



THE LOST CITY OF BARAKUS



NECROMANCER
GAMES

Player's Guide

By Vicky Potter



FROG GOD
GAMES

THE LOST CITY OF BARAKUS

Player's Guide

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The City of Endhome

Welcome

“Good day, sirs and ladies. You look as though you may be new to Endhome. My name is Corlius and for a few small coins I can guide you to a good inn, to the Wizards’ Academy, or any place else you need to go.”

In front of you stands a boy of about nine or ten years, barefoot but cleaner than most. Furthermore, he is in front of you politely getting your attention rather than behind you picking your pocket. Perhaps having a local guide would be useful today, even if it is just a boy. You exchange glances with your companions. It is not that none of you have ever been in a city before, but Endhome is large and inns not exactly in evidence here by the gate. You’d rather not have to search the whole city for one before the dinner hour.

“Alright lad,” one of them says gruffly. “What inn would you recommend for us, and how far away is it?”

The boy looks at your group appraisingly. “I’d say the King’s Road Inn would be the likeliest place for ones such as yourselves. You’re obviously not merchants, and I’d say you’re looking for more in life than just a caravan to guard. On the other hand, you don’t look like ones who want to squander your gold just for a showy dinner or a bed with elegant curtains. King’s has tasty food, even if it’s not fancy, and decent rooms for a reasonable price. Not only that but it is frequented by folks with adventurous spirits, like you, so you can share news and exchange tales. Shall I guide you to the King’s Road Inn?”

“What’s in it for you, boy?” you ask. “How much does the inn give you to throw business its way?”

The boy grins at your canny question. “I may get a little from the inn, ’tis true, but no coin. I usually get a berry tart for my troubles, and sometimes a bit of leftover meat or a piece of cheese to take home to my mam. I wouldn’t steer you wrong, though. I aim to be a famous guide of travelers when I grow up, and I want folk to say that Corlius knows whereof he speaks. A man is never too young to guard his reputation,” he finishes seriously.

You glance at your companions and see them hide grins, but also nod. “Lead on, then, lad. And let’s have a bit of a tour of the city while you’re at it. You can get in some ‘famous guide’ practice.”

“Very well then, gentlefolk, just follow me!” The boy proudly starts off, giving his explanations in a raised voice that carries well, and now and then showing an excellent ability to also walk backward without tripping over any of the hazards common to a city street.

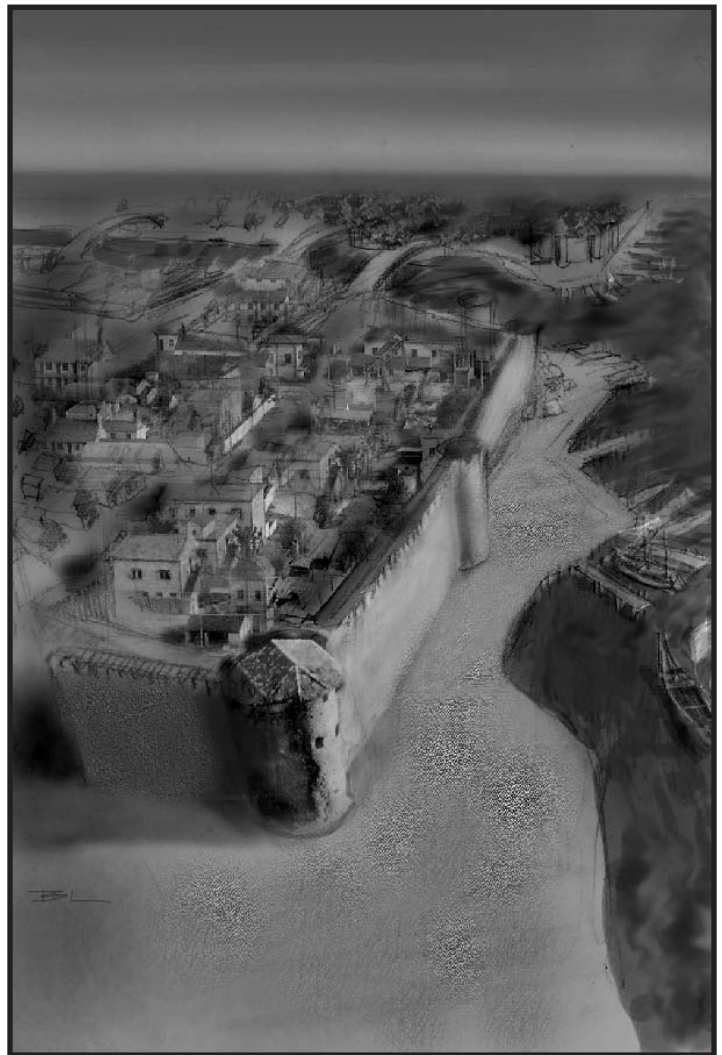
<2>Into the City

<n> “The South Gate here comes into Endhome from the Soldier’s Road, which as you know runs along the coast of the Sinnar Ocean. Going north out of Endhome the road is called Trader’s Way, but it’s the same road. Going through the city it is called Wayfarer’s Way, and it goes back and forth a bit to take in some of the sights. Crossing this road in the middle of the city is the King’s Road which stretches from Endhome by the sea far to the west. The King’s Road Inn is just outside the West Gate, along that highway.”

Before he can continue, one of your group comes to a sudden stop and interrupts. “Outside the gate? We just came in. Why would we want to stay somewhere outside the gate?”

“Well, King’s is a great place to meet people with stories to tell, ones who have exciting adventures. You can also find people who know the area around Endhome but don’t necessarily like to stay in the middle of a big city. Not only that, but since it’s outside of town, things can get a little rowdy without the watch being called. Most consider that an advantage.” The boy winks. “I’ll show you around and if you see someplace you like better, you can just stay there.”

Shrugging, you all pick up the pace again. Corlius takes a quick look around and then continues.



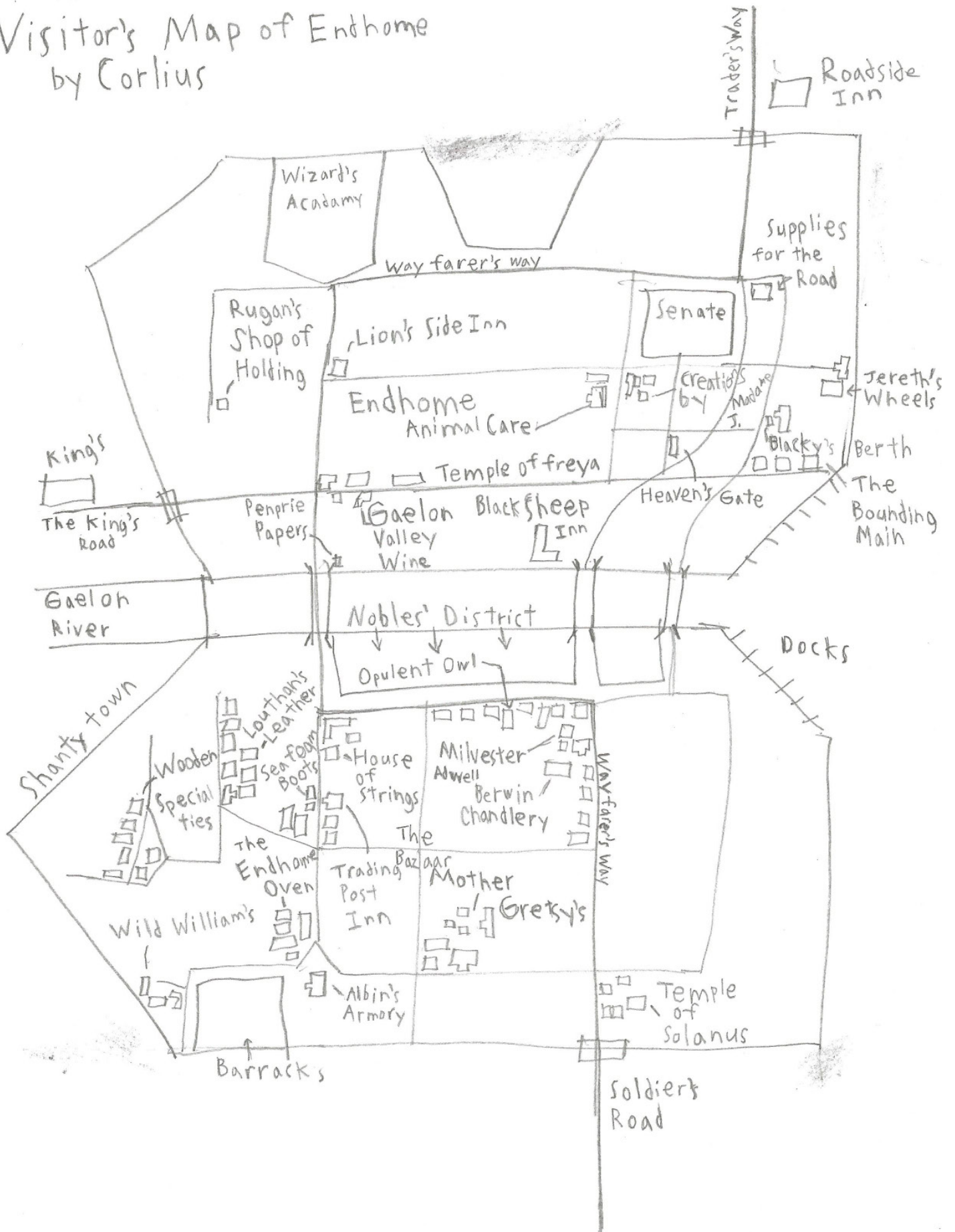
“This part of town is really the worst to see first; the north and west look much better. They say crime is really bad around here, and a lot of poor people live in this area. They have someone new to help them, though; a new priest at the Temple of Solanus. You can just see the temple past the other buildings there.” The boy gestures to the east, but down the alley all you see is a simple stone building, perhaps a little taller than the ones around it but not up to what you usually expect from a temple. “Father Beamus is really good and tries to do a lot for the people around here. Further along to the northeast is the Temple of Jamboor and the priestess there, Elan Kanto, has been taking in some folks without any homes but one temple can’t care for all of them so it’s a good thing Father Beamus is here.”

The Barracks

Your guide leads you left, into another street. It is not quite as busy as the street leading directly from the gate, but is still full with people and wagons coming and going. Narrow streets and even narrower alleys branch off from the main route in quick succession. The buildings on either side of you are made of wood with peaked, thatched roofs and shutters for the windows. Most seem to be fairly well kept, giving the overall impression of Endhome as a prosperous city. Corlius stops at the next major intersection.

THE CITY OF ENDHOME

Visitor's Map of Endhome by Corlius



THE CITY OF ENDHOME

“Down there to the west is the barracks for the city guard. Do you want to go by that way?”

One of your companions shrugs and says, “Why not?” The boy leads you on to the west, coming to another intersection as the street you are on curves north a little. Before the boy can speak, you notice a sign on a building just at the intersection.

“Albin’s Armory. What’s that?”

“Only the best place in town to buy armor, or weapons! Master Albin is the most skilled weaponsmith in hundreds of miles and he and the others in his shop make almost every type of weapon there is. I daresay you’ll be wanting to make his acquaintance after you get settled in.” Corlius then gestures southwest along a side street to where you can see a walled compound.

“There’s the barracks. It has its own wall, inside the other wall. All the soldiers that protect the city live there – thousands of them. Endhome isn’t part of any country, you know. We’re our own city-state and that means we have to take care of ourselves.” Corlius is fierce in his pride of his city. “The guard even has cavalry—there aren’t many cities in the Lost Lands that can say that—and soldiers to take down siege engines if the city is ever attacked. Anyone who assaults Endhome will end up being sorry, though, because we have the Wizards’ Academy here and any army that attacks us will end up getting spelled out of existence by the masters and students there.” Satisfied with the dire fate that awaits any who threaten his beloved town, Corlius leads you on to the north and then east into a crowded marketplace.

“This,” he gestures expansively, “is The Bazaar.”

The Bazaar

The plaza is packed with vendors—small merchants, peddlers with push carts, farmers with collapsible stands—all selling their wares. The hawkers call out, raising their voices to be heard over each other and holding out their wares at anyone who passes nearby. Smells of cooking food mingle with those of flowers and live animals. The noise level is high and the whole scene chaotic, but buyers and sellers are still managing to do business together. You see a patrol of guards pass by, keeping a close eye on everyone involved. Around the open-air center of the bazaar are rows of tiny permanent shops, selling everything from jewelry and ribbons to clothing to weapons. You also notice pawnshops dotting the area, which could be useful if you ever have any goods you wish to sell.

A number of shops and stalls have a poster prominently displayed. It is a “Wanted” notice for something called the “Green Tree Bandits” and offering a reward. At the pace you are moving, though, you don’t have time to take in the details. Your intrepid guide leads you across the marketplace and out of it to the north, where you shortly reach another major street. Although it is also full of people, the noise level is much lower than the Bazaar with only the occasional raised voice heard over the crowd. Corlius turns right and heads back east, causing some confusion in your group.

“Hey,” says one of your companions, “I thought we were headed for the *west* gate. Isn’t this the wrong direction?”

“You did say, sirs and ladies, that you wanted a bit of a tour. It is not far out of the way, and I thought perhaps you would like to get a glimpse of the Nobles’ District, and see a good view from the bridge over the river,” the boy answers.

“Fair enough; lead on.”

The Noble’s District

“The Nobles’ District is just behind that wall,” Corlius says, indicating the wall running along the north side of the street. Glancing east and west, you see the wall runs about 250 feet west from where you are, to another intersection, and at least twice that to the east. These nobles (whoever they might be in an independent city-state) are serious about their privacy. As your group strolls east, the lad comes to a stop across from a gate in the long wall, where a soldier stands guard.

“If you look through the gate, gentlefolk,” your guide intones, “you can see straight across to the gate of the Governor’s mansion. That is where

Governor Ranlan Pool lives, though of course his office is in one of the government buildings in the northeast part of the city. Going there would be some distance out of the way, though I would be happy to take you up that way if you desire.”

“No, it’s near enough to dinner that I think we’ll skip that for today. I’m sure we’ll find our way there eventually. But tell us a little bit about the governor.” Only a small part of the mansion is visible through the large gate the boy indicates, but the stone street leading to it passes by other buildings you would definitely class as mansions as well. Whether or not these people are “noble” by most kingdoms’ standards, there is no doubt about their wealth.

“Governor Pool has been the governor for ten years now, and I know he was an important senator before that,” Corlius explains. “He always goes around with a bodyguard, and sometimes throws big parties at his mansion. Common folks gather on the other side of the river to watch the important people having a good time. It looks wonderful at night, all lit up with lanterns, and sometimes some of the wizards put on a show with colored lights in the air over the river. It’s very exciting! Now if you’ll come this way...”

The boy leads you east to another major intersection and indicates the road going south. “That actually is the road that comes most directly from the South Gate, where you entered Endhome. This is Wayfarer’s Way, which turns west here and goes to the western bridge across the river, then north past the Wizards’ Academy and east past the government compound before turning and heading to the North Gate. It’s the major road north and south through Endhome, but it’s not the most direct. We’ll go north here and cross the center bridge.”

The Gaelon River

Turning north you see that the street, while still wide, is definitely much less busy. Walls rise on either side, and each has a guarded gate similar to the one you passed earlier. “On the right here is the ‘new’ section of the Nobles’ District,” Corlius says, “but it’s still old enough that it was built when my grandfather was young.” Through each gate you can see large, luxurious houses, though the buildings in the eastern compound are slightly less ostentatious than the ones to the west. The walls run right down to the river, and the road narrows considerably when it reaches the bridge. Your guide leads you to a spot on the west side toward the northern end of the span and gestures expansively.

“The great Gaelon River, sirs and ladies, as it comes down to the sea.” Looking between the parapets on the wall of the bridge, you can see the western bridge Corlius mentioned a few minutes ago, and many shallow boats plying their trade up and down the river. The bridges are high above the water, giving plenty of room for boats to pass underneath. There are a few makeshift docks along the sides of the river for small boats, but not many because the walls of the channel are very steep. You estimate they are about 40 feet deep, from ground level down to the water. Even the nobles don’t have access to the river; only behind the governor’s mansion do you see a dock, and the steps down to it are very steep even though they switch back and forth. Corlius points out the various sights.

“Of course the Governor’s mansion is there in the center. Past it, by the western bridge, you can just barely see the estate of the Gaspar family. They are one of the oldest families in Endhome, and one of the richest. Both Lurton and his wife Amelia are very important people in Endhome, and they own the Black Sheep Inn. On the side near us is the Pulanti family estate. Their family is even older than the Gaspar family, and supposedly very wealthy, but they are not involved in Endhome’s society at all. They never have visitors, and may never even go outside the house. I’ve heard people say they have someone locked up inside their mansion who’s mad!” Corlius lowers his voice significantly, and looks around to be sure no one is near enough to overhear. “Not too long ago I overheard two boys from the Nobles’ District bragging to some of their friends. They said they had broken into the house through a window on the east side and stole some paintings right off the walls, and no one ever did anything about it. As far as they knew, the family hadn’t reported it to the guard, or anything! That is odd behavior for almost anyone, but especially rich people. Most would never let something like that go. They must be a very strange family.”

THE CITY OF ENDHOME

Turning, the lad moves to the south wall of the bridge. From there the first thing you see is another bridge and beyond it docks crowded with ships, and then the sea. "This is one of the most important parts of Endhome. Ships from everywhere bring cargo, and then riverboats and barges take it up the Gaelon, or merchants take it by caravan up the Trader's Road or along the King's Road. Caravans and barges traveling the other way bring stuff from around here, or even far to the west, to send away on the ships to other countries. It's amazing, when you think about it. Endhome was built in just the right place to bring all those things together! Some people had a smart idea when they started a town here." Corlius gazes a few more moments at the ships going places he can barely imagine, and then points to the south bank.

"On this side you can see the estate of the Quinchino family. The father, Phillipi Quinchino, is supposedly more than 100 years old! They own the Heaven's Gate Inn, which is the very best in Endhome and also the very most expensive. A friend of mine has a cousin who washes dishes there and she says they have some rooms that cost 50 gold pieces a night! Can you imagine?" The boy shakes his head in wonderment. "Someday, when I'm a famous guide, I'm going to save up enough money to take my mother there for a night." He looks at your group appraisingly. "I daresay you folks will be famous a lot sooner than I am. Maybe next year at this time, you'll be staying at the Heaven's Gate! But for now come along this way."

The Trading District

A short way past the end of the bridge a smaller street crosses and your guide points to the west. "That big building over there is the Black Sheep Inn. It's not quite so pricey as the Heaven's Gate, but they do have a reputation for impressive food. They say you can get a dinner there that is served in six different parts, one right after the other, with two fancy sweets at the end! It costs more coin than I see in a month, so you won't be finding me at their table anytime soon. A lot of the rich people like to go eat there, though, to see each other and let themselves be seen. We're going to go on north here, though, just a little farther."

The next group of buildings you come to are larger, almost like warehouses, with some more elaborate than others. A large assortment of people are coming and going, most in the garb of merchants but many in more exotic outfits who are obviously from foreign locations. You see a few more of those notices about the bandits, which were absent through the Nobles' District; evidently the folks in this part of town care about bandits on the road. Corlius leads you through a busy intersection and stops in front of one of the largest buildings on the road.

"This whole area is the Trading District," he says, with what seems to be a little pride in his voice. "This is another important section of Endhome, where the merchants come, and the sea captains, and trade with each other. Most of these Trading Houses are for certain kinds of things, like grain, or wine, or weapons. Some, though, are Open Houses, where any trader can get a booth for a fee and try to sell whatever his cargo is to another merchant. There are even a few great merchants who have Trading Houses of their own, and expect people to come to them to make deals. Many people who come through Endhome have no idea this is even here, or what goes on, but my pa says it's a key part of our city's life." The boy's voice gets a little deeper on those last words and it is obvious he is quoting someone whose opinions are important to him. "This is just where the trading is done; most of the goods are actually stored in the warehouses over nearer the city wall. They're close to the docks, also, so they're handy for storing stuff coming by ship. I guess there are more warehouses down near the south gate, but I'm not so familiar with those."

Your young guide points north up the street. "The Heaven's Gate Inn is north here just a little way, and the government buildings beyond that, but we're going to go on west." He leads you back south to the intersection you just passed, where a wide street starts at the base of the wall in the east and runs west across town. The part near you is busy with carts and wagons, many heading away from the area as deals are no doubt being concluded and goods changing hands. There are also many people on foot or horseback, and you see two people (evidently wealthy ones) being carried by porters in sedan chairs on poles.

Corlius gestures sweepingly at the street in front of you. "This is the

King's Road, which start right here in Endhome and goes west – well, I don't even know how far west it goes. Someday I'll travel down it right to the end, and then I can guide people along it. I do know that it goes to the West Gate, and past the King's Road Inn, and I can guide you that far at least." He grins at you all and then starts off again, only to pause shortly before a large temple on the north side of the street.

Crossroads

"Here is the Temple of Freya. They have services about every day, I guess, so you should be able to find one you can attend. High Priest Thaban and all his acolytes are good and very sincere, though a couple of the acolytes are still young enough that they get up to some pranks once in a while." The boy smiles knowingly. "I promised not to tell, but I will say the ducks didn't get into Father Beamus' bedroom by themselves. I'm sure he made good use of them, though; they were nice fat ones."

Your guide comes to a halt again at the next intersection, the largest you've seen in the city so far. "This is where Wayfarer's Way crosses the King's Road, so it is officially where the coast road and King's Road meet. If you go north here to the next main intersection, that's where you'll find the Lion's Side Inn. A lot of people like to stop there, though it's a bit more expensive than King's. It's also a place where locals go when they don't want to cook themselves dinner, or want to spend the evening having a bit of a drink with friends. South from here, across the bridge and past the Nobles' District, is the inn called the Trading Post. It's not bad, but it's the place almost all the merchants from the bazaar stay, who are from out of town, and so it gets really crowded."

The boy gives you a cocky look. "I don't want you to say I didn't tell you about any of the other inns in town, because I was trying to get your custom for King's! I think the only inns I haven't talked about so far are the Roadside Inn, which is outside the North Gate and is where most of the merchant caravans stop, and the Ramshackle. But you don't want to go there anyway; it's down by the south docks. I've never been in there but I hear the food is barely edible and the crowd is a bunch of roughnecks. King's is a much better choice, and we're almost there!"

Corlius steps out into the crowd, which is thick here near the West Gate, and for once you have trouble keeping track of him. The guards at the gate give you only a glance on your way out, and you find the boy waiting for you in the more spacious area beyond. He heads west along the verge of the road, staying out of the worst of the dust. Once more he turns and walks backward, using his 'famous guide' voice.

Outside the West Gate

"There are other things outside this gate besides King's," he begins. "South of the road here, up against the wall of the city, is what they call 'Shantytown.' It's a bunch of little buildings or houses made of scraps, or wood from the forest, or whatever people can find. That's where the really poor people live, and sometimes they beg along the road, especially if it looks like the merchants have had a good day. If they get to be too much trouble the guards run them off, but they just keep coming back because they really are that poor." The boy shakes his head.

"Just past the inn another little river, the Meadowbrook, comes into the Gaelon and on the other side of that is a fishing village. It's so small, I don't think it even has a name. Folks there fish the river, and some sell what they get in town. I think they take the fish either to the bazaar or else down by the docks. Anyway, you know if the inn is serving fish for dinner, it's sure to be fresh!"

These entertaining details have filled the short walk from the city gate to the wall protecting the King's Road Inn. It declares itself such by a banner flying on a pole atop the roof peak as well as a signboard on the outside of the wall. The gates in the wall are wide open, and the courtyard is busy with new arrivals as well as merchants arranging their wagons to leave at first light.

"Now, sirs and ladies," Corlius ends with a flourish, "that concludes our tour of Endhome and its environs. It has been my pleasure to guide you today, and I hope to have the opportunity again in the future. Come right inside here and allow me to introduce you to Barnky, the innkeeper."

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Introductions made, the lad stands waiting expectantly though he is not so crass as to actually hold out his hand. His eyes grow wide when one of your companions, in a generous mood with supper on the horizon, hands him a gold coin instead of the copper he was expecting.

“Thank you very kindly, sirs and ladies!” Corlius says. “Freya’s blessings upon you.” Then at a nod from Barnky he scampers off in the direction of the kitchen, obviously hoping for the berry pie he mentioned earlier.

The King’s Road Inn

Acquiring rooms for a few nights is a simple procedure; despite the number of people in the courtyard, the inn has rooms aplenty. It is not even too costly; only 8 silvers each for a room, plus three more for meals for a day. Barnky even offers that Mistress Greythorn and her kitchen staff are willing to package up some cheese and bread, and whatever meat might be available, for folks to carry with them if they are planning to be in Endhome for the noon meal instead of at the inn. “You just have to give ‘em some warning,” the man tells you solemnly; “Mistress Greythorn is a good woman, but she doesn’t much like surprises.”

One of your group clears his throat, and then mentions to the innkeeper that you are all newly arrived in Endhome, and while Corlius was enthusiastic he gave you only general information. He goes on ask if there’s a good way to find out more about Endhome, and also the wild areas around it.

Barnky chuckles. “If it’s knowledge of the area you’re after, you couldn’t come to a better place. The best thing for you to do is just come down to dinner early, eat slowly, and keep your mouths shut. Folks will get to talking, and nearly everything they say is information of one type or another. You could always encourage one now and again by buying a drink for someone who’s getting dry. If there’s something particular you want to know that you don’t hear, you can ask me later. I’m likely to know the answers to your questions, if the others don’t.”

His advice seems sound, so you and your companions appear in the dining room when people are starting to trickle in and select a table near the center, not too far from where the bar runs along the wall next to the kitchen. The menu is adequate; fish stew, followed by a dish of grains and mushrooms with venison, cooked vegetables, and pieces of fruit, and ending with small pastries filled with berries – no doubt the “berry pies” Corlius enjoys so much. You manage to stretch out your meal and then sit leisurely drinking the proprietor’s very acceptable beer (or wine, for one

or two of you) while talk flows like water all around you.

Early in evening a tall, broad-shouldered young man with shoulder-length hair comes into the dining area carrying a keg, which he deposits behind the bar. Barnky, who is the barkeep as well, greets him heartily.

“Gilman! Does Mistress Greythorn have you doing her fetching and carrying today?”

The young man gives him a good-natured grin. “You know Mother; she’ll put anyone to work who just wanders by. She did ask me to be here today, though. Old Nyrick injured his leg somehow and is reduced to turning the spit from a stool in the corner, and Young Nyrick can’t quite lift these kegs yet.”

“Well, now that you’re here why don’t you sit a moment and try this new keg. I don’t want to serve it to the customers if it’s not any good, you know.” Barnky gets the keg into position and taps it, pulling what appears to you to be a perfectly good mug of beer. Gilman Greythorn seems to agree, though he makes a show of hemming and hawing over the drink. “Tell me what you’ve been doing with yourself, Gil. You haven’t been around here in a few weeks.”

“I’ve been supporting the public works of Endhome.” The young man raises his eyebrows as Barnky looks at him curiously. “I had an opportunity that comes only to very few, Barnky. I got to go down in the sewers of Endhome and help clear up some stoppages after that big storm we had.”

By this time Gilman has a crowd listening, so several people make faces at that and you hear exclamations of “Eww,” but the man continues with apparent enthusiasm.

The Sewers of Endhome

“Have any of the rest of you ever been in the sewers of Endhome?” Heads shake; no one admits to it. “They are a marvel of construction, or so I am told by the city’s official in charge of sewers. The most advanced sewers in the world, he says. Certainly they were not at all what I expected – little round tubes barely big enough for a person to enter. You no doubt know there are square grates all over the city where workers can descend; you may even have seen someone climbing up or down. Those are tight, especially for someone with my broad, manly shoulders.” Gilman flexes his shoulders a bit, and winks at a nearby serving maid, the one called Marta.

“Down below, though, those ‘little tunnels’ are wide enough for a channel down the center for the refuse plus walkways along each side for



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those who have to be down there for some reason. There are also ways to cross the channels so workers can move from one area to another. When we first went down it wasn't pleasant; the heavy rains had washed down so much debris that it piled up in the intersections and wasn't able to move. We had to use long poles—and trust me, I wanted them to be longer even than they were—to break up the clogs and let the rainwater flow through again. Those sewers go all over the city, even outside the wall over by the docks. It was an amazing revelation.”

“Did you see anything strange down there, Gil?” one man calls. “They say the rats can get as big as mules, and sometimes things crawl in from the ocean and get into the sewers and then the city is only safe because they can't get up the ladders to the street.”

Gil laughs. “We did see a bunch of rats,” he says, “but when several people with lights start walking around, the rats generally stay away. And none were as big as mules; why, I don't think I saw any taller than my knee.” He winks at his questioner, who chuckles. “I did hear one strange thing, though.” The man's joking manner sobers suddenly. “I swear I heard dogs howling down there. I don't think the sound came from up top because it's surprisingly hard to hear noises from the street; we could only hear big wagons moving quickly, or several horsemen together. The way those howls bounced around, though, they could have come from anywhere or everywhere. I tell you it put a shiver up my spine; down there you could really believe the stories about the hounds of the underworld.”

Most of the crowd is quiet, taken aback at this eerie description. Gil takes in the mood with a quick glance and lightens it with his next comment. “At least it was a better job than the last one I had,” he remarks wryly, practically begging to be asked.

“Worse than cleaning sewers? What was that one, then?” Marta asks.

In the Forest

“Logging. I don't know if you ever think about it, but all the wood used in Endhome has to come from somewhere. Some firewood may be sold by farmers clearing land to increase their crops. With all the fertile land in the Gaelon valley, and the huge market for food in Endhome, there have been a lot of new people moving into the area in the past couple years and they've taken down quite a few trees. Beyond that, though, wood is needed for building and for all the crafters. There are men who live out near the south edge of the Penprie forest who do nothing but cut trees and sell them back into Endhome for lumber and firewood. The conditions are terrible, though. They work from sun up to sun down and then camp out in old tents; only the masters get to stay in a rough cabin. I tried it for a couple months earlier in the spring and it was tough. I'm a hard worker and a handy man with an axe, but I don't care to use it all day every day for such a small return. You know what really made up my mind to leave, though?” Gilman addresses the question to the serving maid, and she earnestly shakes her head. “The food was terrible! At least when I was working in the sewers I could get back here, or up to the farm, every couple days for some real food!”

The listeners chuckle and several take pulls of their drinks or dig back into their own food. Gilman finishes off his mug with a few swallows and takes his leave of Barnky, heading back through the door into the kitchen area.

“Who'd want to live right up to the Penprie Forest?” asks a man standing at the bar. “That's just asking for trouble, what with all those wolves and everything.”

“You know, Mastin, that druid lives up there – Gilda Waynetrop,” Barnky replies. “She seems to do okay. Of course, she has a couple wolves of her own.”

A passing serving maid – Roney – shivers dramatically. “Those wolves of hers give me the creeps!”

Barnky chuckles. “I know, Roney, you told me about it in great detail the other day.” The barkeep glances at the people nearby who seem to be listening. “It seems Gilda had business in the city so she took a room here, because that much stone around her makes it hard to sleep. Well, she got here early and put her things in her room, then grabbed a plum from the kitchen before she headed into Endhome. She was all by herself, so thinking I was joking I said ‘Your wolves aren't out in the stables, are they, spooking all the horses?’ She said, ‘No, they're up in my room

having a nap. You might tell the maids not to go in there today.’ Just then we hear this terrible screech and upstairs there's Roney, white as a sheet, with clean towels all over the floor. She had opened the door and one wolf put up its head and yawned and she thought it was going to eat her right there. We've agreed that in the future, Gilda will come straight to me for whatever she needs and the maids won't go into her room!”

“She seems so young to be living away up there in the forest by herself,” Marta puts in as she walks by with a pitcher.

“I think that's because she's part an elf,” Barnky says. “She has that look about her, and you know elves live forever, so she'll probably live a good long time yet before she starts to show it.”

Two men who have finished eating rise from a table near the bar and set their mugs up on the counter. “Here, Barnky, top these up and then we have to go,” one says. “We have to be up early if Mistress Greythorn is going to have the perch she wants to fry up for breakfast.”

“Here you go, Tyley,” Barnky replies, filling up the man's mug and then pouring for his companion. “I know Berra Greythorn likes nothing so much as really fresh food for cooking, but the rest of us are going to be hungry so don't you and Oster be late!”

The two men finish their drinks and head out the door, stopping before they leave to make way for a small group coming in. A tall woman in chain mail with sword and bow is followed by a man in plate armor with a larger sword at his side and a covered shield slung on his back, and an older woman dressed in leather armor and a worn blue cloak brings up the rear. The innkeeper obviously knows them, because he leaves the bar and goes to clasp hands with the burly man. “Wargo Stoneshield, how are you? I see you've improved your taste in traveling partners. Please introduce me!”

“Lady Felidra, this is Barnky, the proprietor of the King's Road Inn. Barnky, the Lady Felidra of Ravenskeep.”

Barnky bows to the dark-haired lady, then turns his attention to the second woman. “Raanda of Norm! I haven't seen you for the longest time. I hope this time you'll stay long enough to tell what you've been up to. Just come this way, folks; there's a table over here by the wall and you can set some of your things behind the bar while you eat.”

He leads the group to the table just vacated by the fishermen, which the third serving maid, Adeesa, quickly wipes. Barnky gives the woman some quiet instructions and she heads for the kitchen, then he helps the three stow some of their larger items behind the bar and serves them drinks – a large ale for Wargo, a goblet of wine for Lady Felidra, and a small glass of something purplish-blue for the one he called Raanda of Norm. He pours drinks for a few other people, then moves back to the newcomers. “What brings you in at this hour?” he asks. “Long day of travel?”

“Longer than we expected,” rumbles Wargo. “We started near enough that we should have been here long since but there were... complications.”

“You've been west from here, right?” Raanda asks.

“It's been a couple years, but yes,” Barnky replies.

Along the Road West

Raanda nods and goes on. “There is a patch of forest three or four miles north of the road, a little way west of the Oldrock River. The area around it is mostly farming now, but the ground inside the woods is too wet to make good farmland, as we discovered last night.”

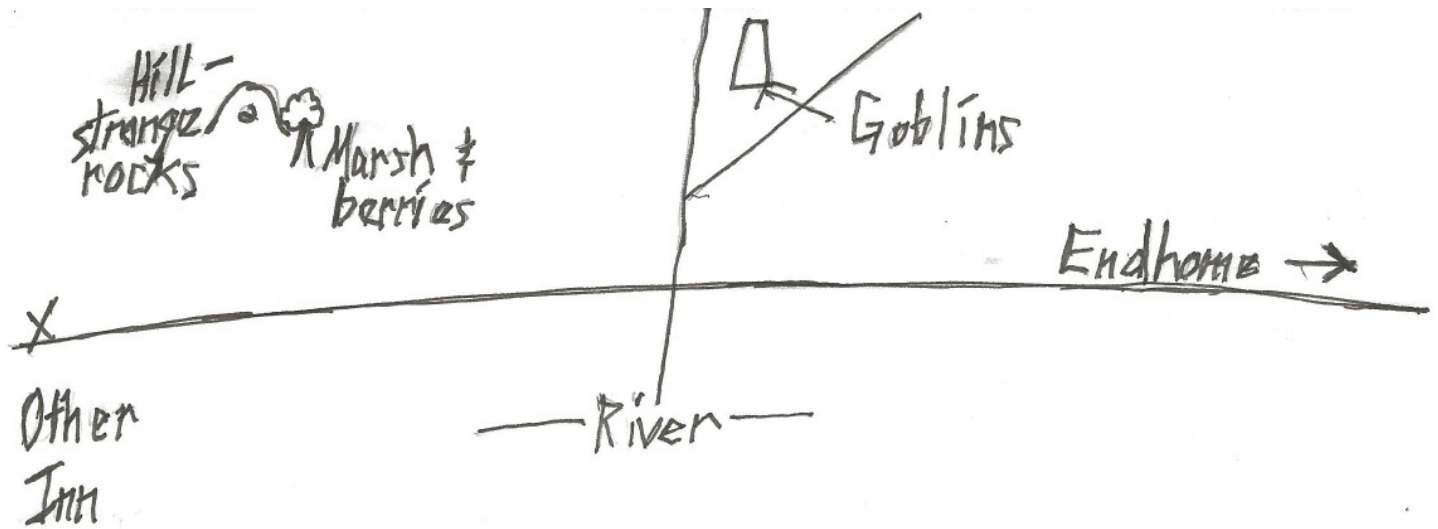
“I think I know the woods you mean, but I've only seen it at a distance, from where the road rises a little bit before it drops down to the Oldrock.”

“Right. We had planned to stop there for the night, not wanting to be too close to the road,” the woman explains. “We would have slept wet, though, if Wargo hadn't found a bit of a hill for us to camp on. That hill had some of the strangest rocks I've ever seen, ones with what looked like hand-sized stone insects in them, and stone seashells. I wish we had had more time. Then this morning we breakfasted on the best blueberries I've ever tasted. And we saw cranberry vines, too. Your Mistress Greythorn would love the place,” Raanda says. “but it's too far away from you to be convenient for harvesting.”

Barnky starts to nod, but pauses and frowns. “I didn't realize you knew Mistress Greythorn, Raanda,” he begins, only to be interrupted by Lady Felidra.

“We had some trouble with goblins on the way,” she says, raising her

THE CITY OF ENDHOME



voice a little, “and people here might care to know about the threat.” People at nearby tables give her their attention and the lady continues. “We crossed the Oldrock above where that eastern branch enters, because we didn’t want to go all the way down to the road but wanted to make it a little easier on the horses. In between the two rivers we encountered a small group of goblins. We think they were planning to ambush us but Raanda heard them so we were prepared. There were five of them to three of us, but we didn’t really have time for a fight right then so we exchanged some arrows and convinced them to leave.”

“She convinced, she should say,” Wargo puts in. “They really didn’t want to deal with Felidra’s bow work. When they left, though, they covered their retreat by using smokesticks. Not just one, either; they set off three or four of them. That’s more resources than goblins usually have for one patrol. We didn’t want to try to track them, but I bet I know where their base is. There is a tall square tower east of the Oldrock, north of that fork. It’s fairly large but it just looks like the kind of place a wizard used to live, rather than some lord with a family, armsmen, servants, and all. I doubt a small group like that will harass travelers all the way down on the road, but anyone off the road needs to watch out.”

Adeesa comes through the door to the kitchen bearing a tray loaded with many good-smelling dishes, some of which you note were not ones that were offered to you earlier. The food gains the entire attention of the hungry travelers, and folks around go back to their own meals and drinks.

A woman with long, white-blond hair has been sitting at the bar and listening intently to the conversation. After the others have told their tale and turned their attention away, she speaks up. “It’s interesting that there’s an abandoned wizard’s tower west of here,” she says in a melodious voice, “because I thought I saw one also up along the northern pass.” From where you are sitting you can see what the bartender cannot – the woman’s packs with a gittern case attached; with a voice like that, and a stringed instrument, she is very probably a traveling bard. It is a wonder she is not offering to sing you a lay about her journey.

Barnky speaks right up. “I’m sure there are many here who’d like to hear about that, mistress, if you’d care to tell. May I ask your name?”

The Northern Pass

“Linandra Whitehair. I’ve traveled through that pass three times now, with various caravans; twice toward Endhome and once the other way. When I was traveling north and west, away from Endhome, at one point on the trail I happened to stop for a breath just where I could look down a rocky valley. The valley floor twisted and turned around hills, but rising at the end of it I could see the top of a round stone tower. I asked around about it after I got back to Endhome and the tale is that a hundred years ago, a wizard – a powerful conjurer – built himself a tower with no doors, so he wouldn’t be disturbed. No one ever saw him go in or out, though he must have because he was known to go to the Wizards’ Academy once in a while. Finally, many years ago, he disappeared completely. No one can

get in to his tower to see if he’s still there, or maybe up and died, but the common thought seems to be that he went away on a long journey and hasn’t returned – yet.”

Mastin, who complained earlier about the Penprie Forest, speaks up again. “I know a tower with the wizard still in it – along the Trader’s Way, where the road forks off into the pass.”

Linandra gives him her attention. “I think I saw that tower, not too near the road but in easy view. I didn’t see any signs of anyone there, but it seemed too convenient to be left empty long. You say it has a wizard in it?”

“Aye, he’s there, but reclusive like so many of his kind. Now and again the Wizards’ Academy sends things to him: lots of little glass bottles, herbs and other strange things. I’ve been with traders who stopped and dropped off the parcels. He’s standoffish and short with his words, but he did give a few coins to the man who carried the bundles up to his door.”

“He sounds interesting,” Linandra muses. “I may have to stop to talk with him sometime, to see if I can find out his story.”

“Better take something with you to catch his attention, then,” Mastin says firmly. “He probably won’t even come out unless you have something to make him curious, or perhaps something good to eat!”

Linandra shakes her head, then changes the subject. “Has anyone here heard anything about bandits on the northern road? I heard the caravan that went through the pass before us was attacked and several people injured.”

Many people are nodding, but Barnky is the first to speak up. “Yes indeed,” he replies. “There has been talk for months about bandits attacking people on Trader’s Way and in the pass. The Green Tree bandits, they supposedly call themselves, and word is they have a hideout somewhere in the Penprie Forest. Bragger Bondhome, the captain of the city guard, has announced a reward of 500 gold pieces for the head of their leader. You’ll probably see notices about it all over Endhome, if you keep your eyes open.”

“That’s quite a reward!” says Linandra. “Are they that elusive? I know Endhome has a large army; they haven’t been able to find them?”

“The bandits aren’t near the city,” puts in Mastin, “They’re up in the north part of the forest, which is huge and even wilder than the section down here. They’d need the whole army – half to do the searching, and half to protect the people who were looking. Never going to happen.” The man tosses off the last of his beer and stalks off toward the stairs. The blonde woman shrugs and goes back to her wine.

One of your companions speaks up. “How large is the Penprie Forest, anyway? We came from the south so we haven’t seen it.”

The bartender looks thoughtful, and then looks around. “Is Zasher down there by the hearth? He would know. He’s been up and down the area.” People in that part of the room pass the word and presently a stocky, white-haired man makes his way to the bar. He looks like someone’s kindly grandfather, except for the long scar that puckers the left side of his face.

“Did you have some question for me, Barnky?” The man rests his mug on the bar. Barnky points surreptitiously to your friend and then the man’s mug, and your companion quickly steps up to the bar with a coin.

The Penprie Forest and Duskmoon Hills

“These folks are just up from the south and were wondering about the Penprie Forest,” the barkeeper says, “how large it is and so forth. I thought you were the right person to tell them.”

The scarred man leans against the bar. “The forest is smaller now than it was in my grandfather’s day, when it used to come all the way to the Gaelon, or so he said. Still, the south end of the Penprie is only about 10 miles north of Endhome. The longest parts now would measure about 30 miles north to south and about the same east to west, on either side of the Oldrock River and running right up to Fool’s Pass and almost all the way down to the Trader’s Way by the sea. It’s an old forest and is home to such things as goblins, gnolls, monstrous big spiders, and the occasional troll.” Here he runs a finger along his scar for emphasis, but does not elaborate. “Of course, it also has places in it that have been lost for a hundred years and are just waiting for someone to find them again. The really dangerous area is further north around Fool’s Pass and past it into the Duskmoon Hills.”

Linandra has become more and more interested as the explanation goes along. “Fool’s Pass? Is that what people in Endhome call the pass through the hills?”

“Everyone calls it that,” Zasher replies gruffly, “except merchants who are trying to hire caravan guards or take on paying passengers. Only someone who is desperate, for time or for gold, will travel through there, and doing so is taking your life into your hands. For instance, there are stories—recent stories—that people traveling along Fool’s Pass have been attacked by demons with the faces of men but the bodies of large monkeys, and big black wings like great bats. A bunch of them will swoop in and grab one person, then pull him apart in midair and his companions can’t do anything but stand and listen to his shrieks.” The man’s voice lowers as he talks, and he almost hisses the last words. Linandra goes a little pale, and perhaps someone in your group does also.

“Did the merchant in charge of your caravan warn you that undead things have been known to roam the area of Fool’s Pass at night?” The young woman shakes her head. “I’m not a bit surprised,” Zasher says. “It’s to their benefit to downplay the worst things that could happen. Then when they get lucky and get through safely, they say, ‘See, everyone exaggerates!’ What about the orc kingdom? Did anyone point that out to you?”

Linandra’s eyes grow wide. “No! Is there a whole kingdom of orcs living along the pass? How can anyone travel through?”

“They are not there anymore, or no one would be able to travel there. There *was* a kingdom, though, and they caused as much trouble as you would expect. About 20 years ago, the army of Endhome called up as many men of the city as they possibly could and marched up to the pass to take out the orcs. They went right into their caves and killed them all, then burned the bodies. That took care of the trouble for a while, but there are too many foul creatures in those hills to ever keep down for long. I was in

Fool’s Pass last autumn and saw an ogre coming out of the cave entrance, so I know for a fact things are still living in those caves.

“Then there’s the dragon,” Zasher continues. “Travelers along Trader’s Way up past Fool’s Pass tell stories of a dragon circling over the Duskmoon Hills, a long way off, and sometimes it breathes fire.”

Another man intervenes at this point. “It might have been just a small dragon; distances in the air are so hard to tell, they can’t be sure it was a long way away.”

Zasher speaks cuttingly. “Robson, you idiot, dragons don’t come small. By the time they can fly like that they’re 50 feet long and can roast a whole herd of sheep from the sky without ever coming within arrowshot. You don’t want to mess around with dragons.”

Robson says, “Fine, fine,” placatingly, then has another thought. “And the giant; don’t forget the giant!”

“What giant?” Zasher snorts. “You fool, no one has ever seen it but you! ’Twas but a tree in the mist, or some such thing.”

“My cousin Niles saw it once,” Robson says defensively.

“Your cousin Niles has never been right since he took that blow to the head. He’d see anything if you suggested it to him.” Zasher gestures to the barkeep for a refill, the heads grumpily back to his seat by the fire.

“I still say there was a giant,” Robson mutters, undeterred.

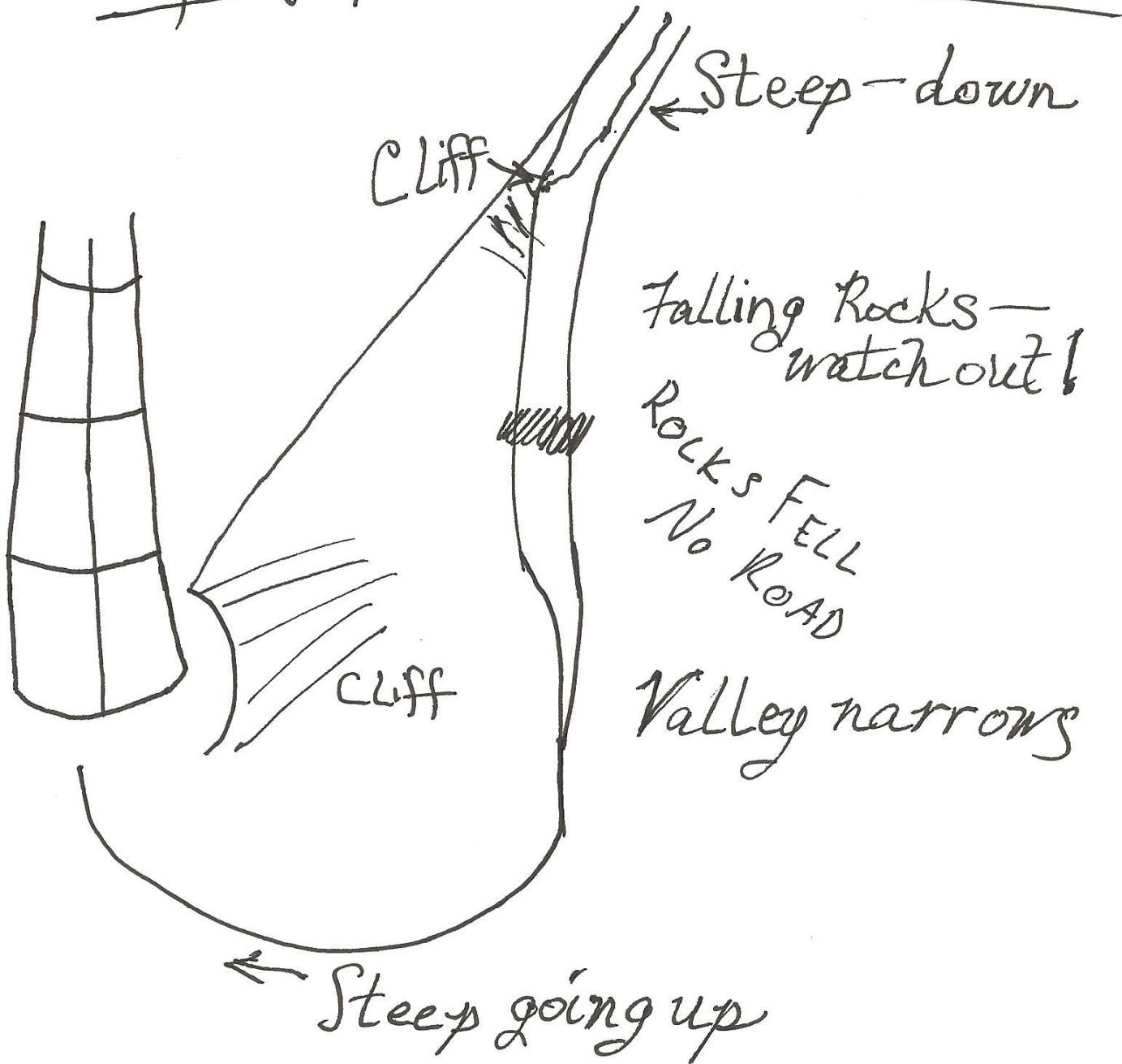
“I should have known better than to stir him up, I suppose,” Barnky says. “Sometimes he can talk about the Penprie Forest just fine and sometimes it sets him off.” The barkeep looks after the older man, but he has disappeared again into the crowd by the fire.

Barnky grabs a pitcher with a little beer left and comes around the bar to your table, where he stands with his back toward the large hearth. “Zasher had a disappointment years ago in the Penprie and has never gotten over it,” he says in a low voice. You notice Linandra Whitehair putting her hand to her ear to be sure she can hear. “It still frustrates him today, but he finally just gave up.

“It seems that his grandfather, who was also a tracker in the Forest, told him about a beautiful fountain deep in the forest that was hundreds of years old and dedicated to Freya. The grandfather said he had been there several times and it had the sweetest water in the world. Zasher used to keep his eyes open for it when he was young but he never found it, until one day he was attacked in the woods. Wounded and delirious, he staggered through the forest and happened across the fountain. To hear him tell it, the fountain healed his wounds. Certainly it may have saved his life, just by providing fresh water to clean his injuries and get plenty to drink. I was barely more than a lad, but I remember when I saw him next, he had that scar and talked incessantly about getting back to the fountain. He had been in such bad shape, though, that he had no memory of how to return to the place. He searched for it for years but finally despaired of ever finding it.” Barnky shakes his head.

“The worst of it is, he says drinking the water from Freya’s fountain has ruined the taste of fresh water for him. He almost never drinks water, even the clearest, but has thin beer or watered wine instead.” The man starts back to the bar, saying over his shoulder, “Who knows? An enterprising group of people like you, maybe you’ll be the next ones to find Freya’s fountain. There are a lot of opportunities around here; you just need to go after them.”

Fool's Pass } Stream-runs under road



Falling Rocks — watch out!

Rocks FELL
No ROAD

Valley narrows

No door!

Places to Shop in Endhome

Albin's Armory

Armor and weapons are crafted and sold here. Given the number of soldiers in the city's guard, there are of course other armorers and weaponsmiths and some of them are even very good, but Albin's is the place to go to purchase a variety of arms in one location. In addition to the masterwork weapons produced by Master Albin himself, the shop occasionally crafts (or acquires) a magical weapon. People who can show they have the gold for expensive things can request to be shown whatever special items Master Albin might have on hand. Albin may also be interested in purchasing magical or unique weapons that he speculates he could resell, but only for a fraction of their value.

Berwin Chandlery

The Berwin family has been selling candles in Endhome for four generations now. They sell everything from expensive colored candles to the simplest dipped tallow candles, along with other related products such as soaps, both plain and scented. They even make the tall pillar candles the temples commonly use in their rituals. Hugo and Syltrid Berwin have increased the size of the family's business and added a cart for selling small items in the Bazaar. Two years ago their son Jerneth married Katessa Oledar and with her knowledge of scents and oils the shop now carries various grades of lamp oil, oils for leather, luxurious scented bath oils, and a few types of incense.

Blacky's Berth

"Blacky" Breen is a broad-shouldered blacksmith with strong arms and the leathery skin of a man who spent years in the sun. A former sailor, he took to his current profession of smithing after an unfortunate incident with a shark left him without one of his sea legs. (He earned his nickname for the color of his hair, but it is doubly apt now.) Rather than a peg, he uses a thick length of wood shod with iron, to give him better support for his work. Blacky makes nails and tools and does decorative iron work. He also has a painted sign that reads, "Any hooved animal shod." Just above it hangs a silvered shoe that matches a set he made a few years ago for a unicorn.

The Bounding Main Shipbuilders

On the docks of Endhome, The Bounding Main is the largest shipbuilding company. They specialize in ocean-going merchant vessels, but do sometimes build private ships. They very seldom do riverboats, however, generally considering barge-making to be no challenge whatsoever. The proprietor, Edrik Kelvie, pushes his workers to achieve better quality and faster work and rewards them with personal praise and recognition as well as monetary compensation. The Bounding Main uses some magic in their work, almost the only shipbuilding company in the city to do so. Among other things, if a customer needs a ship in a hurry and is willing to pay for it, Kelvie will set up everburning torches around the dry dock at night and have his crew work around the clock to get the job done.

Creations by Madame Jacquezel

The owner of this shop is a tall woman who dresses her hair in elaborate styles and always wears an elegant dress of her own creation. Her assistants are polite and calming, a good complement to the excitable proprietor. Madame would like to make most of her money creating amazing dresses for the wealthy of the city but knows there is not enough call for those to keep her shop busy. She actually works most with busy merchants who have no time to make their own clothing, or travelers who need something new while far from home. Madame Jacquezel also has no objection to taking orders for such things as plain cloaks because even though they offer little scope for her creativity, they keep her assistants busy and bring in coin to pay the bills.

Endhome Animal Care and Training

Most people refer to this as the "Endhome Stables," and indeed stabling horses is one of its services. Natanah Haan and her crew provide much more, however. Haan is an expert trainer of animals of many types, as well as being versed in the medical needs of horses and (to a lesser extent) other animals. Her assistants are less experienced but are skilled in the basics of both fields. The establishment has only a small outer yard, but does have a large riding ring inside which is used to exercise the animals and for training. In addition to the regular stalls, the building includes a few large boxes which are sometimes used for mares giving birth, but once housed a giant boar which was the mount of a paladin from a distant forest.

The Endhome Oven

This large bakery makes mass quantities of bread, rolls, and sweets, which are sold mostly at booths in the Bazaar but also from their own shop at the front of the bakery. Master Baker Aidra Kingfisher also makes bread sculptures, elaborate cakes, and subtleties for feasts, for the customer who is not wealthy enough to have a baker on staff but is otherwise able to employ the best. Her most talked-about creation was an eight-foot-long bread sculpture representing a complex scene from a stag hunt.

Gaelon Valley Wine Consortium

Three local wineries have opened a shared shop, to make their wares available in the city at any time. Common bottles are available behind the counter of the showroom; more select vintages are shown and sold by appointment in one of the two small rooms at the back of the shop. A cellar below the shop keeps the better vintages at the right temperature. (It is reached by a ladder in the larger of the two back rooms, with a hidden dumbwaiter to haul up the wine.) The sales representative, Canette Quinshall, is an expert on wine in general and Gaelon Valley wines in particular; she can almost always pinpoint an excellent wine for whatever a customer needs.

The House of Strings

This small shop sells stringed instruments of every kind. Its proprietor, Jessanie Sondgren, works with several skilled craftsmen in the area to sell their wares while they concentrate on crafting. She also buys some instruments from traders. She will take orders for specific items, but they are tentative until she confirms the order with the appropriate instrument maker. Jessanie herself can string and tune the instruments and even replace their pegs, but cannot repair damaged items. She is, however, a skilled musician on all the stringed instruments and can demonstrate and instruct on any instrument in her shop.

Jerneth's Wheeled Transport

Elsmarj Jerneth runs this busy establishment for building carts and wagons and also making and repairing wheels. She employs masters in the various crafts (carpenters, wheelwrights, and so on) but has enough knowledge to lend a hand almost anywhere. However, her greatest skill is organization: keeping the many supplies and orders moving in and out of the yard, and everyone busy and paid. Her various masters want the company to start making carriages as well, though that would require branching out in several different ways. The carriage which Governor Ranlan Pool uses on important occasions is getting worn and needs to be changed, so Jerneth is considering a proposal for her yard to craft its replacement. She anticipates other nobles would desire one then, giving the company plenty of new business.

PLACES TO SHOP IN ENDDHOME

Louthan's Leather Outfitters

Leather clothing and most types of gear can be found here. It is possible to buy plain items (particularly common items such as straps or bags) but most items are decoratively worked. Louthan and his assistants emphasize themes related to nature, so stylized plants and flowers, clouds, and ocean waves frequently appear on their pieces; other patterns can of course be special ordered. Rumor has it that Louthan was at one time a powerful wizard but lost his magical abilities to some strange foe deep in a cavern. His work with leather is supposedly just a way for him to keep busy. (If asked, all Louthan will say is that he doesn't talk about it.)

Milvester Adwell, Tailor of Note

The tailor is a short, wizened old man whose face reminds you of a pale raisin. He keeps a stool handy for measuring his taller customers, and has an assistant to help with particularly wide shoulders. Master Adwell also mumbles to himself slightly as he works and tends to be dictatorial on questions of fabrics and styles for particular uses. However, the garments his shop turns out are fabulous: they fit well, are comfortable for any type of movement, are of the highest-quality workmanship, and generally make their wearers look good. He is much in demand among the wealthy of Endhome, but has been known to refuse to serve people who annoy him or take one project ahead of another simply because he likes a man's look.

Mother Gretsya's Herbs & Simples

Common herbs of every kind can be found here, as well as exotic plant material from distant places. The proprietor is always happy to offer advice on the curative powers of many of her products, as well as their culinary uses. Mother Gretsya dresses plainly and seems to be an ordinary herb-woman, but she studied Herbalism in the Potions Craft Hall at the Arcane Spire in far-off Reme. This occasionally puts her in conflict with the Wizard's Academy, as some of the ingredients and techniques she recommends are very different from what they use.

The Opulent Owl Whitesmiths

A sign of an owl wearing a jeweled chain around its fluffy neck hangs over this jewelers' shop run by a trio of women. Josenna Timston does the gold work, dark-skinned Sumeste Malawin works with silver, and white-blond Lodia Andson cuts and sets gemstones. Probably only in Endhome could the three have ever met, but their partnership has flourished. They produce common rings, necklaces, armbands, and more, but coming from three different cultural backgrounds they also craft original pieces which are inspired by or mix the various cultures. They are always pleased to see unusual or antique items of jewelry which may give even more ideas for their creations.

Penprie Papers

This shop sells paper of many types and sizes, and even the occasional roll of parchment. The paper is made on site, carefully supervised by the proprietor, Michnald Rusmond. He personally oversees any unusual batches (dyed, uncommon inclusions, etc.) as well as special orders. In fact, he steps in any time his assistants might have a little difficulty. Consequently, he works early and late preparing the various products he sells. In addition Rusmond offers bookbinding services to people who want to protect their important writings. He allows his assistants to help with only the most basic steps of that process, doing most of it himself. Rusmond is a master at his craft, but his insistence on doing nearly everything himself means he has little time to practice the finer points of his art.

Rugan's Shop of Holding

This shop truly holds a lot of stuff, most of it very forgettable. There are no top-value items among the dusty collections on these shelves. Rugan himself is nearly forgettable, with gray clothing to match his short graying hair and pale gray eyes. He seldom makes sales, which raises the question of how he manages to stay in business. The answer is a small sign: "We buy or sell anything." He prides himself on being able to get

nearly anything for anyone while being totally incurious about why it is wanted, and he charges for the service. In addition, although he may pay only a few coppers he will buy almost anything without asking about its origins. This amoral, tight-lipped attitude has earned the trust of many people, most not involved in legitimate professions.

Seafoam Boots

The sign over this door shows a pair of boots striding over foamy waves. Inside, the room is draped in gauzy fabric and the fragrance of incense mixes with the smell of leather. A tall workbench holds cobbler's tools, and in the center of the room is a carved wooden chair with a measuring guide positioned carefully on the floor in front of it. The owner of this unusual establishment is Eaduin, an elf who came to Endhome to try some human activities. He is currently making boots to pass his time, and prefers to craft unusual or challenging footwear rather than something any human cobbler could easily do. Eaduin specializes in high boots such as the thigh-high boots some adventurous ladies order. He also makes elaborate shoes with high heels and brags about a pair of men's shoes he once made of blue leather with crystal heels.

Supplies for the Road

Brandlin Denby provides supplies for caravans and general travel, and is often called upon for special equipment for more adventuresome travelers. Pale, balding, and soft-spoken, with a perpetual cough, he may not look like the average person's idea of a consultant to daring adventurers. However, Denby collects every tale of every amazing exploit – as long as it involves equipment. When not otherwise occupied, his sharp mind is busy imagining how better or different equipment could have improved a situation. He knows where to get almost any type of item desired, and has a knack for putting together substitutes from common pieces when necessary. He sometimes wishes he was brave and healthy and could go see the things he only hears about, but then someone arrives with another challenge for his equipment.

Wild William's Pawn and Magic Shop

Old Will (as most call him) stocks his crowded store with all kinds of strange stuff; Will himself hardly knows what most of it is. He will buy almost any unusual item (shark's teeth, broken music boxes, curious carved sticks, and more) though word is he doesn't pay much for anything. There is always the chance that Will has some treasures among his collection of oddities. The most frequently heard statement in his shop is, "I don't know what it does, but the person who sold it to me swore it was magical."

Wooden Specialties

James Carver is a master woodworker who wants to do grand artistic works but instead supervises a shop full of assistants making furniture and household items. Rather than carving his initials on a piece to show its maker, he uses a mark of a stylized dragon. In fact, he is very fond of dragons and frequently works tiny hidden ones into carvings for customers. A large section of wood in the corner of his workroom is supposed to become a ferocious dragon to be a figurehead on a ship. Paying jobs have kept him so busy, however, that he has barely started. Carver has a large supply of a reddish stain that he bought years ago and is still trying to use up, so any item not otherwise specified will be stained the same reddish color.

People to Know Around Endhome

Barnky

Innkeeper of the King's Road Inn, he also tends the bar and keeps the rowdies in hand. Fights do break out in the dining room once in a while, but between the threat of injuries from the cudgel he keeps behind the bar and his absolute refusal to let instigators return to the inn, folks generally settle their differences outside. Barnky is full of information about Endhome and its environs.

Bondhome, Bragger

The only demi-human in a position of authority in Endhome, the dwarf has been Captain of the city guard for the past 20 years. His beard is always neat and his armor in good repair. He is used to giving orders and his booming baritone voice makes it easier for him.

Cain, Father Beamus

Priest at the Temple of Solanus, who came to Endhome only recently. He works tirelessly on behalf of the poor of the city, tending the sick, feeding the hungry, counseling those who need help, and holding three services a week. He is said to live simply in a small room inside the temple.

Gaspar, Amelia

Part of the wealthy Gaspar family, which is one of the oldest in Endhome. In addition to helping her husband oversee the family's numerous holdings, Amelia is a leader in fashion among the wealthy and well-to-do of the city and very influential not just within the Nobles' District but also among the merchants.

Gaspar, Lurton

The patriarch of the Gaspar family. Together, he and his wife Amelia own the lucrative Black Sheep Inn as well as a number of shipping and importing ventures. The couple's oldest son Liam is a Senator and their daughter Felicia is a promising student at the Wizard's Academy.

Greythorn, Berra

Cook at the King's Road Inn for the past two years. When her husband died, she turned over the family's farm to her son Hasrick and his wife Ursula and took over the kitchen at the inn just a couple miles from her home. She is an expert on edible plants and creatures and her tasty meals, though not fancy, are a large part of the inn's increased popularity recently.

Kant, Stylus

Headmaster of the Wizard's Academy, he dresses in fine clothes and wears his black hair in a long ponytail with a neat mustache and goatee. He is intense and ambitious, but can be very charming in social settings. Kant is always recruiting new instructors for the Academy.

Kanto, Elan

The priestess at the Temple of Jamboor, she holds services once a week but with her acolytes spends most of the time helping those who have no homes. The temple takes them in, assists those with health problems to gain their strength back, and helps them learn useful skills.

Kilkarin, Albian

Patriarch of an up-and-coming merchant family, Albian is known for making shrewd investments in goods being traded, and then finding someone with a need for them who is willing to pay a much better price. Three of his four sons are involved in the family business but the youngest is reputed to be a ne'er-do-well.

Kytor the Red

Retired from the city guard, Kytor is restless and frequently looking for something new to do. Recently he has been living well, since a mysterious

trip he took a few months back. He is known to many people about town and always happy to talk about himself if someone will buy him a drink.

Nearwell

Captain of the elite guard permanently stationed in the Government District. The guard protects not only the Governor, Senate, and bureaucrats, but also the wealthy treasury of Endhome, and its half-elven captain is fiercely loyal to his beloved city.

Pool, Ranlan

Governor of Endhome for the past 10 years; elected by the Senate after having been a senator himself for 12 years. He always shows an interest in the people he meets and has an exceptional memory for names.

Pulanti, Antoine

Patriarch of the extremely reclusive Pulanti family, one of the oldest families of Endhome. He has not been seen for years; it is rumored the family has one (or more) mad relatives locked up in the house.

Quinchino, Fernando

Although Philippi Quinchino is technically the head of all the family's businesses, his eldest son Fernando actually run the Heaven's Gate Inn and their other ventures. Some of those 'ventures' are rumored to be on the shady side, but since Fernando is tall, hefty, and willing to settle things with his fists, no one suggests this to his face.

Quinchino, Philippi

Patriarch of the Quinchino family at age 105 and part of the first generation of Quinchinos to join the 'nobles' of Endhome. He is the owner of Heaven's Gate Inn, which is the best inn in hundreds of miles and brings a very good income to the family.

Spink, Kilgore

Bodyguard of Governor Pool and a veteran of the Endhome guard, Spink is with the governor anywhere he goes outside his own estate. If encountered off-duty, he may sometimes be persuaded to tell tales of the time he spent with a group of adventurers.

Talk, Rosko

The owner of two inns on the roads to Endhome, one about a day's journey north on the Trader's Road, and the other a day's journey west on the King's Road. Both take advantage of the quantity of traffic in and out of Endhome and Talk is comfortably well off on the income they provide.

Tarmick, Fell

Rumored to be the leader of the dangerous Green Tree Bandits, the rogue supposedly shared a portion of his band's bounty with some of the residents of the Shantytown. Even if the claims are true, it happened only once or twice in the months the bandits have been attacking merchant trains so altruism does not appear to be Tarmick's real motive for the thefts.

Thaban

The High Priest at the Temple of Freya, Thaban and his acolytes hold seven services a week. Thaban spends much time advising the Governor and Senators, but may be available to perform magical religious rituals for those who make a large enough donation to the temple.

Waynetrop, Gilda

A druid with a house somewhere in the Penprie Forest, not too far from the Oldrock River. She appears young but most attribute that to the fact that she is a half-elf. With two wolves as companions, she manages to take care of herself and look after the creatures of the forest.

Common Knowledge and Rumors in Endhome

- About half a day west of Endhome, goblins have taken over an empty tower and begun harassing farmers in the area.
- A little south of Fool's Pass is the abandoned tower of a wizard, but it is hard to find and a waste of time anyway because there is no way in or out.
- A wild boar – a really big one – has gotten mean and is wreaking havoc with the small farms along the Oldrock River, up near the forest.
- Endhome is a Republic whose senators are primarily merchants; the current Governor is Ranlan Pool.
- Governor Pool throws large parties at his residence in the Nobles' Quarter. He primarily invites the wealthy of the city but also likes to include interesting visitors.
- North of the Penprie Forest, the hills are full of caves. People from Endhome go explore them once in a while and sometimes find valuable things, but other times they don't come back.
- Numerous gangs operate out of the slums. Some just work for themselves but others are organized by someone higher up, though no one knows who.
- One warehouse down at the dock is haunted, because once in a while people hear groaning or moans coming from it. It's locked, though, and no one ever goes in or out.
- People have heard scuffling around inside the wall of the Pulanti Estate. It seems thieves may be trying to break in but no theft is ever reported; the criminals just disappear.
- Rockslides are frequent in the hills. They cover up caves and close travel routes, but sometimes also open new ways into caves that were hidden before.
- Some sages actually live in the library of the Wizard's Academy and they can be hired to do research there.
- Some well-organized bandits have been waylaying merchants on the roads outside Endhome recently. A reward is being offered by Bragger Bondhome (at the Barracks) for their capture or demise.
- The acolytes at the Temple of Jamboor are really rude. It is almost as if they do not want people to come to services anymore.
- The bridges in Endhome have parapets along the sides so soldiers can attack any opponent who might come by river or by sea.
- The current headmaster of the Wizard's Academy is named Stylus Kant. He is actively seeking talented young wizards to join their faculty, but the reason he always wants new people is because the Academy really doesn't pay very well.
- The leader of the Green Tree Bandits, from the Penprie Forest, likes to spend his ill-gotten gains drinking in Endhome's best inns, in disguise.
- The Pulantis are the oldest family in Endhome and they think they are too good to ever socialize with anyone else.
- The Quinchino family, which owns the ritzy Heaven's Gate Inn, is not all on the up-and-up. Folks whisper they also own a series of brothels and run a protection racket.
- There are a lot fewer homeless poor in town than a couple years ago. The priests at the Temple of Jamboor teach them how to work and then evidently get them jobs places, because they are always reaching out to new folks who need a hand.
- The Roadside Inn, north of town, is a good place to look for work guarding merchant caravans. A lot of merchants stop out there when they come to trade in the city.
- The sewers are actually large enough to walk through, but they have rats the size of small dogs and stranger things that come in from the ocean.
- The shantytown outside the west wall is larger than it has been in several years. The Governor is thinking about sending in the guard soon to roust out the squatters.
- The three wealthiest families in Endhome are the Quinchinos, the Pulantis, and the Gaspars.
- The Wizard's Academy boasts the largest magic-user's library known to man, but they charge an arm and a leg for access and are very picky about who is allowed to use it.
- Up in the Duskmoon Hills is a set of caves which were once home to a band of orcs but they were driven from their lair several years ago by the forces of Endhome.



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