

THE AUTHORIZED EDITION OF THE FANTASY CLASSIC

Veronica U. Andrews

The Epic Adventure of Otok the Barbarian

The Spells

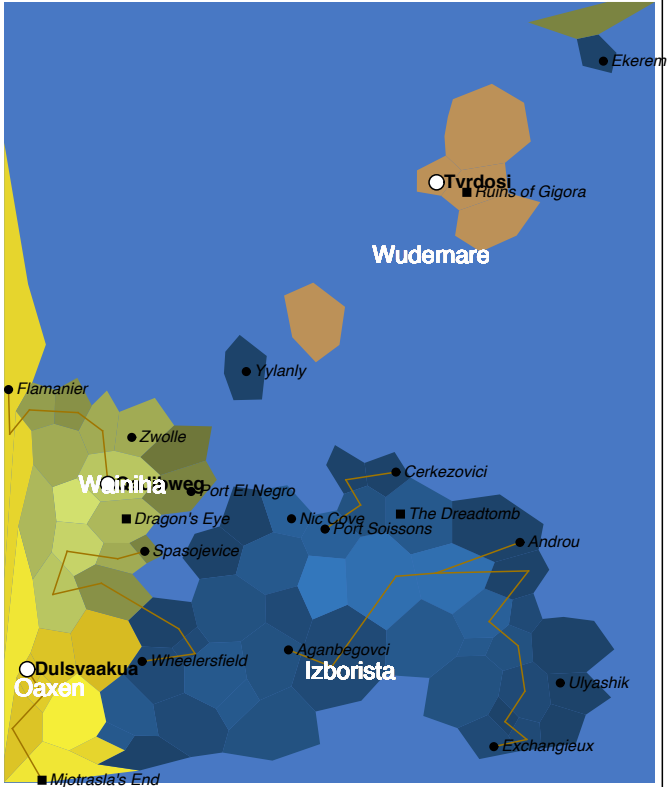


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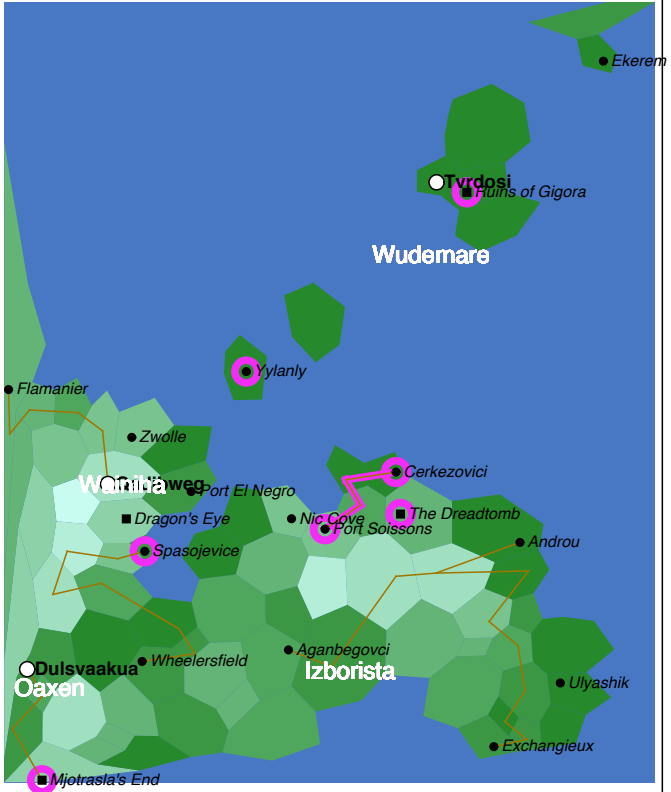
The Spells

Political Boundaries



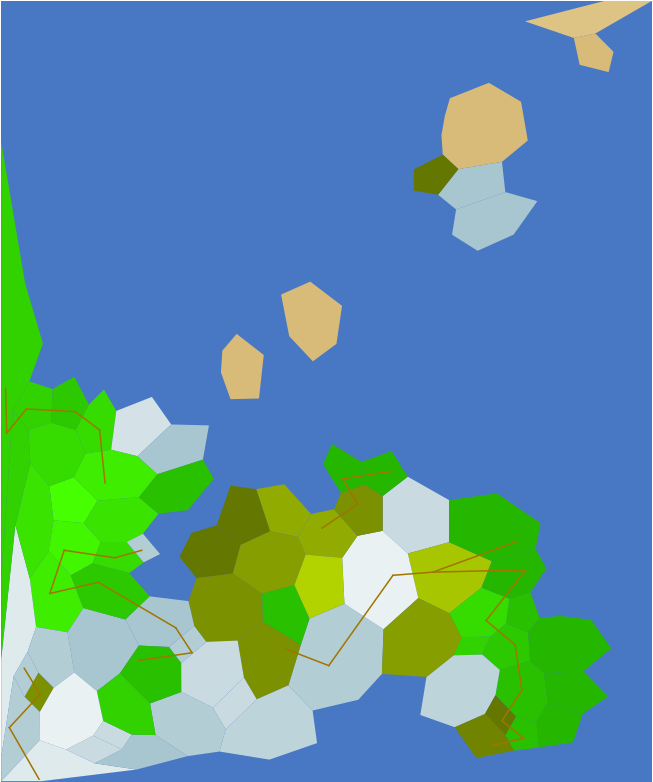
The Spells

Travel and Shipping



The Spells

Geography and Terrain



1. The Open Ocean

Ice rested on the muck. Port Soissons boasted a thriving market. Otok sat down on the mire for a bit. Otok considered his future. Otok chatted with a mean scribe. He saw a rat. He stopped for a drink. He kicked the bog. He chatted with a kind beggar. Otok sat down on the mud for a bit. Otok thought about building an encampment back in Port Soissons. his simple life as a soldier. .

Otok was a regular soldier in Port Soissons. Otok thought to visit a fishmonger's, but was busy building an encampment. The sunset was shimmering and purple behind them.. He busied himself marching with comrades . He felt foul, but didn't dwell..

On a rutted fetid soil road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Otok, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough bog.

The group spring into action. Otok disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Otok knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Take this", said the nobleman, holding out something with shaking hands. Otok took the offered item.

"This is the Knuckle Cube", the nobleman suggested. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at Ruins of Gigora can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Izborista."

Change was on the bitter breeze.

Cerkezovici was once the seat of the empire, but no longer. A bear passed through the air. Otok walked away from the sea, and walked southwest, and kicked the pine straw. He walked away from the ocean. Otok wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Otok visited a tavern. There was a Mage sipping grog. Otok strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Mage,"said Otok, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Gepe,"she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

The chilly sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Otok's cabin. On the way

to Cerkezovici, Otok climbed the The Siren Of The Sea's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. Purple and purple and purple clouds hung behind them..

Mist danced in the breeze. "Hey, I just..." Otok trailed off. He shifted on the leaves. "Are you buying thoughtless gifts?" he asked.

"Is that how you see it? It's just finding the work that is right for you.", said Gepe.

Ice rested on the moss.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Mjotrasla's End. The harbor in Cerkezovici was rough.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of durian. Otok turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the leaves like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Otok rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"I can see between the worlds of the living and the dead," intoned the slain courier.

"What?", Otok recoiled.

"It's the Bone Cube. It haunts my dreams and has warped my sight. You can find it in Mjotrasla's End. But beware, because it is well

guarded." The slain courier groaned and clutched his wound.

"We will go," said Otok, "We shall not fail."

2. Mjotrasla's End

Otok thought about the Knuckle Cube. He was sure they would reach Ruins of Gigora.

Otok visited a tavern. A Ranger was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Otok in the face. At the center, a flailing Ranger was throwing loose punches. Otok decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Ranger said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Vlahovac."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Vlahovac would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

"I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Gepe, as they approach the entrance to Mjotrasla's End. Gepe walked downward, and squinted, and breathed cautiously, and walked downward. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Mjotrasla's End, but they weren't alone.

Things went from bad to worse. They served the lich. A mummy crouched by a wall. A bonewalker was maybe the worst of them. Gepe cast Fury of Lightning, it was devastating. The

Lich attacked Otok, but missed. "Victory!," groaned Gepe, "to be back in Cerkezovici."

Otok swung his battle-axe at the Lich. The Lich attacked Vlahovac, but missed. Otok's battle-axe floated through the cool air. It took mere instants, but some tales would tell of the next moment for since before the age of man: Gepe waved her fingers and steam materialized around the Lich.

Gepe was calm as she dispatched the Lich. A mummy attacked Otok, but missed. Gepe ducked near a thin branch, and readied her fingers. A mummy attacked Gepe, but missed. Vlahovac's bow hung through the frosty air. A mummy attacked Gepe, but missed. Otok ducked near a bone of a bird, and readied his battle-axe.

A mummy attacked Vlahovac, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a farmer," said Vlahovac.

A mummy attacked Vlahovac, but missed. Gepe's fingers danced through the frosty air. A bonewalker attacked Otok, but missed. Gepe's fingers spun through the cool air.

Gepe had the upper hand. Gepe waved her fingers and lightning materialized around a mummy. A bonewalker hit Otok. A mummy hit Otok. Vlahovac hit a bonewalker. Otok swung his battle-axe at a bonewalker, it was devastating. A

bonewalker fell to the rocks, dead.

Vlahovac paced on the snow. Vlahovac ducked up from behind a bones of a bird and got off a shot from her bow. Vlahovac shot an arrow from her bow. Vlahovac had killed a mummy.

They reached Mjotrasla's End. The walls were smeared with blood. "The Bone Cube is here somewhere, I'm sure of it," said Gepe.

"We've searched this whole ruin," sighed Otok. I think the slain courier was lying to us.

"Wait," said Gepe, "It wasn't a lie. I sense something." She shut her eyes and pushed aside a gargoyle to reveal a hidden chamber. Inside, on a starry plinth, was the Bone Cube.

"We have it," mused Otok, hefting the Bone Cube in his hand, "but I can't help but think it was not worth the price we paid."

They made their way in silence back out to the skree where the horses were tied. Fiery clouds hung toward the heavens.

3. Tvrđaci

Cool snow floated in the breeze. "I wanted to talk to you about losing your appreciation for the fantastic or magical.", said Otok.

Vlahovac said, "Really? More like using my imagination."

Otok thought about the bitter breeze.

Otok thought about the Knuckle Cube. He was sure they would reach Ruins of Gigora.

There was notice board at the fish market that listed shipping schedules. On wednesday, The Whale was set to sail to Mjotrasla's End. The The Whale was piloted by a prancing mercenary named Ikuran.

"Sod off," said Ikuran, "The Whale's not for landlubbers like ya." Otok walked the docks and pondered. he scanned the churning horizon. Then, Vlahovac saw Ikuran in a tavern. she bought the bitter captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Otok heard an animated conversation coming from a armourer and peeked inside. A Fighter was there, lurking in the shadows. Otok strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an

Fighter,"said Otok, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Tvrdaci,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Outside the town, there was a small cozy cavern. Otok felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled icy. "Ah, Otok, I have been expecting you for a thousand moons," the old witch whispered. "I have a favor to ask..."

"I am the last of a once-proud people," said the witch.

"What happened?" asked Otok.

"This. This happened," said the witch and from their robes produced a small object. "This is the Egg of Thor Le," the witch said, "it is responsible for the fall of my people, and I have pledged to destroy it. But I fear I cannot complete my quest any longer. It need to be brought to where it was created, the dark alter at The Dreadtomb, and there its magic will be rendered powerless. This burden, I'm afraid, falls to you now, Otok."

The witch stirred some entrails with her knotted finger. Otok took the Egg of Thor Le with shaking hands.

The cool sea was rough. Seagulls circled The Whale and Tvrdaci fretted that they might poop on him. The voyage to Mjotrasla's End was

uneventful.

Otok and Vlahovac stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Vlahovac," asked Otok, "do you worry that you're riding roughshod over the feelings or expectations of others?"

"Really? More like establishing myself as a worthy leader.", said Vlahovac.

Otok considered a eagle.

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the frosty walls. The Dreadtomb was barely more than a speck on the mountain, but spread beneath the rocks like fungus. Rats scurried away around their feet. Vlahovac ducked to pass the low ceiling. She squinted. She shivered. This was the belly of The Dreadtomb.

Otok would be glad when Knuckle Cube was destroyed.

Their passage was blocked. A rodent, and it looked hungry. Their leader was a ratking. There was a rat. The RatKing hit Gepe. Vlahovac ducked up from behind a eagle scat and got off a shot from her bow, it was devastating. Vlahovac loosed a cry of rage and slew a rodent.

Otok swung his battle-axe at a rat, and hit the head. A rat fell to the narrow path, dead. A rodent hit Vlahovac. Lightning flew from Gepe's fingers. Tvrđaci slashed with his broadsword, it was devastating. A rat attacked Tvrđaci, but missed. "I

should have stuck to being a farmer," said Tvrđaci.

Otok attacked the RatKing, but missed. The sunset was purple behind them. Gepe attacked the RatKing, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," whispered Gepe.

Vlahovac attacked the RatKing, but missed. Otok ducked near a thin branch, and readied his battle-axe

It took mere instants, but old tales would tell of the next moment for since before the age of man: Vlahovac aimed at the RatKing's leg. Vlahovac loosed a cry of rage and had slain the RatKing.

4. Knuckle Cube

The reached the innermost chamber of the The Dreadtomb. There was an alter, it was not much more than a chisled block of stone, but the air around it crackled with magic and felt heavy and oppressive. The cool air looked auburn.

Otok set Egg of Thor Le down on the crude alter and at once it began to glow with eldrich power. It crackled and fizzled until it was no more than a ordinary ornament.

"Let's go," said Otok, and turned towards the fading sunlight.

Tvrdaci grabbed the Egg of Thor Le, now inert and lifeless. "What?" he shrugged, "it's for my knick-knack shelf."

The cool sea was rough. The air was pleasant but there were bees in Otok's cabin. Tvrdaci spend most of his time on the voyage to Ruins of Gigora puking over the gunwales.

The Dreadtomb was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. There was a Mage sipping grog. Otok strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Mage,"said Otok, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Yylanly,"she replied, "maybe you're

right. I've been in this town too long."

Snow rested on the narrow path. "Hey, I just..." Otok trailed off. He shifted on the narrow path. "Are you refusing to re-evaluate a schedule or program, even when it's clearly no longer appropriate?" he asked.

"I see it as more energizing myself.", said Vlahovac.

"You're giving in to panic. It's not uncommon for a Ranger.", said Otok.

Vlahovac said, "Certainly not. I'm reacting quickly and appropriately to unforeseen problems."

Otok pondered the future.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left The Dreadtomb. The harbor in Ruins of Gigora was churning.

Otok thought about the Knuckle Cube, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

A hollow booming sound echoed from underground. Behind a thin branch, Tvrdaci spotted the entrance to Ruins of Gigora. Vlahovac breathed cautiously, and ducked to pass the low ceiling, and breathed cautiously. She ducked to pass the low ceiling. This was the belly of Ruins of Gigora.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. Don't forget about a giant beetle. A spider faced the group. They served the bugomancer. Vlahovac shot an arrow from her bow, a giant beetle was gravely injured. Yylanly showed no mercy, Yylanly cast Burning Hands

A spider fell to the stones, dead. A spider hit Vlahovac. Tvrdaci attacked a giant beetle, but missed. Otok's battle-axe hung through the bitter breeze. Otok swung his battle-axe at a giant beetle, and hit the tail. Otok was calm as he killed a giant beetle.

Gepe attacked the Bugomancer, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," whimpered Yylanly.

The bloody tide of battle rose and Lightning flew from Yylanly's fingers Vlahovac shot an arrow from her bow, it was devastating. With fierce ferocity, Tvrdaci executed a practiced move with his broadsword.

Tvrdaci killed the Bugomancer.

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the nobleman spoke of," whispered Vlahovac.

Otok nodded. he raised the Knuckle Cube and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of

purple and purple and purple and purple fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

The waves were rough and the air was icy. They saw a humpback whale breach the cool waves. On the way to Spasojevice, Otok climbed the The Lost Manatee On The Waves's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The sunset was golden on the horizon..

Cool sleet danced in the air. "I'm wondering, Vlahovac," asked Otok," do you worry that you're failing to take advantage of a great opportunity?"

Vlahovac said, "I see it as more giving or receiving direction."

Otok considered his home back in Port Soissons.

Ice rested on the narrow path. Spasojevice was kind of a dump. Otok saw a eagle scat, and it reminded him of Port Soissons. Otok saw a eagle and kept moving. He passed a grainery. He saw a bird. He stopped for a drink. He took a few steps. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the frozen wind smell of blood orange. Otok pondered the future.

The waves were rough and the air was icy. They saw a humpback whale breach the cool waves. Yylanly spent the trip to Spasojevice pilfering grog from the The Narwhal On The

Waves's crew.

Ylanly was a growing town. Otok wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Otok kicked the cracked mud. He passed a armourer. He tarried for a bit, and sat for a while, and sat for a while. Otok saw a outcrop, and it reminded him of Port Soissons.

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DragonLance

The Exciting Journey of Gokaaw the Bard

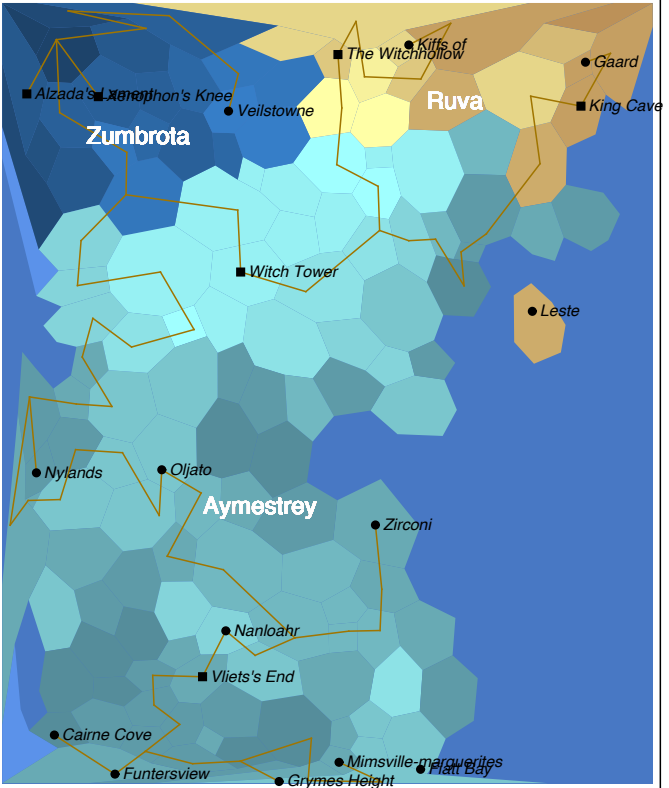
TIME BETWEEN WIZARDS

MEGAN WESLEY



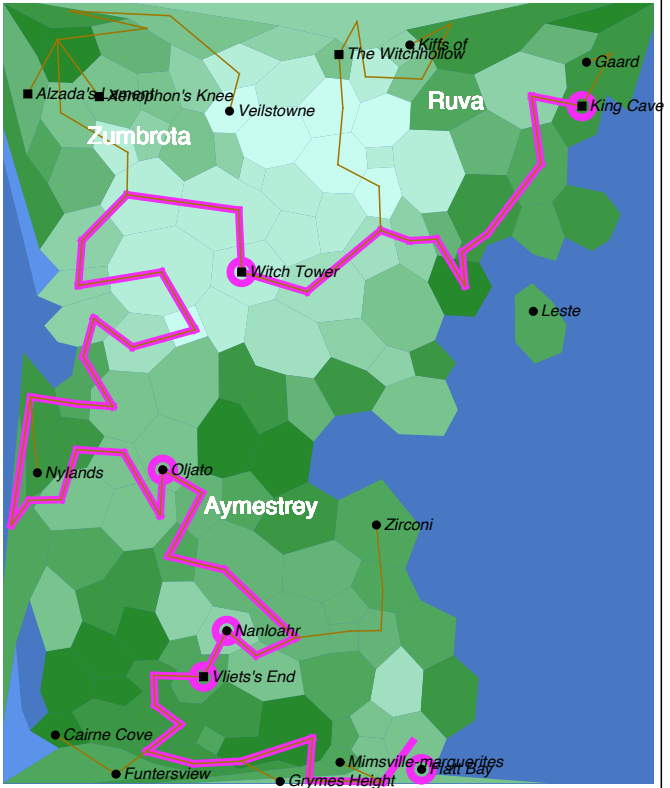
Time Between Wizards

Political Boundaries



Time Between Wizards

Travel and Shipping



Time Between Wizards

Geography and Terrain



1. Blade of Weverte

Fiatt Bay was a rich town, and that kept it stable. Fiatt Bay had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Qokaaw walked for a bit. He passed a grainery. Qokaaw walked away from the ships. He kicked the muck. He saw a lizard. Qokaaw wandered through the market. He bought a grapefruit from a vendor and took a bite. It was sour. Qokaaw pondered the wind.

Qokaaw was a humble baker in Fiatt Bay. Qokaaw thought to visit a bakery, but was busy folding pastry. Auburn clouds hung above them.. He spent the afternoon grinding wheat , this put him in a wistful mood..

They passed a patchwork hut. A voice from within said "Qokaaw...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the old gypsy.

"Why?" asked Qokaaw, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the old gypsy. put out a candle. "In King Cave, there is the grave of a

lost king. Buried with him is the Cerulean Scarab."

"We are not grave robbers," said Qokaaw.

"Aren't you?" the old gypsy squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Cerulean Scarab in the first place."

Qokaaw pondered the story, and pondered the Cerulean Scarab.

Qokaaw's life was about to change in ways he never expected.

The sun-dappled sea was rough. Seagulls circled The Sailor's Delight and Qokaaw fretted that they might poop on him. Not much happened on the voyage to King Cave.

Purple clouds hung above them. as they sailed into the harbor at King Cave.

Qokaaw heard an animated conversation coming from a church and peeked inside. A Thief was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of coffee splashed Qokaaw in the face. At the center, a flailing Thief was throwing loose punches. Qokaaw decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Thief said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Hobdy."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Hobdy would be joining

them for the rest of their journey.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of grapefruit. Qokaaw turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the fetid soil like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Qokaaw rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

The slain courier handed Qokaaw a bundle of cloth. He slowly unwrapped it. "This is Blade of Weverte", the slain courier said. "It is most evil and most be destroyed."

The slain courier leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at Witch Tower. Use it. It can destroy the Blade of Weverte." The slain courier groaned and clutched his wound.

2. Romanticism

King Cave was barely more than a speck on the grove, but spread beneath the fallen logs like root system. A distant thunder rumbled. Qokaaw squinted, and squinted. He shivered. He walked southeast. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A lizard fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Their passage was blocked. The fiercest of all, a ur-ooze. A gelatious cube, and it looked hungry. Hobdy showed no mercy, Hobdy attempted to backstab a gelatious cube Hobdy gutted a gelatious cube with a foil The Ur-Ooze hit Qokaaw. A gelatious cube attacked Hobdy, but missed.

"AaaAaaaaAA," groaned Hobdy, "to be back in Leste."

Hobdy attempted backstab. Hobdy deftly snapped his at a gelatious cube's ribs. Hobdy vanquished a gelatious cube. A gelatious cube hit Hobdy. Qokaaw exclaimed, "Yipes", and smacked the Ur-Ooze with the harp, and hit the outside.

The Ur-Ooze hit Hobdy. Hobdy and the Ur-Ooze circled each other, almost as a dance. The bloody tide of battle rose and Hobdy attempted backstab The Ur-Ooze hit Qokaaw.

Qokaaw suggested, "Oh Fudge it!", and smacked the Ur-Ooze with the harp, it was devastating.

Qokaaw had killed the Ur-Ooze.

The grave was there, deep in King Cave, just as the old gypsy had foretold. Hobdy pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Cerulean Scarab. It looked untouched by time.

Hobdy hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Qokaaw, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Cerulean Scarab. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

Motes floated in the dry air. Qokaaw and Hobdy stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're indulging in overly-sweet sentimentality. Knock it off.", said Qokaaw.

Hobdy said, "I'm merely converting to a new religion."

Qokaaw replied, "Maybe reading romantic intention into innocent action, just a bit?"

"Really? More like showing my emotions freely.", said Hobdy.

Qokaaw pondered what was coming.

"I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Hobdy, as they approach the entrance to Witch Tower. The wind howled through gaps in the

rough stone. Qokaaw walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He shivered. This was the belly of Witch Tower.

Soon their fears were manifest. The fiercest of all, a shelob. A giant beetle glared fiercely. A spider faced the group. A spider hit Qokaaw. "Music," yelled Qokaaw, "can tame the savage the Shelob!" , the Shelob was gravely injured. The Shelob hit Qokaaw.

Qokaaw fell to the mire, his breath came in ragged bursts. A giant beetle attacked Hobdy, but missed. Hobdy and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. A spider hit Hobdy. The bloody tide of battle rose and Hobdy attempted to backstab a giant beetle Hobdy gutted a giant beetle with a foil

A giant beetle was slain. A giant beetle hit Hobdy. Hobdy collapsed. Qokaaw's body twitched. He was still alive!. Qokaaw paced on the dry grass. The Shelob attacked Qokaaw, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," whimpered Qokaaw.

The Shelob attacked Qokaaw, but missed.

"AaaAaaaaAA," groaned Qokaaw, "to be back in Fiatt Bay."

A spider hit Qokaaw. The Shelob hit Qokaaw. Qokaaw played an old melody, an enchanted tune

on the harp and the the Shelob crawled helplessly and was knocked back., and hit the leg. Qokaaw's harp tarried through the breeze.

The Shelob attacked Qokaaw, but missed. Qokaaw and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. Qokaaw had the upper hand. Qokaaw raised his harp. he hit the brown note, and the the Shelob was gravely moved. The Shelob fell to the muck, dead. A spider hit Qokaaw.

Qokaaw collapsed. There was a groan from Qokaaw. he staggered to his feet. Qokaaw paced on the dirt. Qokaaw attacked a spider, but missed. Qokaaw's harp hovered through the wind. A spider hit Qokaaw. Qokaaw attacked a spider, but missed. The sunset was purple on the horizon.

A spider hit Qokaaw. It took mere instants, but old stories would tell of the next moment for since before the age of man: Qokaaw yelled, "Yeargh!", and smacked a spider with the harp. Qokaaw's harp spun through the languid breeze. Qokaaw showed no mercy, Qokaaw played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the harp and the a spider scurried helplessly and was knocked back,

Qokaaw loosed a cry of rage and vanquished a spider. Hobdy had fallen. All of them was consumed with sadness

3. Vliets's End

The Angel Sphere. That would fix this. Qokaaw felt sure of this.

Qokaaw reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for since before recorded history. He set the Blade of Weverte on the shining anvil. he picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a grapefruit. Qokaaw yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all his frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Blade of Weverte was unchanged. He struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Blade of Weverte shattered, splitting into a thousand pieces.

Qokaaw heard an animated conversation coming from a garrison and peeked inside. A Druid was there, lurking in the shadows. The Druid noticed Qokaaw. "Hello there," the Druid said, "You look like you could use a Druid in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Crosskirk."

Haze hung in the wind. Qokaaw walked for a bit. He passed a tavern. Qokaaw kicked the moss, and passed a armourer, and tarried for a bit. He

stopped for a drink. He took a few steps. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the warm wind smell of rambutan. Qokaaw pondered all that had happened.

Qokaaw and Crosskirk stopped in to a tavern. "Can we chat about satisfying yourself at the expense of others", said Qokaaw.

Crosskirk said, "I see it as more recognizing my own talents and abilities."

Qokaaw thought about his home back in Fiatt Bay.

Qokaaw thought about the Angel Sphere. He was sure they would reach Vliets's End.

Dirt rested on the mire. Nanloahr stretched to the horizon. Qokaaw scanned the horizon. He breathed in the dry breeze. Qokaaw tarried for a bit. He saw a alligator and kept moving, and kicked the fetid soil, and tarried for a bit. A hint of motion caught Qokaaw's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone.

Vliets's End had been left to the lizards for since before recorded history. Crosskirk shivered. He lit a torch, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He shivered, and breathed cautiously. This was the belly of Vliets's End.

They braced for a fight. A spider crouched by a wall A bugomancer was their leader. There was

a second spider. The bloody tide of battle rose and Crosskirk draw upon the power of nature with his staff Qokaaw played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the harp and the a spider skittered helplessly and was knocked back,, it was devastating.

A spider hit Crosskirk. A spider hit Crosskirk. Crosskirk met his demise. The Bugomancer hit Qokaaw. "Yipes," groaned Qokaaw, "to be back in Fiatt Bay."

Qokaaw hit a spider. Qokaaw dispatched a spider. A spider attacked Qokaaw, but missed. "Oh Fudge it!," groaned Qokaaw, "to be back in Fiatt Bay."

Qokaaw yelled, "AaaAaaaaAA", and smacked a spider with the harp. Qokaaw raised his harp. he hit the brown note, and the a spider was gravely moved. A spider was slain. A spider attacked Qokaaw, but missed. Qokaaw and the Bugomancer circled each other, almost as a dance.

The Bugomancer hit Qokaaw. Qokaaw collapsed. Qokaaw coughed, and rose to his feet "Why not?," groaned Qokaaw, "to be back in Fiatt Bay."

Qokaaw said, "Why not?," and smacked the Bugomancer with the harp, and hit the carapice. The Bugomancer hit Qokaaw.

The sunset was purple in the distance. The

Bugomancer attacked Qokaaw, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," suggested Qokaaw.

The Bugomancer attacked Qokaaw, but missed. Qokaaw ducked near a dirt mound, and readied his harp. The Bugomancer attacked Qokaaw, but missed.

Qokaaw paced on the dry grass. The Bugomancer hit Qokaaw. Qokaaw struck the Bugomancer. The Bugomancer was slain. Crosskirk was dead. Everyone was consumed with sadness.

"Here!" called Qokaaw, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Qokaaw raised the tiny brass key from the old wizard to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he drew the Angel Sphere. It sparkled in the languid air.

"Well," said Qokaaw, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

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A STORM AMONG CURSES

V. 5 WIP

**The Epic
Voyage of
Ylair the
Fighter**

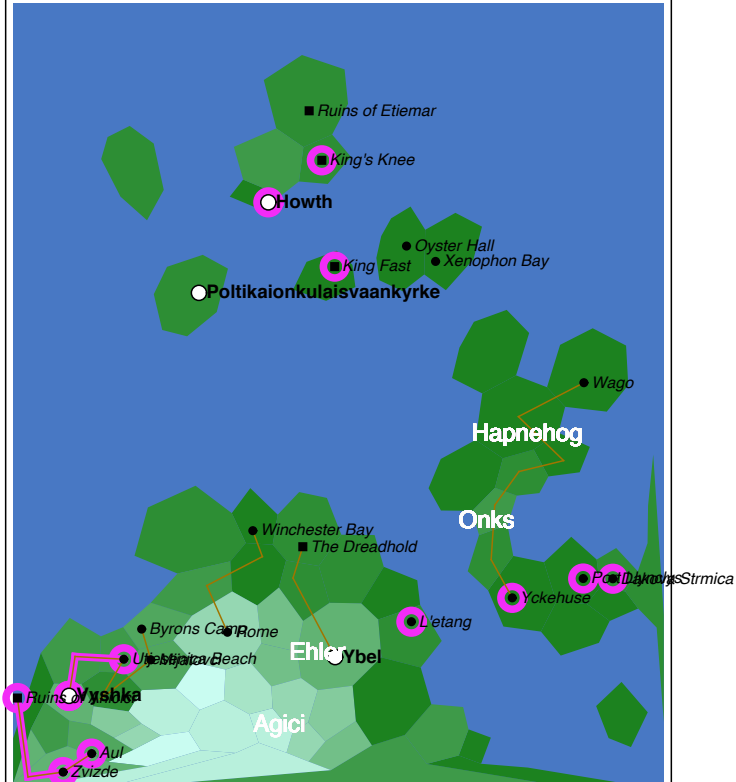
A Storm Among Curses

Political Boundaries



A Storm Among Curses

Travel and Shipping



A Storm Among Curses

Geography and Terrain



1. Vyshka

Ylain was a practiced farmer in Vyshka. He busied himself shucking corn. The sunset was purple in the distance.. He busied himself shearing a sheep . He felt sad, but didn't dwell..

Purple clouds hung on the horizon.. dew rested on the mire. A storm was coming.

Dewy dew hovered in the verdant air. Vyshka covered a square mile of countryside. Ylain wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Ylain passed a armourer, and tarried for a bit. He sat for a while. He saw a lizard and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Ylain's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone.

Ylain was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. Ylain couldn't help but notice a Bard nearby. The Bard noticed Ylain. "Hello there," the Bard said, "You look like you could use a Bard in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Tndorovi."

Utjesenica Beach was not much to look at. Utjesenica Beach had been founded by the druids, but it was all tough men and women now. Ylain

sat down on the fetid soil for a bit. Ylain wondered about a rat. Ylain sat for a while, and saw a rat and kept moving. He took a few steps, and walked away from the sea. He kicked the mud. Ylain wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Ylain and Tndorovi stopped in to a tavern. Ylain said, "You're hiding or ignoring intuitive insights. It makes me foul."

"Is that how you see it? It's just being deeply committed to a cause.", said Tndorovi.

Ylain said, "Maybe rejecting information that suggests your intuitions are misguided, just a bit?"

Tndorovi replied, "Certainly not. I'm acting on intuition alone."

Ylain thought about what was coming.

The dewy sea was rough. Seagulls circled The Wind Of The Sea and Tndorovi fretted that they might poop on him. Tndorovi never found his sea legs on the whole trip to L'etang.

L'etang boasted a thriving market. Old tales stated that L'etang was built where a fallen star had landed. A hint of motion caught Ylain's eye, he turned. It might have been a goat, but it was gone. Ylain saw a bird and kept moving. He stopped for a drink. He passed a cloth seller. An eagle passed through the air.

The waves were churning and the air was fresh. They saw a humpback whale breach the cool waves. Not much happened on the voyage to L'etang.

Dew rested on the rocks. "I wanted to talk to you about expecting everyone to always feel the same way you do.", said Ylain.

"Certainly not. I'm working together with others who share my feelings.", said Tndorovi.

Ylain said, "You're partying to a dangerous or unhealthy extent. It's not uncommon for a Bard."

"I see it as more performing acts of service as a way of saying, "I love you".", said Tndorovi.

Cool birds played in the wind.

2. Jubys

They passed a ornamented caravan. A voice from within said "Ylain...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the old gypsy.

"Why?" asked Ylain, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the old gypsy. stared into a crystal ball. "In King's Knee, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Crown of Skoksonak."

"We are not grave robbers," said Ylain.

"Aren't you?" the old gypsy squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Crown of Skoksonak in the first place."

Ylain pondered the story, and pondered the Crown of Skoksonak.

Ylain was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. There was a Fighter sipping a beer. Ylain strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Fighter,"said Ylain, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Vlahovik," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Port Llynclys was a growing town. Ylain scanned the horizon. He breathed in the cool wind. Ylain took a few steps. He passed a cloth seller. He chatted with a mean wizard, and tarried for a bit. He stopped for a drink. Ylain wandered through the market. He bought a honeydew from a stall and took a bite. It was good. Ylain pondered his journey.

The verdant sea was calm. The Whale On The Waves was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Much happened on the voyage to Port Llynclys, but that is a tale for another time.

Feathers rested on the rocks. Ylain said, "Can we chat about failing to take good care of yourself?"

Vlahovik said, "Certainly not. I'm recognizing and celebrating the conclusion of something."

Ylain pondered his home back in Vyshka.

The Crown of Skoksonak. That would fix this. Ylain felt sure of this.

Ylain heard an animated conversation coming from a grainery and peeked inside. A Barbarian was there, lurking in the shadows. The Barbarian noticed Ylain. "Hello there," the Barbarian said, "You look like you could use a Barbarian in your

group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Jubys."

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Yckehuse. The harbor in Port Llynclys was calm.

Yckehuse was a growing town. Ylain scanned the horizon. He breathed in the warm fresh breeze. Ylain walked away from the sea, and walked toward the docks. He tarried for a bit. He took a few steps, and walked downhill. Ylain walked for a bit. He passed a clothseller.

Feathers rested on the narrow path. "Are you aware that you're allowing an unhealthy desire for love to motivate destructive behavior?", said Ylain.

Jubys said, "I see it as more aligning myself with groups or like-minded others."

Ylain considered his journey.

Ylain thought about the Crown of Skoksonak. He was sure they would reach King's Knee.

Ylain visited a tavern. There was a Fighter sipping coffee. The Fighter noticed Ylain. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Gefsjö."

3. Crown of Skoksonak

The waves were rough and the air was verdant. Seagulls circled The Sailor'S Lass and Tndorovi fretted that they might poop on him. The sail to Dakova Strmica was a much needed rest for the party.

Ylain arrived in Dakova Strmica and and it cheered him up for a moment..

The Crown of Skoksonak. That would fix this. Ylain felt sure of this.

Feathers rested on the rocks. Ylain and Jubys stopped in to a tavern. "You're starting arguments. It makes me sad.", said Ylain.

"Certainly not. I'm pinpointing the problem.", said Jubys.

Birds hung in the dewy air.

Dakova Strmica counted its population in pineapples. Whispered rumors stated that Dakova Strmica was built where a fallen star had landed. The old tales of Dakova Strmica were legendary. Ylain saw a skree, and it reminded him of Vyshka. Ylain walked by the sea. He kicked the narrow path, and tarried for a bit. He walked away from the beach, and sat for a while. Ylain wandered

through the market. He bought a pineapple from a busy stall and took a bite. It was good. Ylain wondered about shucking corn back in Vyshka. That life was just a memory now. his simple life as a farmer. .

The waves were churning and the air was verdant. Seagulls circled The Enchanted Spice and Jubys fretted that they might poop on him. Ylain learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled satsuma to catch halibut.

Behind a alligator scat, Jubys spotted the entrance to King's Knee. They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the fresh walls. Toadstools rested on the muck. Ylain walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and squinted, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He breathed cautiously, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. The air was fresh. They were well into King's Knee now.

Their passage was blocked. A skink licked it's jowls. The fiercest of all, a dragon. Jubys struck the Dragon. Ylain attacked the Dragon, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a farmer," whispered Gefsjö.

Tndorovi attacked a skink, but missed.

Gefsjö paced on the feathers. Jubys swung her halbard at the Dragon. A skink attacked Vlahovik, but missed. Gefsjö ducked near a alligator scat,

and readied her axe Gefsjó struck at the a skink. Gefsjó slashed with her axe. Gefsjó dispatched a skink.

The Dragon attacked Jubys, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," yelled Jubys.

Ylain showed no mercy, Ylain slashed with his axe The Dragon was slain.

Ylain thought about the Crown of Skoksonak, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

The grave was there, deep in King's Knee, just as the old gypsy had foretold. Gefsjó pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Crown of Skoksonak. It looked untouched by time.

Gefsjó hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Ylain, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Crown of Skoksonak. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

4. Voyage to King Fast

Outside the town, there was a small ornamented warren. Ylain felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled verdant. "Ah, Ylain, I have been expecting you for since before living memory," the old witch whispered. "I have a favor to ask..."

"Take this", said the witch, holding out something with shaking hands. Ylain took the offered item.

"This is the Crown of Yendor", the witch whispered. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at King Fast can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Onks."

Ylain and Jubys stopped in to a tavern. "I wanted to talk to you about craving to be the center of attention.", said Ylain.

"I see it as more earning the admiration of others.", said Jubys.

"I mean, it just seems like you're being a bad winner.", said Ylain.

"I'm merely having my "moment in the spotlight".", replied Jubys.

Toadstools rested on the mire.

The warm sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were cicadas in Ylain's cabin. Tndorovi never found his sea legs on the whole trip to King's Knee.

Ylain arrived in King's Knee and it reminded him of Vyshka..

King Fast had been left to the rats for since before recorded history. A distant thunder rumbled. Their footsteps echoed in the chamber. Ylain walked downward, and squinted. He breathed cautiously. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in King Fast, but they weren't alone.

Things went from bad to worse. A skeleton king was their leader. A skelley, and it looked hungry. An additional skelley was across the cobbles. The Skeleton King attacked Jubys, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," yelled Tndorovi.

A skelley hit Tndorovi. Gefsjö's axe swung at a skelley. Gefsjö slashed with her axe. Gefsjö had killed a skelley. Tndorovi played a jaunty tune on the lute and it dazed the Skeleton King, the Skeleton King was gravely injured. Ylain's axe swung at a skelley.

A skelley attacked Tndorovi, but missed. Tndorovi and a skelley circled each other, almost

as a dance. Ylain attacked a skelley, but missed. Tndorovi paced on the feathers. It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next moment for since before recorded history: Gefsjö struck at the the Skeleton King.

Ylain struck at the a skelley. Ylain executed a practiced move with his axe. Ylain had killed a skelley. A skelley hit Ylain. With fierce ferocity, Tndorovi suggested, "For Glory!", and smacked the Skeleton King with the lute. Tndorovi dispatched the Skeleton King.

Ylain thought about the Crown of Yendor. He was sure they would reach King Fast.

Ylain's fingers wandered to the Dark Cube. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the witch spoke of," whispered Jubys.

Ylain nodded. he raised the Crown of Yendor and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of purple fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

5. Voyage to Ruins of Anicici

Ylain and Tndorovi stopped in to a tavern. "You're ignoring obligations and commitments. It makes me forlorn.", said Ylain.

"Is that how you see it? It's just sharing credit for my success.", said Tndorovi.

"I mean, it just seems like you're making a loan as a means of gaining control over someone.", replied Ylain.

Tndorovi said, "Is that what you think? I think it's taking part in a group effort."

Ylain pondered what was coming.

The waves were churning and the air was cool. They saw a humpback whale breach the dewy waves. Jubys spent the trip to Howth pilfering grog from the The Bonefish's crew.

Pollen hovered in the dewy breeze. Started as a farming town, Howth was now a thriving city. Howth was a city of bitter people. Ylain walked for a bit. He passed a grainery. Ylain passed a grainery. He took a few steps, and sat for a while. He took a few steps, and passed a bakery. Ylain saw a bonepile, and it reminded him of Vyshka.

The warm sea was rough. The Narwhal was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Not

much happened on the voyage to Howth.

Ylain thought about the Dark Cube. He was sure they would reach Ruins of Anicici.

Dew rested on the rocks. Ylain and Vlahovik stopped in to a tavern. Ylain said, "Are you aware that you're being controlled by fear?"

"Is that how you see it? It's just motivating myself with images of future success.", said Vlahovik.

Ylain replied, "Maybe obsessing on imaginary fears or uncertain consequences, just a bit?"

Vlahovik replied, "Is that what you think? I think it's making dreams come true."

Rain played in the verdant air.

Dew rested on the bog. A chill ran down Ylain's spine. he felt happy. Ruins of Anicici was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for aeons, but it was far from empty. Vlahovik walked downward. She ducked to pass the low ceiling, and squinted. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Ruins of Anicici, but they weren't alone.

Ahead, there was a problem. A necromancer called the shots. There was a ghoul. A ghoul hit Ylain. The bloody tide of battle rose and Ylain struck at the the Necromancer Jubys had the upper hand. Jubys swung her halbard at the

Necromancer. With fierce ferocity, Gefsjö's axe flashed in the wind.

Gefsjö had slain a ghoul. Tndorovi attacked the Necromancer, but missed. Gefsjö and the Necromancer circled each other, almost as a dance. Jubys had the upper hand. Jubys swung her halbard at the Necromancer. Jubys was calm as she dispatched the Necromancer.

Ylain thought about the Dark Cube. He was sure they would reach Ruins of Anicici.

In the deepest part of Ruins of Anicici, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Ylain held out the Dark Cube above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Gefsjö, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Ylain, and dropped the Dark Cube. "No mortal could." The dewy air looked golden and purple.

Pollen danced in the air. Zvizde bustled with activity. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of gooseberry. Ylain considered his home back in Vyshka. Ylain tarried for a bit, and sat for a while. He stopped for a drink, and passed a church. An alligator passed through the cool wind.

Birds sparkled in the verdant wind. Ylain wondered about the folks living here. Most that he

passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Ylain stopped for a drink, and saw a coyote, and sat for a while. He walked southeast. Ylain saw a outcrop, and it reminded him of Vyshka.

Mist hovered in the verdant breeze. Ylain and Gefsjö stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're obsessing on secrets and conspiracies. Knock it off.", said Ylain.


Gefsjö said, "Really? More like exploring unconventional spirituality."

Ylain wondered about his journey.

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OF DRAGONS AND DUNGEONS

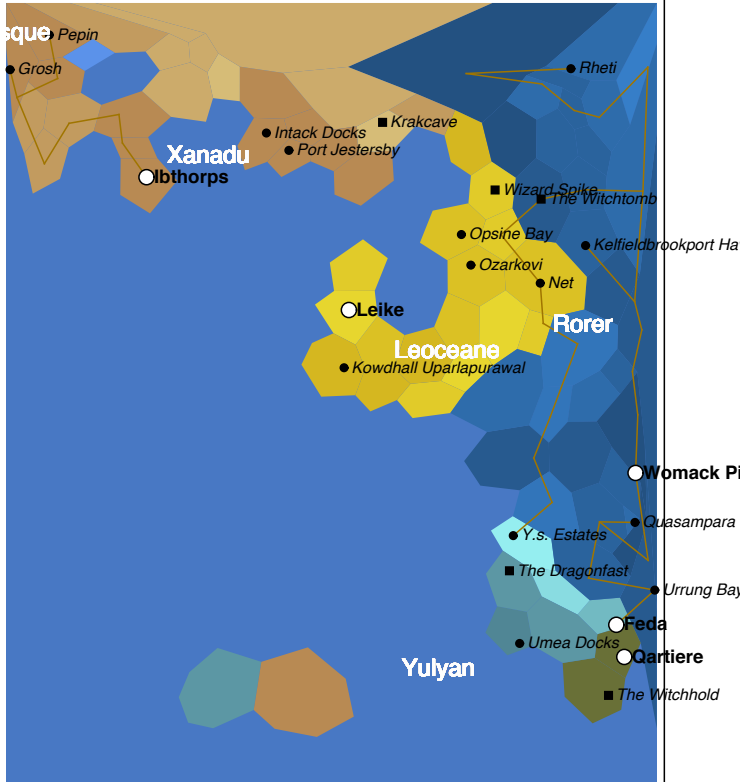
KATHLEEN G BUTCHER



THE CONCLUSION
TO THE
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MIGHTY
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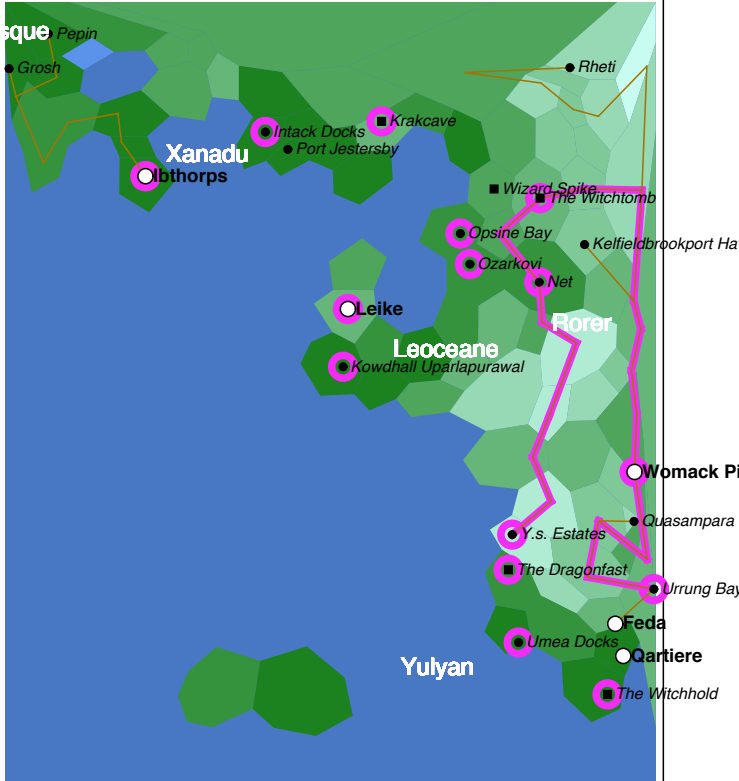
Of Dragons And Dungeons

Political Boundaries



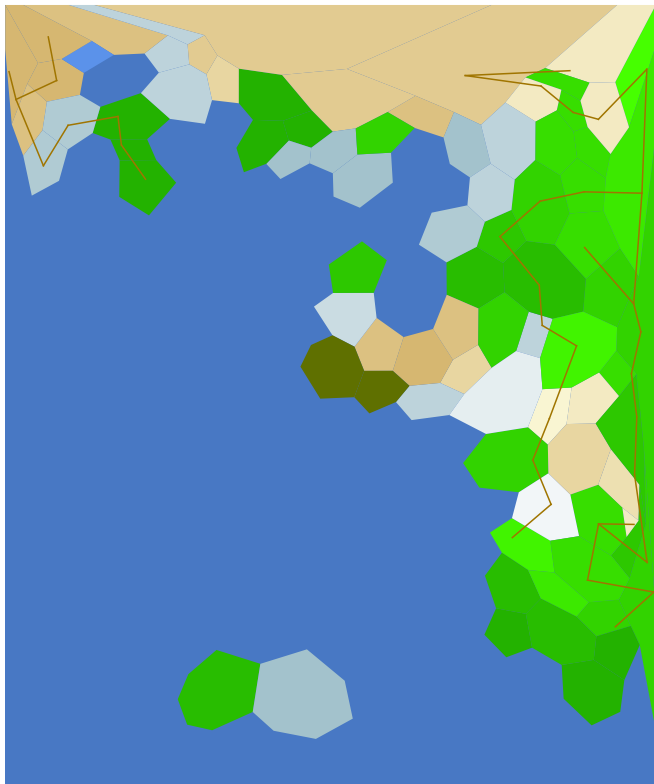
Of Dragons And Dungeons

Travel and Shipping



Of Dragons And Dungeons

Geography and Terrain



1. Bone Sword

Cidra was a humble dockworker in Ibthorps. Cidra thought to visit a plaza, but was busy adjusting rigging. The languid air looked fiery and purple.. Cidra wandered by the armourer and felt forlorn..

More of a commune than a village, Ibthorps was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the humid breeze smell of blackberry. Cidra thought about his home back in Ibthorps. Cidra tarried for a bit. He saw a rat, and tarried for a bit, and tarried for a bit. He saw a bear and kept moving. Cidra saw a bear's den, and it reminded him of Ibthorps.

This was the last evening Cidra would spend unloading a cargo barge.

The waves were churning and the air was dusty. Seagulls circled The Newfound Lass and Cidra fretted that they might poop on him. On the way to Ibthorps, Cidra climbed the The Newfound Lass's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. Fiery clouds hung above them..

Leike was a poor metropolis, and that kept it

proud. Leike stretched to the horizon. Cidra scanned the horizon. He breathed in the stagnant dry wind. Cidra stopped for a drink. He passed a plaza. He kicked the narrow path, and kicked the stones. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the wind smell of cranberry. Cidra considered a goat.

Outside the town, there was a small dilapidated hut. Cidra felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled hot. "Ah, Cidra, I have been expecting you for since before the age of man," the old witch whimpered. "I have a favor to ask..."

"I will tell you a great secret," said the witch.

"Why?" asked Cidra, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the witch. stirred a potion. "In Krakcave, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Mystic Sphere."

"We are not grave robbers," said Cidra.

"Aren't you?" the witch squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Mystic Sphere in the first place."

Cidra pondered the story, and pondered the Mystic Sphere.

Cidra visited a tavern. There was a Bard sipping grog. Cidra strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Bard," said Cidra, "we could

use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Dyudali," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Cidra stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Cidra took a seat and after a while they started talking. As it turned out, the old wizard was also from Ithorps. Cidra seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I am the last of a once-proud people," said the old wizard.

"What happened?" asked Cidra.

"This. This happened," said the old wizard and from their robes produced a small object. "This is the Bone Sword," the old wizard said, "it is responsible for the fall of my people, and I have pledged to destroy it. But I fear I cannot complete my quest any longer. It needs to be brought to where it was created, the dark altar at The Witchtomb, and there its magic will be rendered powerless. This burden, I'm afraid, falls to you now, Cidra."

The old wizard shook his head with sad remembrance. Cidra took the Bone Sword with shaking hands.

2. The Open Ocean

The waves were churning and the air was sun-dappled. The Bonnie Compass Rose was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. The voyage to Intack Docks was uneventful.

Chaff rested on the stones. Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. "Hey, I just..." Cidra trailed off. He shifted on the stones. "Are you obsessing on a problem to the breaking point?" he asked.

"Is that what you think? I think it's acknowledging that you've hit bottom.", said Dyudali.

Motes floated in the wind.

Cidra arrived in Intack Docks and and it cheered him up for a moment..

The old stories of Intack Docks were legendary. Intack Docks was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into bear trails. Intack Docks was not much to look at. A hint of motion caught Cidra's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Cidra walked downhill, and kicked the leaves. He passed a shipwright's office. He kicked the fallen logs, and passed a plaza. Cidra wandered through the market. He bought a date from a stall and took

a bite. It was sweet. Cidra considered his home back in Ibthorps.

Cidra would be glad when Bone Sword was destroyed.

Cidra was sad. He wandered into a garden full of dates. Cidra couldn't help but notice a Fighter nearby. The Fighter noticed Cidra. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Evna."

Cicadas hung in the wind. Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. Cidra said, "I wanted to talk to you about debilitating someone by being overprotective."

"I'm merely celebrating my body.", said Dyudali.

"Maybe being overcome by addictive behavior, just a bit?", said Cidra.

"Really? More like getting things done.", said Dyudali.

Cidra considered the future.

Cidra thought about the Mystic Sphere, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

The dusty sea was calm. Seagulls circled The New Hope and Evna fretted that they might poop on him. On the way to Intack Docks, Cidra

climbed the The New Hope's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The sunset was auburn above them..

Cidra's fingers wandered to the Bone Sword. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

It was afternoon when they reached the docks in Intack Docks.

Ozarkovi was a village of welcoming people. More of a commune than a village, Ozarkovi was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Cidra walked for a bit. He passed a plaza. Cidra saw a bear, and saw a lizard. He took a few steps. Cidra watched a rat by a log on the fallen logs.

Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. "Can we chat about playing the victim", said Cidra.

Dyudali said, "Really? More like asking for assistance."

Dust hovered in the languid wind.

The humid sea was calm. They saw a humpback whale breach the languid waves. The voyage to Krakcave was uneventful.

3. Bone Sword

Dry grass rested on the leaves. Rats scurried away around their feet. Their footsteps echoed in the chamber. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Evna, as they approach the entrance to Krakcave. Dyudali walked carefully on the crumbling stones. She walked carefully on the crumbling stones. She lit a torch. She squinted, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. This was the belly of Krakcave.

Cidra's fingers wandered to the Bone Sword. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

Soon their fears were manifest. The fiercest of all, a shelob. A giant beetle posed a serious threat. A giant beetle hit Dyudali. It took mere instants, but legends would tell of the next moment for a uncounted moons: Evna slashed with her short sword.

Evna had killed a giant beetle. Cidra swung his pole-arm at the Shelob, the Shelob was gravely injured. It took mere instants, but old tales would tell of the next moment for epochs: Dyudali played a jaunty tune on the panpipe and it dazed the Shelob.

The Shelob hit Cidra. Dyudali paced on the

chaff. Evna's short sword swung at the Shelob. It was super effective. Evna loosed a cry of rage and had slain the Shelob.

Cidra thought about the Mystic Sphere. He was sure they would reach Krakcave.

The grave was there, deep in Krakcave, just as the witch had foretold. Dyudali pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Mystic Sphere. It looked untouched by time.

Dyudali hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Cidra, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Mystic Sphere. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

The languid sea was rough. Seagulls circled The Whale On The Waves and Evna fretted that they might poop on him. The voyage to Krakcave was uneventful.

Cidra would be glad when Bone Sword was destroyed.

Cidra and Evna stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Evna," asked Cidra, "do you worry that you're using emotional or spiritual leverage to exercise unhealthy control over others?"

Evna said, "I see it as more honoring the

spirit, not just the letter, of the law."

Cidra replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're abusing spiritual authority."

Evna said, "Is that what you think? I think it's making fair and empathetic decisions."

Stagnant mist rose in the wind.

Opsine Bay was once the seat of the empire, but no longer. Opsine Bay had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Dirt rested on the narrow path. Cidra watched a goat by a bones of a eagle on the rocks. Cidra saw a eagle. He stopped for a drink, and saw a bird and kept moving. He passed a garrison. A hint of motion caught Cidra's eye, he turned. It might have been a eagle, but it was gone.

Cidra was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. There was a Druid sipping coffee. The Druid noticed Cidra. "Hello there," the Druid said, "You look like you could use a Druid in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Klopici."

4. The Jellyfish On The Waves

The languid sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were cicadas in Cidra's cabin. On the voyage to Kowdhall Uparlapurawal, Cidra lost most of his gold playing dice with the crew.

Cidra and Klopici stopped in to a tavern. Cidra said, "Can we chat about taking care of your own needs exclusively, without regard for the needs of others"

"I'm merely fasting as part of a spiritual practice.", said Klopici.

Specks of dust danced in the humid wind.

Cidra thought about the Bone Sword, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Kowdhall Uparlapurawal was huge. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of cranberry. Cidra wondered about a lizard. Cidra passed a plaza. He sat for a while. He passed a fisherman's hovel, and saw a rat. He passed a cloth seller. Cidra watched a lizard by a dirt mound on the bog.

Cidra was sad. He wandered into a garden full of rock melons. There was a Thief sipping

cranberry juice. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Cidra in the face. At the center, a flailing Thief was throwing loose punches. Cidra decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Thief said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Grajsar."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Grajsar would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

There was notice board at the tavern that listed shipping schedules. The Jellyfish On The Waves was set to sail to Kowdhall Uparlapurawal at dawn. The The Jellyfish On The Waves was piloted by a salty freebooter named Rhenok.

"Sorry," said Rhenok, "but The Jellyfish On The Waves isn't a passenger vessel." Cidra visited a tavern and considered his options. Then, Klopici saw Rhenok in a tavern. she bought the bitter captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Cidra thought about the Bone Sword. He was sure they would reach The Witchtomb.

Dirt rested on the muck. Cidra said, "Are you aware that you're mistaking procrastination for thoughtfulness?"

Dyudali said, "Is that how you see it? It's just occupying my thoughts with a healthy distraction."

"Maybe failing to think things through, just a bit?", replied Cidra.

Dyudali said, "Certainly not. I'm thinking over my plans before putting them into action."

Cidra thought about the future.

The dry sea was rough. They saw a humpback whale breach the dusty waves. Grajsar spend most of her time on the voyage to Kowdhall Uparlapurawal puking over the gunwales.

Cidra arrived in Kowdhall Uparlapurawal and and felt sad..

Urrung Bay boasted a thriving market. Cidra sat down on the pine straw for a bit. Cidra pondered his next steps. Cidra saw a rat and kept moving, and took a few steps, and kicked the moss. He walked away from the beach. Cidra saw a lichen, and it reminded him of Ibthorps.

5. Imagination

Cidra's fingers wandered to the Bone Sword. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

Dirt rested on the moss. Cidra said, "Are you aware that you're failing to appreciate life's mysteries?"

"Is that what you think? I think it's embracing the unknown.", said Grajsar.

Dry grass rested on the pine straw.

Womack Pine was the largest city in Rorer. Cidra watched a jackal by a outcrop on the sand. Cidra chatted with a welcoming blacksmith. He stopped for a drink, and walked east. A hint of motion caught Cidra's eye, he turned. It might have been a cobra, but it was gone.

The hot air felt foreboding. The Witchtomb was barely more than a speck on the wilderness, but spread beneath the leaves like vole's burrow. Grajsar shivered, and shivered. She squinted. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in The Witchtomb, but they weren't alone.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A giant lizard posed a serious threat. Don't forget about a skink. A dragolisk was their leader.

Dyudali showed no mercy, "Music," cried Dyudali, "can tame the savage a skink!" The bloody tide of battle rose and Grajsar attempted backstab

Grajsar slew a skink. Cidra attacked a giant lizard, but missed. Purple clouds hung toward the heavens. Klopici attacked a giant lizard, but missed. "Oh Hells," groaned Cidra, "to be back in Ibthorps."

Dyudali had the upper hand. "Music," whispered Dyudali, "can tame the savage the Dragolisk!" .

The bloody tide of battle rose and Cidra swung his pole-arm at a giant lizard A giant lizard was slain. With fierce ferocity, Klopici drew power from the mossThe spirits of the forest inhabited Klopici's quarterstaff. The Dragolisk hit Grajsar. It took mere instants, but whispered rumors would tell of the next moment for a uncounted moons: Evna's short sword flashed in the humid air.

Evna was calm as she had killed the Dragolisk.

The reached the innermost chamber of the The Witchtomb. There was an alter, it was not much more than a chisled block of stone, but the air around it crackled with magic and felt heavy and oppressive. The sunset was shimmering on

the horizon.

Cidra set Bone Sword down on the crude altar and at once it began to glow with eldrich power. It crackled and fizzled until it was no more than a ordinary ornament.

"Let's go," said Cidra, and turned towards the fading sunlight.

Grajsar grabbed the Bone Sword, now inert and lifeless. "What?" she shrugged, "it's for my knick-knack shelf."

Net was not much to look at. Started as a mining town, Net was now a thriving village. Cidra saw a fern, and it reminded him of Ibthorps. Cidra sat for a while. He chatted with a sour monk. He passed a bakery. Cidra sat down on the leaves for a bit. Cidra thought about his journey.

Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. Cidra said, "I wanted to talk to you about rejecting an opportunity to reinvent yourself."

Dyudali said, "I'm merely discovering a new purpose in life."

Cidra wondered about all that had happened.

6. Finger Dagger

Y.s. Estates had been founded by the forest elves, but it was all tough men and women now. Cidra wandered through the market. He bought a cherimoya from a messy stall and took a bite. It was good. Cidra wondered about his journey. Cidra tarried for a bit, and took a few steps, and saw a lizard. Cidra walked for a bit. He passed a garrison.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of guava. Cidra turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the leaves like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Cidra rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

The slain courier handed Cidra a bundle of cloth. He slowly unwrapped it. "This is Finger Dagger", the slain courier whispered. "It is most evil and most be destroyed."

The slain courier leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at The Dragonfast. Use it. It can destroy

the Finger Dagger." The slain courier groaned and clutched his wound.

There was notice board at the quay that listed shipping schedules. The Narwhal was the only scow from Y.s. Estates to The Dragonfast this moon. The captain was a gruff freebooter named Obbol.

There should have been plenty of space on The Narwhal, but Obbol said it was full. Dyudali guessed that it was a smuggler. Cidra wandered the streets of Y.s. Estates. The sunset was fiery toward the heavens.. Then, Dyudali saw Obbol in a tavern. she bought the bitter captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were choppy and the air was warm. The Narwhal was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Grajsar never found her sea legs on the whole trip to The Dragonfast.

Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. "Hey, I just..." Cidra trailed off. He shifted on the leaves. "Are you concealing wisdom?" he asked.

Dyudali said, "Is that how you see it? It's just teaching or guiding others."

Cidra pondered what was coming.

Sun-dappled dust spun in the air. The Dragonfast was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for a thousand years, but it was far from empty.

Dyudali breathed cautiously, and walked downward. She ducked to pass the low ceiling, and walked downward. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A lizard fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A skelley was across the cobbles. There was a skeleton. They were lead by a lich. The Lich hit Dyudali. A skeleton attacked Klopici, but missed. Cidra ducked near a fern, and readied his pole-arm. The Lich attacked Cidra, but missed.

"Victory!," groaned Klopici, "to be back in Quartiere."

A skeleton attacked Klopici, but missed. Evna and a skeleton circled each other, almost as a dance. Klopici struck with her quarterstaff. It was super effective. A skelley hit Klopici. Evna slashed with her short sword. Evna slashed with her short sword.

A skeleton hit Klopici. Klopici staggered, and tumbled to the moss. Grajsar deftly snapped her at a skeleton's ribs, a skeleton was gravely injured. Grajsar slew a skeleton. Cidra swung his pole-arm at a skelley and it met bone. A skelley was slain. Dyudali attacked the Lich, but missed.

"Oh Hells," groaned Grajsar, "to be back in Kowdhall Uparlapurawal."

Cidra swung his pole-arm at the Lich, it was

devastating. The Lich hit Evna. With fierce ferocity, Grajsar attempted to backstab the Lich. Grajsar gutted the Lich with a barb. Grajsar was calm as she dispatched the Lich.

Klopici had fallen. Everyone was consumed with sadness

7. Option

Cidra reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for epochs. He set the Finger Dagger on the shining anvil. he picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a cherimoya. Cidra yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all his frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Finger Dagger was unchanged. He struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Finger Dagger shattered, splitting into a uncounted pieces.

Cidra thought about the Amulet of Galjici, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

The waves were calm and the air was humid. The Dolphin was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. On the way to The Dragonfast, Cidra climbed the The Dolphin's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The stagnant air looked shimmering..

The old tales of Umea Docks were legendary. Umea Docks was once the seat of the empire, but no longer. Cidra watched a lizard by a bear's den on the undergrowth. Cidra tarried for a bit. He sat

for a while. He chatted with a kind soldier. Cidra sat down on the fallen logs for a bit. Cidra considered his next steps.

Cidra and Dyudali stopped in to a tavern. Cidra said, "Are you aware that you're changing course mid-stream for no good reason?"

"I see it as more offering or being offered an option.", said Dyudali.

Cidra wondered about all that had happened.

The sun-dappled sea was calm. The Sunfish Of The Sea was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. On the way to Umea Docks, Cidra climbed the The Sunfish Of The Sea's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The languid air looked purple..

The Witchhold was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for aeons, but it was far from empty. Evna walked carefully on the crumbling stones. She walked south, and squinted. She lit a torch, and walked northeast. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in The Witchhold, but they weren't alone.

If only they had the Amulet of Galjici.

Things went from bad to worse. A skeleton was pure evil. A lich was their leader. A skeleton hit Grajsar. The Lich attacked Evna, but missed. Dyudali's panpipe danced through the breeze. The

Lich hit Evna. With fierce ferocity, Evna's short sword flashed in the wind.

Evna vanquished a skeleton. Cidra swung his pole-arm at the Lich, it was devastating. Grajsar attacked the Lich, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a fisherman," whimpered Grajsar.

Dyudali hit the Lich. Cidra swung his pole-arm at the Lich. It was super effective.

The Lich was slain.

Cidra consulted the old map they had got from the nobleman.

"This must be the place," he murmured.

"There's nothing here," said Grajsar, exasperated.

"No, look, there," said Cidra as he moved a flagstone aside. Beneath it was a small chamber, barely large enough for a bear, and contained within was Amulet of Galjici.

"I don't believe it," suggested Grajsar. They had found it. They found the Amulet of Galjici.

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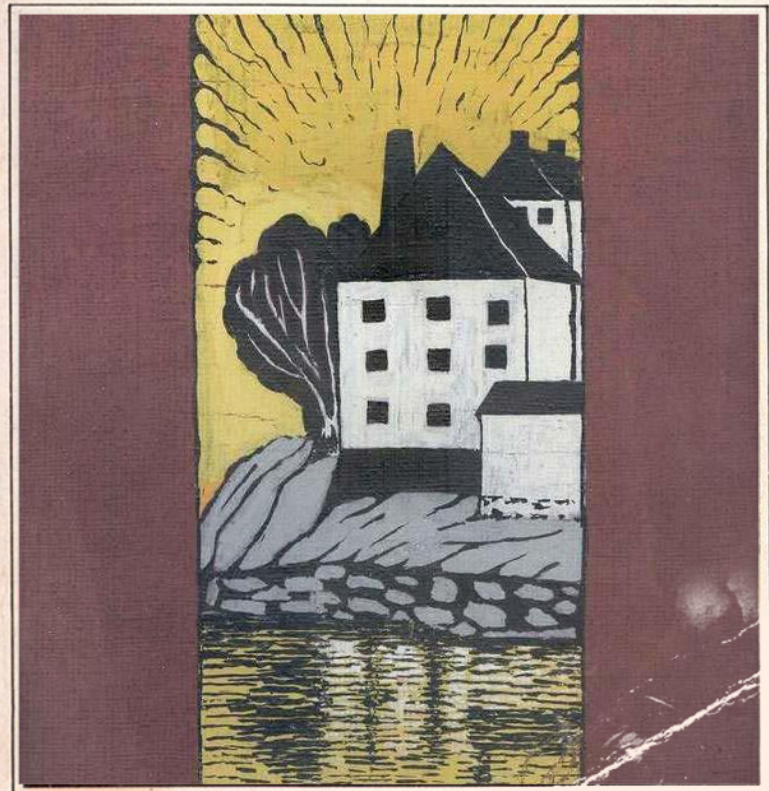
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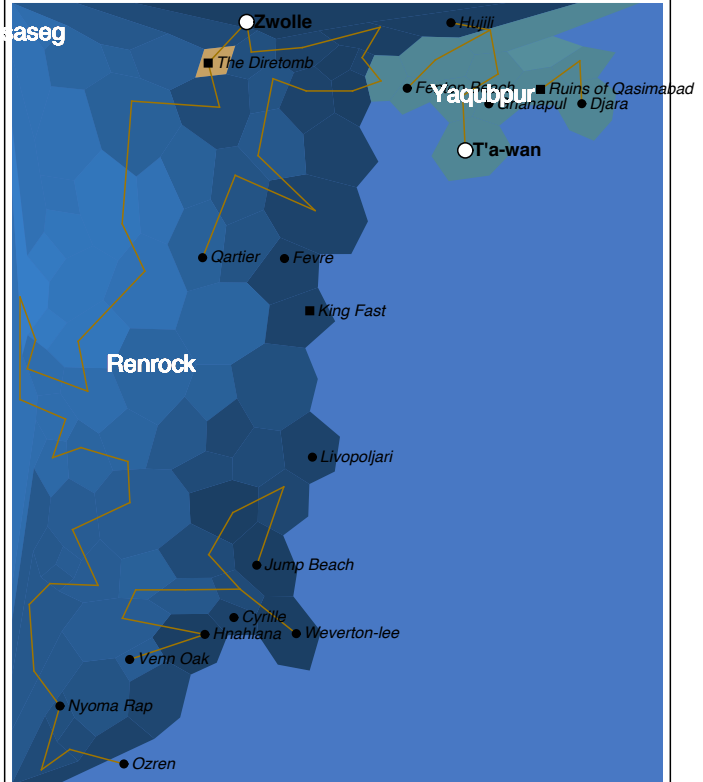
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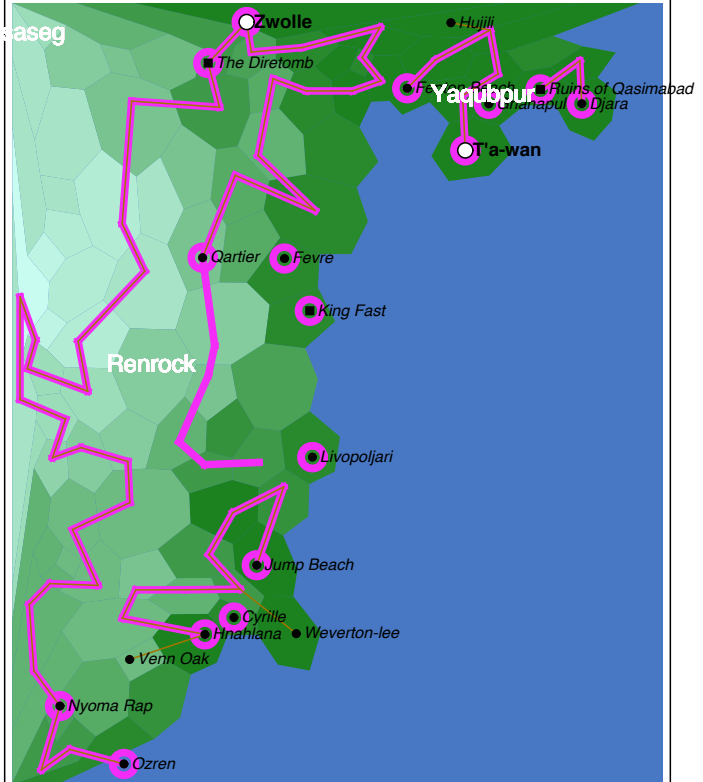
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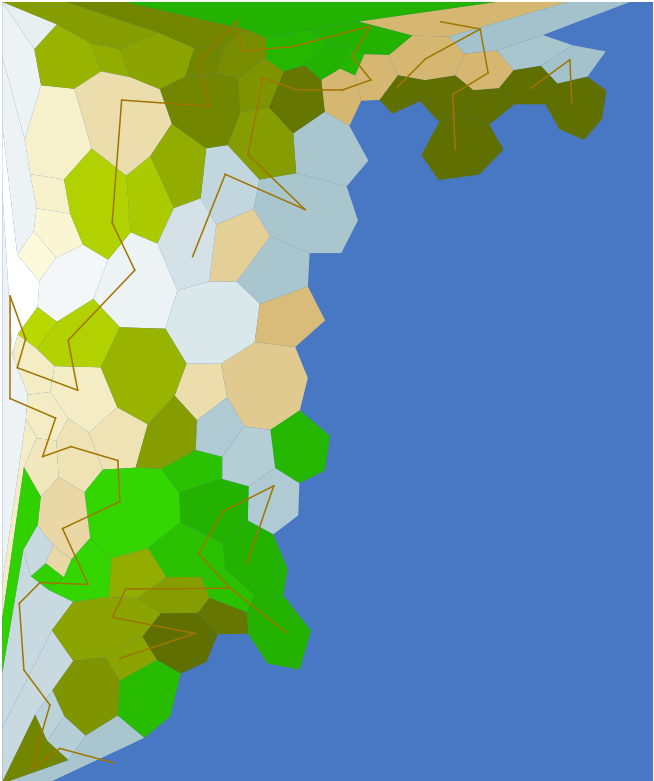
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Travel and Shipping



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Geography and Terrain



1. Meeting K'o-hao

Dirt rested on the undergrowth. Livopoljari was the jewel of Renrock. Livopoljari had been founded by the druids, but it was all grizzled men and women now. More of a commune than a village, Livopoljari was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Xeldem scanned the horizon. He breathed in the hot air. Xeldem walked uphill. He saw a bear and kept moving. He chatted with a kind tailer, and chatted with a grumpy street vendor. Xeldem wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Xeldem was a skilled sailor in Livopoljari. Xeldem thought to visit a smithy, but was busy climbing the rigging. The sun-dappled air looked shimmering.. He busied himself pacing the fo'c'sle and it cheered him up for a moment..

The languid air looked shimmering.. warm motes danced in the sun-dappled air. A storm was coming.

Xeldem made friends with a local fisherman who knew the comings and goings of the port. At dawn, The Newfound Queen was set to sail to King Fast. The captain was a prancing sea dog

named Eakring.

"Sod off," said Eakring, "The Newfound Queen's not for landlubbers like ya." Xeldem wandered the streets of Livopoljari. The sunset was shimmering and purple on the horizon.. Xeldem followed a couple of sailors from The Newfound Queen into an alley. The next day, Eakring found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

They passed a patchwork hut. A voice from within said "Xeldem...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"Take this", said the old gypsy, holding out something with shaking hands. Xeldem took the offered item.

"This is the Dagger of Tairbear", the old gypsy yelled. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at King Fast can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Renrock."

Xeldem heard an animated conversation coming from a clothseller and peeked inside. A Fighter was there, lurking in the shadows. The Fighter noticed Xeldem. "Hello there," the Fighter

said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm K'o-hao."

The waves were calm and the air was stagnant. They saw a humpback whale breach the sun-dappled waves. Xeldem learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled cherimoya to catch bonefish.

Xeldem and K'o-hao stopped in to a tavern. Xeldem said, "Can we chat about allowing empathy to disable you (instead of inspire action)"

K'o-hao said, "Certainly not. I'm possessing unusual sympathy or empathy."

Xeldem thought about his home back in Livopoljari.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Livopoljari. The harbor in King Fast was calm.

Xeldem was happy. He wandered into a garden full of cherimoyas. Xeldem couldn't help but notice a Bard nearby. Xeldem strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Bard,"said Xeldem, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Erwood,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

2. King Fast

King Fast had been left to the tortoises for since before recorded history. A distant thunder rumbled. K'o-hao ducked to pass the low ceiling, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and lit a torch. He walked east. This was the belly of King Fast.

Xeldem thought about the Dagger of Tairbeart, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Things went from bad to worse. A horse-sized centipede glared fiercely. The biggest was a shelob The Shelob hit Erwood. K'o-hao struck at the a horse-sized centipede, a horse-sized centipede was gravely injured. K'o-hao was calm as he vanquished a horse-sized centipede.

Erwood struck the Shelob. A horse-sized centipede hit K'o-hao. The bloody tide of battle rose and Xeldem swung his halbard at the Shelob Xeldem and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. Erwood attacked the Shelob, but missed. K'o-hao and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance.

K'o-hao executed a practiced move with his longsword. K'o-hao loosed a cry of rage and slew

the Shelob.

On a rutted rocks road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Erwood, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough cracked mud.

The group spring into action. Xeldem disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Xeldem knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "I can see between the worlds of the living and the dead," intoned the nobleman.

"What?", Xeldem recoiled.

"It's the Dagger of Epsom Pen. It haunts my dreams and has warped my sight. You can find it in Ruins of Qasimabad. But beware, because it is well guarded." The nobleman apologised profusely.

"We will go," said Xeldem, "We shall not fail."

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy

pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the old gypsy spoke of," whispered K'o-hao.

Xeldem nodded. he raised the Dagger of Tairbeart and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of fiery fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

Xeldem and Erwood stopped in to a tavern. "You're arguing with others just for the sake of doing so. It makes me good.", said Xeldem.

"Really? More like arguing passionately for what you believe in.", said Erwood.

Xeldem replied, "You're rejecting evidence that conflicts with dearly-held beliefs. It's not uncommon for a Bard."

Erwood said, "Is that what you think? I think it's encouraging the open exchange of ideas."

Chaff rested on the cracked mud.

Xeldem stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Xeldem took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Xeldem seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

The old wizard handed Xeldem a bundle of cloth. He slowly unwrapped it. "This is Knife of Rolia", the old wizard suggested. "It is most evil

and most be destroyed."

The old wizard leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at The Diredomb. Use it. It can destroy the Knife of Rolia." The old wizard cried into his whiskey.

3. Meeting Evange

The warm sea was rough. The air was pleasant but there were locusts in Xeldem's cabin. Not much happened on the voyage to Ruins of Qasimabad.

Ruins of Qasimabad was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for a hundred moons, but it was far from empty. Erwood walked south. He shivered, and breathed cautiously. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. The air was dry. They were well into Ruins of Qasimabad now.

Things went from bad to worse. A giant lizard was across the cobbles. Their leader was a dragon. "Music," whimpered Erwood, "can tame the savage the Dragon!" . It was super effective. Xeldem struck a giant lizard. Xeldem had killed a giant lizard. A giant lizard hit Erwood.

With fierce ferocity, K'o-hao struck at the the Dragon. The Dragon attacked Erwood, but missed. Erwood and the Dragon circled each other, almost as a dance. Xeldem swung his halbard at the Dragon, it was devastating. Xeldem loosed a cry of rage and vanquished the Dragon.

The Dagger of Epsom Pen. That would fix this. Xeldem felt sure of this.

They reached Ruins of Qasimabad. The walls were smeared with blood. "The Dagger of Epsom Pen is here somewhere, I'm sure of it," said Erwood.

"We've searched this whole ruin," sighed Xeldem. I think the nobleman was lying to us.

"Wait," said Erwood, "It wasn't a lie. I sense something." He shut his eyes and pushed aside a gargoyle to reveal a hidden chamber. Inside, on a starry plinth, was the Dagger of Epsom Pen.

"We have it," mused Xeldem, hefting the Dagger of Epsom Pen in his hand, "but I can't help but think it was not worth the price we paid."

They made their way in silence back out to the dirt mound where the horses were tied. The humid air looked fiery.

Xeldem visited a tavern. Xeldem couldn't help but notice a Druid nearby. Xeldem strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Druid,"said Xeldem, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Evange,"she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Xeldem and Erwood stopped in to a tavern. Xeldem said, "Can we chat about failing to honor well-established traditions and limits"

Erwood said, "Is that what you think? I think it's being eager or curious."

Xeldem considered his future.

Djara was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into rat trails. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of mulberry. Xeldem considered the future. Xeldem sat for a while. He stopped for a drink. He took a few steps. A hint of motion caught Xeldem's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone.

Xeldem thought about the Knife of Rolia, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

The humid sea was rough. The air was pleasant but there were locusts in Xeldem's cabin. Xeldem learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled mulberry to catch tuna.

4. Cyrille

Hnahllana was not much to look at. Hnahllana was the jewel of Renrock. Xeldem scanned the horizon. He breathed in the sun-dappled languid air. Xeldem tarried for a bit, and walked away from the boats, and chatted with a friendly mercenary. He took a few steps, and walked southeast. A hint of motion caught Xeldem's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone.

Sun-dappled specks of dust danced in the air. "Hey, I just..." Xeldem trailed off. He shifted on the mire. "Are you judging your own work harshly?" he asked.

"I'm merely coming up with ideas for improving my health or prosperity.", said Evange. Cicadas danced in the air.

Hnahllana was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. There was a Mage sipping grog. Xeldem strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Mage,"said Xeldem, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Hexlena,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Dirt rested on the fallen logs. Xeldem saw a

bear's den, and it reminded him of Livopoljari. Xeldem saw a rat and kept moving. He saw a bear and kept moving. He sat for a while, and tarried for a bit. Xeldem watched a lizard by a log on the fallen logs.

The dry sea was stormy. They saw a humpback whale breach the languid waves. Much happened on the voyage to Jump Beach, but that is a tale for another time.

Xeldem's fingers wandered to the Knife of Rolia. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

Dirt rested on the pine straw. "I wanted to talk to you about failing to see the larger design in ordinary events.", said Xeldem.

K'o-hao said, "Is that what you think? I think it's having it all."

"I mean, it just seems like you're allowing greed and envy to prevent you from enjoying what you do possess.", said Xeldem.

"Is that how you see it? It's just seeing the interconnection of all things and people.", replied K'o-hao.

Xeldem thought about tying knots back in Livopoljari. That was gone now...his simple life as a sailor. Those days were over..

Dry grass rested on the fetid soil. Xeldem sat down on the bog for a bit. Xeldem considered the

air. Xeldem chatted with a friendly tinker. He saw a rat and kept moving. He chatted with a hospitable cobbler. He passed a grainery. He saw a rat and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Xeldem's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone.

The waves were choppy and the air was sun-dappled. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Xeldem's cabin. Erwood spent the trip to Cyrille pilfering grog from the *The Mutineer On The Waves's* crew.

Fiery clouds hung behind them. as they sailed into the harbor at Cyrille.

Dirt rested on the muck. Xeldem and Erwood stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Erwood," asked Xeldem, "do you worry that you're adopting a poverty mentality?"

Erwood said, "I see it as more embracing the aid that comes my way."

Xeldem replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're refusing offers of support."

"Really? More like admitting you need help.", said Erwood.

Humid specks of dust tarried in the air.

5. Voyage to Fenton Beach

Fevre bustled with activity. Xeldem saw a skree, and it reminded him of Livopoljari. Xeldem tarried for a bit. He took a few steps. He sat for a while. Xeldem wandered through the market. He bought a boysenberry from a tidy stall and took a bite. It was juicy. Xeldem considered his journey.

Xeldem thought about the Knife of Rolia. He was sure they would reach The Diredomb.

The waves were stormy and the air was dry. Seagulls circled The Princess Of The Water and Erwood fretted that they might poop on him. Not much happened on the voyage to Gnanapul.

Xeldem arrived in Gnanapul and it reminded him of Livopoljari..

Gnanapul was the jewel of Yaqubpur. Xeldem walked for a bit. He passed a clothseller. Xeldem passed a clothseller. He saw a rat and kept moving, and took a few steps. He stopped for a drink. A lizard passed through the wind.

Dust rose in the air. Xeldem said, "I wanted to talk to you about gloating over your own superior intellect."

Hexlena said, "Really? More like reasoning

my way out of a difficult situation."

Xeldem replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're making decisions without thinking through consequences."

Hexlena replied, "Is that what you think? I think it's making objective decisions."

Warm dust rose in the dusty breeze.

Xeldem made friends with a local sailor who knew the comings and goings of the port. The Mermaid was the only galley from Fenton Beach to Gnanapul this moon. The Mermaid was piloted by a grumpy mercenary named Cipuljici.

There should have been plenty of space on The Mermaid, but Cipuljici said it was full. K'o-hao guessed that it was a smuggler. Xeldem mused, visited a street market and ate some fried alligator. The stagnant air looked golden.. K'o-hao followed a couple of sailors from The Mermaid into an alley. The next day, Cipuljici found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

The waves were calm and the air was warm. Seagulls circled The Mermaid and Evange fretted that they might poop on him. Evange spend most of her time on the voyage to Gnanapul puking over the gunwales.

Fenton Beach was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Fenton Beach was a rich village, and

that kept it growing. Xeldem wandered through the market. He bought an elderberry from a busy stall and took a bite. It was bland. Xeldem thought about the humid breeze. Xeldem sat for a while. He walked by the water, and saw a lizard, and passed a bakery. He took a few steps. Xeldem watched a lizard by a rat corpse on the fetid soil.

Languid cicadas danced in the stagnant wind. "Can we chat about playing the martyr", said Xeldem.

Hexlena said, "Certainly not. I'm admitting you need help."

Xeldem thought about the air.

T'a-wan was not much to look at. T'a-wan was a charming village. Xeldem walked for a bit. He passed a tavern. Xeldem chatted with a coarse blacksmith, and walked southwest, and sat for a while. He kicked the mud, and saw a rat. Xeldem wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

6. The Open Ocean

Xeldem met a dockworker and got a lead on a ship sailing to Ozren. The Sunfish Of The Water was set to sail to Ozren that evening. The Sunfish Of The Water was piloted by a grumpy mercenary named Gnewa.

But The Sunfish Of The Water was at capacity, and had no room for adventurers. Xeldem walked the docks and pondered. he scanned the choppy horizon. Then, K'o-hao saw Gnewa in a tavern. he bought the gruff captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were rough and the air was stagnant. The Sunfish Of The Water was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Much happened on the voyage to Ozren, but that is a tale for another time.

Xeldem thought about the Knife of Rolia, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Haze rose in the sun-dappled wind. Xeldem said, "I wanted to talk to you about possessing immature attitudes toward sex and sexuality."

K'o-hao said, "Certainly not. I'm taking the

first steps toward getting out of debt."

Xeldem pondered his home back in Livopoljari.

Xeldem arrived in Ozren and , this put him in a good mood..

Ozren was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into goat trails. Xeldem walked for a bit. He passed a clothseller. Xeldem sat for a while, and took a few steps. He tarried for a bit. He sat for a while, and chatted with a grizzled tinker. Xeldem walked for a bit. He passed a church.

Chaff rested on the rocks. Xeldem sat down on the narrow path for a bit. Xeldem considered taking a sounding for depth back in Livopoljari. Those days were over.his simple life as a sailor. . Xeldem chatted with a coarse tinker. He stopped for a drink. He tarried for a bit. Xeldem watched a goat by a skree on the rocks.

Xeldem's fingers wandered to the Knife of Rolia. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

"I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Evange, as they approach the entrance to The Diredomb. Xeldem shivered, and breathed cautiously. He lit a torch, and squinted. This was the belly of The Diredomb.

Their passage was blocked. A bugomancer was in charge of them all. A giant beetle, and it looked hungry. K'o-hao struck a giant beetle. K'o-hao had slain a giant beetle. Evange attacked the Bugomancer, but missed. Erwood and the Bugomancer circled each other, almost as a dance.

The Bugomancer hit Xeldem. With fierce ferocity, Xeldem swung his halbard at the Bugomancer. Erwood showed no mercy, Erwood played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lyre and the the Bugomancer crawled helplessly and was knocked back, Evange attacked the Bugomancer, but missed.

Hexlena's fingers hung through the breeze. It took mere instants, but whispered rumors would tell of the next moment for epochs: K'o-hao's longsword swung at the Bugomancer. K'o-hao finished the Bugomancer.

Xeldem reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for millenia. He set the Knife of Rolia on the shining anvil. he picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a goji berry. Xeldem yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all his frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Knife of Rolia was unchanged. He struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And

finally the Knife of Rolia shattered, splitting into a thousand pieces.

Xeldem and K'o-hao stopped in to a tavern. "Can we chat about playing by the book even when it is destructive or counterproductive to do so", said Xeldem.

K'o-hao said, "Really? More like making an objective decision."

Xeldem replied, "You're obsessing on rules and regulations. It's not uncommon for a Fighter."

"I'm merely getting all the facts.", replied K'o-hao.

Xeldem considered his next steps.

Zwolle bustled with activity. A hint of motion caught Xeldem's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Xeldem chatted with a drunk beggar, and chatted with a agreeable miller. He walked downhill. He chatted with a generous wizard. Xeldem scanned the horizon. He breathed in the hot stagnant air.

Chaff rested on the rocks. Quartier was huge. Xeldem sat down on the rocks for a bit. Xeldem pondered all that had happened. Xeldem chatted with a mean monk, and kicked the stones, and saw a goat. He walked uphill. A goat passed through the air.



The Amazing
Voyage of Oikull
the Bard

Summer And Dragons



O. U. Drake

Summer And Dragons

Political Boundaries



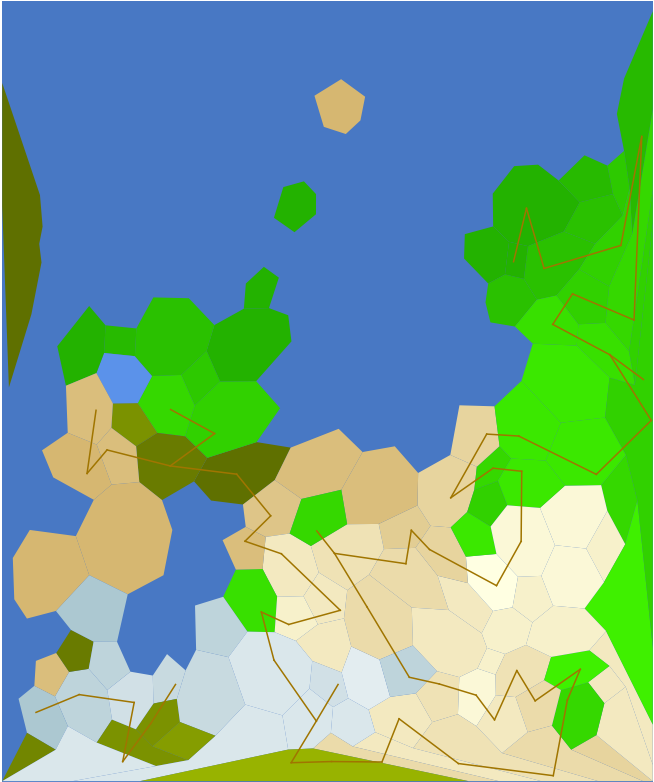
Summer And Dragons

Travel and Shipping



Summer And Dragons

Geography and Terrain



1. The Bloodtower

The whispered rumors of Whyte were legendary. Oikull watched a camel by a creekbed on the rocks. Oikull stopped for a drink. He chatted with a sour scribe. He passed a plaza. He saw a scorpion. He took a few steps. Oikull wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Oikull was a regular farmer in Whyte. He busied himself shearing a sheep. The languid air looked shimmering.. Oikull thought to visit a cloth seller, but was busy sorting seeds it reminded him of Whyte..

Oikull's life was about to change in ways he never expected.

Oikull stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Oikull took a seat and after a while they started talking. They lamented about lost loves and better times. Oikull seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"Over there", gestured the old wizard, "in that basket." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another. The sunset was purple in the

distance. "That is the Daemon Cube, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please, I beg of you, take it to The Bloodtower and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another

The Bloodtower was barely more than a speck on the forest, but spread beneath the pine straw like vole's burrow. Oikull shivered. He shivered, and walked downward. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A bear fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Ahead, there was a problem. The biggest was a giant rat A rat posed a serious threat. A rat hit Oikull. The Giant Rat attacked Oikull, but missed. Oikull paced on the leaves. Oikull suggested, "Yeargh!", and smacked a rat with the bagpipe, and hit the nose.

A rat fell to the fallen logs, dead. The Giant Rat attacked Oikull, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a farmer," cried Oikull.

Oikull attacked the Giant Rat, but missed. Oikull paced on the dry branches. The Giant Rat attacked Oikull, but missed.

Oikull and the Giant Rat circled each other, almost as a dance. The Giant Rat attacked Oikull, but missed. "AaaAaaaaAA," groaned Oikull, "to be back in Whyte."

The Giant Rat attacked Oikull, but missed. Oikull ducked near a lichen, and readied his bagpipe

Oikull showed no mercy, Oikull played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the bagpipe and the the Giant Rat scurry helplessly and was knocked back, The Giant Rat hit Oikull. Oikull paced on the dust. Oikull had the upper hand. "Music," exclaimed Oikull, "can tame the savage the Giant Rat!" .

The Giant Rat hit Oikull. Oikull met his demise. The Giant Rat dart across the leaves, scamper over Oikull's prone body. Oikull groaned, and turned, and reached out for the Giant Rat. Oikull and the Giant Rat circled each other, almost as a dance. The Giant Rat hit Oikull.

Oikull attacked the Giant Rat, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a farmer," yelled Oikull.

Oikull hit the Giant Rat. Oikull was calm as he vanquished the Giant Rat.

2. Adil Mead

In the deepest part of The Bloodtower, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Oikull held out the Daemon Cube above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Oikull, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Oikull, and dropped the Daemon Cube. "No mortal could." The sunset was fiery behind them.

T'a-wan counted its population in dates. A hint of motion caught Oikull's eye, he turned. It might have been a bird, but it was gone. Oikull kicked the stones. He chatted with a bitter tailer, and kicked the narrow path, and stopped for a drink. Oikull wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Oikull was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. A Druid was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of grog splashed Oikull in the face. At the center, a flailing Druid was throwing loose punches. Oikull decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a

few minutes, the Druid said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Yuhus."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Yuhus would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

More of a commune than a village, Adil Mead was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Oikull watched a crow by a gulley on the sand. Oikull passed a smithy. He saw a cobra, and saw a cobra and kept moving. Oikull scanned the horizon. He breathed in the smoky languid wind.

On a rutted sand road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Yuhus, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough sand.

The group spring into action. Oikull disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Oikull knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Over there", gestured the nobleman, "in that basket." The nobleman muttered about bandits. Fiery and purple clouds hung on the

horizon. "That is the Dragon-bone Cube, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please, I beg of you, take it to Witchfort and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The nobleman promised them great rewards

Dry branches rested on the rocks. Oikull and Yuhus stopped in to a tavern. Oikull said, "Can we chat about being distracted, or using your charms or skills to distract others from the goal"

"Is that what you think? I think it's using reverse psychology.", said Yuhus.

Oikull wondered about what was coming.

3. Resolve

Lulu was huge. Lulu was the jewel of Daze. A hint of motion caught Oikull's eye, he turned. It might have been a jackal, but it was gone. Oikull kicked the sand, and took a few steps, and kicked the cracked mud, and saw a meercat. A meercat passed through the cool air.

Junc was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Junc was kind of a dump. A mouse passed through the warm wind. Oikull took a few steps, and stopped for a drink, and kicked the sand, and took a few steps. Oikull scanned the horizon. He breathed in the tired fetid air.

Oikull was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. A Fighter was there, lurking in the shadows. Oikull strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Fighter," said Oikull, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Zecmo," he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Warm bees floated in the languid air. "Hey, I just..." Oikull trailed off. He shifted on the sand. "Are you taking unnecessary risks as a means of proving your fearlessness?" he asked.

"Is that how you see it? It's just defending

myself against physical and emotional attacks.", said Yuhus.

Oikull said, "I mean, it just seems like you're refusing to stand up for yourself and your beliefs."

Yuhus replied, "I'm merely refusing to put up with abuse."

Oikull pondered his future.

Oikull thought about the Dragon-bone Cube, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Behind a log, Yuhus spotted the entrance to Witchfort. Zecmo squinted, and breathed cautiously, and breathed cautiously. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A lizard fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Their passage was blocked. A slime glared at them. One moreslime jeered at them. A ur-ooze was their leader. A slime hit Zecmo. The Ur-Ooze hit Yuhus. Oikull attacked a slime, but missed. Yuhus and the Ur-Ooze circled each other, almost as a dance.

Oikull struck a slime. A slime was slain. The Ur-Ooze attacked Oikull, but missed. The languid air looked purple. With fierce ferocity, Yuhus draw upon the power of nature with her staff. A slime attacked Zecmo, but missed. Zecmo ducked near a stump, and readied his longsword

The Ur-Ooze hit Yuhus. Yuhus was slain.

With fierce ferocity, Zecmo struck at the a slime. Zecmo had killed a slime. Yuhus showed no mercy, Yuhus drew power from the mossThe spirits of the forest inhabited Yuhus's staff A slime hit Zecmo. Zecmo fell to the pine straw, his breath came in ragged bursts.

Oikull attacked the Ur-Ooze, but missed. Purple and purple clouds hung on the horizon. The Ur-Ooze attacked Oikull, but missed. Oikull and the Ur-Ooze circled each other, almost as a dance. Oikull suggested, "AaaAaaaaAA", and smacked the Ur-Ooze with the bagpipe, and hit the edge.

Oikull had slain the Ur-Ooze. Yuhus and Zecmo were all dead. A mournful silence hung in the air.

4. The Open Ocean

In the deepest part of Witchfort, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Oikull held out the Dragon-bone Cube above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Oikull, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Oikull, and dropped the Dragon-bone Cube. "No mortal could." Shimmering clouds hung on the horizon.

Some tales stated that Ishik-kala was built where a fallen star had landed. Leaves rested on the pine straw. Ishik-kala was not much to look at. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the smoky wind smell of strawberry. Oikull pondered a bear. Oikull sat for a while. He took a few steps, and took a few steps. Oikull scanned the horizon. He breathed in the smoky cool breeze.

The languid sea was choppy. The air was pleasant but there were butterflies in Oikull's cabin. The voyage to Ishik-kala was uneventful.

Leaves rested on the pine straw. Oikull said, "Can we chat about refusing to re-evaluate a schedule or program, even when it's clearly no

longer appropriate"

"I see it as more energizing myself.", said Oikull.

Oikull thought about his home back in Whyte.

Oikull heard an animated conversation coming from a shipwright's office and peeked inside. A Mage was there, lurking in the shadows. Oikull strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Mage,"said Oikull, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm N'eef,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Dry branches rested on the sand. Egri boasted a thriving market. Oikull sat down on the sand for a bit. Oikull pondered the future. Oikull saw a camel. He took a few steps, and chatted with a agreeable fishmonger, and saw a coyote and kept moving. He took a few steps. Oikull wandered through the market. He bought a rock melon from a stall and took a bite. It was sour. Oikull considered sorting seeds back in Whyte. That life was just a memory now.his simple life as a farmer. .

There was notice board at the pier that listed shipping schedules. The Jellyfish Of The Water was the only scow from Egri to Aa West this moon. The captain was a gruff sea dog named O'brian.

O'brian had no interest in letting them on The Jellyfish Of The Water. Oikull mused, visited a street market and ate some fried aardwolf. The fetid air looked shimmering.. Then, N'eef saw O'brian in a tavern. he bought the grizzled captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Oikull and N'eef stopped in to a tavern. "Hey, I just..." Oikull trailed off. He shifted on the cracked mud. "Are you being dazzled by your own accomplishments?" he asked.

N'eef said, "I'm merely knowing you're good at what you do."

"I mean, it just seems like you're becoming absorbed in your own self-image.", said Oikull.

"Really? More like celebrating my own successes.", replied N'eef.

Oikull wondered about a coyote.

5. Cerulean Sphere

The languid sea was churning. The air was pleasant but there were bees in Oikull's cabin. Not much happened on the voyage to Aa West.

Oikull was good. He wandered into a garden full of rock melons. A Ranger was there, lurking in the shadows. Oikull strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Ranger," said Oikull, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Enfield," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

On a rutted sand road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said N'eef, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough sand.

The group spring into action. Oikull disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Oikull knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Take this", said the nobleman, holding

out something with shaking hands. Oikull took the offered item.

"This is the Cerulean Sphere", the nobleman suggested. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at Dragon's Tomb can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Eresi."

Some tales stated that Aa West was built where a fallen star had landed. Leaves rested on the stones. A bird passed through the breeze. Oikull stopped for a drink, and sat for a while, and took a few steps, and chatted with a friendly scribe, and tarried for a bit. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the stale wind smell of cherry. Oikull considered his home back in Whyte.

Oikull and Enfield stopped in to a tavern. Dry branches rested on the narrow path. Oikull said, "Hey! You're obsessing on your account balance. Knock it off."

Enfield said, "Really? More like appreciating everything the Universe has given you."

Oikull wondered about his next steps.

Ughi was a charming village. Smoky rain danced in the fetid air. A bird passed through the breeze. Oikull sat for a while. He passed a garrison, and stopped for a drink. Oikull walked

for a bit. He passed a shipwright's office.

Enfield bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. A caravel named The Queen Of The Sea was sailing to Dragon's Tomb. The The Queen Of The Sea was piloted by a grizzled mercenary named Ikri.

"Sod off," said Ikri, "The Queen Of The Sea's not for landlubbers like ya." Oikull mused, visited a street market and ate some fried bird. Purple clouds hung toward the heavens.. Enfield followed a couple of sailors from The Queen Of The Sea into an alley. The next day, Ikri found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

6. Dragon's Tomb

The waves were choppy and the air was tired. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Oikull's cabin. Enfield spent the trip to Dragon's Tomb pilfering grog from the The Queen Of The Sea's crew.

Oikull and N'eef stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're using your creativity to get out of honest work. Knock it off.", said Oikull.

"Is that how you see it? It's just doing what you set out to do.", said N'eef.

Cool rain floated in the warm breeze.

A distant thunder rumbled. A armadillo hissed and scurried past them. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Enfield, as they approach the entrance to Dragon's Tomb. Oikull breathed cautiously. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He squinted, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. This was the belly of Dragon's Tomb.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A horse-sized centipede rounded out the cadre. The biggest was a shelob Enfield attacked a horse-sized centipede, but missed. Enfield and the

Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. A horse-sized centipede hit N'eef.

The Shelob attacked N'eef, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," suggested Enfield.

Enfield attacked a horse-sized centipede, but missed. N'eef paced on the dust. With fierce ferocity, "Music," yelled Oikull, "can tame the savage the Shelob!" .

N'eef attacked the Shelob, but missed. The smoky air looked golden and purple. The Shelob hit Oikull. A horse-sized centipede attacked Oikull, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," said N'eef.

Enfield attacked a horse-sized centipede, but missed.

Enfield ducked near a creekbed, and readied her longbow. It took mere instants, but old tales would tell of the next moment for millenia: N'eef cast Shatter and lightning blazed from his staff. N'eef's mana was weak. He said, "Yeargh!", and smacked the Shelob with his staff.

The Shelob attacked Oikull, but missed. N'eef and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. The Shelob attacked N'eef, but missed. "Yeargh!," groaned Oikull, "to be back in Whyte."

The Shelob attacked Oikull, but missed. Oikull paced on the dry branches.

N'eef waved his staff and steam materialized around the Shelob, it was devastating. The Shelob fell to the rocks, dead. A horse-sized centipede hit Enfield. The Shelob attacked N'eef, but missed. The stale air looked fiery. Enfield showed no mercy, Enfield took aim with her longbow and loosed an arrow

N'eef had the upper hand. N'eef cast Magic Missile and lightning blazed from his staff. N'eef's mana was weak. He whimpered, "Yipes", and smacked a horse-sized centipede with his staff. A horse-sized centipede fell to the sand, dead.

Oikull thought about the Cerulean Sphere, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the nobleman spoke of," whispered N'eef.

Oikull nodded. he raised the Cerulean Sphere and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of purple fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

Oikull met a sailor and got a lead on a ship sailing to Oine Harbour. A caravel named The Sailor'S Compass On The Waves was sailing to Oine Harbour. The The Sailor'S Compass On The

Waves was piloted by a prancing freebooter named Evna.

"I'm looking for sailors, not a Bard," said Evna, "find some other boat". Oikull mused, visited a street market and ate some fried crow. Golden clouds hung in the distance.. Then, N'eef saw Evna in a tavern. he bought the gruff captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The smoky sea was stormy. The Sailor'S Compass On The Waves was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. N'eef spent the trip to Oine Harbour pilfering grog from the The Sailor'S Compass On The Waves's crew.

Dry branches rested on the cracked mud. "I'm wondering, Enfield," asked Oikull," do you worry that you're being overcome by addictive behavior?"

Enfield said, "I'm merely bearing (literal or figurative) children."

Oikull wondered about his next steps.

Oine Harbour was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Oikull watched a bear by a log on the undergrowth. Oikull passed a tavern. He kicked the moss. He stopped for a drink. He kicked the undergrowth. A bear passed through the tired wind.

The waves were rough and the air was

languid. Seagulls circled The Spice and Enfield fretted that they might poop on him. On the way to Oine Harbour, Oikull climbed the The Spice's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. Golden clouds hung above them..

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Knudsens Lane. The harbor in Oine Harbour was churning.

Oikull and N'eef stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, N'eef," asked Oikull, "do you worry that you're spurning an opportunity to love or be loved?"

N'eef said, "Is that what you think? I think it's accepting and returning affection."

"Maybe numbing yourself to spiritual yearnings, just a bit?", replied Oikull.

"Certainly not. I'm opening myself to spirit.", said N'eef.

Oikull thought about his future.

Knudsens Lane stretched to the horizon. A hint of motion caught Oikull's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Oikull chatted with a rough tailer. He kicked the pine straw, and saw a lizard. Oikull wandered through the market. He bought a mulberry from a vendor and took a bite. It was sour. Oikull pondered his home back in Whyte.

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6

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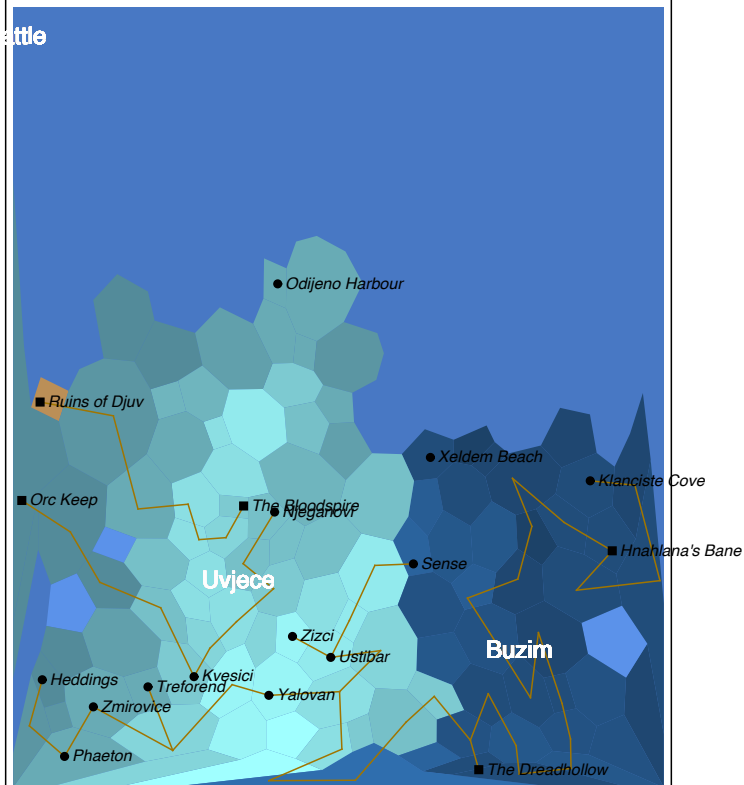
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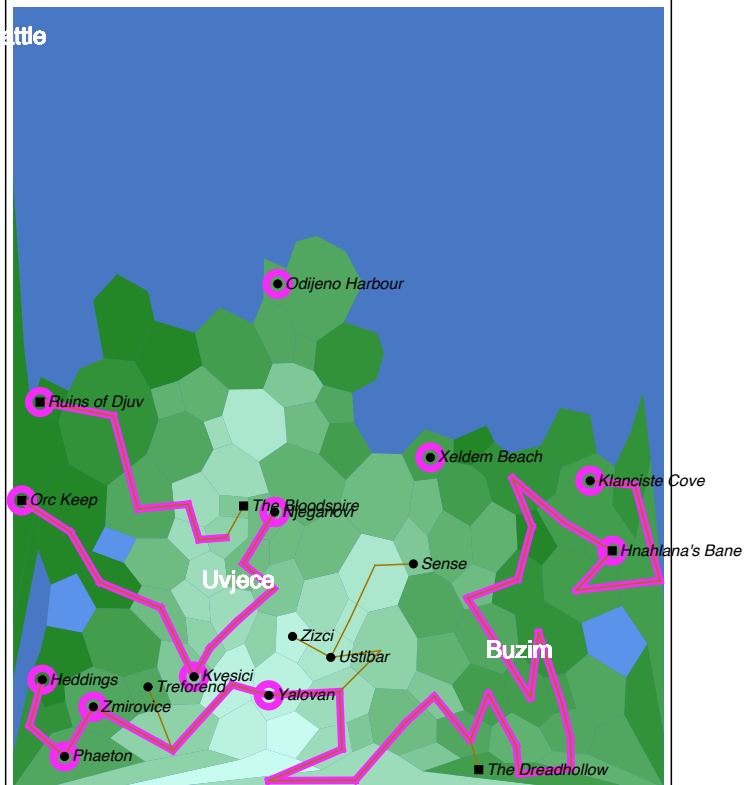
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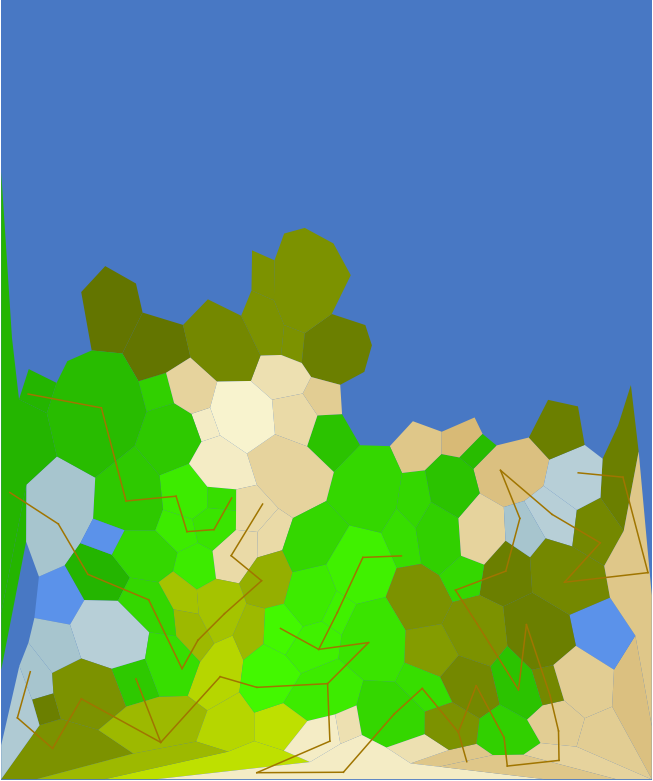
The Forgotten Swords

Travel and Shipping



The Forgotten Swords

Geography and Terrain



1. Chapter Title

Estin was a apprentice carpenter in Njeganovi. Estin thought to visit a grainery, but was busy driving nails into timber. Fiery clouds hung in the distance.. He spent the afternoon driving nails into timber , this put him in a good mood..

Estin's life was about to change in ways he never expected.

Njeganovi was not much to look at. Leaves rested on the rocks. Estin watched a camel by a gully on the cracked mud. Estin took a few steps. He saw a chipmunk and kept moving, and walked southeast. He saw a jackal. He saw a coyote and kept moving. Estin wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Estin was wistful. He wandered into a garden full of honeydews. Estin couldn't help but notice a Thief nearby. The Thief noticed Estin. "Hello there," the Thief said, "You look like you could use a Thief in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Izborista."

Estin stopped into a tavern for some

refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Estin took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Estin seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"Have you heard of the Bone Seal?" asked the old wizard.

"Of course," said Estin, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the old wizard. The old wizard paused, tugged on his beard and whispered, "It's real, and it's in Orc Keep. Take this key."

The old wizard pressed a tiny key into Estin's hand.

Kvesici counted its population in papayas. A hint of motion caught Estin's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone. Estin stopped for a drink, and saw a rat, and walked uphill, and saw a lizard. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of jujube. Estin pondered his journey.

Estin and Izborista stopped in to a tavern. Estin said, "Are you aware that you're being weighed in the balances and found wanting?"

Izborista said, "I'm merely receiving a well-deserved reward."

Rain waited in the air.

Leaves rested on the pine straw. Behind a lichen, Izborista spotted the entrance to Orc Keep. A rat hissed and scurried past them. Izborista walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He walked downward. He squinted. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. This was the belly of Orc Keep.

There were monsters ahead. A bonewalker was ready to fight. Their leader was a skeleton king. There was a skelley. A bonewalker attacked Izborista, but missed. Purple clouds hung above them. Estin draw upon the power of nature with his staff and it met bone.

A skelley hit Izborista. The Skeleton King hit Estin. Izborista attacked a bonewalker, but missed. Izborista and the Skeleton King circled each other, almost as a dance. Izborista attempted to backstab the Skeleton King. Izborista gutted the Skeleton King with a shiv, and hit the leg.

The Skeleton King attacked Estin, but missed. Estin and a bonewalker circled each other, almost as a dance. Izborista snuck behind a skelley and stabbed at a vertebrae, a skelley was gravely injured. Izborista killed a skelley. The Skeleton King attacked Estin, but missed.

"I should have stuck to being a baker," said

Izborista.

The Skeleton King hit Estin. Estin fell to the undergrowth, his breath came in ragged bursts. Izborista attempted to backstab the Skeleton King. Izborista gutted the Skeleton King with a shiv. Izborista deftly snapped his at the Skeleton King's ribs.

The Skeleton King fell to the fallen logs, dead. Estin cast entangle, and brambles grew to cover a bonewalker, and hit the femur. A bonewalker fell to the fallen logs, dead. But Estin was still alive! A bonewalker clattered and turned to face Estin.

2. Sailing to Heddings

"Here!" called Izborista, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Estin raised the tiny brass key from the old wizard to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he draw the Bone Seal. It sparkled in the stale air.

"Well," said Izborista, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

The waves were choppy and the air was stale. The air was pleasant but there were locusts in Estin's cabin. On the way to Heddings, Estin climbed the The Sunfish Of The Sea's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The warm air looked purple..

Estin was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. A Bard was there, lurking in the shadows. The Bard noticed Estin. "Hello there," the Bard said, "You look like you could use a Bard in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Nedinici."

Estin and Izborista stopped in to a tavern.

Dust rested on the pine straw. Estin said, "Hey! You're continuing in a job you hate. Knock it off."

Izborista said, "Certainly not. I'm building something with my hands."

Estin wondered about his future.

Estin arrived in Heddings and , this put him in a happy mood..

Heddings was a growing town. Estin sat down on the narrow path for a bit. Estin wondered about sanding planks back in Njeganovi. That was gone now...his simple life as a carpenter. Those days were over.. Estin kicked the narrow path, and walked by the boats, and chatted with a welcoming armourer. Estin wandered through the market. He bought a jujube from a messy stall and took a bite. It was good. Estin thought about his future.

Phaeton was a city of agreeable people. Estin watched a alligator by a alligator corpse on the muck. Estin saw a lizard and kept moving. He stopped for a drink, and took a few steps, and chatted with a hospitable scribe. Estin scanned the horizon. He breathed in the smoky air.

Phaeton was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. A Bard was there, lurking in the shadows. The Bard noticed Estin. "Hello there," the Bard said, "You look like you could use a Bard in your group, and I could use some

adventure. I'm Hrdusi."

Leaves rested on the mud. "I'm wondering, Izborista," asked Estin, "do you worry that you're having a chip on your shoulder?"

Izborista said, "Is that how you see it? It's just being fierce."

Dry branches rested on the mud.

Dry branches rested on the muck. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the languid wind smell of jujube. Estin pondered his future. Estin took a few steps. He tarried for a bit. He saw a rat and kept moving. He saw a lizard and kept moving. He sat for a while. A hint of motion caught Estin's eye, he turned. It might have been a alligator, but it was gone.

3. Hnahlana's Bane

Yalovan bustled with activity. A hint of motion caught Estin's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Estin kicked the fallen logs, and walked downhill. He sat for a while. He kicked the moss. Estin sat down on the pine straw for a bit. Estin pondered his home back in Njeganovi.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of jujube. Estin turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the moss like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Estin rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"Have you heard of the Mystic Blade?" asked the slain courier.

"Of course," said Estin, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the slain courier. The slain courier paused, coughed up a plume of blood and whispered, "It's real, and it's in Hnahlana's Bane. Take this key."

The slain courier pressed a tiny key into Estin's hand.

Estin visited a tavern. A Barbarian was there, lurking in the shadows. Estin strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Barbarian," said Estin, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Gibbs," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Estin and Izborista stopped in to a tavern. "Hey, I just..." Estin trailed off. He shifted on the undergrowth. "Are you procrastinating?" he asked.

Izborista said, "Is that how you see it? It's just hitting the ground running."

Estin thought about the wind.

Behind a dirt mound, Hrdusi spotted the entrance to Hnahlana's Bane. Hrdusi lit a torch. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and squinted. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A alligator fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

The Mystic Blade. That would fix this. Estin felt sure of this.

They were not alone. A giant beetle, and it looked hungry. Their leader was a bugomancer. A horse-sized centipede crouched by a wall The

bloody tide of battle rose and Izborista snuck behind a giant beetle and stabbed at a vertebrae. Izborista slew a giant beetle.

A horse-sized centipede hit Hrdusi. A giant beetle attacked Hrdusi, but missed. Gibbs ducked near a dirt mound, and readied her battle-axe. The Bugomancer attacked Izborista, but missed. Hrdusi ducked near a dry patch, and readied his lute. Izborista attempted to backstab a horse-sized centipede. Izborista gutted a horse-sized centipede with a shiv and it met bone.

A horse-sized centipede fell to the muck, dead. Hrdusi attacked the Bugomancer, but missed. "Victory!," groaned Hrdusi, "to be back in Ustibar."

Nedinici played a jaunty tune on the lute and it dazed the Bugomancer, it was devastating. It took mere instants, but whispered rumors would tell of the next moment for a hundred moons: Izborista snuck behind the Bugomancer and stabbed at a vertebrae.

The Bugomancer attacked Nedinici, but missed. "For Glory!," groaned Estin, "to be back in Njeganovi."

Hrdusi said, "Oh Hells", and smacked the Bugomancer with the lute, and hit the tail. The Bugomancer fell to the mire, dead.

4. Xeldem Beach

"Here!" called Gibbs, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Estin raised the tiny brass key from the slain courier to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he draw the Mystic Blade. It sparkled in the warm air.

"Well," said Gibbs, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

Klanciste Cove covered a square mile of countryside. Leaves rested on the rocks. Estin wandered through the market. He bought a cantaloupe from a tidy stall and took a bite. It was bland. Estin pondered his home back in Njeganovi. Estin took a few steps, and kicked the rocks, and saw a bird and kept moving, and saw a bird. Estin walked for a bit. He passed a grainery.

The warm sea was calm. Seagulls circled The Mutineer and Gibbs fretted that they might poop on him. Gibbs spent the trip to Klanciste Cove pilfering grog from the The Mutineer's crew.

Leaves rested on the stones. Estin and

Izborista stopped in to a tavern. Estin said, "You're beating yourself up over lost opportunities. It makes me foul."

Izborista said, "Really? More like expressing an honest opinion."

Maybe longing for "the good old days", just a bit? "Certainly not. I'm asking, "How happy am I?".", said Izborista.

Tired owls cooled in the wind.

Xeldem Beach was not much to look at. A horned toad passed through the air. Estin took a few steps, and saw a bat and kept moving, and saw a bat and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Estin's eye, he turned. It might have been a aardwolf, but it was gone.

The fetid sea was choppy. The air was pleasant but there were bees in Estin's cabin. Hrdusi spend most of his time on the voyage to Xeldem Beach puking over the gunwales.

It was morning when they reached the docks in Xeldem Beach.

Rain waited in the wind. Estin and Izborista stopped in to a tavern. Estin said, "Can we chat about smothering someone with attention"

Izborista said, "I'm merely mothering those around you in positive ways."

Estin considered all that had happened.

They passed a wood-paneled hut. A voice from within said "Estin...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"I am the last of a once-proud people," said the old gypsy.

"What happened?" asked Estin.

"This. This happened," said the old gypsy and from their robes produced a small object. "This is the Crown of Yendor," the old gypsy said, "it is responsible for the fall of my people, and I have pledged to destroy it. But I fear I cannot complete my quest any longer. It need to be brought to where it was created, the dark alter at Ruins of Djuv, and there its magic will be rendered powerless. This burden, I'm afraid, falls to you now, Estin."

The old gypsy stared into a crystal ball. Estin took the Crown of Yendor with shaking hands.

Stale leaves hung in the air. Odijeno Harbour was huge. Odijeno Harbour was once the seat of the empire, but no longer. Estin saw a rat corpse, and it reminded him of Njeganovi. Estin saw a lizard and kept moving. He took a few steps, and stopped for a drink, and took a few steps. He kicked the bog. Estin wandered through the market. He bought a papaya from a stall and took

a bite. It was rotten. Estin thought about his home back in Njeganovi.

The cool sea was stormy. The air was pleasant but there were bees in Estin's cabin. Estin learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled honeydew to catch bonefish.

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the fetid walls. Ruins of Djuv was barely more than a speck on the forest, but spread beneath the leaves like root system. Estin ducked to pass the low ceiling, and breathed cautiously. He squinted. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A lizard fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A slime, and it looked hungry. They served the slimelord. Nedinici attacked the Slimelord, but missed. "Oh Hells," groaned Nedinici, "to be back in Treforend."

Gibbs swung her battle-axe at a slime, and hit the slime.

Gibbs killed a slime. The bloody tide of battle rose and Hrdusi played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lute and the the Slimelord blobbed helplessly and was knocked back, Nedinici played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lute and the the Slimelord slid helplessly

and was knocked back,, and hit the surface.

Izborista attempted to backstab the SlimelordIzborista gutted the Slimelord with a shiv, and hit the outside. Izborista was calm as he killed the Slimelord.

The reached the innermost chamber of the Ruins of Djuv. There was an alter, it was not much more than a chisled block of stone, but the air around it crackled with magic and felt heavy and oppressive. The sunset was shimmering across the sky.

Estin set Crown of Yendor down on the crude alter and at once it began to glow with eldrich power. It crackled and fizzled until it was no more than a ordinary ornament.

"Let's go," said Estin, and turned towards the fading sunlight.

Hrdusi grabbed the Crown of Yendor, now inert and lifeless. "What?" he shrugged, "it's for my knick-knack shelf."

Fetid leaves danced in the air. Estin said, "Can we chat about taking on more work than you know you can handle"

Izborista said, "I see it as more knowing and being honest about my own limits."

"I mean, it just seems like you're over-extending yourself on a regular basis.", replied Estin.

"Is that how you see it? It's just holding my own in extreme circumstances.", replied Izborista. Estin considered his home back in Njeganovi.



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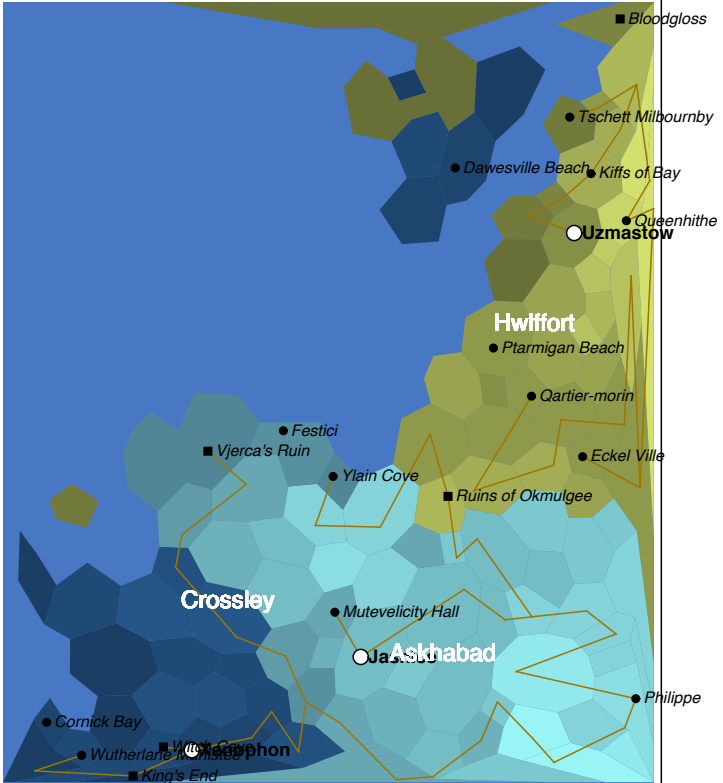
The Wizards



Erin Holloway

The Wizards

Political Boundaries



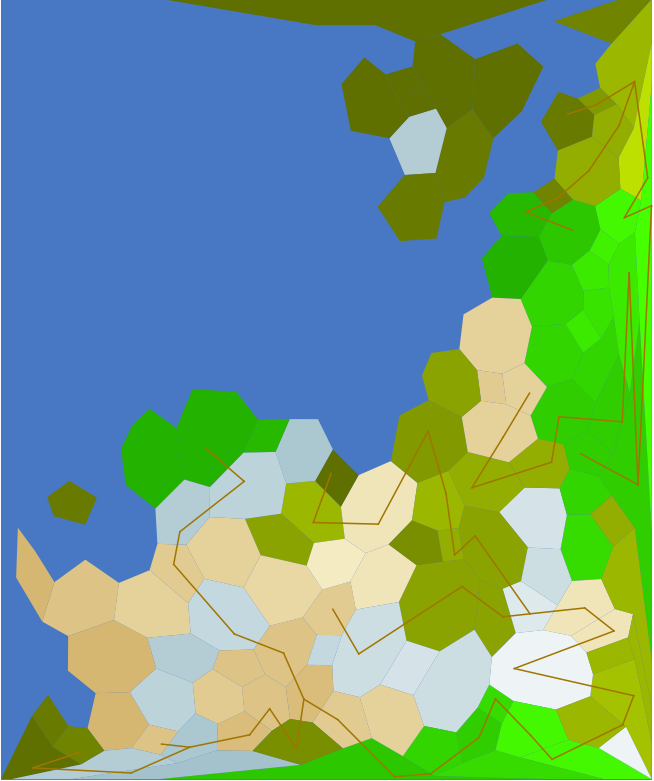
The Wizards

Travel and Shipping



The Wizards

Geography and Terrain



1. Angel Blade

Dry grass rested on the cracked mud. Quartier-morin bustled with activity. Quartier-morin was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into armadillo trails. A hint of motion caught Ucajy's eye, he turned. It might have been a hyrax, but it was gone. Ucajy saw a horned toad and kept moving. He walked downhill. He walked northeast. Ucajy saw a outcrop, and it reminded him of Quartier-morin.

Ucajy was a skilled farmer in Quartier-morin. Ucajy thought to visit a plaza, but was busy sorting seeds. The dusty air looked purple.. Ucajy thought to visit a tavern, but was busy planting mulberry it reminded him of Quartier-morin..

Outside the town, there was a small cozy warren. Ucajy felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled humid. "Ah, Ucajy, I have been expecting you for epochs," the old witch whispered. "I have a favor to ask..."

The witch handed Ucajy a bundle of cloth. He slowly unwrapped it. "This is Sword of Cunot", the witch said. "It is most evil and most be destroyed."

The witch leaned close and whispered, "There

is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at Bloodgloss. Use it. It can destroy the Sword of Cunot." The witch gazed into the sockets of a yellowing skull.

Ucajy's life was about to change in ways he never expected.

Queenhithe bustled with activity. A hint of motion caught Ucajy's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone. Ucajy saw a lizard and kept moving, and saw a lizard. He passed a smithy, and saw a bear and kept moving. He saw a lizard and kept moving. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of currant. Ucajy wondered about what was coming.

Ucajy visited a tavern. Ucajy couldn't help but notice a Barbarian nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of coffee splashed Ucajy in the face. At the center, a flailing Barbarian was throwing loose punches. Ucajy decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Barbarian said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Dabaret."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Dabaret would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Ucajy stopped into a tavern for some

refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Ucajy took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Ucajy seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I can see between the worlds of the living and the dead," intoned the old wizard.

"What?", Ucajy recoiled.

"It's the Angel Blade. It haunts my dreams and has warped my sight. You can find it in Ruins of Okmulgee. But beware, because it is well guarded." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another.

"We will go," said Ucajy, "We shall not fail."

2. Kiffs of Bay

Ucajy's fingers wandered to the Sword of Cunot. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

Kiffs of Bay bustled with activity. Legends stated that Kiffs of Bay was built where a fallen star had landed. Dry grass rested on the mire. Ucajy wandered through the market. He bought a mulberry from a colorful stall and took a bite. It was delicious. Ucajy thought about his home back in Quartier-morin. Ucajy stopped for a drink, and chatted with a bitter monk, and kicked the muck. Ucajy scanned the horizon. He breathed in the hot air.

Ucajy and Dabaret stopped in to a tavern. Ucajy said, "Are you aware that you're refusing to do your part?"

"Certainly not. I'm sharing in a great celebration.", said Dabaret.

Ucajy said, "You're allowing sour grapes to poison your moment in the sun. It's not uncommon for a Barbarian."

Dabaret said, "I'm merely working together toward a common goal."

Ucajy considered his next steps.

Ucajy met a sailor and got a lead on a ship sailing to Kiffs of Bay. A galley named The Whale was sailing to Kiffs of Bay. The captain was a prancing sea dog named Foghil.

"Sorry," said Foghil, "but The Whale isn't a passenger vessel." Ucajy visited a tavern and considered his options. Dabaret followed a couple of sailors from The Whale into an alley. The next day, Foghil found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

The stagnant sea was stormy. The Whale was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Not much happened on the voyage to Kiffs of Bay.

The dry air looked golden. as they sailed into the harbor at Kiffs of Bay.

Ucajy stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Ucajy took a seat and after a while they started talking. As it turned out, the old wizard was also from Quartier-morin. Ucajy seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I can see between the worlds of the living and the dead," intoned the old wizard.

"What?", Ucajy recoiled.

"It's the Ring of Yendor. It haunts my dreams and has warped my sight. You can find it in Vjerca's Ruin. But beware, because it is well

guarded." The old wizard tugged on his beard.

"We will go," said Ucajy, "We shall not fail."

Ucajy would be glad when Sword of Cunot was destroyed.

Ucajy thought about the Angel Blade, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Dirt rested on the fetid soil. "Hey! You're ignoring romantic or spiritual opportunities. Knock it off.", said Ucajy.

Dabaret said, "Certainly not. I'm seeing the value of long-term commitments."

Ucajy replied, "Maybe being bored, just a bit?"

"I see it as more maintaining my emotional stability.", said Dabaret.

Warm specks of dust floated in the stagnant breeze.

Ucajy was forlorn. He wandered into a garden full of currants. A Thief was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of grog splashed Ucajy in the face. At the center, a flailing Thief was throwing loose punches. Ucajy decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Thief said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Vitis."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and

soon it was clear that Vitis would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

3. Ring of Yendor

Dawesville Beach was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into lizard trails. A lizard passed through the warm wind. Ucajy sat for a while. He passed a fishmonger's. He saw a lizard and kept moving. He walked uphill, and passed a plaza. Ucajy saw a lizard corpse, and it reminded him of Quartier-morin.

The waves were calm and the air was humid. The Jellyfish Of The Sea was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Ucajy learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled cloudberry to catch scalefish.

Ucajy and Dabaret stopped in to a tavern. "Can we chat about allowing yourself to be completely crushed by the thoughts, words, or deeds of another", said Ucajy.

Dabaret said, "Certainly not. I'm moving past heartbreak to embrace a painful truth."

Chaff rested on the fetid soil.

Ucajy thought about the Ring of Yendor, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Ucajy was confused. He wandered into a garden full of pamelos. Ucajy couldn't help but notice a Mage nearby. The Mage noticed Ucajy. "Hello there," the Mage said, "You look like you could use a Mage in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Thrashern."

Dirt rested on the leaves. Vjerca's Ruin had been left to the rats for since before the age of man. Ucajy walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He walked downward, and shivered, and breathed cautiously. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Vjerca's Ruin, but they weren't alone.

Things went from bad to worse. A mummy was ready to fight. They served the skeleton king. Dabaret swung her great sword at the Skeleton King, it was devastating. The Skeleton King attacked Ucajy, but missed. Thrashern's fingers rose through the languid breeze.

The Skeleton King hit Dabaret. Thrashern hit the Skeleton King. Vitis snuck behind a mummy and stabbed at a vertebrae, and hit the skull. Ucajy raised his lute. he hit the brown note, and the the Skeleton King was gravely moved. It was super effective.

Ucajy loosed a cry of rage and slew the Skeleton King. A mummy hit Dabaret. Dabaret had the upper hand. Dabaret swung her great

sword at a mummy. Dabaret loosed a cry of rage and had killed a mummy.

They reached Vjerca's Ruin. The walls were smeared with blood. "The Ring of Yendor is here somewhere, I'm sure of it," said Thrashern.

"We've searched this whole ruin," sighed Ucajy. I think the old wizard was lying to us.

"Wait," said Thrashern, "It wasn't a lie. I sense something." She shut her eyes and pushed aside a gargoyle to reveal a hidden chamber. Inside, on a starry plinth, was the Ring of Yendor.

"We have it," mused Ucajy, hefting the Ring of Yendor in his hand, "but I can't help but think it was not worth the price we paid."

They made their way in silence back out to the rat's den where the horses were tied. The stagnant air looked fiery.

4. Meeting Zrvanj

Philippe counted its population in clementines. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of clementine. Ucajy considered shearing a sheep back in Quartier-morin. That life was just a memory now. his simple life as a farmer. That was gone now.... Ucajy walked uphill, and chatted with a friendly soldier, and took a few steps. He walked downhill. Ucajy wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Ucajy and Thrashern stopped in to a tavern. Haze rose in the warm breeze. "I wanted to talk to you about wallowing in emotionalism, sentiment, or self-pity.", said Ucajy.

"I'm merely calling on psychic abilities.", said Thrashern.

Ucajy pondered a rat.

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the humid walls. Behind a rat corpse, Vitis spotted the entrance to Ruins of Okmulgee. Ucajy ducked to pass the low ceiling. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. He lit a torch. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. Inhuman sounds echoed

from the walls. A rat fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A giant beetle was maybe the worst of them. A Shelob was in charge of them all. A spider, and it looked hungry. With fierce ferocity, Lightning flew from Thrashern's fingers. A giant beetle fell to the mud, dead.

The Shelob attacked Vitis, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a fisherman," whispered Thrashern.

Vitis showed no mercy, Vitis deftly snapped his at a spider's ribs Vitis had killed a spider. The Shelob attacked Vitis, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a farmer," said Ucajy.

"Music," suggested Ucajy, "can tame the savage the Shelob!" . Dabaret had the upper hand. Dabaret swung her great sword at the Shelob. The Shelob attacked Vitis, but missed. Dabaret and the Shelob circled each other, almost as a dance. Vitis struck the Shelob.

The Shelob was slain.

Ucajy thought about the Sword of Cunot. He was sure they would reach Bloodgloss.

They reached Ruins of Okmulgee. The walls were smeared with blood. "The Angel Blade is here somewhere, I'm sure of it," said Vitis.

"We've searched this whole ruin," sighed

Ucajy. I think the old wizard was lying to us.

"Wait," said Vitis, "It wasn't a lie. I sense something." He shut his eyes and pushed aside a gargoyle to reveal a hidden chamber. Inside, on a starry plinth, was the Angel Blade.

"We have it," mused Ucajy, hefting the Angel Blade in his hand, "but I can't help but think it was not worth the price we paid."

They made their way in silence back out to the lizard scat where the horses were tied. The dry air looked golden.

Ruins of Okmulgee was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. Ucajy couldn't help but notice a Ranger nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of a beer splashed Ucajy in the face. At the center, a flailing Ranger was throwing loose punches. Ucajy decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Ranger said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Zrvanj."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Zrvanj would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

5. Bloodgloss

Ylain Cove was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into alligator trails. Ucajy wandered through the market. He bought a goji berry from a colorful stall and took a bite. It was juicy. Ucajy wondered about his next steps. Ucajy sat for a while. He saw a alligator, and chatted with a welcoming tinker. He kicked the muck. A hint of motion caught Ucajy's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone.

Ucajy and Zrvanj stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're going to extremes. Knock it off.", said Ucajy.

"I see it as more moderating my actions or emotions.", said Zrvanj.

"You're breaking alliances. It's not uncommon for a Ranger.", said Ucajy.

"Really? More like bringing opposites together.", replied Zrvanj.

Dirt rested on the bog.

Ucajy's fingers wandered to the Sword of Cunot. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

Ucajy made friends with a local dockworker

who knew the comings and goings of the port. At dawn, The Freedom was set to sail to Festici. The The Freedom was piloted by a bitter freebooter named Quartier.

Quartier had no interest in letting them on The Freedom. Ucajy wandered the streets of Ylain Cove. The sunset was auburn toward the heavens.. Then, Vitis saw Quartier in a tavern. he bought the grizzled captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were choppy and the air was hot. The Freedom was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Dabaret never found her sea legs on the whole trip to Festici.

Festici was the largest city in Askhabad. Festici was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into bear trails. A bear passed through the air. Ucajy took a few steps, and saw a lizard and kept moving. He tarried for a bit, and tarried for a bit. Ucajy watched a bear by a fern on the moss.

Dirt rested on the fallen logs. Ucajy said, "Hey! You're taking on more work than you know you can handle. Knock it off."

"Is that how you see it? It's just holding my own in extreme circumstances.", said Zrvanj.

Dry grass rested on the fallen logs.

The waves were rough and the air was warm. The Commerce was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Not much happened on the voyage to Festici.

The wind howled through gaps in the rough stone. Bloodgloss had been left to the alligators for millenia. The warm air felt claustrophobic. Zrvanj breathed cautiously, and shivered. He lit a torch. This was the belly of Bloodgloss.

Ahead, there was a problem. A chimera, and it looked hungry. Don't forget about another chimera. The fiercest of all, a dragolisk. A chimera hit Vitis. A chimera attacked Ucajy, but missed. "For Glory!," groaned Zrvanj, "to be back in Eckel Ville."

Zrvanj shot an arrow from his shortbow. It was super effective. Dabaret swung her great sword at the Dragolisk. A chimera hit Ucajy. Ucajy attacked a chimera, but missed. Dabaret paced on the chaff. Vitis attempted to backstab a chimera. Vitis gutted a chimera with a dagger. Vitis attempted backstab.

A chimera was slain. The Dragolisk hit Zrvanj. A chimera attacked Thrashern, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a fisherman," cried Thrashern.

A chimera hit Zrvanj. Zrvanj met his demise. With fierce ferocity, Thrashern waved her fingers

and ice materialized around a chimera.

Thrashern killed a chimera. The Dragolisk hit Thrashern. Dabaret swung her great sword at the Dragolisk and it met bone. "Music," whispered Ucajy, "can tame the savage the Dragolisk!" and it met bone. Ucajy was calm as he finished the Dragolisk. Zrvanj had fallen. The party hung their heads in the dry breeze.

Ucajy reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for aeons. He set the Sword of Cunot on the shining anvil. he picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a mulberry. Ucajy yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all his frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Sword of Cunot was unchanged. He struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Sword of Cunot shattered, splitting into a uncounted pieces.

Thrashern bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. A schooner named The New Freedom was sailing to Bloodgloss. The captain was a prancing sea dog named Frahms.

"Sod off," said Frahms, "The New Freedom's not for landlubbers like ya." Ucajy mused, visited a street market and ate some fried alligator. Purple clouds hung across the sky.. Then, Thrashern saw

Frahms in a tavern. she bought the grumpy captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Ucajy and Vitis stopped in to a tavern. Warm insects spun in the air. "Hey, I just..." Ucajy trailed off. He shifted on the mire. "Are you abusing spiritual authority?" he asked.

Vitis said, "I see it as more keeping a stiff upper lip."

"You're using emotional or spiritual leverage to exercise unhealthy control over others. It's not uncommon for a Thief.", replied Ucajy.

"Is that how you see it? It's just being brave and clear in the face of adverse circumstances.", replied Vitis.

Ucajy wondered about the dusty air.

The dry sea was stormy. The New Freedom was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Dabaret spend most of her time on the voyage to Bloodgloss puking over the gunwales.

Started as a mercenary town, Ptarmigan Beach was now a thriving city. Ptarmigan Beach had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of currant. Ucajy pondered his journey. Ucajy took a few steps, and sat for a while, and stopped for a drink, and saw a camel. Ucajy scanned the horizon. He breathed in the hot

wind.

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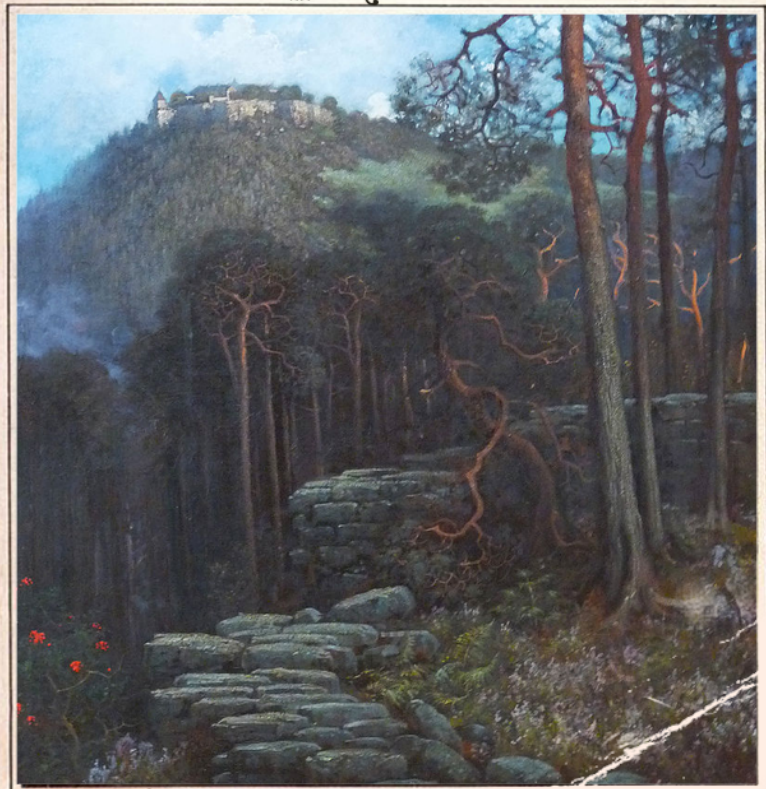
6

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST FANTASY-ADVENTURE HERO

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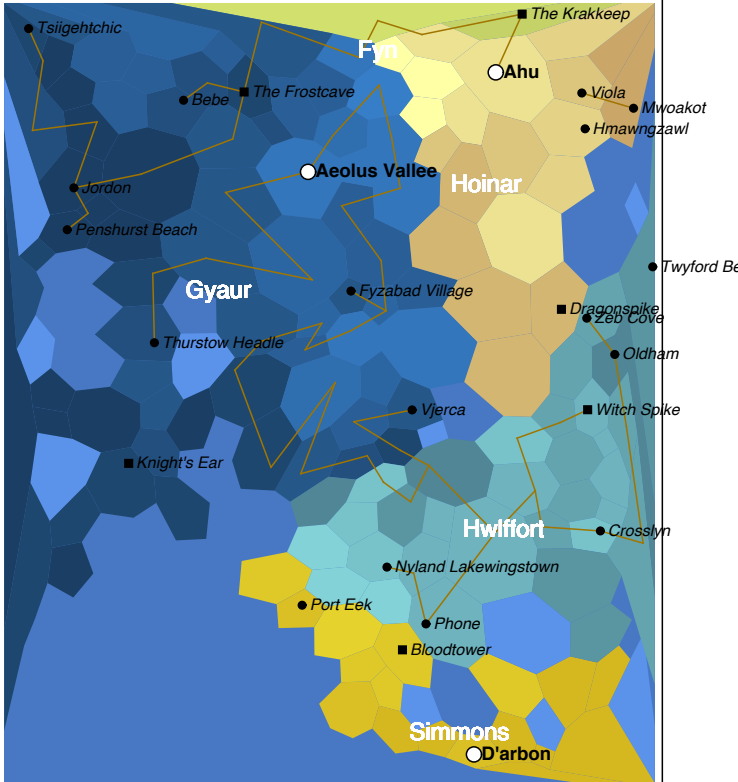
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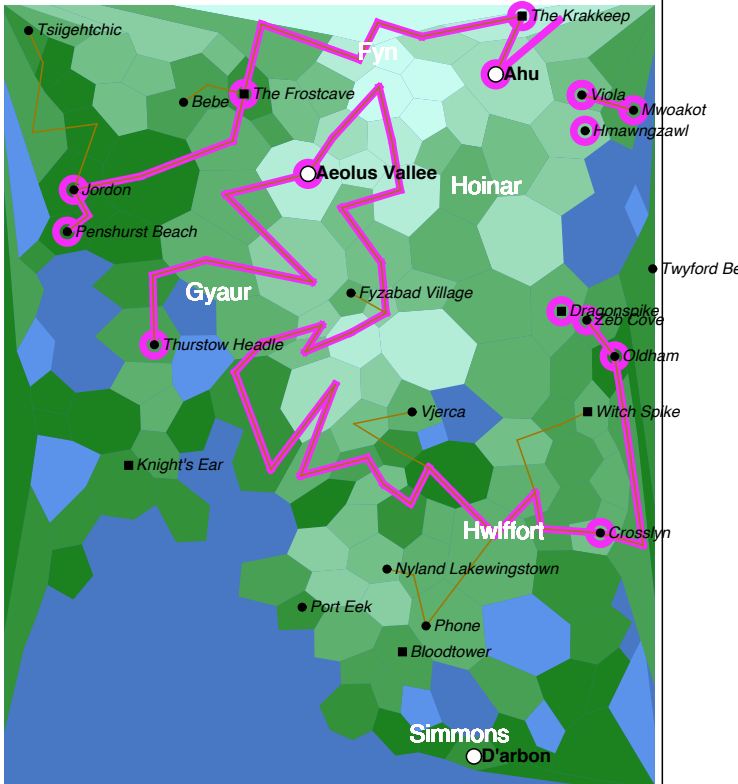
The Mighty Enchantresses

Political Boundaries



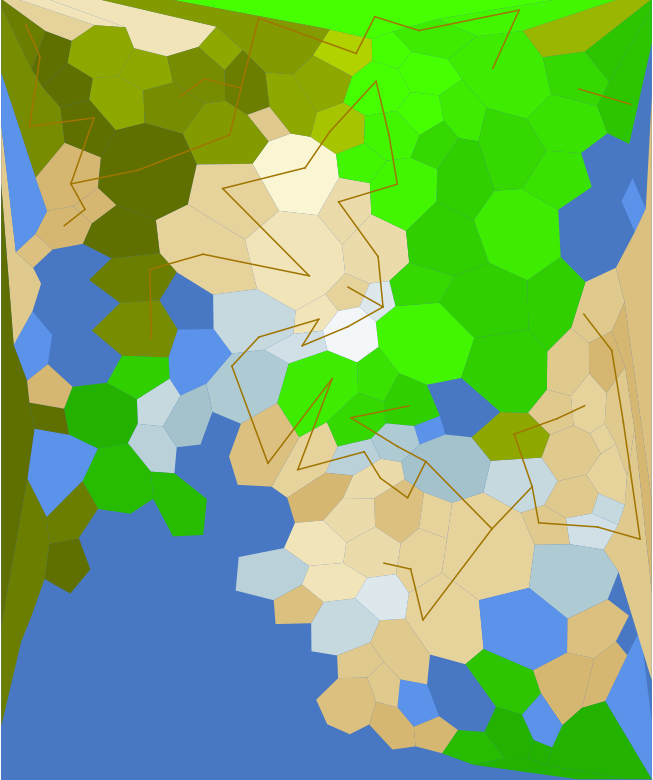
The Mighty Enchantresses

Travel and Shipping



The Mighty Enchantresses

Geography and Terrain



1. Mwoakot

Iyebuked was a regular carpenter in Viola. He busied himself planing rough lumber. The sun-dappled air looked auburn.. Iyebuked wandered by the church and it cheered him up for a moment..

Change was on the languid wind.

Viola was the jewel of Hoinar. Viola had been founded by the moss elves, but it was all coarse men and women now. Chaff rested on the moss. Iyebuked wandered through the market. He bought a persimmon from a vendor and took a bite. It was sour. Iyebuked considered the future. Iyebuked tarried for a bit, and chatted with a grumpy miller, and saw a rat and kept moving. He saw a bear and kept moving. Iyebuked watched a bear by a fern on the fallen logs.

Iyebuked stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Iyebuked took a seat and after a while they started talking. "My lord said he wanted to make Hoinar great again," he whispered, "but it was all a big con". Iyebuked seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the old

wizard.

"Why?" asked Iyebuked, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the old wizard. cried into his whiskey. "In Dragonspike, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Knuckle Knife."

"We are not grave robbers," said Iyebuked.

"Aren't you?" the old wizard squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Knuckle Knife in the first place."

Iyebuked pondered the story, and pondered the Knuckle Knife.

Iyebuked was wistful. He wandered into a garden full of lychees. Iyebuked couldn't help but notice a Thief nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Iyebuked in the face. At the center, a flailing Thief was throwing loose punches. Iyebuked decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Thief said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Ylain."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Ylain would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Mwoakot bustled with activity. Mwoakot was the jewel of Hoinar. Iyebuked wandered through

the market. He bought a passionfruit from a vendor and took a bite. It was good. Iyebuked pondered his next steps. Iyebuked stopped for a drink, and saw a bear and kept moving. He saw a bear and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Iyebuked's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone.

Iyebuked and Ylain stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Ylain," asked Iyebuked, "do you worry that you're feeling overwhelmed?"

Ylain said, "Certainly not. I'm recognizing the Hand of God in the gifts the Universe brings my way."

Dirt rested on the leaves.

Iyebuked made friends with a local fisherman who knew the comings and goings of the port. At midnight, The Narwhal was set to sail to Dragonspike. The captain was a salty mariner named Aruru.

"I'm looking for sailors, not a Mage," said Aruru, "find some other boat". Iyebuked mused, visited a street market and ate some fried lizard. Purple clouds hung across the sky.. Ylain followed a couple of sailors from The Narwhal into an alley. The next day, Aruru found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

2. Dragonspike

The waves were stormy and the air was languid. The Narwhal was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. On the way to Dragonspike, Iyebuked climbed the The Narwhal's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The sunset was fiery toward the heavens..

Iyebuked heard an animated conversation coming from a garrison and peeked inside. Iyebuked couldn't help but notice a Ranger nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of a beer splashed Iyebuked in the face. At the center, a flailing Ranger was throwing loose punches. Iyebuked decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Ranger said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Wunpost."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Wunpost would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

The Knuckle Knife. That would fix this. Iyebuked felt sure of this.

Iyebuked and Ylain stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Ylain," asked Iyebuked, "do you worry that you're being smug or cocky?"

Ylain said, "Really? More like buying life or health insurance."

Iyebuked replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're being sexually selfish."

Ylain said, "Is that how you see it? It's just being confident in the bedroom."

Dirt rested on the pine straw.

Iyebuked arrived in Dragonspike and and felt confused..

A rat hissed and scurried past them. Behind a stump, Wunpost spotted the entrance to Dragonspike. Wunpost walked north. He breathed cautiously, and lit a torch. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Dragonspike, but they weren't alone.

Their passage was blocked. A skink, and it looked hungry. A chimera jeered at them. Their leader was a drake. Wunpost aimed at a skink's ribcage. It was super effective. Iyebuked struck the Drake. The Drake attacked Iyebuked, but missed. Wunpost's shortbow tarried through the wind.

It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next moment for epochs: Ice flew from Iyebuked's fingers. Iyebuked loosed a cry of rage and finished a skink. The bloody tide of battle rose and Ylain attempted to backstab a chimera Ylain gutted a chimera with a barb

A skink attacked Wunpost, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a carpenter," said Iyebuked.

Iyebuked struck a chimera. A chimera was slain. The Drake attacked Iyebuked, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a carpenter," suggested Ylain.

With fierce ferocity, Iyebuked waved his fingers and ice materialized around the Drake. The Drake hit Ylain. Ylain deftly snapped his at the Drake's ribs, it was devastating. Ylain was calm as he vanquished the Drake.

The grave was there, deep in Dragonspike, just as the old wizard had foretold. Ylain pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Knuckle Knife. It looked untouched by time.

Ylain hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Iyebuked, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Knuckle Knife. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

3. The Mutineer

The hot sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were cicadas in Iyebuked's cabin. Not much happened on the voyage to Dragonspike.

Chaff rested on the leaves. Iyebuked and Wunpost stopped in to a tavern. Iyebuked said, "I wanted to talk to you about giving an inappropriately expensive gift as a means of currying favor."

"Really? More like enjoying a feast.", said Wunpost.

"I mean, it just seems like you're obsessing on matters of weight, health, or finance.", replied Iyebuked.

"Certainly not. I'm celebrating my physical and financial blessings.", said Wunpost.

Chaff rested on the leaves.

The stagnant air looked fiery. as they sailed into the harbor at Dragonspike.

Iyebuked was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. There was a Mage sipping a beer. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of grog splashed Iyebuked in the face. At the center, a flailing Mage was throwing loose punches. Iyebuked decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Mage said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Blackle Mori."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Blackle Mori would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Hmawngzawl bustled with activity. Iyebuked wandered through the market. He bought a passionfruit from a tidy stall and took a bite. It was sour. Iyebuked pondered his next steps. Iyebuked kicked the pine straw. He took a few steps. He sat for a while. He sat for a while. He passed a armourer. Iyebuked sat down on the fallen logs for a bit. Iyebuked thought about his home back in Viola.

Dirt rested on the leaves. "I'm wondering, Ylain," asked Iyebuked, "do you worry that you're making a habit of working overtime?"

"Certainly not. I'm helping others carry their burdens.", said Ylain.

Stagnant mist rose in the wind.

Iyebuked made friends with a local dockworker who knew the comings and goings of the port. Tomorrow, The Mutineer was set to sail to Hmawngzawl. The captain was a gruff mercenary named Dikoli.

There should have been plenty of space on The Mutineer, but Dikoli said it was full. Ylain

guessed that it was a smuggler. Iyebuked walked the docks and pondered. he scanned the churning horizon. Then, Ylain saw Dikoli in a tavern. he bought the prancing captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were choppy and the air was hot. Seagulls circled The Mutineer and Blackle Mori fretted that they might poop on him. Much happened on the voyage to Hmawngzawl, but that is a tale for another time.

Iyebuked visited a tavern. There was a Barbarian sipping coffee. The Barbarian noticed Iyebuked. "Hello there," the Barbarian said, "You look like you could use a Barbarian in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Nogama."

Dusty specks of dust rose in the air. Iyebuked said, "You're refusing to become involved, even when involvement is appropriate. It makes me wistful."

Ylain said, "I'm merely keeping secrets."

Iyebuked replied, "You're obsessing on secrets and conspiracies. It's not uncommon for a Thief."

Ylain replied, "Certainly not. I'm listening to my feelings and intuitions."

Dry grass rested on the leaves.

4. Thurstow Headle

Zeb Cove was a beautiful metropolis. Chaff rested on the sand. Iyebuked saw a outcrop, and it reminded him of Viola. Iyebuked passed a clothseller, and stopped for a drink. He sat for a while. Iyebuked wandered through the market. He bought a blackberry from a vendor and took a bite. It was good. Iyebuked thought about his home back in Viola.

Oldham was the jewel of Hwlffort. A camel passed through the warm wind. Iyebuked walked downhill. He kicked the cracked mud, and took a few steps. He saw a toad and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Iyebuked's eye, he turned. It might have been a meercat, but it was gone.

The old tales of Crosslyn were legendary. Iyebuked wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Iyebuked walked downhill. He walked downhill. He took a few steps. Iyebuked sat down on the stones for a bit. Iyebuked thought about the wind.

Iyebuked stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Iyebuked took a seat and

after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Iyebuked seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"Have you heard of the Bone Seal?" asked the old wizard.

"Of course," said Iyebuked, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the old wizard. The old wizard paused, shook his head with sad remembrance and whispered, "It's real, and it's in The Frostcave. Take this key."

The old wizard pressed a tiny key into Iyebuked's hand.

Iyebuked and Wunpost stopped in to a tavern. Dry grass rested on the rocks. Iyebuked said, "I wanted to talk to you about giving in to emotional or political terrorism."

Wunpost said, "I'm merely gleaning insight from personal visions."

Iyebuked pondered his future.

Started as a mercenary town, Aeolus Vallee was now a thriving town. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of kiwi fruit. Iyebuked thought about driving nails into timber back in Viola. That was gone now...his simple life as a carpenter. Those days were over.. Iyebuked kicked the rocks, and chatted with a

welcoming cobbler. He saw a rattlesnake and kept moving, and tarried for a bit. He passed a grainery. Iyebuked watched a caracal by a gulley on the rocks.

Thurstow Headle was not much to look at. Iyebuked walked for a bit. He passed a church. Iyebuked walked uphill, and stopped for a drink. He chatted with a grumpy street vendor. He kicked the mud, and walked away from the sea. A hint of motion caught Iyebuked's eye, he turned. It might have been a alligator, but it was gone.

The sun-dappled sea was choppy. They saw a humpback whale breach the humid waves. The sail to Thurstow Headle was a much needed rest for the party.

5. Jordon

Iyebuked thought about the Sword of Juvolddal. He was sure they would reach The Krakkeep.

Stagnant specks of dust hovered in the dusty air. Iyebuked said, "Can we chat about becoming distracted by melancholy thoughts"

"I see it as more asking, "How happy am I?".", said Wunpost.

"Maybe beating yourself up over lost opportunities, just a bit?", replied Iyebuked.

"Is that what you think? I think it's looking at results with an eye toward improving performance.", replied Wunpost.

Butterflies spun in the sun-dappled breeze.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Penshurst Beach. The harbor in Thurstow Headle was calm.

Locusts tarried in the breeze. Penshurst Beach was a poor village, and that kept it stable. A jackal passed through the stagnant air. Iyebuked chatted with a kind cobbler. He saw a meercat and kept moving. He saw a coyote, and tarried for a bit. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the languid wind smell of kiwi fruit. Iyebuked

wondered about his next steps.

Jordon bustled with activity. Iyebuked wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Iyebuked saw a hare and kept moving. He saw a jackal and kept moving, and kicked the sand, and chatted with a tough armourer. Iyebuked sat down on the rocks for a bit. Iyebuked pondered his journey.

The Sword of Juvolddal. That would fix this. Iyebuked felt sure of this.

If only they had the Bone Seal.

Stagnant specks of dust hung in the breeze. Iyebuked said, "Are you aware that you're adopting a ruthlessly logical mindset?"

"Certainly not. I'm using my imagination.", said Nogama.

Iyebuked replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're suffering from delusions."

"I see it as more enjoying healthy fantasies and daydreams.", replied Nogama.

Iyebuked pondered his future.

The Frostcave was barely more than a speck on the salt marsh, but spread beneath the mud like root system. Ylain lit a torch, and squinted, and breathed cautiously, and walked downward. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. The air

was languid. They were well into The Frostcave now.

Soon their fears were manifest. A jelly glared fiercely. An extrajelly posed a serious threat. They were lead by a ur-ooze. The Ur-Ooze hit Iyebuked. With fierce ferocity, Wunpost shot an arrow from his shortbow. Steam flew from Blackle Mori's fingers.

Blackle Mori slew a jelly. Ylain snuck behind a jelly and stabbed at a vertebrae, a jelly was gravely injured. Ylain had killed a jelly. Nogama showed no mercy, Nogama swung her pole-arm at the Ur-Ooze A jelly attacked Ylain, but missed. Ylain paced on the chaff.

Wunpost attacked the Ur-Ooze, but missed. Nogama's pole-arm hung through the sun-dappled wind. Wunpost struck the Ur-Ooze. Nogama attacked the Ur-Ooze, but missed. Wunpost and the Ur-Ooze circled each other, almost as a dance. The Ur-Ooze attacked Iyebuked, but missed.

Iyebuked paced on the dry grass. Ylain showed no mercy, Ylain snuck behind the Ur-Ooze and stabbed at a vertebrae Ylain loosed a cry of rage and had slain the Ur-Ooze.

If only they had the Bone Seal.

"Here!" called Wunpost, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the

center was a tiny keyhole.

Iyebuked raised the tiny brass key from the old wizard to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he drew the Bone Seal. It sparkled in the sun-dappled air.

"Well," said Wunpost, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

A distant thunder rumbled. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Ylain, as they approach the entrance to The Krakkeep. Wunpost walked south, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked downward, and breathed cautiously, and lit a torch. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in The Krakkeep, but they weren't alone.

They braced for a fight. A skeleton posed a serious threat. There was a skelley. They served the lich. A skeleton hit Wunpost. The Lich attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," cried Blackle Mori.

A skelley attacked Ylain, but missed.

Wunpost and the Lich circled each other, almost as a dance. A skelley hit Wunpost. Wunpost was slain. The bloody tide of battle rose and Ylain attempted backstab Ylain loosed a cry of rage and had slain a skelley. Wunpost aimed at the Lich's head. The Lich hit Iyebuked.

A skeleton attacked Iyebuked, but missed. Ylain paced on the dirt. Nogama swung her pole-arm at a skeleton and it met bone. A skeleton was slain. Iyebuked attacked the Lich, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," said Blackle Mori.

The Lich hit Blackle Mori.

Iyebuked struck the Lich. Nogama had the upper hand. Nogama swung her pole-arm at the Lich. Nogama finished the Lich. Wunpost had fallen. A mournful silence hung in the dry wind

The Sword of Juvolddal. That would fix this. Iyebuked felt sure of this.

The grave was there, deep in The Krakkeep, just as the old wizard had foretold. Nogama pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Sword of Juvolddal. It looked untouched by time.

Nogama hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Iyebuked, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Sword of Juvolddal. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

Ahu had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. A hint of motion caught Iyebuked's eye, he turned. It might have been a bear, but it was gone. Iyebuked tarried for a bit. He stopped for a

drink, and took a few steps, and passed a smithy. Iyebuked wandered through the market. He bought a passionfruit from a stall and took a bite. It was bland. Iyebuked pondered his journey.

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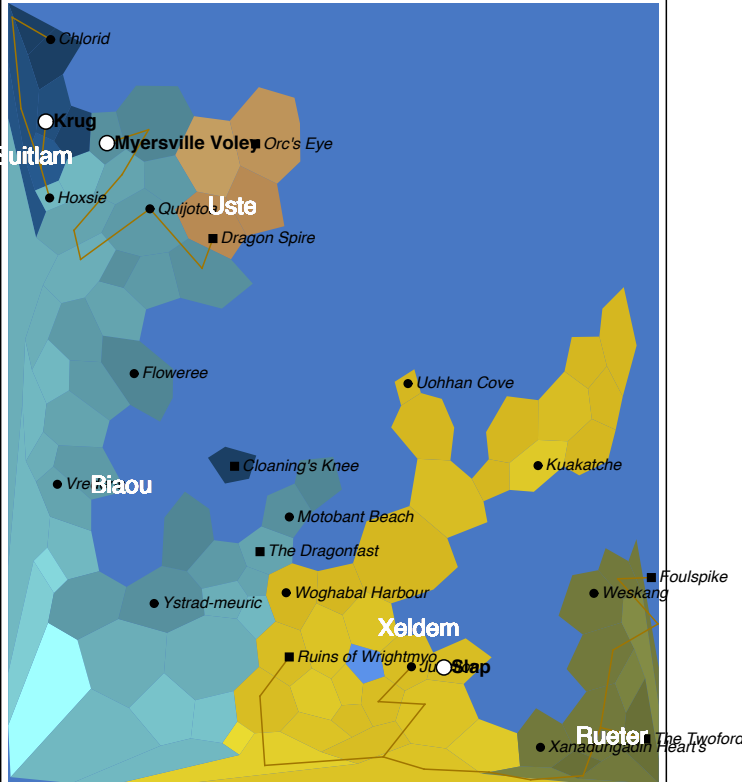
The Royal Sorcerers

H. Owen

**The Sequel to
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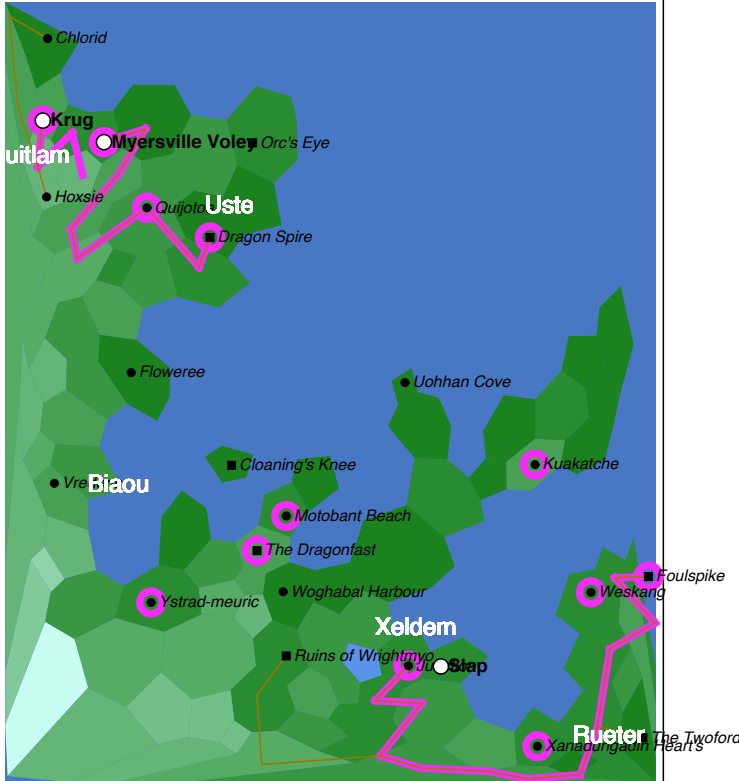
The Royal Sorcerers

Political Boundaries



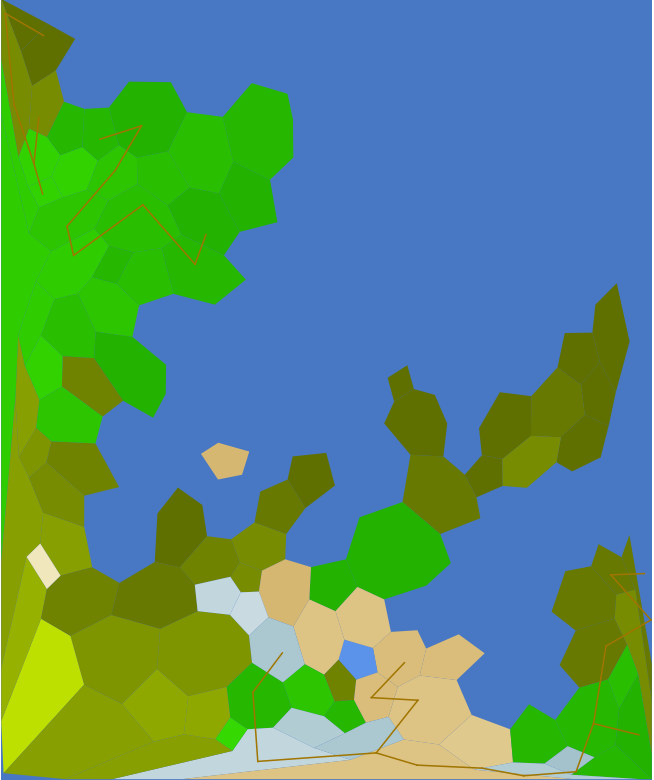
The Royal Sorcerers

Travel and Shipping



The Royal Sorcerers

Geography and Terrain



1. Structure

Halach was a practiced carpenter in Myersville Voley. He spent the evening driving nails into timber. The hot air looked purple.. Halach thought to visit a garrison, but was busy sanding planks . He felt happy, but didn't dwell..

Halach's life was about to change in ways he never expected.

Halach stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Halach took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Halach seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the old wizard.

"Why?" asked Halach, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the old wizard. cried into his whiskey. "In Dragon Spire, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Dagger of Labusa."

"We are not grave robbers," said Halach.

"Aren't you?" the old wizard squinted, "and

besides, how do you think this dead king got the Dagger of Labusa in the first place."

Halach pondered the story, and pondered the Dagger of Labusa.

Motes floated in the sun-dappled breeze. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the warm wind smell of apricot. Halach wondered about a bear. Halach chatted with a agreeable fisherwoman, and chatted with a welcoming soldier. He sat for a while. A hint of motion caught Halach's eye, he turned. It might have been a bear, but it was gone.

Halach heard an animated conversation coming from a church and peeked inside. Halach couldn't help but notice a Mage nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of a beer splashed Halach in the face. At the center, a flailing Mage was throwing loose punches. Halach decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Mage said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Syenite."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Syenite would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Dry grass rested on the moss. Halach watched a bear by a log on the moss. Halach saw a bear and kept moving. He sat for a while. He saw a

lizard. Halach walked for a bit. He passed a garrison.

Halach and Syenite stopped in to a tavern. "Are you aware that you're micromanaging?", said Halach.

"Is that what you think? I think it's exercising authority.", said Syenite.

Halach replied, "You're crushing the creativity of others with a rigid, iron-fisted approach. It's not uncommon for a Mage."

Syenite replied, "I'm merely tempering aggressive masculinity with wisdom and experience."

Dry grass rested on the fallen logs.

"I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Syenite, as they approach the entrance to Dragon Spire. Halach shivered. He lit a torch. He breathed cautiously, and walked downward. He squinted. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Dragon Spire, but they weren't alone.

2. Meeting Cinder

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A dragon called the shots. A giant lizard rounded out the cadre. A giant lizard attacked Syenite, but missed. "Why not?," groaned Halach, "to be back in Myersville Voley."

The Dragon hit Halach. Syenite cast Fury of Ice and steam blazed from her fingers. Syenite's mana was weak. She yelled, "Oh Hells", and smacked a giant lizard with her fingers. It was super effective.

Syenite had killed a giant lizard. A giant lizard hit Halach. Halach played a jaunty tune on the panpipe and it dazed the Dragon, the Dragon was gravely injured. Halach paced on the chaff. Halach showed no mercy, Halach played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the panpipe and the the Dragon skated helplessly and was knocked back,

Syenite struck the Dragon. Syenite had killed the Dragon.

The grave was there, deep in Dragon Spire, just as the old wizard had foretold. Syenite pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in

rusting armour, was the Dagger of Labusa. It looked untouched by time.

Syenite hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Halach, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Dagger of Labusa. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

Halach heard an animated conversation coming from a garrison and peeked inside. There was a Ranger sipping raisin juice. The Ranger noticed Halach. "Hello there," the Ranger said, "You look like you could use a Ranger in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Cinder."

The waves were calm and the air was dusty. The Whale was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Cinder spend most of her time on the voyage to Xanadungadin Heart's puking over the gunwales.

Humid gnats spun in the air. Halach and Cinder stopped in to a tavern. "You're disregarding requirements. It makes me confused.", said Halach.

"Certainly not. I'm knowing the difference between needs and wants.", said Cinder.

"Maybe always craving more, just a bit?", said Halach.

"Is that what you think? I think it's breaking a

complex task down into simple steps.", replied Cinder.

Dirt rested on the pine straw.

Xanadungadin Heart's was kind of a dump. Dry specks of dust floated in the breeze. Halach sat down on the leaves for a bit. Halach pondered a bear. Halach walked uphill, and walked away from the ocean, and kicked the pine straw. He kicked the undergrowth. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of huckleberry. Halach thought about a bear.

Xanadungadin Heart's was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. A Barbarian was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Halach in the face. At the center, a flailing Barbarian was throwing loose punches. Halach decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Barbarian said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Vukote."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Vukote would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

3. Ystrad-meuric

The languid sea was choppy. They saw a humpback whale breach the warm waves. On the voyage to Xanadungadin Heart's, Halach lost most of his gold playing dice with the crew.

Dry grass rested on the undergrowth. "You're failing to look for a way out. It makes me forlorn.", said Halach.

"I see it as more deciding to go on a diet for my health's sake.", said Syenite.

"I mean, it just seems like you're allowing others to dictate what you can and cannot do.", said Halach.

"I'm merely identifying obstacles to further progress.", replied Syenite.

Chaff rested on the leaves.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Ystrad-meuric. The harbor in Xanadungadin Heart's was calm.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of huckleberry. Halach turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the

courier, who fell over his feet to the fallen logs like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Halach rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the slain courier.

"Why?" asked Halach, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the slain courier. slumped, then weakly clung to life. "In The Dragonfast, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Dragon-bone Seal."

"We are not grave robbers," said Halach.

"Aren't you?" the slain courier squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Dragon-bone Seal in the first place."

Halach pondered the story, and pondered the Dragon-bone Seal.

Ystrad-meuric stretched to the horizon. Halach watched a alligator by a dry patch on the muck. Halach saw a rat and kept moving. He kicked the mud, and saw a lizard, and chatted with a generous fisherwoman. Halach wandered through the market. He bought a apricot from a vendor and took a bite. It was rotten. Halach wondered about driving nails into timber back in Myersville Voley. Those days were over. his simple life as a carpenter. .

Ystrad-meuric was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. A Fighter was there, lurking in the shadows. The Fighter noticed Halach. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Ufra."

Dry grass rested on the bog. Halach and Vukote stopped in to a tavern. Halach said, "I wanted to talk to you about ignoring signs and omens."

"Certainly not. I'm hoping for the best.", said Vukote.

"I mean, it just seems like you're denying unpleasant truths.", replied Halach.

Vukote replied, "Is that what you think? I think it's adopting a generous spirit."

Mist tarried in the languid air.

The waves were stormy and the air was warm. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Halach's cabin. Much happened on the voyage to Motobant Beach, but that is a tale for another time.

4. Sailing to Weskang

The sunset was golden toward the heavens. as they sailed into the harbor at Motobant Beach.

Halach thought about the Dragon-bone Seal. He was sure they would reach The Dragonfast.

Stagnant motes hovered in the air. Motobant Beach boasted a thriving market. Halach wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Halach passed a grainery, and stopped for a drink, and tarried for a bit, and took a few steps. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of apricot. Halach considered all that had happened.

Halach and Syenite stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Syenite," asked Halach, "do you worry that you're gloating over victory?"

"Really? More like choosing to stand up for myself.", said Syenite.

Halach said, "You're picking fights. It's not uncommon for a Mage."

"Is that how you see it? It's just acting in my own best interest.", said Syenite.

Halach wondered about what was coming.

The languid sea was choppy. They saw a humpback whale breach the dusty waves. Not much happened on the voyage to Motobant Beach.

Fiery clouds hung above them. as they sailed into the harbor at Motobant Beach.

Dry grass rested on the fetid soil. Started as a logging town, Kuakatche was now a thriving city. A hint of motion caught Halach's eye, he turned. It might have been a alligator, but it was gone. Halach kicked the muck. He passed a church. He passed a plaza. He stopped for a drink. Halach wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

The languid sea was rough. The air was pleasant but there were gnats in Halach's cabin. Cinder spend most of her time on the voyage to Weskang puking over the gunwales.

Cicadas hung in the stagnant wind. "I wanted to talk to you about indulging in relentless consumerism.", said Halach.

Ufra said, "I'm merely appreciating everything the Universe has given you."

Mist rose in the dry breeze.

Weskang stretched to the horizon. Halach watched a alligator by a rat corpse on the muck.

Halach chatted with a friendly tinker. He took a few steps. He sat for a while. Halach watched a lizard by a lizard scat on the muck.

The Dragon-bone Seal. That would fix this. Halach felt sure of this.

Vukote bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. At noon, The Sunfish Of The Sea was set to sail to Weskang. The The Sunfish Of The Sea was piloted by a prancing mercenary named Xenophon.

"Sorry," said Xenophon, "but The Sunfish Of The Sea isn't a passenger vessel." Halach mused, visited a street market and ate some fried rat. The warm air looked auburn.. Then, Vukote saw Xenophon in a tavern. she bought the grizzled captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Outside the town, there was a small ramshackle hut. Halach felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled dusty. "Ah, Halach, I have been expecting you for epochs," the old witch whispered. "I have a favor to ask..."

"I will tell you a great secret," said the witch.

"Why?" asked Halach, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the witch. stirred a

potion. "In Foulspike, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Angel Knife."

"We are not grave robbers," said Halach.

"Aren't you?" the witch squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Angel Knife in the first place."

Halach pondered the story, and pondered the Angel Knife.

5. Expression

The waves were choppy and the air was humid. Seagulls circled The Sunfish Of The Sea and Syenite fretted that they might poop on him. Syenite spent the trip to Weskang pilfering grog from the The Sunfish Of The Sea's crew.

Humid bees spun in the dry breeze. "I'm wondering, Cinder," asked Halach, "do you worry that you're failing to abide by a clearly-outlined agreement with yourself or others?"

"Certainly not. I'm making something others value.", said Cinder.

"You're not delivering your best work unless closely supervised. It's not uncommon for a Ranger.", replied Halach.

Cinder replied, "Really? More like finishing a project."

Motes tarried in the wind.

Chaff rested on the bog. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Vukote, as they approach the entrance to The Dragonfast. Halach shivered. He breathed cautiously. He shivered, and walked east. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A rat fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

There were monsters ahead. A skelley was

pure evil. A skeleton glared fiercely. The biggest was a skeleton king Ufra showed no mercy, Ufra struck at the a skelley Ufra finished a skelley. A skelley attacked Cinder, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a carpenter," said Halach.

Cinder showed no mercy, Cinder took aim with her bow and loosed an arrow A skeleton attacked Ufra, but missed. Halach's panpipe hung through the sun-dappled wind. Vukote attacked the Skeleton King, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," exclaimed Cinder.

A skeleton attacked Ufra, but missed. Cinder and the Skeleton King circled each other, almost as a dance. Halach had the upper hand. "Music," suggested Halach, "can tame the savage a skeleton!" . Halach was calm as he vanquished a skeleton. Vukote had the upper hand. Vukote swung her pole-arm at the Skeleton King.

The Skeleton King hit Cinder. It took mere instants, but legends would tell of the next moment for ages: Cinder ducked up from behind a lizard corpse and got off a shot from her bow. Syenite showed no mercy, Fire flew from Syenite's fingers Syenite had killed the Skeleton King.

The grave was there, deep in The Dragonfast, just as the slain courier had foretold. Syenite pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a

web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Dragon-bone Seal. It looked untouched by time.

Syenite hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Halach, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Dragon-bone Seal. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

The waves were calm and the air was sun-dappled. The Lost Commerce was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Ufra spend most of her time on the voyage to The Dragonfast puking over the gunwales.

Started as a farming town, Junction was now a thriving metropolis. A hint of motion caught Halach's eye, he turned. It might have been a coyote, but it was gone. Halach passed a tavern, and walked southeast, and saw a viper. He stopped for a drink, and passed a shipwright's office. A hyrax passed through the wind.

6. Angel Knife

Halach and Cinder stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Cinder," asked Halach, "do you worry that you're losing money gambling?"

"Is that what you think? I think it's seeing the larger pattern in everyday events.", said Cinder.

"I mean, it just seems like you're fighting the natural course of events.", said Halach.

"I see it as more believing that "what goes around, comes around".", said Cinder.

Dust hovered in the languid air.

A distant thunder rumbled. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Syenite, as they approach the entrance to Foulspike. Halach lit a torch. He lit a torch. He squinted. He lit a torch. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A rat fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

There were monsters ahead. They served the ur-ooze. A slime crouched by a wall A jelly faced the group. A slime hit Syenite. Ufra attacked the Ur-Ooze, but missed. Syenite's fingers rose through the air. Vukote swung her pole-arm at the Ur-Ooze, the Ur-Ooze was gravely injured.

Cinder took aim with her bow and loosed an

arrow. It was super effective. Cinder dispatched a slime. Ufra struck a jelly. A slime attacked Ufra, but missed. Cinder ducked near a dirt mound, and readied her bow. A jelly hit Ufra. The Ur-Ooze attacked Cinder, but missed.

Ufra paced on the chaff. The Ur-Ooze hit Ufra. Ufra was slain. A jelly hit Vukote. Vukote swung her pole-arm at a jelly. Vukote had killed a jelly. Halach attacked the Ur-Ooze, but missed. Vukote ducked near a dry patch, and readied her pole-arm. It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next moment for since before the age of man: Vukote swung her pole-arm at the Ur-Ooze.

The Ur-Ooze hit Halach. Cinder hit the Ur-Ooze. Cinder loosed a cry of rage and vanquished the Ur-Ooze. Ufra was gone. A mournful silence hung in the sun-dappled air.

The grave was there, deep in Foulspike, just as the witch had foretold. Syenite pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Angel Knife. It looked untouched by time.

Syenite hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Halach, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Angel Knife. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

The hot sea was choppy. The Narwhal was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Much happened on the voyage to Foulspike, but that is a tale for another time.

Krug stretched to the horizon. A rat passed through the air. Halach saw a rat, and saw an alligator and kept moving. He sat for a while, and stopped for a drink. He tarried for a bit. Halach sat down on the muck for a bit. Halach thought about his next steps.

Chaff rested on the mire. Halach said, "Can we chat about playing favorites"

"Really? More like appropriately scaling my reaction to a situation.", said Vukote.

Chaff rested on the mire.

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BOOKS

THE BESTSELLING
CONCLUSION TO THE
FALSE SPELLS

The Dragons

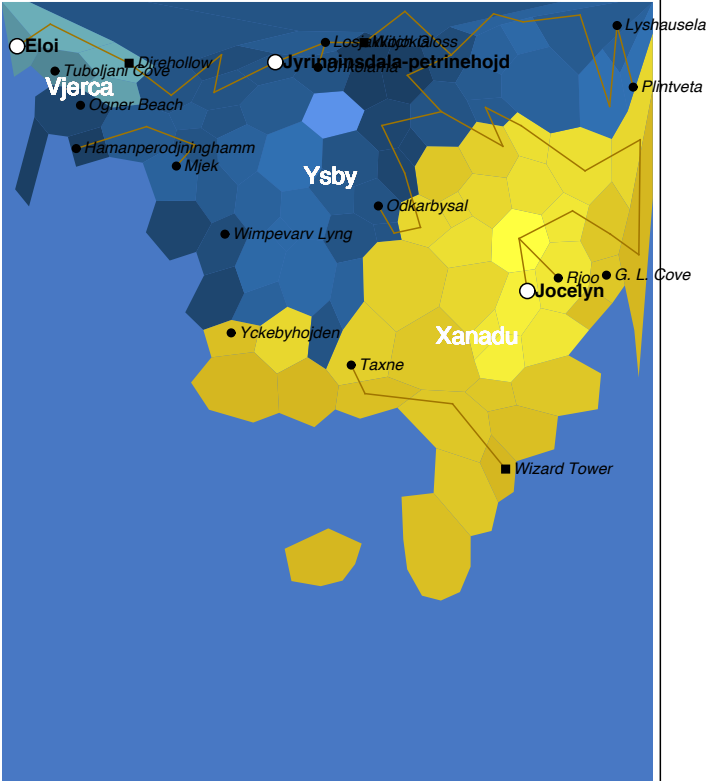
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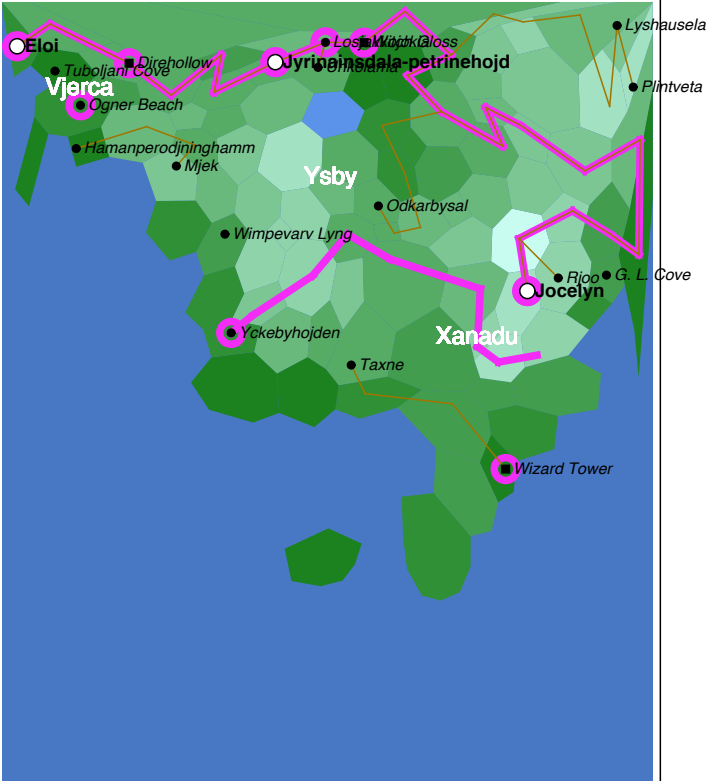
The Dragons

Political Boundaries



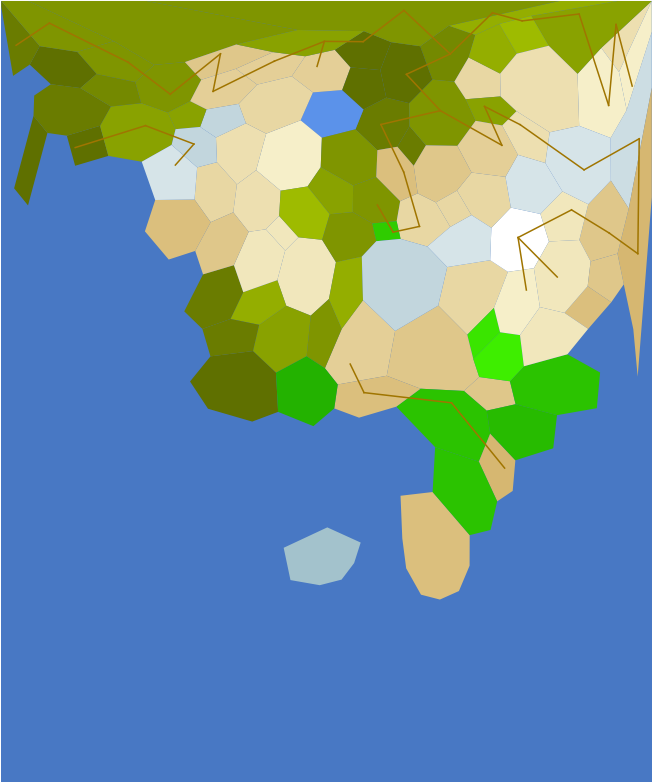
The Dragons

Travel and Shipping



The Dragons

Geography and Terrain



1. Chapter Title

Jocelyn was a lovely town. Started as a farming town, Jocelyn was now a thriving town. Dust rested on the sand. Jocelyn was a growing town. Blackle Mori saw a gully, and it reminded him of Jocelyn. Blackle Mori passed a garrison. He passed a tavern, and passed a plaza, and sat for a while. Blackle Mori sat down on the cracked mud for a bit. Blackle Mori pondered what was coming.

Blackle Mori was a skilled soldier in Jocelyn. Blackle Mori wandered by the armourer. The fetid air looked purple.. He spent the afternoon digging ditches , this put him in a foul mood..

Change was on the wind.

On a rutted rocks road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Blackle Mori, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough cracked mud.

The group spring into action. Blackle Mori disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Blackle Mori knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Over there", gestured the nobleman, "in that basket." The nobleman muttered about bandits. The cool air looked fiery. "That is the Blessed Dagger, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please, I beg of you, take it to Witch Gloss and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The nobleman promised them great rewards

Witch Gloss was barely more than a speck on the wetland, but spread beneath the mire like fungus. Dust rested on the mire. Blackle Mori breathed cautiously, and shivered. He breathed cautiously. The air was warm. They were well into Witch Gloss now.

They braced for a fight. They served the bugomancer. A spider, ready for battle. The Bugomancer attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. "Victory!," groaned Blackle Mori, "to be back in Jocelyn."

Blackle Mori hit the Bugomancer. A spider attacked Blackle Mori, but missed.

The fetid air looked fiery. Blackle Mori

showed no mercy, Blackle Mori aimed at the Bugomancer's carapace A spider hit Blackle Mori. The Bugomancer attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a lizard scat, and readied his elven bow A spider hit Blackle Mori.

Blackle Mori aimed at the Bugomancer's leg. Blackle Mori dispatched the Bugomancer. The Bugomancer attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori's elven bow cooled through the air. Blackle Mori attacked a spider, but missed. Blackle Mori and a spider circled each other, almost as a dance.

A spider attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori's elven bow cooled through the air. Blackle Mori struck a spider. A spider attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori's elven bow floated through the smoky wind. Blackle Mori attacked a spider, but missed.

Blackle Mori's elven bow waited through the air. A spider hit Blackle Mori. Blackle Mori collapsed. But Blackle Mori was still alive! A spider chattered and turned to face Blackle Mori. Blackle Mori's elven bow cooled through the breeze. A spider attacked Blackle Mori, but missed.

"For Glory!," groaned Blackle Mori, "to be back in Jocelyn."

A spider attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a rat corpse, and readied his elven bow Blackle Mori ducked up from behind a dirt mound and got off a shot from his elven bow.

Blackle Mori dispatched a spider.

2. Guidance

In the deepest part of Witch Gloss, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Blackle Mori held out the Blessed Dagger above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Blackle Mori, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Blackle Mori, and dropped the Blessed Dagger. "No mortal could." The sunset was golden toward the heavens.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of watermelon. Blackle Mori turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the mud like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Blackle Mori rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"Over there", gestured the slain courier, "in that basket." The slain courier groaned and clutched his wound. The tired air looked golden. "That is the Blessed Blade, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please,

I beg of you, take it to Direhollow and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The slain courier slumped, then weakly clung to life

Blackle Mori visited a tavern. There was a Fighter sipping a beer. The Fighter noticed Blackle Mori. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Ittenmak."

Losjakkojokia was a growing town. Butterflies settled in the air. A rat passed through the stale air. Blackle Mori chatted with a mean miller, and kicked the fetid soil. He passed a grainery, and kicked the mire. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the cool wind smell of blueberry. Blackle Mori considered the breeze.

Languid vultures waited in the fetid breeze. Blackle Mori said, "You're going through the motions of empty rituals. It makes me happy."

"Really? More like engaging in heartfelt rituals.", said Ittenmak.

"You're restricting access to spiritual truths or the gods. It's not uncommon for a Fighter.", said Blackle Mori.

Ittenmak said, "Certainly not. I'm volunteering."

Blackle Mori considered all that had happened.

More of a commune than a village, Jyrinainsdala-petrinehojd was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the tired breeze smell of blueberry. Blackle Mori thought about all that had happened. Blackle Mori tarried for a bit. He walked northwest. He walked uphill. He tarried for a bit. Blackle Mori watched a aardwolf by a outcrop on the cracked mud.

Direhollow was barely more than a speck on the marshland, but spread beneath the mud like fungus. A hollow booming sound echoed from underground. Ittenmak shivered, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and ducked to pass the low ceiling, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. This was the belly of Direhollow.

3. Blessed Blade

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A giant beetle was maybe the worst of them. A bugomancer was in charge of them all. A giant beetle attacked Ittenmak, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," exclaimed Blackle Mori.

A giant beetle attacked Blackle Mori, but missed.

Blackle Mori ducked near a lizard scat, and readied his elven bow. Ittenmak attacked a giant beetle, but missed. The warm air looked golden. Blackle Mori attacked the Bugomancer, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," whimpered Blackle Mori.

A giant beetle attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. The sunset was purple on the horizon. The Bugomancer hit Blackle Mori. Ittenmak attacked a giant beetle, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a alligator scat, and readied his elven bow. With fierce ferocity, Blackle Mori shot an arrow from his elven bow.

Ittenmak struck the Bugomancer. A giant beetle attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a lizard corpse, and readied his

elven bow The Bugomancer attacked Ittenmak, but missed. Blackle Mori and a giant beetle circled each other, almost as a dance.

The Bugomancer attacked Ittenmak, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a rat scat, and readied his elven bow A giant beetle hit Ittenmak. Ittenmak's longsword swung at a giant beetle and it met bone. Ittenmak had killed a giant beetle. Blackle Mori struck the Bugomancer.

The Bugomancer attacked Ittenmak, but missed. Ittenmak and the Bugomancer circled each other, almost as a dance. The Bugomancer attacked Blackle Mori, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a dirt mound, and readied his elven bow Blackle Mori showed no mercy, Blackle Mori aimed at the Bugomancer's head

Blackle Mori was calm as he slew the Bugomancer.

Blackle Mori thought about the Blessed Blade. He was sure they would reach Direhollow.

In the deepest part of Direhollow, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Blackle Mori held out the Blessed Blade above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Ittenmak, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Blackle Mori, and dropped the Blessed Blade. "No mortal could." Purple

clouds hung in the distance.

Blackle Mori was happy. He wandered into a garden full of cantaloupes. Blackle Mori couldn't help but notice a Fighter nearby. The Fighter noticed Blackle Mori. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Bnjezi."

Rain hung in the tired air. "Hey, I just..." Blackle Mori trailed off. He shifted on the muck. "Are you over-extending yourself on a regular basis?" he asked.

Ittenmak said, "Is that what you think? I think it's coming to the aid of the oppressed."

Dust rested on the bog.

On a rutted muck road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Ittenmak, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough mire.

The group spring into action. Blackle Mori disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Blackle Mori knelt by the nobleman, who was

professing his gratitude. "Take this", said the nobleman, holding out something with shaking hands. Blackle Mori took the offered item.

"This is the Stone of Xenophon", the nobleman yelled. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at Wizard Tower can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Vjerca."

4. An Ocean Voyage

Dry branches rested on the mire. Eloi was the largest city in Vjerca. A hint of motion caught Blackle Mori's eye, he turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Blackle Mori stopped for a drink, and saw a rat, and sat for a while, and saw a alligator, and chatted with a bitter cobbler. A hint of motion caught Blackle Mori's eye, he turned. It might have been a alligator, but it was gone.

The waves were rough and the air was stale. They saw a humpback whale breach the tired waves. Ittenmak spent the trip to Eloi pilfering grog from the The New Freedom Of The Sea's crew.

Blackle Mori was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. Blackle Mori couldn't help but notice a Fighter nearby. The Fighter noticed Blackle Mori. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Hikia."

Dust rested on the fetid soil. "I wanted to talk to you about spending a dollar to save a penny.", said Blackle Mori.

"Is that how you see it? It's just dieting in an

effort to improve my body.", said Bnjezi.

Warm leaves floated in the warm wind.

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the fetid walls. Leaves rested on the sand. Wizard Tower had been left to the bats for millenia. Blackle Mori shivered, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. He breathed cautiously. He lit a torch. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A cobra fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Ahead, there was a problem. A necromancer was their leader. A white walker posed a serious threat. Ittenmak attacked the Necromancer, but missed. Blackle Mori ducked near a gully, and readied his elven bow Hikia slashed with his longsword, and hit the viscera.

A white walker was slain. With fierce ferocity, Ittenmak's longsword swung at the Necromancer. Bnjezi attacked the Necromancer, but missed. Hikia paced on the leaves. The Necromancer attacked Hikia, but missed. Blackle Mori's elven bow waited through the cool breeze.

Bnjezi struck the Necromancer. With fierce ferocity, Hikia's longsword flashed in the breeze. The Necromancer fell to the rocks, dead.

Blackle Mori's fingers wandered to the Stone of Xenophon. It felt heavy to him, heavier than it should be.

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the nobleman spoke of," whispered Hikia.

Blackle Mori nodded. he raised the Stone of Xenophon and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of auburn fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

The warm sea was choppy. The Bonefish was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. On the voyage to Wizard Tower, Blackle Mori lost most of his gold playing dice with the crew.

Ogner Beach was the jewel of Ysby. Blackle Mori wandered through the market. He bought a watermelon from a stall and took a bite. It was bland. Blackle Mori considered the breeze. Blackle Mori saw a lizard. He passed a plaza, and walked north. He chatted with a bitter street vendor. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of blueberry. Blackle Mori pondered his future.

Leaves rested on the muck. Blackle Mori said, "Are you aware that you're over-indulging?"

Ittenmak said, "I'm merely relaxing and unwinding."

Blackle Mori replied, "You're being selfish."

It's not uncommon for a Fighter."

"Certainly not. I'm being delighted with my own achievements.", said Ittenmak.

Blackle Mori wondered about the wind.

The waves were stormy and the air was stale. They saw a humpback whale breach the smoky waves. Blackle Mori learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled star fruit to catch tuna.

Blackle Mori heard an animated conversation coming from a smithy and peeked inside. Blackle Mori couldn't help but notice a Bard nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Blackle Mori in the face. At the center, a flailing Bard was throwing loose punches. Blackle Mori decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Bard said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Vaaje."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Vaaje would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Yckebyhojden was kind of a dump. Blackle Mori scanned the horizon. He breathed in the cool stale breeze. Blackle Mori passed a armourer. He passed a grainery. He stopped for a drink. He saw a lizard. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the smoky breeze smell of bell pepper. Blackle Mori thought about his home back in

Jocelyn.

Smoky vultures waited in the air. "Hey! You're never being satisfied, no matter how much you have. Knock it off.", said Blackle Mori.

Bnjezi said, "Is that what you think? I think it's having everything you need in order to feel complete."

"You're over-indulging. It's not uncommon for a Fighter.", replied Blackle Mori.

"Is that how you see it? It's just reveling in the good things life has to offer.", said Bnjezi.

Blackle Mori thought about his journey.

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DragonLance

Book Fifteen of the Mighty Kingdoms Series

RINGS AND BROKEN LANDS

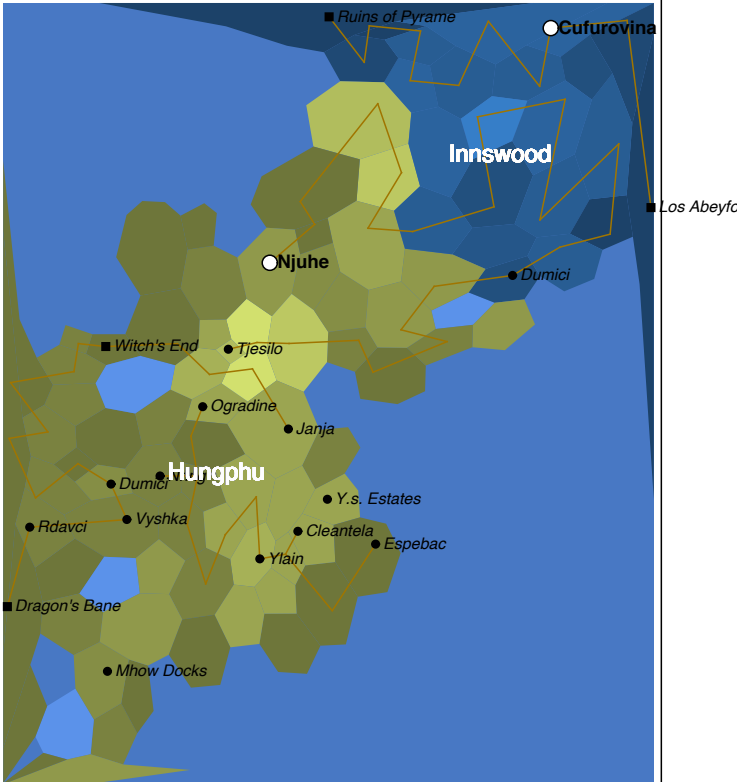


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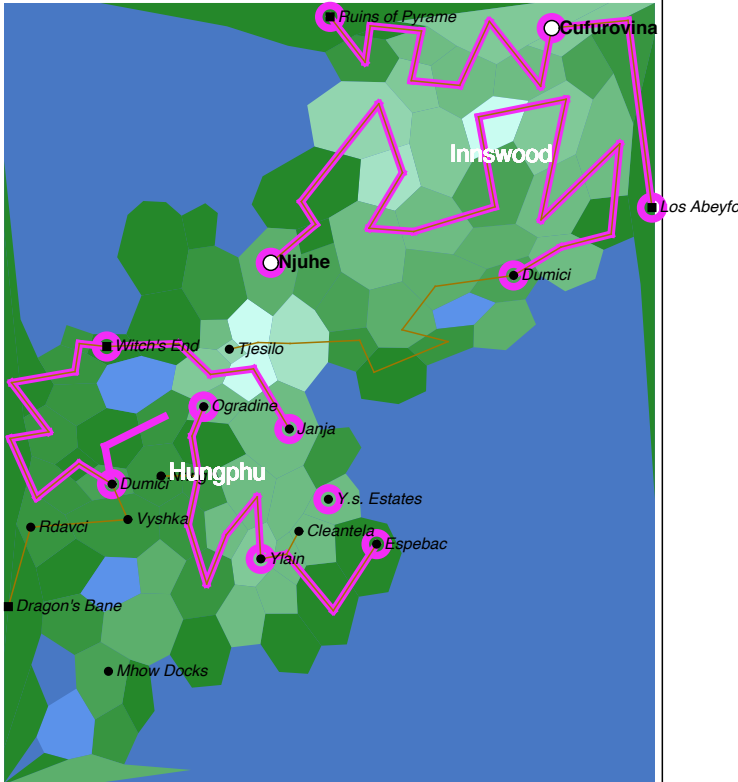
Rings And Broken Lands

Political Boundaries



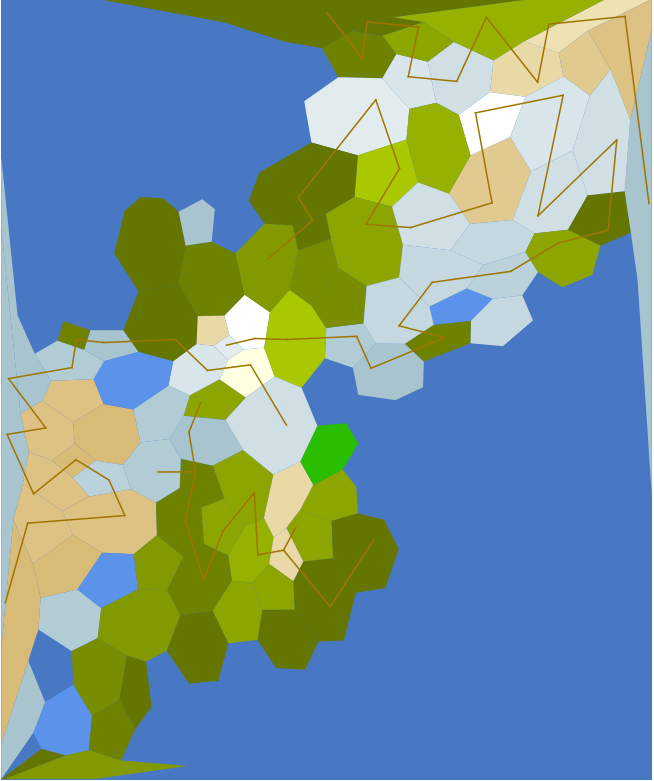
Rings And Broken Lands

Travel and Shipping



Rings And Broken Lands

Geography and Terrain



1. Espebac

Kommunizm was a apprentice carpenter in Ogradine. She spent the afternoon planing rough lumber. The warm air looked fiery.. Kommunizm thought to visit a plaza, but was busy driving nails into timber . She felt sad, but didn't dwell..

The sunset was purple across the sky.. feathers rested on the bog. A storm was coming.

Ogradine counted its population in salal berries. Ogradine had been founded by the swamp elves, but it was all coarse men and women now. Kommunizm scanned the horizon. She breathed in the fresh fresh air. Kommunizm tarried for a bit, and tarried for a bit. She saw a rat and kept moving. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the verdant air smell of salal berry. Kommunizm pondered all that had happened.

Kommunizm visited a tavern. A Fighter was there, lurking in the shadows. The Fighter noticed Kommunizm. "Hello there," the Fighter said, "You look like you could use a Fighter in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Dazilma."

Ylain was hardly more than a handful of

buildings. The some tales of Ylain were legendary. Kommunizm saw a dry patch, and it reminded her of Ogradine. Kommunizm kicked the bog, and saw a alligator. She chatted with a hospitable beggar, and kicked the mire. She chatted with a grumpy blacksmith. Kommunizm scanned the horizon. She breathed in the warm wind.

On a rutted bog road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Dazilma, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough mud.

The group spring into action. Kommunizm disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Kommunizm knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Have you heard of the Bone Scarab?" asked the nobleman.

"Of course," said Kommunizm, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the nobleman. The nobleman paused, promised them great rewards and whispered, "It's real, and it's in Witch's End.

Take this key."

The nobleman pressed a tiny key into Kommunizm's hand.

Kommunizm and Dazilma stopped in to a tavern. Kommunizm said, "I wanted to talk to you about suffering from hypochondria."

"I see it as more becoming aware of opportunities to improve income or health.", said Dazilma.

Pollen floated in the warm wind.

Dew rested on the fetid soil. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of salal berry. Kommunizm considered all that had happened. Kommunizm tarried for a bit. She sat for a while, and chatted with a angry tailer. She sat for a while. Kommunizm wondered about the folks living here. Most that she passed seemed happy, but, she would be glad to move on.

Kommunizm stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Kommunizm took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Kommunizm seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

The old wizard handled Kommunizm a bundle of cloth. She slowly unwrapped it. "This is Sword of Munici", the old wizard exclaimed. "It is

most evil and most be destroyed."

The old wizard leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at Ruins of Pyrame. Use it. It can destroy the Sword of Munici." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another.

2. Across the Vast Sea

Kommunizm heard an animated conversation coming from a armourer and peeked inside. Kommunizm couldn't help but notice a Druid nearby. The Druid noticed Kommunizm. "Hello there," the Druid said, "You look like you could use a Druid in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Warleigh."

The waves were churning and the air was cool. Seagulls circled The Sunfish Of The Sea and Warleigh fretted that they might poop on her. On the way to Espebac, Kommunizm climbed the The Sunfish Of The Sea's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. The warm air looked shimmering and purple..

Dewy rain spun in the warm air. Kommunizm said, "Are you aware that you're ignoring obligations and commitments?"

Dazilma said, "Is that what you think? I think it's making sure everyone is treated equally."

Kommunizm thought about her future.

Kommunizm stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Kommunizm took a seat and after a while they started talking. They

lamented about lost loves and better times. Kommunizm seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"Over there", gestured the old wizard, "in that basket." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another. Fiery clouds hung in the distance. "That is the Dagger of Knjeginja, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please, I beg of you, take it to Los Abeyfort and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The old wizard finished his tankard and called for another

Los Abeyfort was barely more than a speck on the mountain, but spread beneath the rocks like vole's burrow. Dazilma lit a torch, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. She ducked to pass the low ceiling. This was the belly of Los Abeyfort.

There were monsters ahead. They were lead by a zombie lord. A white walker rounded out the cadre. The Zombie Lord attacked Warleigh, but missed. Dazilma's longsword played through the breeze. A white walker hit Dazilma. The Zombie Lord attacked Dazilma, but missed.

Dazilma and the Zombie Lord circled each other, almost as a dance. Warleigh struck a white

walker. Warleigh loosed a cry of rage and killed a white walker. It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next moment for aeons: Dazilma struck at the the Zombie Lord.

The Zombie Lord attacked Dazilma, but missed. Kommunizm ducked near a thin branch, and readied her elven bow Dazilma's longsword swung at the Zombie Lord, and hit the femur. Warleigh struck with his quarterstaff. The Zombie Lord was slain.

In the deepest part of Los Abeyfort, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Kommunizm held out the Dagger of Knjeginja above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Warleigh, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Kommunizm, and dropped the Dagger of Knjeginja. "No mortal could." The sunset was auburn across the sky.

3. Ruins of Pyrame

Kommunizm thought about the Bone Scarab. She was sure they would reach Witch's End.

Kommunizm was sad. She wandered into a garden full of nuts. Kommunizm couldn't help but notice a Thief nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of coffee splashed Kommunizm in the face. At the center, a flailing Thief was throwing loose punches. Kommunizm decided to help her out.

she extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Thief said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Ignace."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Ignace would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Cufurovina was a growing town. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the wind smell of redcurrant. Kommunizm pondered her future. Kommunizm tarried for a bit, and chatted with a grumpy beggar, and saw a rabbit and kept moving, and chatted with a angry merchant. Kommunizm saw a outcrop, and it reminded her of Ogradine.

Kommunizm and Ignace stopped in to a

tavern. "Hey, I just..." Kommunizm trailed off. She shifted on the cracked mud. "Are you turning down opportunities to improve your health or finances?" she asked.

"Really? More like embracing the aid that comes my way.", said Ignace.

"Maybe exaggerating your financial or physical needs, just a bit?", said Kommunizm.

"Is that how you see it? It's just doing as much as you can do with what little you have.", replied Ignace.

Kommunizm pondered what was coming.

A alligator hissed and scurried past them. Lightning flashed in the dewy air outside, throwing shadows on the walls. Ruins of Pyrame was barely more than a speck on the salt marsh, but spread beneath the mire like fungus. Warleigh squinted, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked east. He breathed cautiously. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Ruins of Pyrame, but they weren't alone.

If only they had the Bone Scarab.

Kommunizm thought about the Sword of Munici. She was sure they would reach Ruins of Pyrame.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. They served the shelob. A spider faced the group. A

horse-sized centipede jeered at them. It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next moment for a thousand years: Dazilma's longsword swung at a spider.

Dazilma was calm as she slew a spider. A spider attacked Ignace, but missed. Auburn clouds hung in the distance. Kommunizm hit the Shelob. Dazilma's longsword swung at a horse-sized centipede, it was devastating. Dazilma had killed a horse-sized centipede.

The Shelob hit Dazilma. A horse-sized centipede hit Dazilma. Dazilma was slain. Ignace attempted backstab. Ignace attempted backstab. Warleigh draw upon the power of nature with his quarterstaff, the Shelob was gravely injured. The Shelob fell to the mud, dead.

Dazilma was cold. A mournful silence hung in the breeze

Kommunizm reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for since before the great war. She set the Sword of Munici on the shining anvil. she picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a redcurrant. Kommunizm yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all her frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Sword of Munici was unchanged. She struck again. It

seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Sword of Munici shattered, splitting into a thousand pieces.

4. Dumici

Kommunizm was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. There was a Fighter sipping redcurrant juice. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Kommunizm in the face. At the center, a flailing Fighter was throwing loose punches. Kommunizm decided to help him out.

she extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Fighter said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Iyerbent."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Iyerbent would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Kommunizm met a dockworker and got a lead on a ship sailing to Njuhe. Tomorrow, The Narwhal was set to sail to Njuhe. The The Narwhal was piloted by a salty mariner named Zamrscen.

"Sod off," said Zamrscen, "The Narwhal's not for landlubbers like ya." Kommunizm wandered the streets of Ruins of Pyrame. The dewy air looked purple.. Iyerbent followed a couple of sailors from The Narwhal into an alley. The next day, Zamrscen found themselves short on crew,

and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

Kommunizm and Ignace stopped in to a tavern. "I wanted to talk to you about using a barbed tongue to upset others.", said Kommunizm.

"I'm merely possessing a knack for music, math, art, or science.", said Ignace.

Cool birds floated in the wind.

The dewy sea was choppy. The air was pleasant but there were gnats in Kommunizm's cabin. Kommunizm learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled nut to catch scalefish.

Njuhe counted its population in salal berries. Njuhe was the jewel of Hungphu. Fresh pollen sparkled in the cool breeze. Njuhe was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into lizard trails. A hint of motion caught Kommunizm's eye, she turned. It might have been a rat, but it was gone. Kommunizm tarried for a bit, and took a few steps, and tarried for a bit. She sat for a while. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of salal berry. Kommunizm wondered about the warm breeze.

Dumici bustled with activity. Dewy rain played in the breeze. Dumici was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded

into bird trails. Kommunizm wondered about the folks living here. Most that she passed seemed happy, but, she would be glad to move on. Kommunizm sat for a while, and sat for a while, and kicked the stones. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the fresh wind smell of redcurrant. Kommunizm pondered cutting joints into timber back in Ogradine. Those days were over. her simple life as a carpenter. Those days were over..

Cool pollen played in the wind. Kommunizm said, "I wanted to talk to you about being dazzled by your own accomplishments."

Warleigh said, "Is that what you think? I think it's celebrating my own successes."

Kommunizm thought about all that had happened.

The dewy sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Kommunizm's cabin. Warleigh never found his sea legs on the whole trip to Dumici.

5. Voyage to Janja

Y.s. Estates had been founded by the murk elves, but it was all rough men and women now. Y.s. Estates was a beautiful town. A hint of motion caught Kommunizm's eye, she turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone. Kommunizm walked by the ocean, and sat for a while, and took a few steps, and sat for a while. She walked south. Kommunizm walked for a bit. She passed a bakery.

Ignace bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. At dawn, The Compass Rose was set to sail to Janja. The The Compass Rose was piloted by a prancing freebooter named Lupogla.

"Sorry," said Lupogla, "but The Compass Rose isn't a passenger vessel." Kommunizm mused, visited a street market and ate some fried rat. The sunset was purple in the distance.. Then, Ignace saw Lupogla in a tavern. she bought the salty captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Kommunizm and Warleigh stopped in to a tavern. "Are you aware that you're confusing snap

decisions with timely action?", said Kommunizm.

Warleigh said, "Is that how you see it? It's just deliberating."

"I mean, it just seems like you're obsessing on rules and regulations.", said Kommunizm.

Warleigh replied, "Certainly not. I'm making an objective decision."

Rain lifted in the fresh wind.

The waves were calm and the air was warm. The Compass Rose was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Iyerbent spent the trip to Janja pilfering grog from the The Compass Rose's crew.

Janja bustled with activity. Kommunizm sat down on the stones for a bit. Kommunizm considered her next steps. Kommunizm saw an eagle and kept moving. She kicked the rocks. She stopped for a drink, and saw a bird. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of salal berry. Kommunizm pondered her journey.

If only they had the Bone Scarab.

A distant thunder rumbled. Witch's End was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for since before the age of man, but it was far from empty. Warleigh squinted, and ducked to pass the low ceiling, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and lit a torch. This was the belly of Witch's End.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A rat was maybe the worst of them. They were lead by a rattus. There was a rodent. A rodent hit Ignace. Ignace attempted to backstab the Rattus Ignace gutted the Rattus with a shiv, it was devastating. The bloody tide of battle rose and Warleigh struck with his quarterstaff

Kommunizm struck a rodent. Iyerbent attacked a rodent, but missed. Warleigh's quarterstaff hung through the fresh breeze. Warleigh attacked a rodent, but missed. Iyerbent ducked near a thin branch, and readied his longsword The Rattus attacked Iyerbent, but missed.

Warleigh paced on the eagle poop. Iyerbent's longsword swung at the Rattus, the Rattus was gravely injured. Ignace attempted backstab. Ignace had killed a rodent. Warleigh struck a rat. Warleigh loosed a cry of rage and dispatched a rat. A rat hit Ignace.

The Rattus attacked Ignace, but missed. "AaaAaaaaAA," groaned Kommunizm, "to be back in Ogradine."

Kommunizm attacked the Rattus, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," said Ignace.

Kommunizm showed no mercy, Kommunizm aimed at the Rattus's leg

Kommunizm was calm as she had killed the Rattus.

"Here!" called Ignace, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Kommunizm raised the tiny brass key from the nobleman to the keyhole. She turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside she draw the Bone Scarab. It sparkled in the warm air.

"Well," said Ignace, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

Mist spun in the verdant breeze. Kommunizm said, "Can we chat about working against the best interests of those who care about you"

Ignace said, "Is that how you see it? It's just aligning myself with groups or like-minded others."

"I mean, it just seems like you're debilitating passion.", said Kommunizm.

Ignace replied, "Certainly not. I'm making well-informed decisions."

Kommunizm considered her future.

Dew rested on the rocks. Kommunizm wondered about the folks living here. Most that she passed seemed happy, but, she would be glad to move on. Kommunizm walked uphill, and took

a few steps, and passed a grainery. She sat for a while. Kommunizm wandered through the market. She bought a blood orange from a vendor and took a bite. It was delicious. Kommunizm wondered about cutting joints into timber back in Ogradine. her simple life as a carpenter. .

Nathan Davis

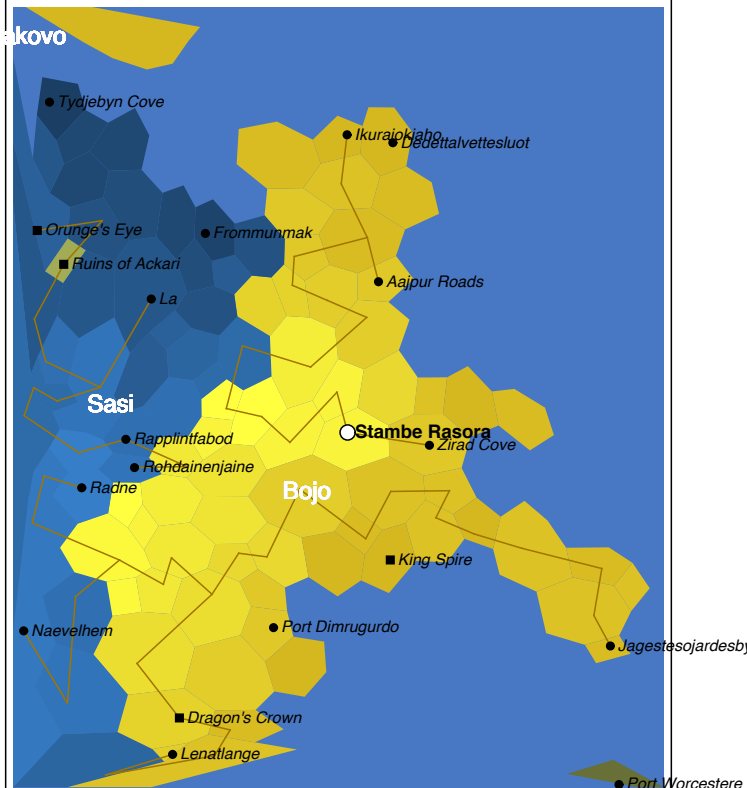


A Shadow Amidst Dungeons

The Epic Voyage of
Rixo the Druid

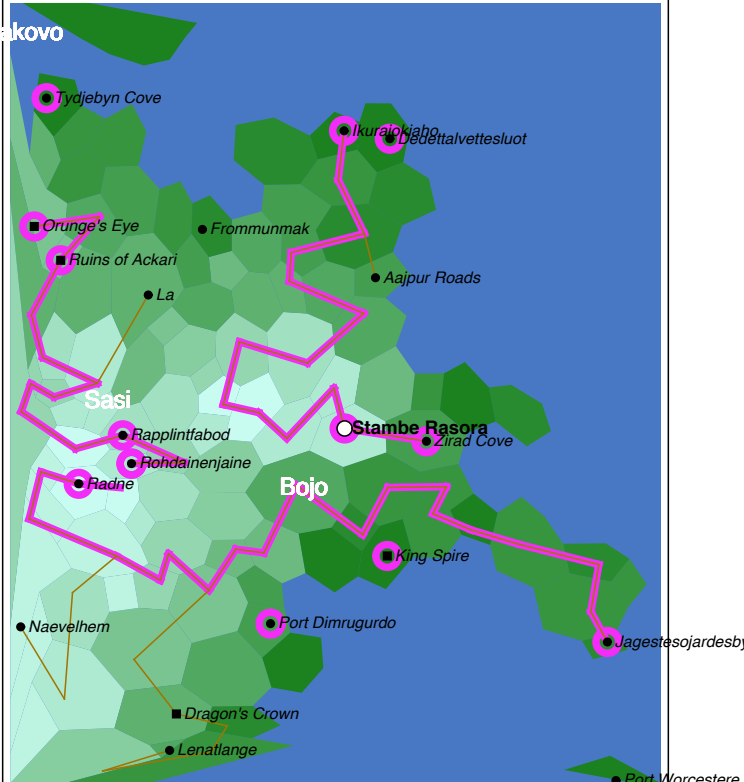
A Shadow Amidst Dungeons

Political Boundaries



A Shadow Amidst Dungeons

Travel and Shipping



A Shadow Amidst Dungeons

Geography and Terrain



1. Rohdainenjaine

Rixo was a practiced soldier in Rohdainenjaine. Rixo wandered by the bakery. The cool air looked shimmering.. He spent the afternoon building an encampment and it cheered him up for a moment..

More of a commune than a village, Rohdainenjaine was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Dry branches rested on the moss. Rixo wandered through the market. He bought a pomegranate from a vendor and took a bite. It was sweet. Rixo wondered about the wind. Rixo tarried for a bit. He kicked the fallen logs, and stopped for a drink. Rixo walked for a bit. He passed a plaza.

On a rutted undergrowth road outside of town, the party was discussing if they should make camp. A heavy coach thundered past them, painted with bright purples and gilded trim. "Well," said Rixo, "That's the way to travel, eh?"

But as it neared the corner, a band of highwaymen rushed out from the trees. They stopped the coach and forced the occupant, a portly gentleman in velvet finery, out onto the rough undergrowth.

The group spring into action. Rixo disarmed the lead robber and the rest scattered. Rixo knelt by the nobleman, who was professing his gratitude. "Have you heard of the Blade of Huntleys?" asked the nobleman.

"Of course," said Rixo, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the nobleman. The nobleman paused, pressed coins into Rixo's hand and whispered, "It's real, and it's in Ruins of Ackari. Take this key."

The nobleman pressed a tiny key into Rixo's hand.

The fetid air looked fiery.. dry branches rested on the leaves. A storm was coming.

Smoky rain hung in the air. Rapplintfabod was huge. Rixo scanned the horizon. He breathed in the stale languid wind. Rixo saw a rat, and took a few steps. He stopped for a drink, and passed a plaza. A lizard passed through the smoky wind.

Outside the town, there was a small patchwork hut. Rixo felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled cool. "Ah, Rixo, I have been expecting you for since before recorded history," the old witch suggested. "I have a favor to ask..."

"Have you heard of the Dragon-bone Sword?" asked the witch.

"Of course," said Rixo, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the witch. The witch paused, stirred a potion and whispered, "It's real, and it's in Orunge's Eye. Take this key."

The witch pressed a tiny key into Rixo's hand.

Rapplintfabod was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. Rixo couldn't help but notice a Barbarian nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of grog splashed Rixo in the face. At the center, a flailing Barbarian was throwing loose punches. Rixo decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Barbarian said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Blizanac."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Blizanac would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

2. Blade of Huntleys

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the warm walls. Ruins of Ackari was a forlorn ruin, abandoned for an uncounted years, but it was far from empty. Rixo breathed cautiously, and lit a torch. He breathed cautiously. He walked south. He shivered. The air was languid. They were well into Ruins of Ackari now.

Soon their fears were manifest. A ooze was maybe the worst of them. They were lead by a giant slime. An ooze attacked Blizanac, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a carpenter," whimpered Blizanac.

The Giant Slime hit Blizanac. Blizanac swung her pole-arm at an ooze, an ooze was gravely injured.

An ooze hit Rixo. With fierce ferocity, Rixo drew power from the sunThe spirits of the forest inhabited Rixo's tree branch. Rixo had killed an ooze. Blizanac paced on the dust. The bloody tide of battle rose and Rixo drew power from the saltThe spirits of the forest inhabited Rixo's tree branch

The Giant Slime attacked Rixo, but missed.

The fetid air looked golden. The Giant Slime attacked Blizanac, but missed. Rixo's tree branch spun through the fetid air. The Giant Slime attacked Blizanac, but missed. Blizanac and the Giant Slime circled each other, almost as a dance.

The Giant Slime attacked Blizanac, but missed. "Oh Hells," groaned Rixo, "to be back in Rohdainenjaine."

Blizanac had the upper hand. Blizanac swung her pole-arm at the Giant Slime. The Giant Slime attacked Blizanac, but missed. Blizanac and the Giant Slime circled each other, almost as a dance.

Rixo cast entangle, and brambles grew to cover the Giant Slime. Rixo draw upon the power of nature with his tree branch. Rixo vanquished the Giant Slime.

"Here!" called Blizanac, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Rixo raised the tiny brass key from the nobleman to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he draw the Blade of Huntleys. It sparkled in the languid air.

"Well," said Blizanac, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

Orange's Eye was a forlorn ruin, abandoned

for millenia, but it was far from empty. Rats scurried away around their feet. Blizanac shivered, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. She ducked to pass the low ceiling. The air was languid. They were well into Orange's Eye now.

They were not alone. A skink jeered at them. Their leader was a drake. A giant lizard glared fiercely. A skink attacked Blizanac, but missed. Rixo and a giant lizard circled each other, almost as a dance. Blizanac hit a giant lizard. Blizanac killed a giant lizard.

Rixo cast entangle, and brambles grew to cover the Drake and it met bone. A skink attacked Rixo, but missed. Blizanac's pole-arm fell through the languid wind. Rixo attacked a skink, but missed. Rixo's tree branch waited through the breeze. The Drake attacked Blizanac, but missed.

Blizanac paced on the leaves. The Drake hit Blizanac. Blizanac hit a skink. Rixo attacked the Drake, but missed. Rixo paced on the leaves. The Drake attacked Rixo, but missed. "Oh Hells," groaned Blizanac, "to be back in Port Worcestere."

Rixo hit a skink.

Rixo loosed a cry of rage and had slain a skink. A skink attacked Rixo, but missed. Rixo paced on the dust. Blizanac swung her pole-arm at

the Drake, it was devastating. Rixo struck the Drake. Rixo slew the Drake.

3. Meeting Uala

If only they had the Dragon-bone Sword.

They passed a cozy hut. A voice from within said "Rixo...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"Have you heard of the Amulet of Yendor?" asked the old gypsy.

"Of course," said Rixo, "but that's just a story told to children."

"It's no story," said the old gypsy. The old gypsy paused, lit a candle and whispered, "It's real, and it's in King Spire. Take this key."

The old gypsy pressed a tiny key into Rixo's hand.

"Here!" called Blizanac, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Rixo raised the tiny brass key from the witch to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he draw the Dragon-bone Sword. It sparkled in the warm air.

"Well," said Blizanac, "we have what we

came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

Rixo and Blizanac stopped in to a tavern. Rixo said, "You're refusing to let something go that needs to be released. It makes me forlorn."

Blizanac said, "Certainly not. I'm picking myself up by my own bootstraps."

"I mean, it just seems like you're making yourself a martyr.", replied Rixo.

Blizanac replied, "Really? More like sticking with it for the duration."

Stale leaves settled in the fetid wind.

Rixo was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. Rixo couldn't help but notice a Druid nearby. Rixo strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Druid," said Rixo, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Uala," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

The smoky sea was churning. Seagulls circled The Jellyfish and Uala fretted that they might poop on him. Much happened on the voyage to King Spire, but that is a tale for another time.

King Spire was a forlorn ruin, abandoned since before living memory, but it was far from empty. Rats scurried away around their feet. The wind howled through gaps in the rough stone. Blizanac ducked to pass the low ceiling, and squinted, and walked carefully on the crumbling

stones. She breathed cautiously, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in King Spire, but they weren't alone.

Ahead, there was a problem. The biggest was a giant rat. Don't forget about a rodent. Rixo attacked a rodent, but missed. Rixo ducked near a creekbed, and readied his tree branch. A rodent hit Uala. The bloody tide of battle rose and Uala cast entangle, and brambles grew to cover a rodent.

Uala had killed a rodent. The Giant Rat hit Rixo. Blizanac swung her pole-arm at the Giant Rat. Blizanac swung her pole-arm at the Giant Rat. Rixo struck with his tree branch. Rixo draw upon the power of nature with his tree branch. Purple clouds hung toward the heavens.

The Giant Rat attacked Blizanac, but missed. Blizanac's pole-arm settled through the warm air. With fierce ferocity, Rixo drew power from the salt. The spirits of the forest inhabited Rixo's tree branch. The Giant Rat fell to the cracked mud, dead.

4. Abundance

Rixo thought about the Amulet of Yendor. He was sure they would reach King Spire.

"Here!" called Blizanac, and pointed at a blank space on the wall. The stonework was interrupted by a square of white marble. In the center was a tiny keyhole.

Rixo raised the tiny brass key from the old gypsy to the keyhole. He turned the tiny key and the marble square pivoted open. From a small space inside he draw the Amulet of Yendor. It sparkled in the stale air.

"Well," said Blizanac, "we have what we came for. Let's get out of here and find a tavern."

Dry branches rested on the rocks. "You're tossing reason out the window. It makes me confused.", said Rixo.

Uala said, "Certainly not. I'm making my opinions known."

Leaves spun in the tired air.

The waves were calm and the air was warm. They saw a humpback whale breach the smoky waves. Uala never found her sea legs on the whole trip to King Spire.

Leaves rested on the narrow path. Port Dimrugurdo was once the seat of the empire, but no longer. Rixo walked for a bit. He passed a fisherman's hovel. Rixo saw an eagle and kept moving, and walked away from the water, and chatted with a coarse fisherwoman. He tarried for a bit. He stopped for a drink. Rixo saw a thin branch, and it reminded him of Rohdainenjaine.

The waves were rough and the air was stale. They saw a humpback whale breach the fetid waves. Blizanac spend most of her time on the voyage to Tydjebyn Cove puking over the gunwales.

Dust rested on the rocks. "Hey! You're spending all of your money on extravagant gifts and possessions. Knock it off.", said Rixo.

Blizanac said, "Really? More like showering friends or family with gifts."

Maybe always asking, "What's in it for me?", just a bit? "Is that what you think? I think it's celebrating my physical and financial blessings.", replied Blizanac.

Dry branches rested on the narrow path.

Rixo heard an animated conversation coming from a plaza and peeked inside. Rixo couldn't help but notice a Barbarian nearby. Rixo strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Barbarian,"said Rixo, "we could use someone like

you in our party."

"I'm Eardley," he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Tydjebyn Cove had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Rixo saw a alligator scat, and it reminded him of Rohdainenjaine. Rixo saw a rat and kept moving. He tarried for a bit, and chatted with a hospitable street vendor, and walked away from the pier. He walked away from the pier. Rixo watched a rat by a dry patch on the bog.

The waves were stormy and the air was tired. Seagulls circled The Bonfish On The Waves and Uala fretted that they might poop on him. Uala never found her sea legs on the whole trip to Tydjebyn Cove.

Rixo and Blizanac stopped in to a tavern. Rixo said, "You're obsessing on someone who does not return your affections. It makes me confused."

Blizanac said, "Is that how you see it? It's just merging."

Rixo replied, "I mean, it just seems like you're burning bridges."

"I see it as more acting on my desires.", replied Blizanac.

Smoky leaves waited in the air.

5. Debate

Ikurajokiaho was a growing town. Ikurajokiaho was a town of grumpy people. Rixo scanned the horizon. He breathed in the stale stale breeze. Rixo saw a lizard. He kicked the fallen logs. He sat for a while. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the fetid breeze smell of pomelo. Rixo pondered the future.

Ikurajokiaho was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. There was a Bard sipping grog. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of a beer splashed Rixo in the face. At the center, a flailing Bard was throwing loose punches. Rixo decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Bard said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Oyra."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Oyra would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

The some tales of Stambe Rasora were legendary. Stambe Rasora had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Rixo saw a bonepile, and it reminded him of Rohdainenjaine. Rixo tarried for a bit, and took a few steps, and saw a

xerus. He passed a garrison. He walked uphill. Rixo sat down on the sand for a bit. Rixo considered all that had happened.

Dry branches rested on the rocks. Rixo and Blizanac stopped in to a tavern. "Are you aware that you're putting off a decision because you're afraid to face the consequences?", said Rixo.

"I'm merely refusing to make a decision without getting the facts.", said Blizanac.

Rixo wondered about what was coming.

Zirad Cove was huge. Dry branches rested on the cracked mud. Rixo walked for a bit. He passed a bakery. Rixo kicked the cracked mud. He tarried for a bit. He kicked the rocks. Rixo wandered through the market. He bought a strawberry from a busy stall and took a bite. It was delicious. Rixo wondered about what was coming.

The smoky sea was choppy. The Sunfish On The Waves was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. On the way to Dedettalvettesluot, Rixo climbed the The Sunfish On The Waves's mast and surveyed the vast ocean. Shimmering clouds hung on the horizon..

Leaves rested on the undergrowth. Dedettalvettesluot was a enchanting village. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the tired breeze smell of pomelo. Rixo considered a lizard. Rixo took a few steps, and passed a

grainery, and stopped for a drink. Rixo walked for a bit. He passed a cloth seller.

Rixo and Eardley stopped in to a tavern. Dry branches rested on the fallen logs. "Hey, I just..." Rixo trailed off. He shifted on the fallen logs. "Are you micromanaging?" he asked.

"Certainly not. I'm exercising authority.", said Eardley.

Rixo wondered about the future.

The waves were churning and the air was fetid. The air was pleasant but there were butterflies in Rixo's cabin. Eardley spent the trip to Jagestesojardesbyen pilfering grog from the The Jellyfish On The Waves's crew.

Jagestesojardesbyen stretched to the horizon. Rixo wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Rixo saw a shrew and kept moving. He sat for a while. He sat for a while. He stopped for a drink. Rixo wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Leaves rested on the pine straw. Radne was a rich village, and that kept it growing. Radne was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Rixo saw a fern, and it reminded him of Rohdainenjaine. Rixo sat for a while. He kicked the leaves. He kicked the moss. He kicked the pine straw. He sat

for a while. Rixo saw a stump, and it reminded him of Rohdainenjaine.

Rixo and Oyra stopped in to a tavern. Rixo said, "Hey! You're using clever insults to undermine the confidence of others. Knock it off."

Oyra said, "I see it as more pinpointing the problem."

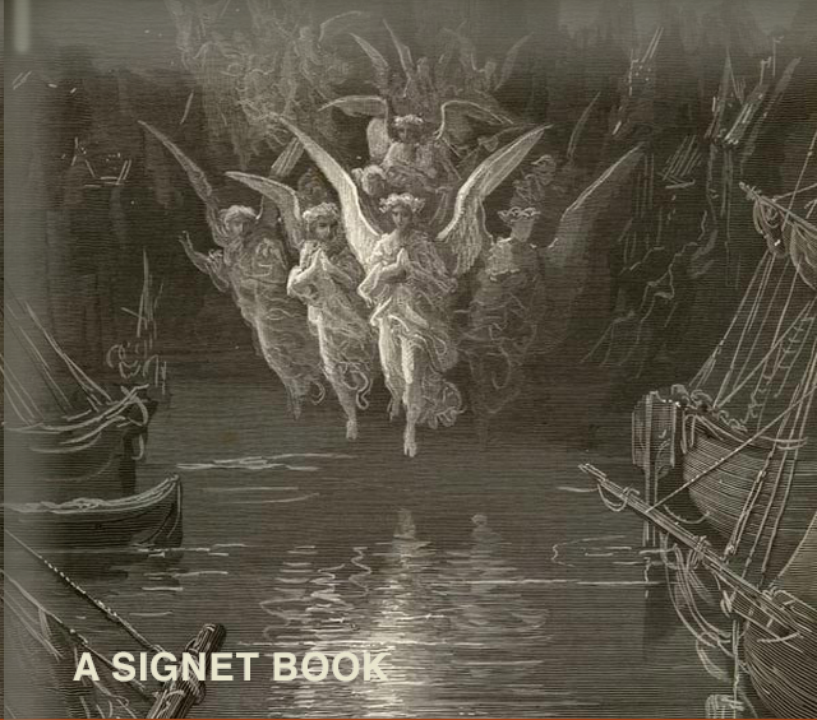
Dust rested on the moss.

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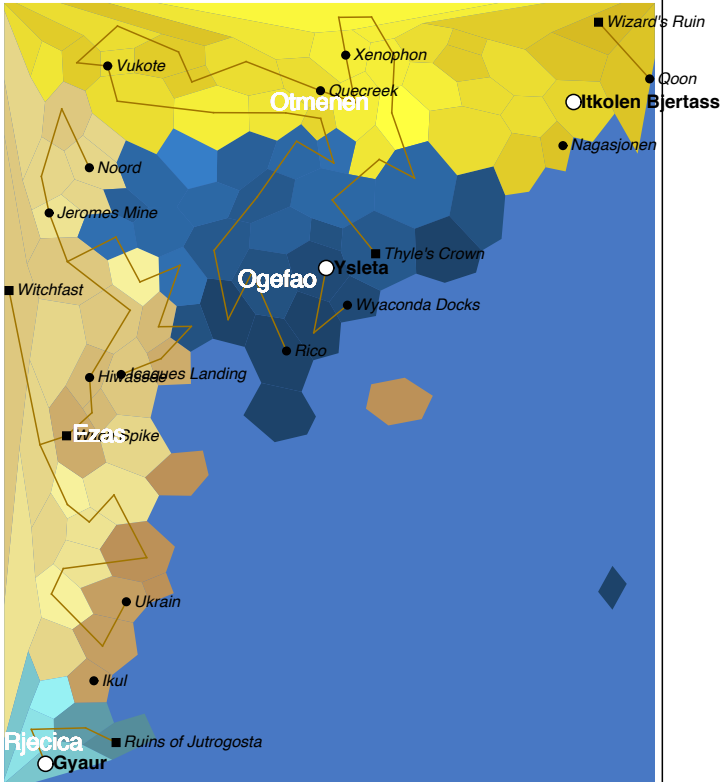
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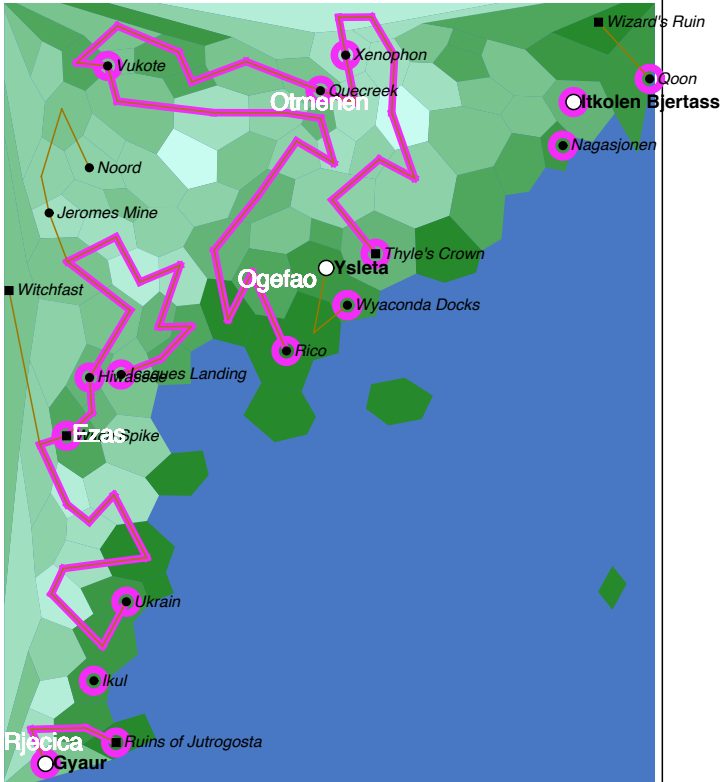
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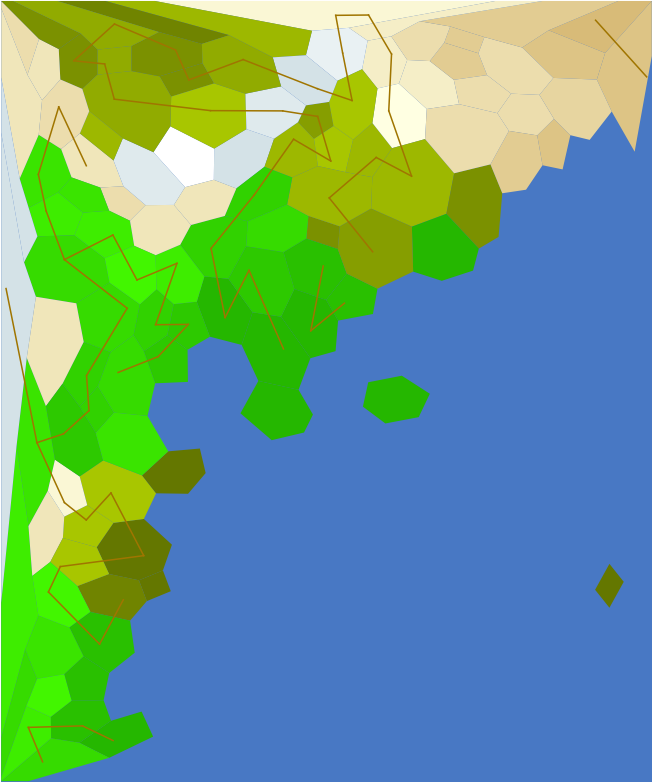
The Curses

Travel and Shipping



The Curses

Geography and Terrain



1. Uehlin

Fleta was a regular sailor in Wyaconda Docks. She busied herself reading a star chart. The sunset was golden and purple toward the heavens.. Fleta wandered by the bakery . She felt happy, but didn't dwell..

Change was on the wind.

Outside the town, there was a small patchwork warren. Fleta felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled humid. "Ah, Fleta, I have been expecting you for epochs," the old witch cried. "I have a favor to ask..."

"Over there", gestured the witch, "in that basket." The witch sipped a noxious tea. Fiery clouds hung behind them. "That is the Sword of Poturak, and it is how I gained and lost my fortune. But it is an evil thing. Please, I beg of you, take it to Ruins of Jutrogosta and there you will find a well so deep as to have no bottom. Drop it into the well and the world will be free of it. But be careful, as long as you carry it ill luck will befall you." The witch sipped a noxious tea

Wyaconda Docks counted its population in apricots. Fleta sat down on the pine straw for a bit. Fleta pondered what was coming. Fleta chatted

with a kind street vendor. She kicked the moss. She took a few steps. She saw a bear. She took a few steps. Fleta sat down on the moss for a bit. Fleta considered pacing the fo'c'sle back in Wyaconda Docks. her simple life as a sailor. That life was just a memory now..

Fleta visited a tavern. A Bard was there, lurking in the shadows. The Bard noticed Fleta. "Hello there," the Bard said, "You look like you could use a Bard in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Uehlin."

The sun-dappled sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were gnats in Fleta's cabin. On the voyage to Wyaconda Docks, Fleta lost most of her gold playing dice with the crew.

Chaff rested on the moss. "Hey, I just..." Fleta trailed off. She shifted on the leaves. "Are you rejecting an opportunity to try something new?" she asked.

Uehlin said, "Is that how you see it? It's just hitting the ground running."

"I mean, it just seems like you're launching a project without a clear definition of who should do what.", replied Fleta.

Uehlin replied, "Really? More like blazing new trails."

Fleta thought about her home back in Wyaconda Docks.

Fleta arrived in Wyaconda Docks and and felt foul..

Outside the town, there was a small wood-paneled hut. Fleta felt drawn inside. Within, there was a gnarled witch. The air smelled dry. "Ah, Fleta, I have been expecting you for ages," the old witch said. "I have a favor to ask..."

"Here!" said the witch, and thrust a ragged, crumbling map into Fleta's hand. she looked it over.

"Witch Spike?", Fleta wondered aloud. "I thought that was just a legend."

"Oh, no", whispered the witch, "it's no legend. And the Knuckle Ankh is there."

Fleta nodded with understanding.

2. Meeting Wyben

Qoon had been founded by the druids, but it was all tough men and women now. Qoon was the jewel of Otmenen. Qoon counted its population in apples. A horse passed through the dusty wind. Fleta sat for a while. She chatted with a mean scribe. She took a few steps, and stopped for a drink. She kicked the sand. Fleta scanned the horizon. She breathed in the humid wind.

The stagnant sea was stormy. Seagulls circled The Sailor'S Spice Of The Sea and Uehlin fretted that they might poop on her. The sail to Ruins of Jutrogosta was a much needed rest for the party.

Fleta and Uehlin stopped in to a tavern. Dry grass rested on the cracked mud. "You're becoming so caught up in matters of Spirit, you become detached from the world. It makes me wistful.", said Fleta.

Uehlin said, "I see it as more achieving unity with Spirit."

Chaff rested on the sand.

Fleta was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. There was a Druid sipping tea. The Druid noticed Fleta. "Hello there," the Druid said, "You look like you could use a Druid in your

group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Wyben."

Ruins of Jutrogosta had been left to the bears for millenia. Rats scurried away around their feet. A chill ran down Fleta's spine. she felt sad. Wyben breathed cautiously. He shivered. He walked downward. He squinted. The air was stagnant. They were well into Ruins of Jutrogosta now.

Ahead, there was a problem. There was a gelatious cube. A jelly rounded out the cadre. Their leader was a great jelly. With fierce ferocity, Fleta's axe flashed in the dry wind. A gelatious cube was slain. Uehlin attacked a jelly, but missed. Purple clouds hung in the distance.

A jelly hit Fleta. With fierce ferocity, Wyben drew power from the mossThe spirits of the forest inhabited Wyben's bird's nest. Wyben was calm as he finished a jelly. The Great Jelly hit Wyben. Fleta struck at the the Great Jelly. It was super effective.

It took mere instants, but whispered rumors would tell of the next moment for since before the great war: Uehlin exclaimed, "Victory!", and smacked the Great Jelly with the lyre. Uehlin ducked near a log, and readied his lyre With fierce ferocity, Fleta's axe flashed in the dry wind.

Fleta had killed the Great Jelly.

Fleta thought about the Dragon-bone Sword. She was sure they would reach Thyle's Crown.

In the deepest part of Ruins of Jutrogosta, they reached the well and stared into the abyss. It truly seemed to have no bottom. Fleta held out the Sword of Poturak above the brink.

"We should keep it," suggested Wyben, "we can learn to use its power."

"We cannot," said Fleta, and dropped the Sword of Poturak. "No mortal could." The stagnant air looked fiery and purple.

Gyaur covered a square mile of countryside. Mist floated in the wind. Fleta saw a lizard's den, and it reminded her of Wyaconda Docks. Fleta chatted with a kind monk, and walked by the pier. She took a few steps, and kicked the undergrowth. Fleta watched a rat by a log on the undergrowth.

3. The Newfound Delight On The Waves

Fleta and Uehlin stopped in to a tavern. "Are you aware that you're allowing sour grapes to poison your moment in the sun?", said Fleta.

"Certainly not. I'm preparing for a party.", said Uehlin.

Fleta wondered about all that had happened.

Fleta met a sailor and got a lead on a ship sailing to Ikul. At dawn, The Newfound Delight On The Waves was set to sail to Ikul. The The Newfound Delight On The Waves was piloted by a bitter mercenary named Ubetsk.

Ubetsk had no interest in letting them on The Newfound Delight On The Waves. Fleta wandered the streets of Gyaur. Purple clouds hung in the distance.. Wyben followed a couple of sailors from The Newfound Delight On The Waves into an alley. The next day, Ubetsk found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

Fleta heard an animated conversation coming from a shipwright's office and peeked inside. There was a Bard sipping salal berry juice. Fleta strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Bard,"said Fleta, "we could use someone like you

in our party."

"I'm Essundamo," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

The waves were rough and the air was warm. The *Newfound Delight On The Waves* was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Uehlin spend most of his time on the voyage to Ikul puking over the gunwales.

Dry grass rested on the fallen logs. Fleta said, "Can we chat about indulging in relentless consumerism"

"Is that how you see it? It's just realizing you have everything you need.", said Essundamo.

Chaff rested on the undergrowth.

If only they had the Knuckle Ankh.

Fleta arrived in Ikul and , this put her in a sad mood..

Stagnant gnats hung in the dusty wind. Fleta watched a lizard by a lichen on the undergrowth. Fleta stopped for a drink. She stopped for a drink, and stopped for a drink. Fleta scanned the horizon. She breathed in the warm air.

Fleta heard an animated conversation coming from a bakery and peeked inside. Fleta couldn't help but notice a Ranger nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of tea splashed Fleta in the face. At the center, a flailing

Ranger was throwing loose punches. Fleta decided to help him out.

she extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Ranger said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Xelvona."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Xelvona would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Dirt rested on the moss. "You're mistaking procrastination for thoughtfulness. It makes me sad.", said Fleta.

"I'm merely pausing to meditate or clear my mind.", said Uehlin.

Fleta said, "I mean, it just seems like you're failing to think things through."

Uehlin replied, "I see it as more taking time to understand someone or something before criticizing it."

Fleta thought about her next steps.

4. Witch Spike

Fleta thought about the Knuckle Ankh, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

Fleta thought about the Dragon-bone Sword, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

The waves were calm and the air was dry. The Whale was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Essundamo spent the trip to Ikul pilfering grog from the The Whale's crew.

The legends of Icaques Landing were legendary. Fleta watched a bear by a log on the moss. Fleta took a few steps. She stopped for a drink. She stopped for a drink, and sat for a while. She saw a lizard. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the breeze smell of persimmon. Fleta wondered about climbing the rigging back in Wyaconda Docks. That life was just a memory now. her simple life as a sailor. That life was just a memory now..

Butterflies danced in the air. Hiwassee was a modest city, and that kept it proud. Fleta watched a bear by a log on the pine straw. Fleta stopped for

a drink, and passed a tavern. She sat for a while. She walked uphill, and passed a smithy. A hint of motion caught Fleta's eye, she turned. It might have been a bear, but it was gone.

Fleta and Essundamo stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Essundamo," asked Fleta, "do you worry that you're allowing greed and envy to prevent you from enjoying what you do possess?"

"Really? More like having it all.", said Essundamo.

Fleta pondered the air.

Fleta thought about the Dragon-bone Sword, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

Behind a bear's den, Essundamo spotted the entrance to Witch Spike. Essundamo lit a torch, and walked downward. She squinted. This was the belly of Witch Spike.

Ahead, there was a problem. A ur-ooze was their leader. A jelly scuttled behind the rest. A slime, and it looked hungry. A slime hit Wyben. The bloody tide of battle rose and Uehlin played a jaunty tune on the lyre and it dazed a jelly The Ur-Ooze hit Wyben.

A jelly attacked Wyben, but missed. Fleta and a jelly circled each other, almost as a dance. With fierce ferocity, Fleta slashed with her axe. It took mere instants, but rumors would tell of the next

moment for ages: Xelvona ducked up from behind a fern and got off a shot from his longbow.

The Ur-Ooze attacked Fleta, but missed. "Victory!," groaned Uehlin, "to be back in Wyaconda Docks."

Fleta showed no mercy, Fleta struck at the a slime A jelly attacked Essundamo, but missed. "Yipes," groaned Fleta, "to be back in Wyaconda Docks."

Essundamo played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lyre and the a jelly wobbled helplessly and was knocked back,. Essundamo raised her lyre. she hit the brown note, and the a jelly was gravely moved. Essundamo was calm as she dispatched a jelly.

The Ur-Ooze hit Essundamo. Fleta struck a slime. A slime was slain. A slime attacked Uehlin, but missed. Uehlin's lyre rose through the wind. Uehlin raised his lyre. he hit the brown note, and the the Ur-Ooze was gravely moved, it was devastating. The Ur-Ooze was slain.

5. Chapter Title

Fleta consulted the old map they had got from the witch.

"This must be the place," she murmured.

"There's nothing here," said Uehlin, exasperated.

"No, look, there," said Fleta as she moved a flagstone aside. Beneath it was a small chamber, barely large enough for a rat, and contained within was Knuckle Ankh.

"I don't believe it," yelled Uehlin. They had found it. They found the Knuckle Ankh.

Dust tarried in the air. Fleta walked for a bit. She passed a church. Fleta kicked the fetid soil. She sat for a while, and passed a clothseller. She kicked the mire. Fleta watched a lizard by a dry patch on the muck.

The waves were stormy and the air was sun-dappled. Seagulls circled The Lass and Xelvona fretted that they might poop on her. The sail to Thyle's Crown was a much needed rest for the party.

Fleta's fingers wandered to the Dragon-bone Sword. It felt heavy to her, heavier than it should be.

Dirt rested on the mire. "Hey! You're becoming ruthlessly dedicated to profit or pleasure. Knock it off.", said Fleta.

Essundamo said, "Is that what you think? I think it's becoming debt-free."

"I mean, it just seems like you're becoming so conservative you resist all change on principle alone.", replied Fleta.

Essundamo said, "Certainly not. I'm buying life or health insurance."

Chaff rested on the muck.

It seemed as if weeks had passed since they left Ukrain. The harbor in Thyle's Crown was stormy.

A hollow booming sound echoed from underground. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Wyben, as they approach the entrance to Thyle's Crown. Wyben lit a torch. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked downward. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. This was the belly of Thyle's Crown.

Their passage was blocked. A spider rounded out the cadre. A bugomancer called the shots. A spider attacked Wyben, but missed. Uehlin's lyre hung through the languid air. Fleta had the upper hand. Fleta executed a practiced move with her axe. Wyben draw upon the power of nature with his bird's nest.

Uehlin played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lyre and the the Bugomancer flew helplessly and was knocked back, and it met bone. The Bugomancer attacked Fleta, but missed. "AaaAaaaaAA," groaned Xelvona, "to be back in Ikul."

A spider attacked Essundamo, but missed.

Fleta paced on the dry grass. Fleta hit a spider. Fleta had slain a spider. Essundamo attacked the Bugomancer, but missed. Xelvona and the Bugomancer circled each other, almost as a dance. Xelvona shot an arrow from his longbow and it met bone. Xelvona had killed the Bugomancer.

Fleta reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for ages. She set the Dragon-bone Sword on the shining anvil. she picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a papaya. Fleta yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all her frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Dragon-bone Sword was unchanged. She struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Dragon-bone Sword shattered, splitting into a thousand pieces.

6. Motivation

Xenophon had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. The some tales of Xenophon were legendary. A hint of motion caught Fleta's eye, she turned. It might have been a goat, but it was gone. Fleta saw a bird and kept moving. She sat for a while. She stopped for a drink. Fleta watched a eagle by a bones of a eagle on the stones.

Fleta and Wyben stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Wyben," asked Fleta, "do you worry that you're living strictly for today, with no thought of tomorrow?"

"I'm merely starting a savings plan.", said Wyben.

Chaff rested on the narrow path.

Quecreek was kind of a dump. An eagle passed through the dusty breeze. Fleta passed a smithy. She saw a goat and kept moving, and sat for a while, and saw a goat and kept moving. Fleta wondered about the folks living here. Most that she passed seemed happy, but, she would be glad to move on.

Vukote was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Vukote was kind of a dump. Fleta

wandered through the market. She bought a apple from a stall and took a bite. It was good. Fleta considered a rat. Fleta stopped for a drink, and passed a bakery. She saw a alligator and kept moving, and saw a rat. She saw a rat and kept moving. Fleta wandered through the market. She bought a feijoa from a colorful stall and took a bite. It was bland. Fleta considered all that had happened.

Rico boasted a thriving market. A lizard passed through the hot breeze. Fleta chatted with a generous monk. She stopped for a drink. She passed a shipwright's office, and saw a lizard and kept moving, and tarried for a bit. Fleta wandered through the market. She bought a mandarine from a vendor and took a bite. It was rotten. Fleta wondered about the breeze.

Dry grass rested on the leaves. "Hey, I just..." Fleta trailed off. She shifted on the undergrowth. "Are you being ineffectual or lazy?" she asked.

"I'm merely seeing a solution.", said Uehlin.

Fleta pondered the future.

Uehlin bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. The Sailor's Windlass was set to sail to Nagasjonen at noon. The captain was a gruff mercenary named Igiugig.

"Sod off," said Igiugig, "The Sailor's Windlass's not for landlubbers like ya." Fleta

visited a tavern and considered her options. Then, Uehlin saw Igiugig in a tavern. he bought the prancing captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were choppy and the air was dry. The Sailor'S Windlass was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. The sail to Nagasjonen was a much needed rest for the party.

The dry air looked auburn. as they sailed into the harbor at Nagasjonen.

Fleta and Wyben stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Wyben," asked Fleta, " do you worry that you're rejecting the counsel of your heart?"

"I see it as more trusting my feelings.", said Wyben.

"Maybe spurning an opportunity to love or be loved, just a bit?", said Fleta.

"Is that how you see it? It's just listening to the still, small voice.", replied Wyben.

Fleta wondered about her home back in Wyaconda Docks.

Nagasjonen was the largest city in Otmenen. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the wind smell of strawberry. Fleta pondered a caracal. Fleta kicked the cracked mud. She saw a fox, and stopped for a drink. She sat for a while. She saw a xerus. Fleta saw a creekbed, and it

reminded her of Wyaconda Docks.

Uehlin bought a round for the sailors at the local tavern and asked about ships. On wednesday, The Compass Of The Water was set to sail to Itkolen Bjertass. The captain was a grumpy mercenary named Etlaht.

But The Compass Of The Water was at capacity, and had no room for adventureres. Fleta visited a tavern and considered her options. Then, Uehlin saw Etlaht in a tavern. he bought the grizzled captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

The waves were rough and the air was hot. They saw a humpback whale breach the hot waves. The sail to Itkolen Bjertass was a much needed rest for the party.

Mist hovered in the air. Fleta said, "Hey! You're obsessing on your account balance. Knock it off."

"I see it as more receiving the perfect gift at the perfect time.", said Wyben.

Fleta said, "Maybe suffering from hypochondria, just a bit?"

Wyben said, "Really? More like appreciating everything the Universe has given you."

Hot haze floated in the wind.

Started as a mining town, Itkolen Bjertass was

now a thriving metropolis. The legends of Itkolen Bjertass were legendary. A tortoise passed through the languid breeze. Fleta saw a viper and kept moving, and walked north, and walked by the docks. She walked downhill. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the languid breeze smell of strawberry. Fleta pondered her journey.

**ANDREW J
MCKEE**

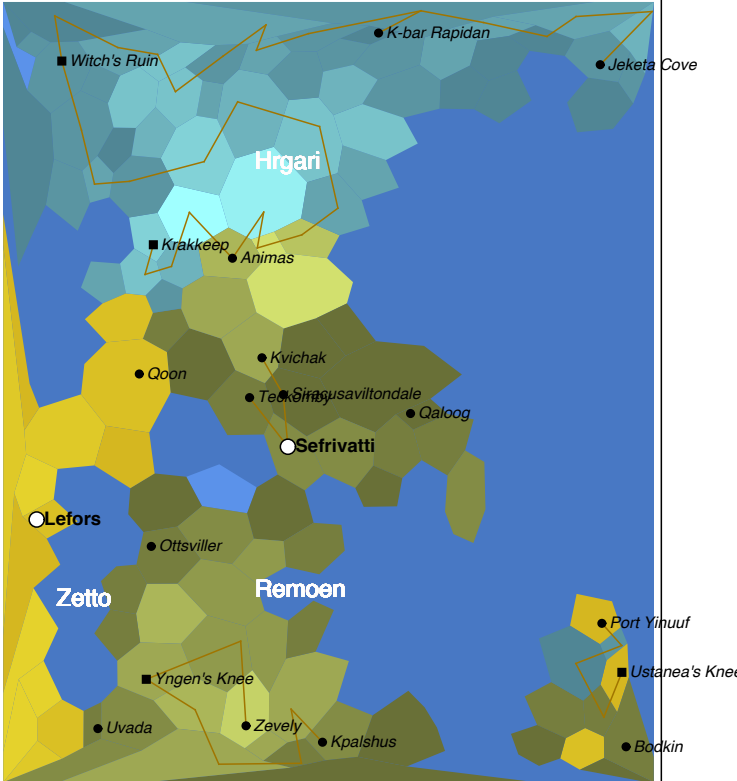


**ROSES
AND
RINGS**

**BOOK TWO OF THE
CURSES SERIES**

Roses And Rings

Political Boundaries



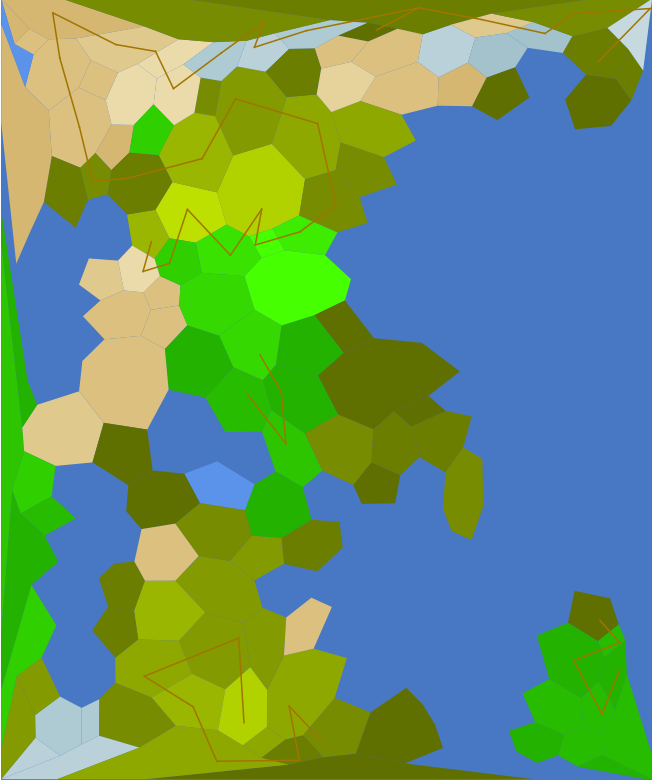
Roses And Rings

Travel and Shipping



Roses And Rings

Geography and Terrain



1. Kpalshus

Eichenal was a humble baker in Kvichak. He busied himself heating up the oven for a loaf of bread. The dewy air looked shimmering and purple.. Eichenal wandered by the church , this put him in a forlorn mood..

Some tales stated that Kvichak was built where a fallen star had landed. Pollen lifted in the fresh air. Eichenal watched a rat by a fern on the undergrowth. Eichenal chatted with a bitter armourer, and sat for a while. He walked uphill. He sat for a while. He chatted with a sour armourer. Eichenal sat down on the fallen logs for a bit. Eichenal pondered a bear.

This was the last afternoon Eichenal would spend folding pastry.

Siracusaviltendale was a town of generous people. Eichenal walked for a bit. He passed a plaza. Eichenal tarried for a bit, and stopped for a drink. He chatted with a hospitable monk. He saw a bear and kept moving, and saw a rat. A lizard passed through the air.

Started as a mercenary town, Sefrivatti was now a thriving village. Sefrivatti was a village of

kind people. Eichenal wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Eichenal passed a smithy. He passed a grainery. He walked northeast, and passed a tavern. A hint of motion caught Eichenal's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone.

They passed a ramshackle hut. A voice from within said "Eichenal...". he looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"Take this", said the old gypsy, holding out something with shaking hands. Eichenal took the offered item.

"This is the Blessed Seal", the old gypsy yelled. "It is powerful but cursed. Only the magic fire at Krakkeep can destroy it. Go there, and destroy it, for your own sake and for the sake of all of Remoen."

Eichenal heard an animated conversation coming from a garrison and peeked inside. There was a Thief sipping ugly fruit juice. The Thief noticed Eichenal. "Hello there," the Thief said, "You look like you could use a Thief in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Booyah."

The warm sea was calm. The air was pleasant but there were cicadas in Eichenal's cabin. Eichenal learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled chili pepper to catch tuna.

Alligator poop rested on the mud. Kpalshus was once a trading center at a great crossroads, but those roads faded into lizard trails. Eichenal scanned the horizon. He breathed in the dewy wind. Eichenal sat for a while. He tarried for a bit, and sat for a while. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the warm air smell of chili pepper. Eichenal wondered about what was coming.

Eichenal and Booyah stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're numbing yourself to spiritual yearnings. Knock it off.", said Eichenal.

"Is that how you see it? It's just taking advantage of an opportunity to express love to others.", said Booyah.

"Maybe indulging in hysteria or obsession, just a bit?", replied Eichenal.

Booyah said, "Really? More like getting in touch with what motivates you."

Eichenal thought about his next steps.

2. Contemplation

The waves were choppy and the air was cool. The Sunfish was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Eichenal learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled ugli fruit to catch scalefish.

More of a commune than a village, Qaloog was home to a few stubborn families and their livestock. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the dewy wind smell of chili pepper. Eichenal pondered the future. Eichenal saw a lizard, and stopped for a drink, and walked downhill, and sat for a while, and saw a lizard. Eichenal scanned the horizon. He breathed in the cool warm wind.

Eichenal stopped into a tavern for some refreshment. The only open seat was beside an old wizard in auburn robes. Eichenal took a seat and after a while they started talking. "I am near the end of my journey," the mage lamented, "but you remind me of my younger self." Eichenal seemed to gain the old wizard's trust.

"I can see between the worlds of the living and the dead," intoned the old wizard.

"What?", Eichenal recoiled.

"It's the Ring of Yendor. It haunts my dreams

and has warped my sight. You can find it in Ustanea's Knee. But beware, because it is well guarded." The old wizard cried into his whiskey.

"We will go," said Eichenal, "We shall not fail."

Eichenal made friends with a local dockworker who knew the comings and goings of the port. At midnight, The Jellyfish Of The Sea was set to sail to Qaloog. The captain was a gruff sea dog named Goska.

There should have been plenty of space on The Jellyfish Of The Sea, but Goska said it was full. Booyah guessed that it was a smuggler. Eichenal wandered the streets of Port Yinuuf. The cool air looked shimmering.. Then, Booyah saw Goska in a tavern. she bought the grumpy captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

Verdant dew played in the cool breeze. Eichenal and Booyah stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're adopting a point of view and refusing to reconsider your conclusions, even when presented with refuting evidence. Knock it off.", said Eichenal.

"Really? More like taking time to understand someone or something before criticizing it.", said Booyah.

Eichenal considered all that had happened.

The warm sea was rough. The Jellyfish Of The Sea was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Booyah spend most of her time on the voyage to Qaloog puking over the gunwales.

Eichenal was hungry and stopped into an inn for some food. A Mage was there, lurking in the shadows. The Mage noticed Eichenal. "Hello there," the Mage said, "You look like you could use a Mage in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Noahs."

Port Yinuuf covered a square mile of countryside. Port Yinuuf was kind of a dump. A lizard passed through the air. Eichenal took a few steps. He saw a lizard. He tarried for a bit, and took a few steps. Eichenal watched a lizard by a alligator scat on the muck.

3. Sword of Jnnel

Eichenal thought about the Blessed Seal, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Eichenal thought about the Ring of Yendor. He was sure they would reach Ustanea's Knee.

Dew rested on the muck. Eichenal and Noahs stopped in to a tavern. "I wanted to talk to you about wishing in vain you could take back what's been said.", said Eichenal.

"I see it as more consulting an expert.", said Noahs.

Eichenal considered his home back in Kvichak.

They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the warm walls. Lightning flashed in the fresh air outside, throwing shadows on the walls. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Noahs, as they approach the entrance to Ustanea's Knee. Noahs lit a torch. He lit a torch, and walked southeast. The air was dewy. They were well into Ustanea's Knee now.

They were not alone. A dragolisk was in charge of them all. A skink faced the group.

Noahs attacked a skink, but missed. Shimmering clouds hung behind them. A skink hit Eichenal. With fierce ferocity, Eichenal played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the panpipe and the a skink slithered helplessly and was knocked back,.

The Dragolisk hit Noahs. Ice flew from Noahs's amulet, and hit the skull. Booyah attacked the Dragolisk, but missed. Noahs ducked near a stump, and readied his amulet Eichenal struck the Dragolisk. Booyah showed no mercy, Booyah attempted to backstab a skinkBooyah gutted a skink with a foil

Booyah loosed a cry of rage and killed a skink. Noahs cast Force Lightning and ice blazed from his amuletNoahs's mana was weak. He cried, "Yeargh!", and smacked the Dragolisk with his amulet, it was devastating. The Dragolisk fell to the undergrowth, dead.

Eichenal would be glad when Blessed Seal was destroyed.

They reached Ustanea's Knee. The walls were smeared with blood. "The Ring of Yendor is here somewhere, I'm sure of it," said Booyah.

"We've searched this whole ruin," sighed Eichenal. I think the old wizard was lying to us.

"Wait," said Booyah, "It wasn't a lie. I sense something." She shut her eyes and pushed aside a

gargoyle to reveal a hidden chamber. Inside, on a starry plinth, was the Ring of Yendor.

"We have it," mused Eichenal, hefting the Ring of Yendor in his hand, "but I can't help but think it was not worth the price we paid."

They made their way in silence back out to the fern where the horses were tied. Fiery clouds hung in the distance.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of apricot. Eichenal turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the fallen logs like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Eichenal rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

The slain courier handed Eichenal a bundle of cloth. He slowly unwrapped it. "This is Sword of Jnnel", the slain courier exclaimed. "It is most evil and most be destroyed."

The slain courier leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at Witch's Ruin. Use it. It can destroy the Sword of Jnnel." The slain courier slumped, then weakly clung to life.

4. Sailing to Jeketa Cove

Eichenal met a dockworker and got a lead on a ship sailing to Jeketa Cove. A caravel named The Narwhal Of The Water was sailing to Jeketa Cove. The The Narwhal Of The Water was piloted by a grizzled pirate named Raton.

Raton had no interest in letting them on The Narwhal Of The Water. Eichenal wandered the streets of Ustanea's Knee. The fresh air looked purple.. Booyah followed a couple of sailors from The Narwhal Of The Water into an alley. The next day, Raton found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

The fresh sea was stormy. They saw a humpback whale breach the verdant waves. Much happened on the voyage to Jeketa Cove, but that is a tale for another time.

Bear poop rested on the undergrowth. Eichenal said, "I wanted to talk to you about blundering forward with inadequate skill or information."

"I see it as more convincing others to follow you.", said Booyah.

Dew rested on the pine straw.

Jeketa Cove was a wealthy village, and that kept it growing. Cool birds rose in the wind. Jeketa Cove was hardly more than a handful of buildings. A hint of motion caught Eichenal's eye, he turned. It might have been a lizard, but it was gone. Eichenal sat for a while. He passed a fishmonger's. He chatted with a welcoming tinker. He saw a rat. Eichenal walked for a bit. He passed a armourer.

"I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Noahs, as they approach the entrance to Witch's Ruin. Eichenal walked downward, and ducked to pass the low ceiling. He shivered. He walked downward, and walked downward. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Witch's Ruin, but they weren't alone.

There were monsters ahead. A basilisk glared at them. A chimera glared at them. A drake was in charge of them all. A chimera hit Booyah. A basilisk hit Eichenal. Booyah attacked a basilisk, but missed. Noahs ducked near a bonepile, and readied his amulet

With fierce ferocity, Noahs cast Force Lightning and fire blazed from his amulet Noahs's mana was weak. He said, "Why not?", and smacked the Drake with his amulet. The Drake hit Noahs. Eichenal had the upper hand. Eichenal raised his panpipe. he hit the brown note, and the

a chimera was gravely moved.

A basilisk attacked Noahs, but missed. Booyah ducked near a creekbed, and readied her foil. A basilisk hit Eichenal. With fierce ferocity, Booyah attempted to backstab a chimera. Booyah gutted a chimera with a foil. Booyah had killed a chimera. The Drake hit Eichenal.

Eichenal staggered, and tumbled to the sand. Noahs attacked the Drake, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," cried Booyah.

The Drake hit Booyah. A basilisk hit Booyah. Booyah fell to the cracked mud, her breath came in ragged bursts.

Booyah showed no mercy, Booyah attempted backstab Noahs cast Force Lightning, and hit the spine. "Oh Hells," groaned Noahs, "to be back in Qaloog."

The Drake hit Noahs. A basilisk hit Noahs. Noahs staggered, and tumbled to the rocks. A basilisk skated across the rocks, skated over Eichenal's prone body. Eichenal groaned, and turned, and reached out for a basilisk.

A basilisk skittered across the sand, slunk over Booyah's prone body. Booyah groaned, and turned, and reached out for a basilisk. Noahs coughed, and rose to his feet "Why not?," groaned Eichenal, "to be back in Kvichak."

A basilisk hit Noahs. The Drake hit Booyah.

Eichenal played a jaunty tune on the panpipe and it dazed the Drake and it met bone. The Drake was slain. Booyah attacked a basilisk, but missed. Noahs paced on the toadstools. It took mere instants, but old stories would tell of the next moment for a hundred years: Eichenal played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the panpipe and the a basilisk skated helplessly and was knocked back,.

Eichenal was calm as he finished a basilisk.

5. Krakkeep

Eichenal reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for since before recorded history. He set the Sword of Jnnigel on the shining anvil. he picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a lychee. Eichenal yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all his frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Sword of Jnnigel was unchanged. He struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Sword of Jnnigel shattered, splitting into a uncounted pieces.

Eichenal would be glad when Blessed Seal was destroyed.

Witch's Ruin was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. A Mage was there, lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of blood orange juice splashed Eichenal in the face. At the center, a flailing Mage was throwing loose punches. Eichenal decided to help him out.

he extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Mage said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Vikhroli."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Vikhroli would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Eichenal and Booyah stopped in to a tavern. "Hey! You're allowing base instincts to govern your life. Knock it off.", said Eichenal.

Booyah said, "Is that what you think? I think it's dealing with unhealthy impulses in healthy ways."

Hare poop rested on the rocks.

Animas was a beautiful village. Eichenal walked for a bit. He passed a plaza. Eichenal sat for a while, and saw a bear, and stopped for a drink, and tarried for a bit, and passed a armourer. Eichenal walked for a bit. He passed a garrison.

Toadstools rested on the mud. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Noahs, as they approach the entrance to Krakkeep. Booyah shivered. She squinted. She shivered, and shivered. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Krakkeep, but they weren't alone.

They braced for a fight. They were lead by a dragon. Don't forget about a giant lizard. Booyah snuck behind the Dragon and stabbed at a vertebrae and it met bone. The Dragon attacked Vikhroli, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," yelled Vikhroli.

Vikhroli attacked a giant lizard, but missed. The sunset was fiery on the horizon. A giant lizard hit Vikhroli. The Dragon hit Eichenal. Eichenal yelled, "Oh Hells", and smacked a giant lizard with the panpipe, and hit the leg. Eichenal was calm as he vanquished a giant lizard.

Booyah attacked the Dragon, but missed. Vikhroli and the Dragon circled each other, almost as a dance. The bloody tide of battle rose and Booyah deftly snapped her at the Dragon's ribs. It took mere instants, but old tales would tell of the next moment for a uncounted years: "Music," yelled Eichenal, "can tame the savage the Dragon!" .

The Dragon was slain.

They came to an inner room, covered with arcane ruins. From a circle etched into the center of the floor, a column of shimmering energy pulsed and swayed. "This must be the magic fire that the old gypsy spoke of," whispered Vikhroli.

Eichenal nodded. he raised the Blessed Seal and it seemed to jump from his hands, into the gout of golden fire. It flared up into a shower of magical sparks, and an instant later, was gone.

Eichenal was foul. He wandered into a garden full of lychees. There was a Druid sipping blood orange juice. Eichenal strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Druid,"said Eichenal,

"we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Mpong,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Eichenal and Booyah stopped in to a tavern. Verdant dew hovered in the breeze. Eichenal said, "I wanted to talk to you about ill-informed decisions."

"Is that what you think? I think it's aligning myself with groups or like-minded others.", said Booyah.

"I mean, it just seems like you're debilitating passion.", said Eichenal.

"Really? More like being in love.", replied Booyah.

Toadstools rested on the mire.

The warm sea was choppy. The air was pleasant but there were bees in Eichenal's cabin. The voyage to Qoon was uneventful.

Qoon was not much to look at. A mouse passed through the air. Eichenal kicked the sand, and sat for a while. He sat for a while. Eichenal scanned the horizon. He breathed in the verdant warm wind.

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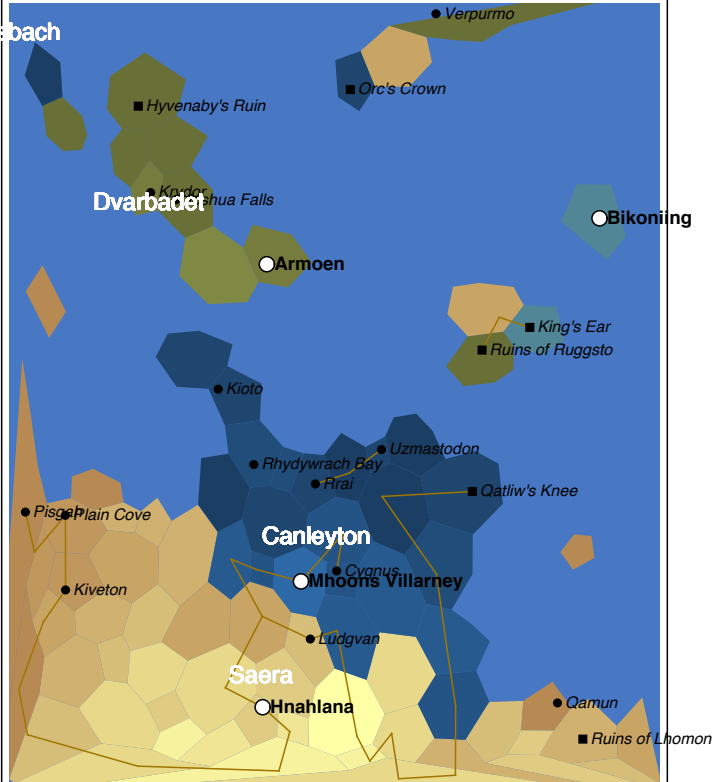
THE BARREN LANDS AND THE CURSED CURSES

MARCUS MIRANDA

THE PREDECESSOR
TO THE
LONG AWAITED
NOVEL THE
HEAVENLY
ENCHANTRESSES

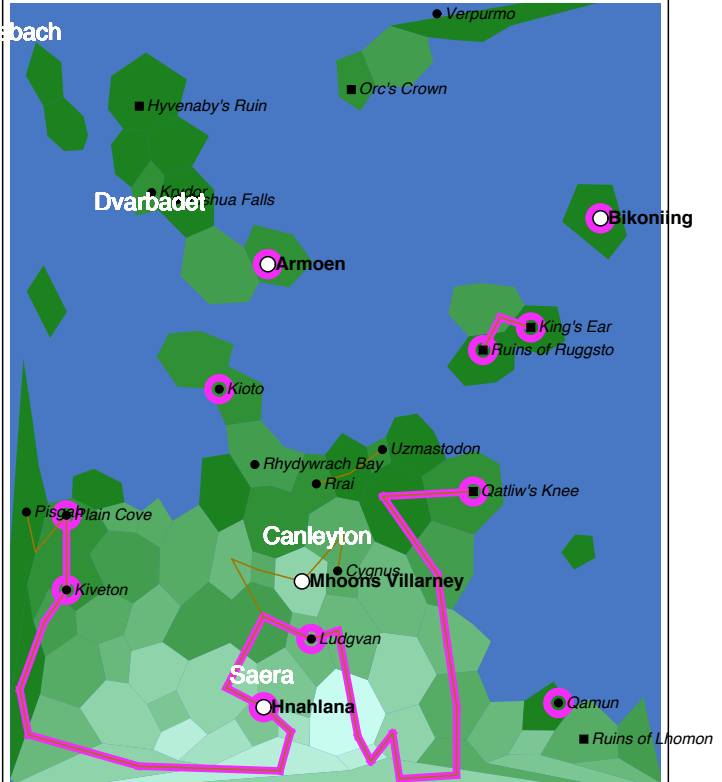
The Barren Lands And the Cursed Curses

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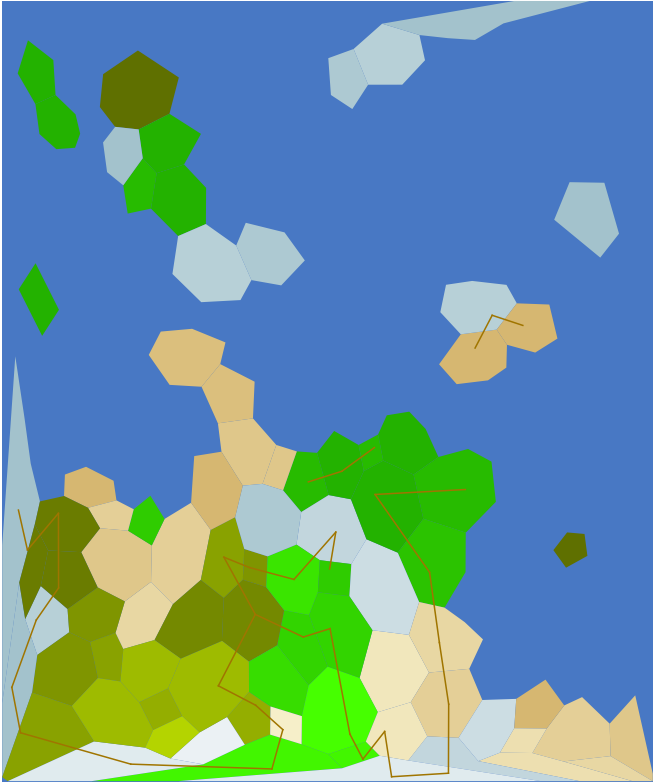
The Barren Lands And the Cursed Curses

Travel and Shipping



The Barren Lands And the Cursed Curses

Geography and Terrain



1. Bikoniing

Kvichak was a humble farmer in Qamun. She spent the afternoon planting pomelo. The sunset was purple and purple across the sky.. Kvichak thought to visit a armourer, but was busy planting passionfruit . She felt sad, but didn't dwell..

This was the last evening Kvichak would spend digging a furrow.

They passed a fabric-walled hut. A voice from within said "Kvichak...". she looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the old gypsy.

"Why?" asked Kvichak, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the old gypsy. stared into a crystal ball. "In Ruins of Ruggsto, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Finger Sphere."

"We are not grave robbers," said Kvichak.

"Aren't you?" the old gypsy squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Finger Sphere in the first place."

Kvichak pondered the story, and pondered the Finger Sphere.

Qamun was not much to look at. Kvichak saw a bonepile, and it reminded her of Qamun. Kvichak kicked the sand, and tarried for a bit. She tarried for a bit. Kvichak sat down on the rocks for a bit. Kvichak considered the air.

The waves were stormy and the air was icy. Seagulls circled The Sailor'S Siren Of The Water and Kvichak fretted that they might poop on her. Kvichak spend most of her time on the voyage to Bikoniing puking over the gunwales.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of passionfruit. Kvichak turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the sand like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Kvichak rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"Here!" said the slain courier, and thrust a ragged, crumbling map into Kvichak's hand. she looked it over.

"Qatliw's Knee?", Kvichak wondered aloud. "I thought that was just a legend."

"Oh, no", whispered the slain courier, "it's no

legend. And the Ring of Ojus is there."

Kvichak nodded with understanding.

Started as a blacksmithing town, Bikoniing was now a thriving village. Bikoniing was a poor village, and that kept it proud. An eagle passed through the frosty air. Kvichak kicked the rocks. She chatted with a kind street vendor, and stopped for a drink, and walked northeast, and tarried for a bit. A goat passed through the wind.

The cool sea was stormy. The air was pleasant but there were insects in Kvichak's cabin. On the voyage to Bikoniing, Kvichak lost most of her gold playing dice with the crew.

Kvichak heard an animated conversation coming from a shipwright's office and peeked inside. There was a Thief sipping a beer. Kvichak strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Thief,"said Kvichak, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm N'eef,"he replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

2. Plain Cove

Frigid sleet danced in the chilly breeze. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of boysenberry. Kvichak considered her journey. Kvichak stopped for a drink. She passed a bakery. She passed an armourer. She chatted with a generous miller, and took a few steps. Kvichak watched a bird by a bones of a goat on the rocks.

Kvichak thought about the Finger Sphere, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

Frozen mist spun in the frigid wind. Kvichak and N'eef stopped in to a tavern. I wanted to talk to you about longing for "the good old days". N'eef said, "Certainly not. I'm deciding it's time for a change."

"You're holding others to inappropriate standards. It's not uncommon for a Thief.", replied Kvichak.

"Is that how you see it? It's just measuring progress toward my goal.", replied N'eef.

Frigid mist sliced in the frozen breeze.

The frozen sea was calm. They saw a humpback whale breach the chilly waves. Kvichak learned the fisherman's trick of baiting

with spoiled pamelos to catch whitefish.

Kvichak thought about the Ring of Ojus, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

The Finger Sphere. That would fix this. Kvichak felt sure of this.

Plain Cove was a charming village. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the cool air smell of pomelo. Kvichak considered her home back in Qamun. Kvichak kicked the mire, and saw a rat and kept moving, and saw a rat, and took a few steps, and took a few steps. Kvichak walked for a bit. She passed a tavern.

Kvichak was forlorn. She wandered into a garden full of coconuts. Kvichak couldn't help but notice a Ranger nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of a beer splashed Kvichak in the face. At the center, a flailing Ranger was throwing loose punches. Kvichak decided to help her out.

she extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Ranger said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Gholston."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Gholston would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Kvichak and N'eef stopped in to a tavern.

"Hey! You're finding fault. Knock it off.", said Kvichak.

"Really? More like blazing my own trail.", said N'eef.

Chilly mist spun in the cool breeze.

Kiveton had cobblestone steets, and a few taverns on each. Kvichak scanned the horizon. She breathed in the icy breeze. Kvichak chatted with a sour monk. She sat for a while, and chatted with a grumpy beggar. She took a few steps. She passed a bakery. Kvichak wandered through the market. She bought a pomelo from a tiny stall and took a bite. It was bland. Kvichak wondered about her next steps.

Hnahlana was hardly more than a handful of buildings. Kvichak wandered through the market. She bought a coconut from a tiny stall and took a bite. It was delicious. Kvichak pondered the future. Kvichak saw a rat and kept moving. She stopped for a drink. She passed a church. She took a few steps. Kvichak wandered through the market. She bought a passionfruit from a stall and took a bite. It was sour. Kvichak thought about what was coming.

3. Ring of Ojus

Kvichak visited a tavern. A Bard was there, lurking in the shadows. Kvichak strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Bard,"said Kvichak, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Ystalfera,"she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Kvichak thought about the Finger Sphere. She was sure they would reach Ruins of Ruggsto.

Kvichak thought about the Ring of Ojus, and all the trouble it had brought into her life. Soon, this would be over.

Kvichak and N'eef stopped in to a tavern. Kvichak said, "Hey! You're experiencing a mental breakdown. Knock it off."

N'eef said, "Is that what you think? I think it's committing to a turnaround."

Kvichak said, "I mean, it just seems like you're deeply unhealthy thoughts."

"Really? More like knowing the worst is over.", replied N'eef.

Icy rain tinkled in the air.

Ludgvan was once the seat of the empire, but

no longer. A lizard passed through the air. Kvichak saw a lizard and kept moving, and passed a armourer. She walked uphill. She chatted with a welcoming scribe. She sat for a while. Kvichak wondered about the folks living here. Most that she passed seemed happy, but, she would be glad to move on.

Ice rested on the fallen logs. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered N'eef, as they approach the entrance to Qatliw's Knee. N'eef walked carefully on the crumbling stones. He squinted. He ducked to pass the low ceiling, and lit a torch. He walked carefully on the crumbling stones. The air was icy. They were well into Qatliw's Knee now.

Kvichak thought about the Finger Sphere. She was sure they would reach Ruins of Ruggsto.

They were not alone. A gelatious cube, ready for battle. A slimelord was their leader. Gholston aimed at a gelatious cube's edge. The Slimelord attacked N'eef, but missed. Gholston's elven bow tinkled through the frigid air. The bloody tide of battle rose and Ystalfera played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the bagpipe and the the Slimelord wobbled helplessly and was knocked back,

Kvichak hit a gelatious cube. A gelatious cube fell to the fallen logs, dead. With fierce

ferocity, Gholston took aim with her elven bow and loosed an arrow. The Slimelord attacked N'eef, but missed. Gholston ducked near a fern, and readied her elven bow

Kvichak cast Magic Missile and steam blazed from her amulet. Kvichak's mana was weak. She said, "AaaAaaaaaaAA", and smacked the Slimelord with her amulet. Kvichak waved her amulet and lightning materialized around the Slimelord. Kvichak was calm as she had slain the Slimelord.

Kvichak consulted the old map they had got from the slain courier.

"This must be the place," she murmured.

"There's nothing here," said Gholston, exasperated.

"No, look, there," said Kvichak as she moved a flagstone aside. Beneath it was a small chamber, barely large enough for a lizard, and contained within was Ring of Ojus.

"I don't believe it," whispered Gholston. They had found it. They found the Ring of Ojus.

4. Blade of Wooster

The waves were choppy and the air was cool. Seagulls circled The Narwhal Of The Water and Ystalfera fretted that they might poop on her. Ystalfera spend most of her time on the voyage to Qatliw's Knee puking over the gunwales.

Kvichak and Gholston stopped in to a tavern. Puddles rested on the moss. "Are you aware that you're obsessing on past lives and past loves?", said Kvichak.

"Really? More like finding the silver lining in a dark cloud.", said Gholston.

Kvichak replied, "Maybe clinging to the past, just a bit?"

Gholston replied, "Is that how you see it? It's just focusing on how the glass remains "half-full"."

Kvichak wondered about the wind.

Qatliw's Knee was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. Kvichak couldn't help but notice a Fighter nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of chili pepper juice splashed Kvichak in the face. At the center, a flailing Fighter was throwing loose punches. Kvichak decided to help him out.

she extricated him from the fight and after a few minutes, the Fighter said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Ylain."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Ylain would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Ice rested on the rocks. Behind a jackal skull, Gholston spotted the entrance to Ruins of Ruggsto. They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the icy walls. Gholston shivered, and ducked to pass the low ceiling, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and walked downward. The air was frigid. They were well into Ruins of Ruggsto now.

The Finger Sphere. That would fix this. Kvichak felt sure of this.

They were not alone. There was a zombie. A necromancer was their leader. The Necromancer hit Gholston. A zombie attacked Ystalfera, but missed. N'eef paced on the ice. Kvichak waved her amulet and fire materialized around the Necromancer. It was super effective.

The Necromancer attacked Ylain, but missed. "Yipes," groaned N'eef, "to be back in Kioto."

Ystalfera exclaimed, "Why not?", and smacked the Necromancer with the bagpipe, it was devastating. Ylain had the upper hand. Ylain slashed with his short sword.

Ylain was calm as he had slain the Necromancer. N'eef attacked a zombie, but missed. Gholston ducked near a bonepile, and readied her elven bow N'eef hit a zombie. Gholston ducked up from behind a outcrop and got off a shot from her elven bow, a zombie was gravely injured.

Gholston loosed a cry of rage and finished a zombie.

They passed a ornamented hut. A voice from within said "Kvichak...". she looked up and peeked inside. A smokey fire burned in the hearth. Within, an old gypsy woman was hunched over a small table.

The old gypsy handled Kvichak a bundle of cloth. She slowly unwrapped it. "This is Blade of Wooster", the old gypsy cried. "It is most evil and most be destroyed."

The old gypsy leaned close and whispered, "There is a great forge and golden anvil built into the walls at King's Ear. Use it. It can destroy the Blade of Wooster." The old gypsy lit a stick of incense that smelled of boysenberry.

5. The Sunfish Of The Water

The grave was there, deep in Ruins of Ruggsto, just as the old gypsy had foretold. Gholston pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Finger Sphere. It looked untouched by time.

Gholston hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Kvichak, and she reached into the grave and drew out the Finger Sphere. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

King's Ear had been left to the sand cats for since before the great war. Ystalfera ducked to pass the low ceiling. She walked northeast. She ducked to pass the low ceiling, and walked downward, and squinted. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A bat fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Soon their fears were manifest. A ghoul was across the cobbles. A zombie posed a serious threat. The biggest was a zombie lord The bloody tide of battle rose and Ylain's short sword flashed in the frosty breeze A ghoul hit Ystalfera.

Ystalfera hit a ghoul.

The Zombie Lord attacked Gholston, but missed. "For Glory!," groaned Kvichak, "to be back in Qamun."

Kvichak cast Flaming Sphere and fire blazed from her amulet. Kvichak's mana was weak. She exclaimed, "Yeargh!", and smacked the Zombie Lord with her amulet, the Zombie Lord was gravely injured.

The bloody tide of battle rose and N'eef attempted to backstab the Zombie Lord. N'eef gutted the Zombie Lord with a barb. Ystalfera attacked a zombie, but missed. Gholston and a zombie circled each other, almost as a dance. A zombie hit Ylain. A ghoul hit Kvichak.

Kvichak hit the Zombie Lord. Kvichak killed the Zombie Lord. Ylain had the upper hand. Ylain slashed with his short sword. Ylain had killed a ghoul. The Zombie Lord hit Gholston. Gholston had the upper hand. Gholston took aim with her elven bow and loosed an arrow.

A zombie fell to the rocks, dead.

Kvichak reached the anvil. The forge glowed red-hot even though it was abandoned for ages. She set the Blade of Wooster on the shining anvil. she picked up the hammer. It was massive, but seemed to weigh no more than a plum. Kvichak yelled, screamed out an intense cry, venting all

her frustration and hopes and fears at the world and let the hammer ring against the stone. The Blade of Wooster was unchanged. She struck again. It seemed to flex, to wobble. And finally the Blade of Wooster shattered, splitting into a thousand pieces.

Kvichak and Ystalfera stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Ystalfera," asked Kvichak, "do you worry that you're refusing to give up old habits or unhealthy relationships?"

Ystalfera said, "Certainly not. I'm bringing an unpleasant phase of life to an end."

"You're failing to take good care of yourself. It's not uncommon for a Bard.", replied Kvichak.

"Really? More like recognizing and celebrating the conclusion of something.", said Ystalfera.

Snow floated in the air.

There was notice board at the fish market that listed shipping schedules. The Sunfish Of The Water was the only barque from Kioto to King's Ear this moon. The captain was a gruff mariner named Muanon.

Muanon had no interest in letting them on The Sunfish Of The Water. Kvichak wandered the streets of Kioto. Auburn and purple clouds hung behind them.. N'eef followed a couple of sailors from The Sunfish Of The Water into an alley. The

next day, Muanon found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

The frozen sea was calm. They saw a humpback whale breach the frozen waves. On the voyage to King's Ear, Kvichak lost most of her gold playing dice with the crew.

Kioto was kind of a dump. Kioto had been founded by the salt elves, but it was all tough men and women now. Kvichak watched a hare by a bonepile on the rocks. Kvichak chatted with an angry mercenary. She kicked the cracked mud, and saw a camel. She saw a cobra. She tarried for a bit. A hint of motion caught Kvichak's eye, she turned. It might have been a sand cat, but it was gone.

Snow rested on the cracked mud. "You're applying scientific criteria to matters of faith, or confusing faith with science. It makes me foul.", said Kvichak.

Gholston said, "Is that what you think? I think it's changing the way you see the world."

"Maybe playing the victim, just a bit?", said Kvichak.

"I see it as more recovering from defeat.", replied Gholston.

Kvichak thought about shucking corn back in Qamun. That life was just a memory now.her

simple life as a farmer. That was gone now....

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Book Twelve of the Rings Chronicles

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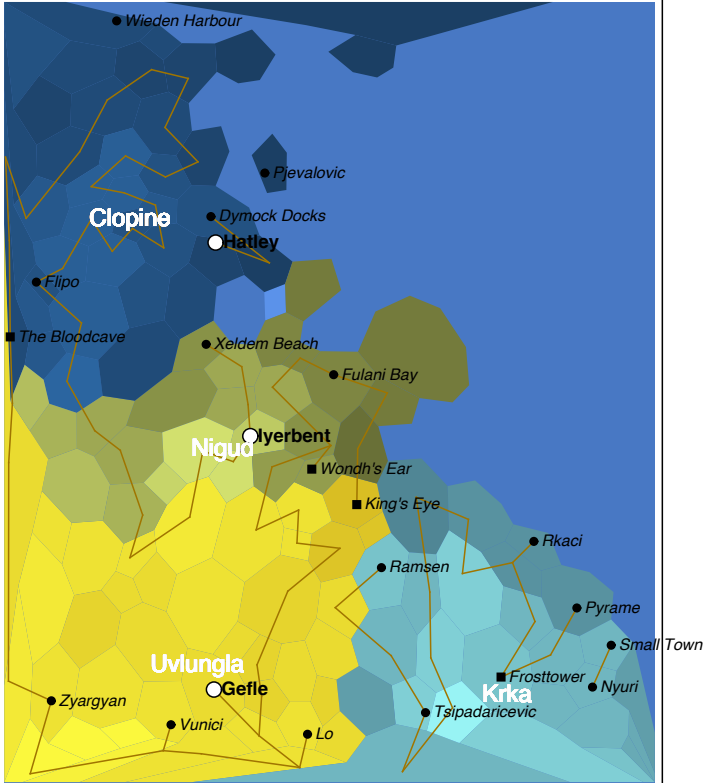
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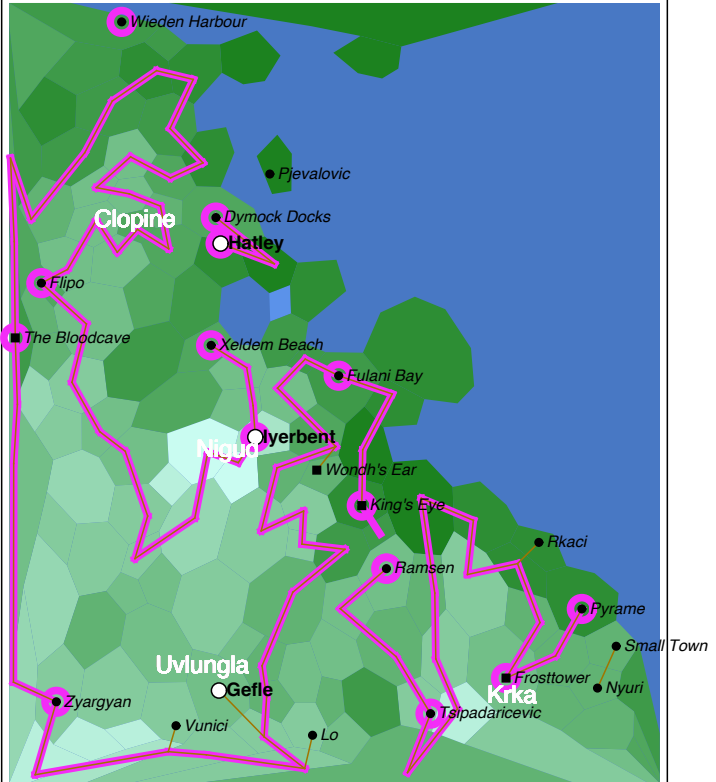
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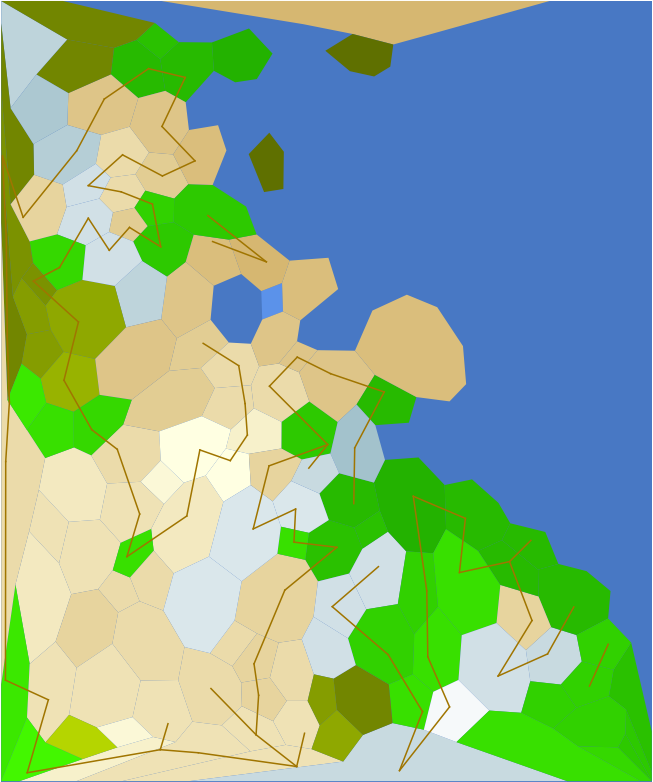
The Age Beyond Dungeons

Travel and Shipping



The Age Beyond Dungeons

Geography and Terrain



1. Frosttower

Mikel was a practiced soldier in Ramsen. He spent the evening practicing swordfighting. Fiery clouds hung in the distance.. He spent the evening digging ditches and felt forlorn..

Dirt rested on the narrow path. A hint of motion caught Mikel's eye, he turned. It might have been a bird, but it was gone. Mikel saw a bird and kept moving. He saw a bird. He sat for a while. He took a few steps, and saw a goat and kept moving. Mikel saw a skree, and it reminded him of Ramsen.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of banana. Mikel turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the narrow path like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Mikel rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"I will tell you a great secret," said the slain courier.

"Why?" asked Mikel, "would you tell me this?"

"Isn't it obvious?" grinned the slain courier. slumped, then weakly clung to life. "In Frosttower, there is the grave of a lost king. Buried with him is the Amulet of Adiomoune."

"We are not grave robbers," said Mikel.

"Aren't you?" the slain courier squinted, "and besides, how do you think this dead king got the Amulet of Adiomoune in the first place."

Mikel pondered the story, and pondered the Amulet of Adiomoune.

Change was on the languid wind.

Dirt rested on the moss. Tsipadaricevic bustled with activity. Old stories stated that Tsipadaricevic was built where a fallen star had landed. Mikel wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on. Mikel kicked the moss. He tarried for a bit. He took a few steps, and chatted with a kind scribe, and took a few steps. Mikel wondered about the folks living here. Most that he passed seemed happy, but, he would be glad to move on.

Mikel visited a tavern. A Thief was there, lurking in the shadows. Mikel strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Thief,"said Mikel, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Vicario,"she replied, "maybe you're

right. I've been in this town too long."

The wind howled through gaps in the rough stone. Dirt rested on the stones. Frosttower was barely more than a speck on the rocky steppe, but spread beneath the stones like vole's burrow. Mikel ducked to pass the low ceiling. He squinted, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones, and shivered. A door boomed closed behind them. They were trapped in Frosttower, but they weren't alone.

Soon their fears were manifest. A great jelly was in charge of them all. A jelly, and it looked hungry. There was a slime. Mikel struck a slime. A slime fell to the stones, dead. A jelly hit Vicario. A slime hit Mikel. Vicario hit the Great Jelly.

The Great Jelly hit Mikel. Mikel staggered, and tumbled to the narrow path. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," exclaimed Vicario.

The Great Jelly hit Vicario. Vicario fell to the stones, her breath came in ragged bursts. The Great Jelly wobbled across the stones, blobbed over Mikel's prone body. Mikel groaned, and turned, and reached out for the Great Jelly.

Mikel ducked near a skree, and readied his lute. The Great Jelly hit Mikel. A jelly hit Mikel. Mikel raised his lute. he hit the brown note, and the the Great Jelly was gravely moved, and hit the

surface. "I should have stuck to being a soldier," whimpered Mikel.

The Great Jelly hit Mikel. Mikel collapsed. Mikel coughed, and rose to his feet Mikel ducked near a thin branch, and readied his lute The Great Jelly hit Mikel. Mikel played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lute and the a jelly wobbled helplessly and was knocked back,. It was super effective.

A jelly hit Mikel. Mikel and the Great Jelly circled each other, almost as a dance. A jelly attacked Mikel, but missed. Mikel paced on the dry grass. Mikel hit a jelly. Mikel had killed a jelly. The Great Jelly hit Mikel. Mikel fell to the stones, his breath came in ragged bursts.

Mikel's body twitched. He was still alive!. Fiery clouds hung above them. The Great Jelly hit Mikel. Mikel struck the Great Jelly. Mikel had killed the Great Jelly. Vicario was gone. A mournful silence hung in the wind

2. Dark Sword

The grave was there, deep in Frosttower, just as the slain courier had foretold. Mikel pried off the lid of the sarcophagus. Inside, resting on a web of bones and tight-stretched skin wrapped in rusting armour, was the Amulet of Adiomoune. It looked untouched by time.

Mikel hesitated.

"This is no time to be squeamish", said Mikel, and he reached into the grave and drew out the Amulet of Adiomoune. It glowed softly with a mystical energy.

They walked through the market. Suddenly, a young man pushed past, running frantically, knocking over a crate of goji berry. Mikel turned and saw a hooded form clad in black leather armour chasing him. The assassin snapped an arrow from a crossbow and it struck the courier, who fell over his feet to the narrow path like a sack of potatoes.

The assassin vanished into the crowd. Mikel rushed to the side of the fallen courier.

"Here!" said the slain courier, and thrust a ragged, crumbling map into Mikel's hand. he looked it over.

"The Bloodcave?", Mikel wondered aloud. "I thought that was just a legend."

"Oh, no", whispered the slain courier, "it's no legend. And the Bone Sphere is there."

Mikel nodded with understanding.

Chaff rested on the rocks. Mikel said, "You're failing to measure up to a well-defined standard. It makes me foul."

Mikel said, "I'm merely receiving a wake-up call."

Languid haze hung in the warm wind.

Pyrame stretched to the horizon. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the air smell of banana. Mikel wondered about what was coming. Mikel stopped for a drink. He stopped for a drink, and saw a lizard and kept moving. Mikel walked for a bit. He passed a tavern.

The sun-dappled sea was choppy. The Sailor'S Queen was followed for a while by a pod of dolphins. Mikel learned the fisherman's trick of baiting with spoiled goji berry to catch tuna.

It was afternoon when they reached the docks in Wieden Harbour.

Chaff rested on the fallen logs. "Can we chat about refusing to take part in a project, then whining about the quality of the outcome", said Mikel.

"Is that how you see it? It's just coming up with ideas for improving my health or prosperity.", said Mikel.

Maybe longing for "the good old days", just a bit? "Really? More like looking at results with an eye toward improving performance.", said Mikel.

Mikel thought about his next steps.

Wieden Harbour bustled with activity. Specks of dust rose in the warm wind. A lizard passed through the dry breeze. Mikel tarried for a bit. He stopped for a drink, and tarried for a bit. Mikel sat down on the fetid soil for a bit. Mikel pondered the warm wind.

Mikel thought about the Dark Sword. He was sure they would reach King's Eye.

There was notice board at the fish market that listed shipping schedules. A barque named The Enchanted Spice Of The Sea was sailing to Wieden Harbour. The The Enchanted Spice Of The Sea was piloted by a salty mariner named Xanadu.

But The Enchanted Spice Of The Sea was at capacity, and had no room for adventureres. Mikel visited a tavern and considered his options. Then, Mikel saw Xanadu in a tavern. he bought the prancing captain enough whiskey to change their mind, even if they had a little trouble recalling it the next day.

3. Hatley

If only they had the Bone Sphere.

Mikel visited a tavern. Mikel couldn't help but notice a Barbarian nearby. Suddenly, a brawl broke out among the patrons. A mug of coffee splashed Mikel in the face. At the center, a flailing Barbarian was throwing loose punches. Mikel decided to help her out.

he extricated her from the fight and after a few minutes, the Barbarian said, "Thanks for your help back there. I'm Osjecka."

They chatted for the rest of the afternoon, and soon it was clear that Osjecka would be joining them for the rest of their journey.

Mikel and Mikel stopped in to a tavern. "I'm wondering, Mikel," asked Mikel, "do you worry that you're failing to prepare for an examination you know is coming?"

"I'm merely discovering a new purpose in life.", said Mikel.

Motes danced in the air.

The waves were choppy and the air was warm. Seagulls circled The Enchanted Spice Of The Sea and Osjecka fretted that they might poop on him. Osjecka never found her sea legs on the

whole trip to Wieden Harbour.

If only they had the Dark Sword.

Stagnant dust hung in the breeze. Dymock Docks was a village of mean people. Mikel walked for a bit. He passed a smithy. Mikel chatted with a coarse mercenary. He tarried for a bit. He tarried for a bit. Mikel wandered through the market. He bought a bilberry from a vendor and took a bite. It was rotten. Mikel thought about marching with comrades back in Ramsen. That life was just a memory now. his simple life as a soldier. .

Dymock Docks was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. There was a Druid sipping a beer. Mikel strode up to the stranger. "You have the look of an Druid," said Mikel, "we could use someone like you in our party."

"I'm Aggregate," she replied, "maybe you're right. I've been in this town too long."

Chaff rested on the moss. "Are you aware that you're giving in to emotional or political terrorism?", said Mikel.

Osjecka said, "I see it as more taking an imaginative or creative approach to problem solving."

Mikel replied, "Maybe being controlled by fear, just a bit?"

Osjecka said, "Really? More like gleaning

insight from personal visions."

Warm motes hung in the dry wind.

Hatley was huge. Mikel sat down on the rocks for a bit. Mikel wondered about his journey. Mikel saw a cobra and kept moving. He tarried for a bit. He walked northwest, and sat for a while. Mikel watched a rabbit by a outcrop on the sand.

There was notice board at the pier that listed shipping schedules. A barque named The Commerce Of The Water was sailing to Hatley. The The Commerce Of The Water was piloted by a bitter mariner named Improve.

"Sod off," said Improve, "The Commerce Of The Water's not for landlubbers like ya." Mikel wandered the streets of Xeldem Beach. The sunset was auburn above them.. Aggregate followed a couple of sailors from The Commerce Of The Water into an alley. The next day, Improve found themselves short on crew, and had little choice but to take on the party if they agreed to help sail.

4. Fulfillment

Mikel thought about the Dark Sword, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Hatley was hardly a cosmopolitan town, but it had a coffee shop. There was a Bard sipping grog. The Bard noticed Mikel. "Hello there," the Bard said, "You look like you could use a Bard in your group, and I could use some adventure. I'm Dyudalic."

Dirt rested on the rocks. "Hey, I just..." Mikel trailed off. He shifted on the cracked mud. "Are you refusing to share a burden?" he asked.

"I see it as more taking satisfaction in knowing how my efforts will aid others.", said Osjecka.

Mikel said, "You're linking your sense of self-worth to the appraisals of others. It's not uncommon for a Barbarian."

Osjecka replied, "Certainly not. I'm being motivated to do a good deed."

Dry motes floated in the humid air.

The waves were stormy and the air was stagnant. The air was pleasant but there were cicadas in Mikel's cabin. The sail to Hatley was a

much needed rest for the party.

Xeldem Beach was not much to look at. Mikel wandered through the market. He bought a watermelon from a vendor and took a bite. It was sour. Mikel wondered about a fox. Mikel sat for a while, and kicked the rocks. He walked away from the water, and saw a camel and kept moving, and saw a tortoise. Some peasants were dyeing cloth nearby, it made the languid breeze smell of satsuma. Mikel considered his future.

Iyerbent was kind of a dump. Mikel scanned the horizon. He breathed in the warm wind. Mikel tarried for a bit, and stopped for a drink. He stopped for a drink, and passed a grainery, and saw a xerus and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Mikel's eye, he turned. It might have been a aardwolf, but it was gone.

Flipo counted its population in bilberries. Chaff rested on the muck. A rat passed through the languid wind. Mikel chatted with a welcoming armourer, and stopped for a drink, and sat for a while. He tarried for a bit. He sat for a while. Mikel watched a lizard by a alligator corpse on the mud.

If only they had the Dark Sword.

Mikel and Dyudalic stopped in to a tavern. Mikel said, "Are you aware that you're

experiencing emotions so intense they blunt your ability to cope with reality?"

Dyudalic said, "Certainly not. I'm experiencing transcendent joy."

Mikel said, "I mean, it just seems like you're comparing your achievements or relationships to unrealistic fantasy standards."

Dyudalic replied, "Is that what you think? I think it's having more than you ever dreamed."

Mikel wondered about his next steps.

If only they had the Bone Sphere.

The Bloodcave had been left to the rats for since before the great war. They passed scratch marks tinged with dried blood on the warm walls. Mikel breathed cautiously, and lit a torch. He ducked to pass the low ceiling. The air was warm. They were well into The Bloodcave now.

5. King's Eye

Their passage was blocked. A rattus called the shots. A capybara crouched by a wall A capybara attacked Aggregate, but missed. Mikel and a capybara circled each other, almost as a dance. Aggregate draw upon the power of nature with her staff. Aggregate struck with her staff.

With fierce ferocity, Mikel played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lute and the the Rattus scurry helplessly and was knocked back,. With fierce ferocity, Osjecka swung her halbard at the Rattus. Osjecka dispatched the Rattus. The Rattus hit Mikel.

A capybara hit Dyudalic. Dyudalic attacked a capybara, but missed. Mikel ducked near a lizard corpse, and readied his lute Mikel showed no mercy, "Music," whimpered Mikel, "can tame the savage a capybara!" Osjecka swung her halbard at a capybara, a capybara was gravely injured.

Osjecka was calm as she had slain a capybara.

Mikel consulted the old map they had got from the slain courier.

"This must be the place," he murmured.

"There's nothing here," said Aggregate, exasperated.

"No, look, there," said Mikel as he moved a flagstone aside. Beneath it was a small chamber, barely large enough for a lizard, and contained within was Bone Sphere.

"I don't believe it," said Aggregate. They had found it. They found the Bone Sphere.

Zyargyan was kind of a dump. A hint of motion caught Mikel's eye, he turned. It might have been a viper, but it was gone. Mikel stopped for a drink. He saw a armadillo and kept moving, and sat for a while. Mikel wandered through the market. He bought a peach from a vendor and took a bite. It was good. Mikel thought about his home back in Ramsen.

Fulani Bay boasted a thriving market. A xerus passed through the hot air. Mikel chatted with a sour tinker. He stopped for a drink, and stopped for a drink, and saw a horned toad and kept moving. He saw a mouse and kept moving. A hint of motion caught Mikel's eye, he turned. It might have been a mouse, but it was gone.

Mikel and Osjecka stopped in to a tavern. Dry grass rested on the sand. Mikel said, "Are you aware that you're rejecting the idea that your actions have consequences?"

"I see it as more helping others who find themselves in dire circumstances.", said Osjecka.

Mikel replied, "I mean, it just seems like

you're playing the victim."

Osjecka said, "Is that how you see it? It's just changing the way you see the world."

Chaff rested on the rocks.

A hollow booming sound echoed from underground. Dirt rested on the fallen logs. "I have a bad feeling about this," muttered Osjecka, as they approach the entrance to King's Eye. Osjecka walked downward, and walked carefully on the crumbling stones. She walked carefully on the crumbling stones. Inhuman sounds echoed from the walls. A bear fled in terror from whatever lay ahead.

Mikel thought about the Dark Sword, and all the trouble it had brought into his life. Soon, this would be over.

Around a corner, they ran into trouble. A capybara posed a serious threat. Their leader was a giant rat. With fierce ferocity, "Music," cried Dyudalic, "can tame the savage the Giant Rat!" . A capybara attacked Osjecka, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a sailor," suggested Dyudalic.

Mikel attacked the Giant Rat, but missed. "I should have stuck to being a baker," cried Osjecka.

Osjecka attacked a capybara, but missed. Aggregate's staff tarried through the languid air.

Mikel attacked a capybara, but missed. Dyudalic ducked near a fern, and readied her lute

Dyudalic cried, "Yeargh!", and smacked a capybara with the lute. "Music," yelled Dyudalic, "can tame the savage a capybara!" . A capybara attacked Aggregate, but missed. Dyudalic and the Giant Rat circled each other, almost as a dance. A capybara hit Mikel.

Aggregate attacked a capybara, but missed. Mikel paced on the dirt. It took mere instants, but old stories would tell of the next moment for millenia: Osjecka swung her halbard at a capybara. Osjecka vanquished a capybara. The Giant Rat hit Mikel. Dyudalic attacked the Giant Rat, but missed.

Aggregate paced on the dry grass. Osjecka attacked the Giant Rat, but missed. Aggregate's staff spun through the languid air. With fierce ferocity, Dyudalic played an old melody, an enchanted tune on the lute and the the Giant Rat dart helplessly and was knocked back,.

Aggregate had the upper hand. Aggregate drew power from the stoneThe spirits of the forest inhabited Aggregate's staff. Aggregate loosed a cry of rage and finished the Giant Rat.

Mikel consulted the old map they had got from the nobleman.

"This must be the place," he murmured.

"There's nothing here," said Aggregate, exasperated.

"No, look, there," said Mikel as he moved a flagstone aside. Beneath it was a small chamber, barely large enough for a bear, and contained within was Dark Sword.

"I don't believe it," whimpered Aggregate. They had found it. They found the Dark Sword.

Acknowledgements

If you still aren't quite sure what the heck you just read, this was an experiment in generative fiction from Joel Davis (@joeld42) as part of #NaNoGenMo 2016. NaNoGenMo is similar to NaNoWriMo, in which you try to generate a 50k novel in a month, but in this case the challenge is to write a computer program that generates 50k words of text.

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