the wood until almost nothing is left. More terrified people run away and the crowd thins out a bit, except for one person who instead of running away, runs directly in your direction. It is a slender woman who is drawing a rapier from under a long cloak. As she runs her hood falls back revealing her long silvery-blond hair and a face you've already seen before - Roll Initiative.

The Rukz scout who hid on the roof threw several acid bottles down, thereby causing panic. At the same time, Nyx and the other Rukz warriors take advantage of the chaos and attack the player party. By mentioning her thin build, hair color, long coat and other clues from the previous chapters, the group should be able to recognize the woman as Nyx. If properly staged, this should be a great revelation for them.

Put yourself in the shoes of Nyx and the Rukz warriors for an exciting fight and climax of the adventure. They have finally managed to face their adversaries and want to take revenge for the theft of the punch card or even murder of their comrades-in-arms. For an immersive portrayal of Nyx and the Rukz during the fight, have them utter angrily and in short phrases what they had to go through to find them. This also helps your group to understand what happened in parallel during their journey, so that afterwards everything feels coherent and not confusing. Make sure you do this during the fight as

they most likely won't survive and it may feel unsatisfying for your party if they don't understand who they were.

Roll initiative for **Nyx** (see appendix A) and the **Rukz Scout (Rukz Throw-It-All)**, see appendix A) individually, while the other four **Rukz warriors** (see appendix A) share their own roll result. When the Rukz warriors have their first turn, they jump out from under the four different manhole covers and run towards the closest player's character to attack them.

The panicked residents are not meant to play a major role and only help for the theatrical staging in order to give the feel of a chaotic and fun battle. If the fight is too easy, you can always let another **Rukz warrior** climb out of the sewers at any time and if it's too hard, a **guard** (see appendix A) could come out of an alley and help. Ultimately, it's all about presenting your party with an epic final battle that leaves them feeling satisfied.

If the unarmed Rukz didn't manage to distract the Ambrosian guards, he's still there, grabbing some object to attack with. The four guards then become the focus of the Rukz scout, who uses his first turn to throw his only Poison Bomb at them, thereby killing them. They don't play a big role in the fight, but the scout loses a whole turn and his best weapon to them. Thereafter he can't attack the player party with it anymore.

LOCATION OVERVIEW

This map is for the Game Master. Use the spoiler-free variant as battle map for your group and let them start in the alley on the bottom left.

1. BUILDINGS

Most buildings are two-story and about 25-30 feet high. Most have shops on the ground floor and apartments on the second floor. A character who wants to jump from one roof to another needs a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. If unsuccessful, they fall about 25 feet before hitting the ground and suffer 2d6 bludgeoning fall damage.

2. MARKET STALLS

A number of market stalls are spread across the marketplace. During the fight, most of them are without owners, so thieves can be easily tempted. If a character wants to steal something, you can look at the map and use the displayed goods as a guide to determine what they find. Any character who searches through them thoroughly can roll once on the random loot table (see "Adventure Introduction"), after a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** check.

3. HEY BALES

Several stacked hay bales serve as a stage for a Juman (Hornet-woman) singer. She mostly sings heroic songs about brave warriors fighting the armies of Sorgoth on the borders. She accepts song



requests, but expects at least 1 piece of silver in return. When a fight breaks out, she hides in the hay and tries to watch everything carefully so that she can later write a hit song about it.

4. MERCHANT YATZEHESI'S STALL

Yatzehesi's market stall is located right next to a fountain in the middle of the square. He is a Juman (Snake-Man) and sells mostly herbs, fragrances and incense sticks. He takes great pride in the smells he creates and has recently started to claim that they have calming effects. However, this is just a sales strategy in order to sell more goods to scared citizens. Yatzehesi is very hardworking but also greedy for money, he spends almost every day exclusively on the marketplace in order to always be up to date on prices and competition. Because of this, he doesn't miss much of what's happening and is occasionally asked about the latest events.

When a player character asks him for information, he immediately sees a new opportunity to make some money. He needs three volunteers to try out his latest yet untested smells. If the group agrees, describe how he slowly puts on gloves before taking three vials out of a well-closed box, and hands them to the characters. The vials are defined in the table below and are all so strong that a character who puts them on their skin smells like their specific odor for 1d4 hours. For an immersive portrayal of Yatzehesi, you can make snake-like hissing noises when he speaks.

PERFUME VIAL

SMELL & EFFECT

Sweet Serenade

This perfume is a milky white liquid made from Serenade Anchora plants. It smells sweet and pleasantly tingles on the skin.

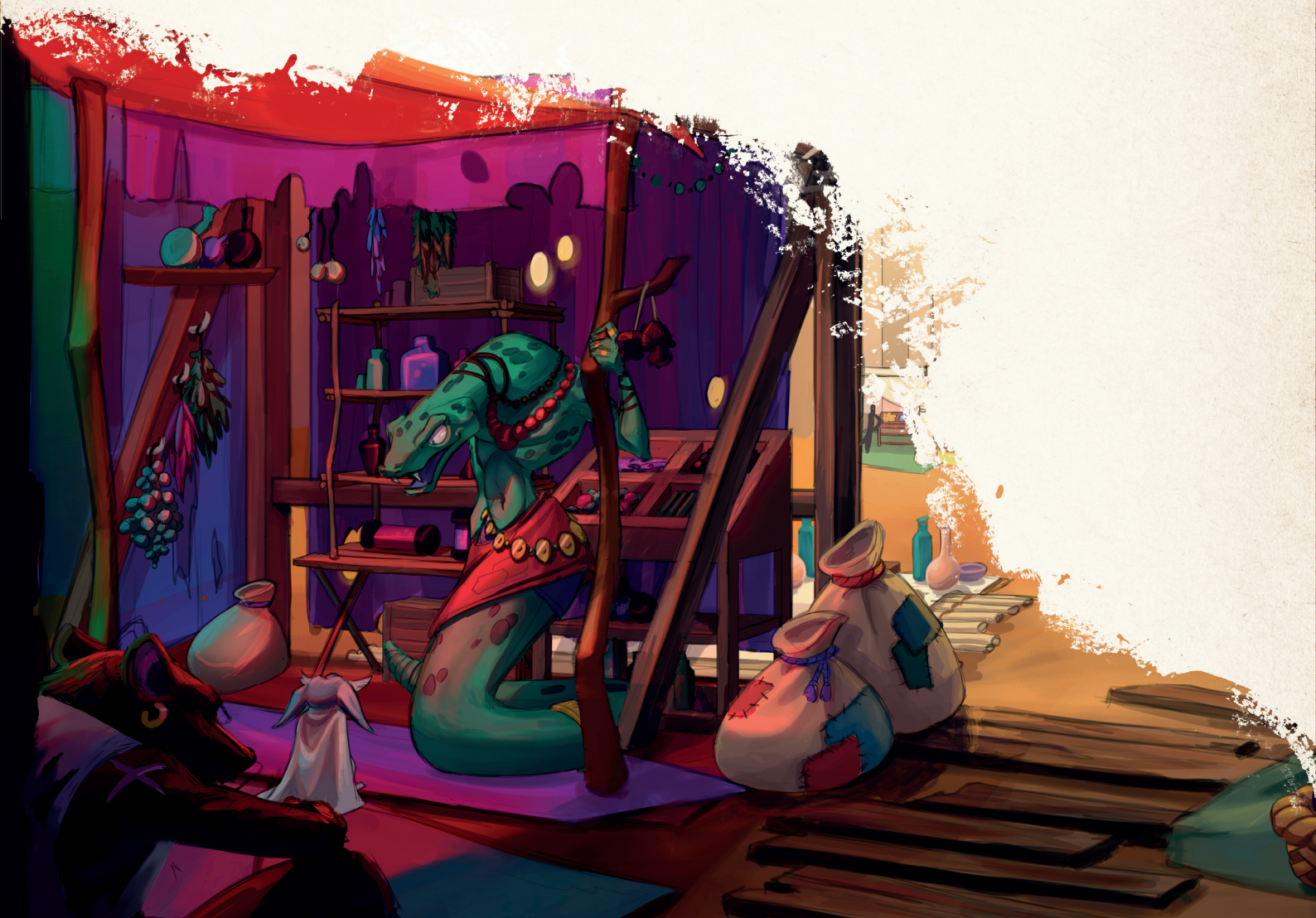
Snout Stimulator

This perfume is a greasy slightly beige liquid made from Vakensnout (boar like creatures) fat. It smells horrible and causes severe coughing and nausea.

Forbidden
Pompolloplum

This perfume is a pink liquid made from small Pompolloplum plants that bear small fruits and have an intense plummy aroma.

Yatzehesi is then curious about their opinions and expects them to smell it properly. Since he wants to sell the perfumes sooner or later, he is only interested in honest answers and gets angry if he feels he is being lied to. If they give satisfactory answers, he will offer them the vials as a gift. If the group refuses to help by being a test subject,



the merchant can also be persuaded to help with absurdly large amounts of gold. If they have Caster Holcomb's golden snake statue and show it to him, he will consider that to be fair pay as well. In fact, the statue fits right in with his golden snake statue collection, which would then be complete.

Afterwards he tells the group that Cromankus and other Steam Dwarfs just recently walked through the marketplace. He assumes that they want to go to the Sporeforge - a tavern that is just around the corner and roughly describes the way to them. He tells them to keep an eye out for a Sporebeer merchant, because he is responsible for who enters the tavern, although he may initially deny it. With the new information, the group must now go to the Sporeforge tavern to speak to Cromankus. If Nyx hasn't already struck, she will do it now before they leave the market place (see "Final Showdown" above).

SPOREFORGE TAVERN

The Sporeforge is one of the most difficult taverns to find in Coreheim, as it was built underground and only grants access to Steam Dwarfs. Only few people know about this establishment as the entrance is well camouflaged and looks like an inconspicuous merchant sitting on a carpet. In truth, there is a hidden hatch underneath the carpet that leads down into the tavern.

After the group followed Yatszehsi directions, you may read the following text:

After walking a few streets further, you suddenly see an inconspicuous merchant sitting on a huge carpet, right in the alley Yatszehsi described to you. At first glance, he looks a bit strange because his head seems to be almost the same size as his entire body. He doesn't wear pants, instead a shirt that looks like a sewn-together sack of potatoes covers his entire body and his facial expression is anything but inviting. Next to him are several beer kegs and on a cardboard sign in front of him is written „Real Sporebeer, 10 gold coins per keg“.

Sitting on the carpet is the Giraffe-Juman Sidwick Grinnick, who is the Sporeforge's bouncer and bartender. Characters taking a closer look at Sidwick, can make a [DC 11 Wisdom \(Perception\)](#) check in order to realize that his shirt is stuffed with straw, and that where hands and feet would normally be sticking out, only wooden sticks can be seen. The outfit is meant to hide his true appearance so he draws less attention. In reality, only a small part of his long giraffe neck is hidden under the shirt, while the rest extends further down into the tavern through a hatch.

In order to reach Cromankus, the group must first convince Sidwick that letting them through is of the utmost importance. If they question him about Cromankus or the tavern, Sidwick denies everything and acts like he's just an incredibly stupid merchant. A successful [DC 13 Wisdom \(Insight\)](#) check immediately reveals that he is lying to them. If a character confronts him about his lies, he stops playing dumb and abruptly demands that it would be better not to ask any more questions. Cromankus has given him strict orders to only let in regulars and he doesn't want to lose his job. The group must now continue trying to persuade Sidwick. Enjoy the unfolding conversation and decide for yourself when Sidwick relents. If the group comes up with evidence, such as the punch card, Sidwick will want to examine it closely. However, since his real hands are far underground, he is dependent on help and demands that they should hold it directly in front of his snout.

After they successfully convince him, he tells them about the hatch under his rug, through which they can easily climb down and that they can easily ask anyone inside the tavern about Cromankus.



As the group climbs down the ladder, you may read the following text:

As you climb down, you hear increasingly loud music and laughter until you reach the end of the ladder and stand in the middle of a rustic tavern. The whole room is filled with drinking Steam Dwarfs, therefore leaving only a few tables free. A small band plays loud music and entices the dwarfs to sing along, while they rhythmically stamp their feet on the floor. Right next to you is a small counter where a Steam Dwarf is picking up several freshly tapped beers. The bartender is the same giraffe that is also guarding the entrance above the hatch. His long neck stretches behind the counter across the room and up through a small opening in the ceiling, while he uses the rest of his body to diligently fill new mugs from behind the counter.

AUDIENCE WITH CROMANKUS STEELSPLINT

When the group arrives, **Cromankus Steelsplint** (see appendix A) is in a private room with his advisers discussing the critical situation regarding the missing punch card. Finding him will be easy from now on, since anyone who isn't too drunk knows exactly where he is. Should the group ask for him, pretty much everyone who notices will point to a closed room at the end of the drinking hall.

When the group enters Cromankus's private room, you may read the following text:

The rustic door creaks loudly and opens into a small room. Inside are 5 Steam Dwarfs sitting around a circular table staring at a letter on it. At first they seem thoughtful and tense, but when the door opens, they all look in a confused fashion in your direction. Then one of them abruptly puts his hand on the table, covering the letter on it completely, before asking you: "And who are you?"

The group will now probably tell Cromankus everything. He'll be skeptical and suspicious at first, but as soon as they mention the punch card, a wounded Nosmerian or bandits, he'll insist that they sit down and close the door behind them. If a character hands him the punch card or other evidence, Cromankus passes it on to his advisers, who then all pull strangely steaming monocles from their pockets to examine the items. Intelligent as they are, they should immediately realize from the evidence that the group is telling the truth. Cromankus will be incredibly relieved at this and will order a decent round of Sporebeer for the group, who can now tell the dwarfs all about their journey. During the ensuing conversation, the group should feel welcome and should be given a clear sense of success: They did it!

For an immersive portrayal of Cromankus and to give your players any information that is still missing for the bigger picture use the following information, which he is very happy to share.

- Sorgoth's army is about to win the war on the frontiers, but the punch card may change everything because it's the last one needed to activate the Ultracore.
- Cromankus has received several blackmail letters demanding ridiculous amounts of money if he wants the punch card back.
- The letters were signed with a capital „N“ and sent by carrier pigeons from Ambros.
- If Cyrian Kresge survived, he most likely made it to Coreheim and had already warned Cromankus, who then ordered him not to tell anyone else about the punch card.

After the conversation, Cromankus does not want to waste any time and asks the group to accompany him to the Ultracore Tower immediately.

BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

If the party has made it this far, they have saved Tormentosia and can now witness the activation of the Ultracore. If they are accompanying Cromankus, describe how they walk through Coreheim together until they arrive at a huge tower while constantly being watched by curious residents.

When the group arrives at the tower, you may read the following text:

You stand in front of a massive tower taller than anything you have seen before. The peak is shaped like a gigantic crescent and reaches above the clouds. Cromankus has already disappeared halfway into the building, so you have to follow him quickly. You walk through a huge lobby straight towards a spiral staircase that leads all the way to the top. Everywhere throughout the building you meet Ambrosian Guards, who only nod at you as soon as they realize that you are with Cromankus. Once at the top, he takes you down a long corridor that leads directly into a large circular room. Inside are dozens of strange devices and contraptions, all of which are being inspected by busy Nosmerians. They are carrying clipboards, and evaluating data while occasionally shoving punch cards into mechanical consoles. They're so engrossed in their work that they don't notice you until Cromankus hands them the missing punch card, thereby prompting instant excitement among the Nosmerians as their invention is about to be activated.

Before a high ranking Nosmerian slides the punch card into the main console, he tells everyone in the room to stand by the large glass window so they can see exactly what happens next. He points to a window which is so big that you can easily see the whole city and beyond from up there.

When the group stands in front of the window, you may read the following text:

The Nosmerian slides the punch card into the main console with a euphoric laugh, while everyone else tensely looks at the device. Then, against all expectations, blue electronic bolts whirl around the room as the whole contraption shakes wildly, hitting several Nosmerians and throwing them against the walls due to a heavy recoil. One slams into the glass window right next to you, and then a second loud bang follows as another suddenly kicks the console with full force. After that, the machine calms down and every Nosmerian, even the ones lying on the ground, begin to cheer in triumph, while looking out the window excitedly. Now the electronic bolts appear to be gathering in a ball of energy above the crescent shape of the tower. It gets bigger and bigger until a strong energy beam suddenly shoots out of it into the sky, it is so strong that the whole building briefly trembles. At a certain height, the beam changes shape into the form of a gigantic dome that grows downwards until it eventually hits the ground, thereby separating the remaining kingdoms from Sorgoth's army. It is the sight of a new era.

Congratulations, you managed to save Tormentosia! Nyx's plans were successfully stopped and the prophecy she received ironically turned out to be true, as she ended up having "life-altering" consequences, just not in the way she expected. She will now most likely be in prison or worse. The punch card made it to Cromankus thanks to the group, who will be gloriously rewarded and celebrated as heroes, because the remaining kingdoms are now protected from Sorgoth's army and a new era begins.

The adventure ends here, but feel free to keep playing if your group wants to party with the residents of Coreheim or has unfinished business to settle. Otherwise, we hope you enjoyed our adventure and that your group had a great time together. If you enjoy the world of Coreborn, we sincerely invite you to check out more of the world and the official video game at <https://coreborn.gg>.

Thank you for playing and stay tuned for more!



APPENDIX - A CREATURE STATISTICS

ARCAS FARNLEY

Medium Humanoid, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 14 (breastplate)

Hit Points 80 (10d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Skills Athletics +6, History +4, Insight +3, Investigation +4

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Arcas can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Arcas is very smart and doesn't get fooled easily. His memory is excellent and his deductive skills are also remarkable. Because he doesn't talk much, the view of him is often reduced to his muscles, but he couldn't care less. He is Dyonis Brentwood's right-hand man and has important information about Nyx's location (explained in "Chapter 1: Pipers Whistle - Twiceborn Windmill").

BANDIT

Medium Humanoid (Any Race),
Any Non-Lawful Alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

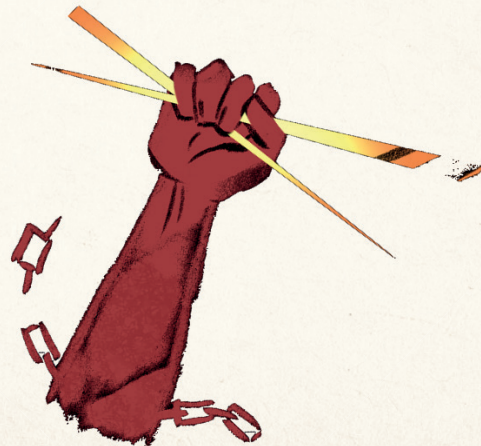
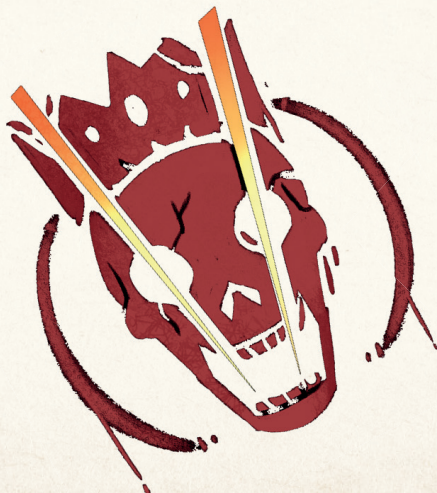
Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Most of the bandits in Ambros are abandoned Ambrosian soldiers who have lost their faith in the kingdom.



COMMONER

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Commoners are ordinary citizens who have no significant combat experience.

CROMANKUS STEELSPLINT

Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +7, CON +7

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +5

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cromankus makes three Steamhammer attacks or two Blunderbuss attacks.

Steamhammer. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Blunderbuss. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 60/120, ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d12+1) piercing damage.

Buckshot. (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Cromankus fires an explosive buckshot shell with his blunderbuss. Each creature in a 30-foot-cone must make a DC 15 Constitution Saving Throw. A creature takes 10 (3d6) force damage and 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Every creature that fails the save is pushed 15ft. away from Cromankus.

Steampowered. Cromankus melee attacks deal an extra 7 (2d6) fire damage (included in the attack) and the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls until the start of Cromankus next turn.

Cromankus Steelsplint is the sixty-fifth supreme Steamgeneral and leader of the Steam Dwarfs. He is an excellent fighter and strategist and oversees the activation of the Ultracore in Coreheim. It is he who must ultimately be handed the punch card by the group in order for Tormentosia to be saved.

DINOSAUR COMPANION

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11 + your level (natural armor)

Hit Points 6 + four times your level (the companion has a number of Hit Dice (d8's) equal to your level)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +4, Survival +4

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages understands the languages you speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Various Forms. Choose an appropriate type of attack for your companion, this affects the type of damage it does. Bites usually are piercing, claws are slashing and ram-attacks are bludgeoning damage.

Charge. If the companion moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with an attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage and it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Attack. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage.



DYONIS BRENTWOOD

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Dyonis can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Dyonis deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Dyonis that isn't incapacitated and Dyonis doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dyonis makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Dyonis has narcissistic tendencies and always thinks he's superior, although he's actually rather stupid. Nevertheless, he has a lot of influence in Pipers Whistle and can be very helpful in the search for Nyx. As she betrayed him, it suits him very well that she is being hunted by the player group - especially since he then doesn't have to venture into the dangerous Moss Seas himself, in order to hunt her down (explained in "Chapter 1: Pipers Whistle - Twiceborn Windmill").

FINNIGAN SPRUCE

Medium Humanoid, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 12 (hide armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Finnigan can move up to his speed towards a hostile creature that he can see.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Finnigan is a 40-year-old musclehead who was persuaded by Nyx to leave the Twiceborn Bandits in order to do their own thing and now firmly believes that she will lead them to great success. He has become her second in command due to his sheer strength. He has a very distinctive face and chin, and stands out in any crowd due to his above-average size. Some people say that he wrestled boars with his bare hands, which is evident from his appearance as he wears a thick boar hide over his armor. His biggest flaw is his short temper, so if anyone or anything provokes Finnigan he won't take it, no matter friend or foe.

GHOUL

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

GUARD

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Passive Perception 7

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Ambrosian Guards include members of a city watch and the bodyguards of merchants and nobles.

MOSDIR

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d6 + 4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Charge. If the mosdir moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Crumple Zone. The mosdir has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Ram. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Mosdir are particularly swift goat creatures covered in moss. They are vegetarian and usually friendly, unless they feel threatened. They have a massive pair of spiraling horns on their foreheads and a protective layer of moss covering their backs.



NOBLE

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Any two languages

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

The Hedonists live in a clearly hierarchical society that attaches tremendous importance to nobility, ancestry and generally a person's descent.

NOSMERIAN ROBO BAT

Tiny Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 3 (1d4)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Mechanical Sensors. The robo bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Water-Defect. After being doused with water, the robot bats sensors fail to function for 1d4 rounds. Neither its mechanical sensors nor its sensors responsible for blindsight work during that time.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 1 piercing damage.

Blood Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage, and the robo bat attaches to the target. While attached, the robo bat doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the robo bat's turns, the target loses 2 (1d4) hit points due to blood loss.

The robo bat can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the robo bat.

Robo Bats are mechanical bats and loyal companions of the Nosmerians, helping with various errands.

NYX

Medium Humanoid (Human), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Overcharge Malfunction. Immediately after Nyx drops below 20 HP, all creatures within 10ft of her must make a DC 15 Dexterity Saving Throw or be stunned until the start of her next turn. Her attacks and other abilities gain additional effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nyx makes two attacks: one with her glove and one with her rapier. **Overcharge:** Nyx makes an additional rapier attack.

Glove. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: If the target is a medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 14). Nyx can only grapple one target at a time. **Overcharge:** Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 3 (1d6) lightning damage at the start of each of its turns.

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Glove Parry. Nyx adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Nyx must see the attacker. **Overcharge:** The attacker takes 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

Nyx is the leader of the Nyx Bandits, who are causing chaos in Tormentosia. She is a skilled fighter and former member of the Twiceborn Bandits, which she left to pursue her own goals. She will encounter the players several times throughout the adventure and become the antagonist of the group. She cares for nothing more than herself and embodies her innate Ambrosian arrogance to the extreme. This gives her incredible self-confidence and assertiveness, but at the same time it is also her greatest weakness, as she often underestimates her opponents. Her exact motives are described in the introduction under „Adventure Background“.

RUKZ THROW-IT-ALL

Medium Humanoid, Any Alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Keen Smell. The Rukz has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Rukz Pistol. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, ranged 80/320ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Acid Vial. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 20 ft., one target. Hit: The target is covered in acid and takes 3 (1d6) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. Any creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to scrape or wash the acid off, taking 2 (1d4) acid damage on a failed save.

Poisonous Bomb (1/Day). The Rukz can light a bomb and throw it at a point up to 60 feet away. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful one.

“Rukz Throw It All” are special Rukz who specialize in poisons, bombs and acids. They use any means to demoralize their opponents. The group will first encounter one in Coreheim (more information in Chapter 3: Coreheim - “Final Showdown”)

RUKZ WARRIOR

Medium Humanoid, Any Alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Rukz Cunning. The warrior has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.

Keen Smell. The Rukz has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Rukz Knife. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Pack Tactics. The warrior has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the warrior's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Rukz warriors are fearless melee fighters who will use any trick to win. The group will first encounter one of them in the Moss Seas (more information in Chapter 2: The Moss Seas - “Who are the Rukz”).



YOUNG WEBMONGER

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amphibious. The webmonger can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The webmonger uses Web and makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Web. The webmonger targets one Medium or smaller creature that it can see within 20 feet of it. The target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is grappled and pulled into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the webmonger. As an action, the grappled target can make a DC 14 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed - AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage.

Webmongers are large crab-like creatures that behave very aggressively. They carry their eggs in large sticky webs, which they also can shoot at things in order to catch their prey. They collect all sorts of materials, depending on their surroundings, in order to put it as armor on their sticky back.



COREBORN

NATIONS OF THE ULTRACORE



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