

A LEVEL 1-10  
DUET CAMPAIGN  
FOR 5E

PREVIEW!

# LAND OF VAMPIRES

SLIPPING INTO SHADOW



by Jonathan Ball and Beth Ball

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## Land of Vampires Part One

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#### Introduction

Several thousand years ago, the land of Steymhorod disappeared from the surface of Eldura. What had once been a prosperous region descended into the

Shadowlands, its borders separated from the rest of the plane by impenetrable mist. At all times, Steymhorod remains under gray clouds, lit only by weak sunlight even at the brightest times of day. The forests teeter between autumn and winter, a state of living death. And over the land, a dark vampire, Lord Xander Rasvan Draego, rules.

In the ages since Steymhorod's fall, a great flood divided the civilizations of Eldura and created a new world, Azuria. Steymhorod and its denizens have fallen out of memory and time. It is toward this land that our adventurer's destiny leads, though Steymhorod has not cast its pall over their fate... yet.

In Chapter One, the Player Character's (PC's) journey begins in the seaside city-state of Linolynn, where beneath the sun and the sound of crashing waves, a disturbing string of disappearances has afflicted the city. Children have gone missing from their beds, vanished from late walks home after dusk. The City Watch have uncovered a few clues as to what may have transpired, but as of yet, they have no leads that show true promise.

During this opening chapter, the PC follows leads and makes three new allies, each of whom would make a great adventuring companion to take with them on their journey to the Nocturne estate to the north. The PC's search concludes in the catacombs of Io Keep where they find evidence of a vampire.

In Chapter Two, the PC concludes their business in Linolynn and proceeds across the rolling Caldaran hills into the Stormside Forest, climbing toward the roots of the Frostmaw Mountains in search of Nocturne and their quarry, a disgraced nobleman now known as a vampire: Lord Nassarq.

After the first two chapters, each of the following chapters takes place in the fallen realm of Steymhorod. As the PC gets their bearings, they uncover the secrets of this long-lost realm and the role they are destined to play within it. The PC and their companion(s) set about making allies in Steymhorod as they widen their explorations and search for Nassarq. During their search, they learn of the ancient ties held between the vampires and the land of Steymhorod itself. If they are to have any hope of destroying Nassarq—and living to tell the tale—they'll need to bring back the Archfae who once ruled over this land, in the days before it passed into shadow.

Between Chapters Three and Twelve, the party travels across Steymhorod and resurrects two of the Four Fae Sisters. This weakens the vampires' hold on the land enough for the party to mount an assault against Nassarq. And they have reacted just in time. During his return to Steymhorod, Nassarq has amassed greater power to himself, and his ambitions within this realm have grown. In a tragic turn of events, Nassarq's thralls attack the party's allies in St. Sebastian and execute a beloved NPC and friend of the party. The vampire aims to not only wield power over this portion of Steymhorod, but to take on Lord Draego himself. In Chapters Thirteen through Fifteen, the campaign concludes with the party joining alongside their allies to attack Nassarq's tower and rid the realm of this terror once and for all. After their exploits, the PC has a decision to make: Will they remain in Steymhorod and continue in their efforts to awaken the Archfae, or will they return to the relative safety of Linolynn, stronger now than they were before?

We hope you're excited to weave a dark, exciting tale! In the next section, we walk through how to use the adventure text and adapt the scale and scenarios for your gaming table. You'll also find an overview of the land of Linolynn and the circumstances under which the campaign begins, followed by details about the land of Steymhorod. Armed with this lore and worldbuilding information, you're ready to start your one-on-one campaign!



## How to Use the Campaign Text

This campaign assumes that you have access to the 5e SRD. Items or creatures that are not part of the SRD can be found in Appendix A.

Text box example: Text that appears in a box like this may be read aloud, paraphrased, or omitted as you prefer. It is intended to help describe scenarios and environments.

### Sidebar example

Text that appears in sidebars is also optional and/or intended to provide extra background information or lore that may be helpful as you flesh out the adventure.

**Creatures with stat blocks appear in bold**, *magic items appear in italics*.

*[GM's note: tips on scale or RP appear in brackets. You'll also find information for GM's eyes only in brackets.]*

## Campaign Layout and Organization

You'll find four appendices at the end of this campaign. Appendix A contains stat blocks, creature details, magic items, and a few character backstories to help flesh out your campaign. Appendix B contains additional worldbuilding information and optional rules and mechanics. Appendix C offers two unique character backgrounds. And Appendix D holds the reference and world maps for running the adventure. **If you would like full-page versions of the maps for printing, you'll find them in your maps download or at [dndduet.com/vampire-downloads](http://dndduet.com/vampire-downloads).**

## Adjusting Combat for 1-on-1 Play

Regardless of whether you are running this adventure one-on-one or for a group, one of the most important roles of the GM is balancing and tweaking encounters to suit the PC. The combat should feel weighty but fun. Some pre-combat strategies include reducing or raising hit points or changing the number of combatants. GMs should also feel free to make adjustments during combat as needed.

For more information and resources about playing this one-on-one style, please see [dndduet.com](http://dndduet.com).

### A Note on Scale

Even more so than with group adventures, individual stats such as hp and damage-per-turn play a critical role in a duet game. As the GM, it's likely that you'll need to make adjustments for your PC. The GM's notes throughout the campaign

indicate moments where you may need to take particular care.

In terms of scale, we assume that the PC will be traveling with at least one other party member and that the PC is a bit more powerful—either in terms of extra spells, magic items, or another special bump of your choosing—than most individual PCs would be at their corresponding level in a group game. Throughout, we use the terms PC and party relatively interchangeably for variety, though we do suggest that the narrative centers around the PC as much as possible.

### Additional Adjustments

Duet gaming tables thrive on individualized adjustments that suit the needs and preferences of the two people at the table and the story they're weaving together. As you might imagine, no two iterations of this campaign will be exactly the same; we want GMs to be as empowered as possible to suit the campaign to their player and the PC. With that end in mind, we've provided a few additional notes on campaign adaptation in the Campaign Overview section below.

## Campaign Overview

In what follows, you'll find an overview of each of the four narrative arcs in the campaign alongside story notes or adaptations to streamline your session preparations. After the overview, you'll find important information to share with your player as they create their PC.

### Introductory Arc: Chapters 1-2

The introductory arc of the campaign takes place in Linolynn. In this arc, the PC investigates a series of kidnappings, meets possible adventuring companions, discovers a vampire, and tracks the vampire's journey north. At the end of the introductory arc, the PC passes through a blood portal into Steymhorod.

#### Chapter One: A Dark Destiny

A disturbing series of disappearances, primarily of children, has eroded the confidence of Linolynn's Water Ward. People are afraid to leave their homes or go to work. The City Watch are anxious to uncover who or what is snatching children from their beds and off the streets.

As the tension mounts, the PC takes on the task of discovering where the children have gone and who has taken them. They might embark upon this mission at the behest of the City Watch or on their

own. You can find inspiration for adventure hooks in the “Involving the Player” section that follows.

The PC scours the city of Linolynn for signs of the children, eventually making their way to the catacombs beneath the castle, Io Keep. There, they find clues that point to the workings of a foul creature, a vampire, responsible for the disappearances... and deaths of his victims. Further digging reveals that the vampire masquerades as a Linolynnian nobleman, Lord Nassarq, who has just left the castle and traveled north to his family estate.

## Chapter Two: The Blood Portal

It will take several days for Stormguard Basha to organize Linolynn’s troops and mount an attack against Nassarq’s mountain estate, Nocturne. But in that time, there’s a high likelihood that the vampire could escape. The PC also uncovers evidence that suggests several of Nassarq’s victims are still alive, at least for now.

If the PC hurries, they may catch Nassarq before he flees. But long-dormant dangers stand between them and the vampire’s second lair. If they survive the tests of the forest *and* their encounter with the vampire, a blood portal opens before them. It leads to the land from which all vampires originate—Steymhorod.

### Additional Adjustments for Introductory Arc: Acquiring a Companion

One of the goals of Chapters One and Two is that the PC finds a traveling companion to accompany them on their journey. Depending on the PC’s backstory, they might already have someone they trust and plan to adventure with, or they might find that person along the way. Additionally, the GM may already have a character or character type in mind. The first two chapters introduce five possible adventuring companions, three in Chapter One and two in Chapter Two, who would make great allies on the PC’s adventures.

Though the PC does not know it yet, Chapter Two ends with them stepping through a portal into Steymhorod. The PC and any and all of their surviving companions have to decide if they want to set aside everything they’ve ever known to pursue Nassarq or not. Some tables may wish to heighten the stakes for the PC with the death of one of their companions during their confrontation with Nassarq at the close of Chapter Two. We leave this to GM discretion and what will be the most fun, impactful, and appropriate for your table.

## Part One: Chapters 3-7

In Part One, the party grows acquainted with Steymhorod, forges alliances, and uncovers a long-lost artifact that holds the key to their quest to

destroy Nassarq: In order to defeat the vampire, they must awaken one of the Archfae to restore the balance of power. Many forces vie for power in these dark lands. The party navigates political tension and mistrust alongside zombies and forest creatures.

## Chapter Three: Out of the Witchwood

The party arrives in Steymhorod disoriented and confused. After an encounter with zombies in the woods, they make their way to Willowhold, where they find a lukewarm welcome. Many of the people here have been afflicted with a mysterious sickness, and it falls upon the party to rescue a woman who has been taken by the forest.

## Chapter Four: Basking in the Light

The party braves the open roads of Steymhorod and travels north from Willowhold to the town of St. Sebastian. Here, they must choose between two conflicting forces: the Ring of Light and the town. With each side, they find that the struggling power structures are not what they seem.

## Chapter Five: The Seed of Corruption

The priest Lazarus swoops in to satisfy any of the party’s healing needs, but nothing comes for free in these dark lands. Lazarus has found mention of a powerful artifact (the Heart of the Fields) housed in a long-abandoned manor. If the party braves the Witchwood to retrieve this item, they can have access to Lazarus and his restoration magic.

Once they finally arrive at the manor, the party discovers that it is far less abandoned than they expected. After a harrowing encounter with the corrupted beings guarding the artifact, the party learns about the Fanes of Steymhorod, which sets them on the next phase of their journey.

## Chapter Six: Realm of the Fae

Following a narrow escape and a new discovery, the party finds themselves in a fae forest seemingly untouched by the fallen state of the rest of Steymhorod: The Green Vale. The PC and the Heart of the Fields are in high demand here. Some leaders of the Green Vale see the party as harbingers of change for their people while others view them as a threat to the Vale’s safety. To complicate things further, the Heart of the Fields disappears.

## Chapter Seven: Riverside Reckoning

The corrupted Heart of the Fields has brought low another once-pure heart and now the Green Vale has a new Grand Marshal who knows one thing for certain: this item is too dangerous to keep within the confines of the last fae forest in Steymhorod. The Grand Marshal bids the party to remove the Heart

and to find others like themselves in hopes that they might cleanse it and restore the Fane.

## Part Two: Chapters 8-12

In Part Two, the party begins interacting with more powerful forces across Steymhorod, none more significant than Lord Draego himself, who takes a keen interest in these strangers to his realm, the PC in particular. They also encounter the werewolves and wights of Steymhorod.

As the party learned at the end of Part One, they must bring back the Four Fae Sisters if they are to have any chance of purging the corruption from Steymhorod and weakening their mortal enemy, Lord Nassarq. This is no small task as each of the Sisters has been split in two by Lord Draego to prevent their return. One part of each sister is embedded in her Fane while the other half of her essential essence has crystalized into a gem over the long, dark ages, a Heart. Locating these Hearts is a challenge: Steymhorod is large and holds many secrets.

In Part Two, the party has the opportunity to locate two of the Fanés and restore two of the Sisters: Eronia and Arduenne. To bring back one of the Sisters, they must take the Heart to the Fane and cleanse any corruption they find there. Reviving the Sisters weakens the vampires' hold on Steymhorod, increasing the party's chance of survival and success once they finally take on Nassarq.

### With Great Power...

In addition to the chapter summaries for Part Two, you'll find suggestions for the running order for this part below. Part Two opens up the order of events for the PC so the GM can tailor the campaign arc to the PC's interests.

To increase the sense of narrative cohesion and emphasize the party's growing power in Steymhorod, GMs should stagger the scenes of Chapter Eight across Part Two. We intended the nodal adventure structure to enable the PC to decide which of their priorities is most important. GMs can use the PC priorities sidebar at the end of this section for help with prompting the player with what they'd like to do or where they'd like to go next throughout Part Two.

### Leveling Up

Because the adventures in Part Two can be played in a variety of orders, we have not included exact points when the PC should level up. Instead, we leave this to the GM's discretion and suggest using pivotal story moments for leveling up. For example, when the PC restores one of the

Fanes, they increase in level. The PC should be level 9 by the end of Part Two.

### Chapter Eight: The Wight Hand of Death

*[This chapter fits differently in the play order of Part Two than Chapters Nine through Twelve. Each scene occurs as the party travels across Steymhorod, and the chapter should be spread across the nodes of Part Two.]*

In chapter Eight the party runs afoul of the Wight Knights of Steymhorod over a series of tense encounters that mirror the five stages of grief. It is not the party's grief that is being worked through in this chapter, but that of the Wight Knights' Commandant, Cedrine Shrikehonor. By the end of the chapter (which occurs at the end of Part Two), she has dealt with falling into Lord Draego's thrall and the party has made traversing the dark lands a little easier for themselves.

### Chapter Nine: Blood Harvest

The easiest of the Four Fae Sisters for the party to revive is Eronia, Lady of the Fields. After they discover that Eronia's Fane is most likely located in the Killing Fields, the party travels into the Archfae's mystical demiplane. This once bountiful place has descended into decay in the dissolution of its mistress. Can the party navigate the maze protecting her temple, survive long enough to complete the ritual, return the Heart, and save Eronia?

### Chapter Ten: Eye of the Wolf Mother

One of Steymhorod's greatest secrets is the origin of the region's werewolves. But in this chapter, the party learns of how they emerged from the twisting of Arduenne's magic with Steymhorod's fall.

### Chapter Eleven: The Mountain's Embrace

Having learned the location of the legendary Fane of the Mountains in Chapter Ten, the party endures a difficult journey into the formidable Andel Mountains. To reach the Fane, they must navigate a deadly bridge crossing, survive an encounter with a gluttonous goblinoid, and discover the passage to the home of Arduenne, Lady of the Mountains.

### Chapter Twelve: The Fall of St. Sebastian

Even seasoned, successful adventurers need to rest now and again. In this chapter, the party returns to St. Sebastian seeking safety and respite before searching for Nassarq's tower. But the party's enemies have more dangerous plans in store for their allies in the walled city and for the party themselves.

### Possible Priorities for the PC in Part Two

- Restoring the Four Fae Sisters in order to weaken the vampires' hold on Steymhorod
- Returning home
- Attacking/exacting vengeance against Nassarq
- Ridding Steymhorod of vampires entirely
- Carrying out the requests or priorities of NPC allies in exchange for their help accomplishing other goals

#### *Renewing the Fanes*

We have organized Part Two under the assumption that the PC's highest priority will be restoring the Fanes. Since they already have the Heart of the Fields, they can return it to the Field Fane (Chapter Nine) before searching for the Heart of the Mountains and the Mountain Fane (Chapters Ten and Eleven, respectively). In this case, the PC moves through the chapters in order with the exception of Chapter Eight which occurs sequentially across Part Two, with one scene occurring between each chapter and/or whenever the party is traveling to a new location.

#### *Location-Based Adventuring Order*

As an alternative to the order proposed above, the PC may choose to pursue a location-based order of priorities.

For instance, following the events of Chapter Nine, the GM could launch Scene One of Chapter Ten as the party navigates back to the temporary home they have selected in Steymhorod (St. Sebastian or another location). Since travel in Steymhorod is always dangerous, the GM can lead the party to believe that the initial encounter with the wolf pack is random and not an involved adventure leading to the discovery of the Heart of the Mountains. As the party nears their destination, scene two begins with Inga's transformation. Following Vicq's reveal, the party decides their next steps.

In the location-based example, the adventuring order might look like this:

- Party leaves Arethusa's Enclave and ventures back toward St. Sebastian to find the Fane of the Fields in Chapter Nine, Scene One
- Before or after the party reaches the Fane, they encounter Inga and the wolf pack (Chapter Ten, Scene One). An observant or suspicious party member might notice something strange about Inga, but, ideally, a compassionate friend or NPC averts their suspicions until one night, when it's too late. This leads them into Chapter Ten, Scene Two.

#### *Event-Based Organization*

Finally, you may choose to organize the adventures of Part Two based on cataclysmic events. We've detailed a few examples below:

- The PC or a party member is infected with lycanthropy. Their search for a cure leads them into the events of Chapter Ten.
- The party loses a beloved friend or NPC and decides to return to St. Sebastian to beg for Lazarus's help. Their return journey sees them complete the events of Chapter Nine but, before they can set out to find the second Fae Sister and Fane, Nassarq's vampire thralls attack St. Sebastian, igniting the events of Chapter Twelve. Still reeling from the attack against the city, the party sets out for the martial aid Eronia said they might find with her sister, Arduenne.

### **Additional Adjustments for Part Two: Random Encounters and Higher-Level Parties**

You'll notice fewer random encounters and troubles on the road as the party progresses through the thirteen chapters set in Steymhorod. In part, this is due to the events of Chapter Eight and the party's dealings with the Wight Knights of Steymhorod. GMs should feel free to interject random encounters as the party travels. However, with higher-level parties and depending on player preference, GMs should also consider narrating some hazards and sights along the way and skip running full combat encounters. What were once jarring occurrences at the beginning of the party's adventures, such as running into a clump of zombies, now do not slow them down. This shift in travel norms reinforces that the party is growing stronger and makes combat, when it does occur, that much more exciting. If, however, your player *loves* combat, then insert as many random encounters as you desire!

Random encounters in the final sessions of the campaign also allow the GM to include or wrap up any dangling narrative threads that remain. At the end of Slipping into Shadow, the party chooses whether they wish to leave Steymhorod and return to Azuria or if they prefer to remain, so ensure their business in this realm is wrapped up satisfactorily. The balance in this case is between closure and momentum—once the party is finally on their way to encounter Nassarq, they should be eager to make an end of their vampiric enemy.

### **Conclusion Arc: Chapters 13-15**

By the end of Part Two, the party has successfully revived two of the Four Fae Sisters, Eronia and Arduenne. With each return of an Archfae, the balance of power in Steymhorod shifts—the vampires grow weaker as the original rulers of the land resume their rightful place. Now that two of the Fae Sisters have returned, the party's enemy, Lord

Nassarq, is weak enough for them to attempt a second fight.

### **Leveling Up**

The PC should be level 9 at the beginning of Chapter Thirteen. We suggest leveling up to level 10 before the final scene of Chapter Fourteen or at the beginning of Chapter Fifteen.

### **Chapter Thirteen: Evening the Odds**

The party must contend with the fall of St. Sebastian and the town's new ruler, Olya. Following Sebastian's execution, it also falls to them to stand up for St. Sebastian's people whose spirits are broken after the attack. Once the party decides how to deal with Olya, they leave the city to take on Nassarq's most brutal progeny, Rodian.

### **Chapter Fourteen: The Sanguine Summit**

In this chapter, the party sets out on a collision course with their primary foe as they finally uncover the location of his vile lair. This revelation allows the party the chance to strike. They must gather all their allies and prepare to move against this great threat. Nassarq's lair is protected by a large force that must be lured away or eradicated before they can descend into the bowels of his dungeon. As the party sets their plans in motion, the vampire abducts one of the party's friends, threatening to upend everything the party and their allies have worked for and cement his rule over this region in Steymhorod.

### **Chapter Fifteen: Sky Spike Showdown**

This chapter begins with the party at the foot of the Sky Spike, Nassarq's tower, and encompasses the final combat with Lord Nassarq. Nassarq's vampire thrall assassin, Anya, fled into the formidable tower, inadvertently revealing the only obvious means of ingress.

## Involving the Player

In this portion of the adventure setup materials, we cover adventure hooks and PC backstories for your player to consider when setting up for the campaign. GMs should give players as much say over their character's design and backstory as possible. However, the PC's origins and mechanics do not need to be a mystery to the GM. Instead, the more the GM knows about the PC, the better. With this knowledge, they can personalize the campaign to the PC's story and class as well as the player's preferences at the table.

## Adventure Hooks and PC Backstories

Several possible adventure hooks and PC backstories follow. We want the adventure to be as personalized to the PC as possible; this customization highlights one of the best aspects of one-on-one gaming. Feel free to adjust, adapt, or mix the prompts that follow to suit your player, their character, and the campaign the two of you are co-creating.

*A note of caution:* This campaign contains darker themes that may not be appropriate for gaming with children, and some of the suggestions that follow may be triggering for yourself or your player. Before beginning this campaign, GMs and players should discuss their comfort with and tolerance for darker themes and threats and then make changes to the campaign as-written accordingly. GMs, your loyalty is to yourself, your player, and the story you're co-creating—these adventures are a tool and a guide, and, similar to the rule of cool, our first priority is for you and the player to enjoy yourselves.

- **Personal Loss.** A child dear to you (the PC) disappears. This can be a younger sibling, a friend's child, or a niece or nephew. You join alongside a capable friend, companion, or new acquaintance to discover what has happened to the child, stopping at nothing until they are found.
- **Vampire Hunter.** You wait in the shadows of this naïve city and watch the common folk go about their innocent days. They have no idea that a creature more dangerous even than you lurks nearby, and it is for this you have come, to hunt the hunter, a vampire.
- **City Watchperson.** Like other honorable members of your family before you, you signed up to become a member of the City Watch, an order dedicated to serving the king and keeping the

people of Linolynn safe. Grim-faced, your commander approaches. "I need you to tell them this time," she says. Enough children have disappeared that the watch now takes turns informing the families that their children have vanished without a trace. It is heavy work, but each day, you grow closer to uncovering the parties responsible.

- **Courtier.** You grew up in the small yet close-knit (depending upon who you are) court of Linolynn, either as a noble, ladies' maid, cook, castle guard, etc. Even from inside your cloistered environment, word has reached you of several disturbing disappearances, of children vanished in the night. Yesterday, an uproar rattled through the castle walls as two young boys from the Air Ward disappeared from beneath their mother's careful gaze. You know Demetria well—she would never allow harm to befall her children. With your position of power, and all the kind intentions of your heart, you swear to aid the young widow and restore her boys to her side.
- **Bandit About Town.** You've spent several years developing a reliable flow of underground goods, exchanged in the catacombs beneath the castle of Io Keep (or working for a similar "illegal" operation). But lately, members of your organization have reported seeing strange sights in the stone tunnels. A few of your fellow thieves have died, while others have disappeared. Though you've tried to ignore it, a nagging sense tells you that there's a connection between your interrupted goods and the missing children across the city. And there's only one way to find out for sure.
- **Suspicious Circumstances.** As his sibling-in-law, relative, steward, servant, etc., you discerned years ago that Nassarq was a snake, but you never imagined he would resort to this. Everywhere he went, for years, what once was good and right descended into chaos and death. You *know* with every fiber of your being that he is the one behind the disappearances, but how to prove it? It was he who bewitched the heart of your beloved away from you, Teela, she who had been so free of spirit. Within a month of marrying him, she died under mysterious causes. You didn't even get to say goodbye. But you did follow Nassarq south from Nocturne, and you don't mean to be fooled, not this time.

*You can find two unique character backgrounds for this campaign in Appendix C: the saudad and the vampire hunter.*



# The World of Azuria



## The World of Azuria

In this section, we discuss the world of Azuria, the homebrew setting we created together in our duet game and where we now set all of our adventures.

If you enjoy your adventures in Azuria and would like to add to your duet library, be sure to check out *Witches, Fae, & Foes*, a collection of six adventures set in Azuria, and if you like high fantasy fiction, check out Beth's novels, especially the *Age of Azuria* series, at [bethballbooks.com](http://bethballbooks.com).

## Adventure Beginnings: The Wards of Linolynn

The city-state of Linolynn is located on the western shores of the continent Caldara in the world of Azuria. It is the newest and most modest of the three major Caldaran city-states, with Hadvar to its north and Cyrinia to the south. To Linolynn's east lies the free city and trading port of Red's Cross near the Frostmaw Mountains, and the Stormside Forest stretches across the lands to the north.

The city of Linolynn is made up of four wards: the Earth and Water Wards, the Air Ward, and the Castle Ward. The Earth and Water Wards hold the majority of the city's residents, and they surround the Air Ward which, in turn, wraps around the Castle Ward. Disparity in income and class is a growing concern for Linolynn's young king, Arontis, who has made some forays into addressing inequality in the city, but it remains to be seen whether his efforts will take effect before the city's people attempt more dramatic interventions.

### The Earth Ward

The largest of the city's wards, the Earth Ward possesses several groups of residential districts interspersed with markets, inns, taverns, and shops. Many of this ward's residents work on farms outside the city walls while others assist the craftspersons and wealthier merchants and families of the Air or Castle Wards. Residents of Linolynn who wish to visit temples to Veloni, the god of agriculture, or Vida, goddess of rain, can find their temples here, surrounding by well-kept parks with smaller shrines

to the deities of the seasons: Zivena, goddess of life and spring; Yena, goddess of fire, heat, and summer; Gwenyth, goddess of autumn and the harvest; and Elena, goddess of winter and death.

### The Water Ward

The seaside city of Linolynn possesses an impressive navy for a metropolis of its size. These ships rest closest to the cliffside beneath Io Keep with the smaller docks open to Linolynn's populace stretching along the city's coastline. Fresh fish markets sit just off the docks where fishers' families can sell the day's catch to other city residents or tavern keepers. An expansive temple to Kleodna, goddess of the sea and passions, sits near the wall that separates the Water Ward from the Air Ward. Most of the lower-ranking members of Linolynn's navy live in this ward as well.

### The Air Ward

The Air Ward sits at a higher elevation on the cliffside above the Earth and Water Wards, separated from the lower wards by a stone wall. Aside from the nobility, the city's wealthiest residents reside here. The Air Ward also prides itself on being home to artists and fine craftspersons, though of course they come from established or up-and-coming lines. Many of the Ward's craftspersons employ apprentices from the Earth and Water Wards. The Air Ward's merchants provide goods and services for the Castle Ward's nobles, and many of the wealthiest families regularly attend events in Io Keep.

Most members of the City Watch live in dormitories in the Air Ward set aside for this purpose, though some choose to remain in the Earth or Water Wards with their families. Most of the city's high-ranking priests live in this ward and work either in the Temple of A'thea, god of trade and commerce favored by the city's merchants, or the Sun Temple, dedicated to the goddess Arrinia, that also serves a house of worship for deities without a temple of their own.

### The Castle Ward

The Castle Ward centers around the sweeping arches and stone walls of Io Keep, a pale gray castle characterized by brilliant glass windows and its position at the top of the cliff-face beside the Infinite Ocean. Io Keep has extensive grounds, gardens, and a carefully maintained Arboretum home to each known species of tree and plant in the city-state and its surroundings. The oldest noble families possess wings of their own inside the castle, and the minor nobility live in elegant guest wings during their visits to court.

In addition to its highest-ranking residents, including the royal family, Io Keep also houses the Royal Guard, and barracks for lower-tier soldiers in the city's army line the walls that separate the Castle and Air Wards. Members of the cavalry dwell in Scholars and sages have rooms near the Librarium, where they meet and study when not advising the king or his courtiers. Palace servants not assigned to a particular family live in the lower levels near the kitchens.

## Important NPCs in Linolynn

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This section details the most important NPCs that adventurers might come across before their journey to Steymhorod. More information about Ismael, Evony, and Reina can be found in the Appendix.

### Ismael Mornbow

Ismael is an experienced guard serving in Linolynn's City Watch. He is deeply passionate about uncovering the truth of what's happening with the disappearing children across the city and makes an eager ally if the PC needs martial assistance.

### Evony Ferne

Evony works as an apothecary apprentice in her mother's shop, The Happy Herbalist, but she is growing tired of life in Linolynn and hopes to expand her horizons outward. Somewhere out in the wider world, adventure and intriguing concoctions await!

### Reina Melusine

Reina has recently moved to Linolynn after the deaths of her family members in the Frostmaw Mountains. She works as a weaponsmith, learning the trade of infusing magic and metal. Behind her brooding façade, Reina knows more than she's yet said about the disappearances in Linolynn and further afield. If she meets someone who she believes is trying to make a difference, she just might be willing to share what she knows—somehow, these disappearances connect directly to the Nocturne Estate... the home of Lord Nassarq of Linolynn.

### Victoro Nassarq

Lord Victoro Nassarq, a now disgraced (thanks to the PC and party) Linolynnian nobleman is a **vampire** and a powerful one at that. Through a foul ceremony that cost the lives of a score of innocent souls, Nassarq proved his worthiness to Xarnev, god of undeath, and revived the sleeping magic of an ancient, cursed chest. Inside the magical chest, Nassarq found a vial of blood from the vampire Hugo, one of the two most trusted allies of Draego, the first vampire and the ruler of Steymhorod. Hugo

disappeared or was killed several millennia ago, but his bloodline lives on, now, in Nassarq.

## Slipping into Shadow: Welcome to Steymhorod

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Those who live on the prime plane in a world now known as Azuria—several thousand years after Steymhorod’s fall—are unaware of what happened to the land of Steymhorod. Over the millennia since the region descended into the Shadowlands, few have ventured across its borders. For non-vampires, such a visit is impossible save through the use of a portal.

The muddled history of the years before the great flood obscured the history of Steymhorod further still, and characters are unlikely to have heard of the region at all—its very memory has left the prime plane of Azuria. When your party arrives, they do not know where they are, and this will be one of their chief initial concerns as they grow acquainted with the region.

### History of Steymhorod

While Steymhorod was still a prosperous land in the northwestern reaches of Eldura, major and minor nobles from across the realms arrived, hoping to win the hand of the young Lord Draego, the noble ruler of all of Steymhorod. To everyone’s surprise, a minor noblewoman, Elena of Palais, captured the lord’s attention. The captivating Elena left Palais behind, and she remained with Lord Draego and became his wife.

Unfortunately, the couple’s happiness was short-lived. While pregnant with their first-born child, Elena became ill and needed a blood transfusion. One of her most trusted servants agreed and offered her lifeblood for her mistress—but the blood was cursed. Elena’s condition worsened. Large, seeping pustules covered her skin, keeping her in a constant state of agony. She could often be heard screaming late into the night because of the fire licking her skin and rushing through her blood.

Draego became obsessed with the blood curse. He waged an all-out war against surrounding kingdoms, thinking that by collecting blood he might find a cure for his ailing wife. It was said that in the Killing Fields of Steymhorod, the earth and the grasses drank more blood than water and developed a taste for wet red death. But despite all of this loss of life as Draego expanded the reach of his kingdom, no cure could be found.

Lord Draego was desperate. He called upon his allies, the Four Fae Sisters, ancient beings tied to the land and with whom he shared influence, love, and control over Steymhorod. Though he begged, they refused to help him save Elena or the child. Draego attacked the fae as they turned their back on him, destroying those who had been his allies for so long. The Sisters died alongside Elena, and the land fell into the Shadowlands, cursed.

A small flicker of light remained. The child lived, delivered as his mother passed on to the realm of Astralei. The distraught father did his best to raise his son and rule his land, but further tragedy awaited Draego. A few months into his young life, the healers discovered that Cadogan also had the blood disorder that had killed his mother.

The Sisters having failed him, Draego turned to a new set of powers, crying out for aid from any who would listen. Braemorn, god of undeath, answered him. The god promised to heal the boy and vowed that he and Draego would live forever. Draego agreed, and the first vampire came into being.

### *Known vs Unknown*

Most people in Steymhorod are unaware of the fact that they live in the Shadowlands. Similarly, the common understanding of what transpired with the fall or the Darkening is that the Four Sisters left—few beyond the *saudad* or the residents of the Green Vale know of Draego’s connection to the Sisters’ disappearance.

## Steymhorod’s Major Cities

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There are three major cities in Steymhorod: Saint Sebastian, Barasov, and Rasonov. The Witchwood is home to the witches and their servitors, and the town of Willowhold rests inside the forest’s borders. The village Umbra sits at the base of Castle Cadogan; a pack of werewolves make their den at Wolf’s Head Peak, and a collection of fae and druids secretly dwell within the Green Vale. The desecrated temples to the Four Fae Sisters lie in the heart of each natural element—the mountains, the rivers, the forests, and the fields.

### Saint Sebastian

The walled city of Saint Sebastian is the first the adventurers are likely to come across upon their arrival in Steymhorod. The population of Saint Sebastian is aging rapidly, most of their young residents leaving to join the Ring of Light, a cult that surrounds the city walls, or traveling to the city of Barasov for greater excitement and opportunity.

The mayor of Saint Sebastian is an ancient [seemingly] human man named Sebastian. He maintains strict rules about who may or may not enter the city as well as who may remain after the gates are shut at dusk every night to protect the residents from the dangers beyond the walls.

### *The Ring of Light*

A little over twenty years ago, a middle-aged, bald man with dark brown skin asked for admittance to Saint Sebastian after sundown. Sebastian refused, which was functionally a death sentence. Between the witches, wildlings, werewolves, and vampire spawn, the man would surely be devoured in the dark. The man sat in front of the gates, a lantern by his side.

Dawn rose the next day, and the man remained. He walked through the city streets, preaching a message of hope and light, of safety beyond the walls, so long as the residents remained in his care. Many joined him. After the first year of his residence, a wave of refugees fled from Barasov to Saint Sebastian, and they too joined the Ring of Light. They built wooden shelters around the city, leaning them against Saint Sebastian's sturdy walls.

### **Barasov**

Barasov is the largest, most developed city in all of Steymhorod. Though officially ruled by Lady Divine Odalyde, functionally, it is divided into three sections: one ruled by the nobles, another by the Bloodletters, and the third by the Watchers. The nobility's portion of the city is the wealthiest, and each of the five noble families has ties to either the Bloodletters or the Watchers.

A sharp line runs through the city between the Bloodletters' and the Watchers' territory. Residents pay for protection depending on which of the two sections they call home, though for the most part, the citizens of Barasov try to remain separate from the inter-guild conflicts. Twenty years ago, the fighting between the two guilds intensified to the point that blood ran through the streets and many innocents died, caught in the crossfire. Those who could fled the city and made their way to Saint Sebastian and Willowhold.

A mysterious fog hangs over the minds of those who leave Barasov, slowly erasing their memories of the city, making recollection more difficult the longer they are away.

### **Rasonov**

Not much is known of this city to the east of Draego's castle, but groups of hooded riders occasionally

burst forth from its gates, quelling disturbances in the countryside before returning to their homes. No one in Barasov or Saint Sebastian has had contact with a citizen of Rasonov for several decades.

Nevertheless, several rumors persist about the place and its formidable walls. Some say that Rasonov is populated by sentient, isolationist ghouls. Others claim that Rasonov is the home of a mad wizard who protects incredible treasures in the labyrinth within the walls. The most improbable claim is that it is within Rasonov that resistance to Draego's dominion over Steymhorod gathers strength.

### **Witchwood**

The Witchwood is a vast forest that spans the region of Steymhorod. Like the rest of the region, the fall to the Shadowlands corrupted the wood and its residents. A single path, the Spindlewood Road, curls through the forest, connecting the vast woodland to the other elements of Steymhorod. The Witchwood is ever-expanding, slowly encroaching on neighboring cities and towns as well as the fields and rivers.

### **Willowhold**

The small settlement of Willowhold sits in the middle of the Witchwood, its residents protecting themselves from the horrors of the forest as best as they're able. So far, the residents have managed to beat back the ever-encroaching Witchwood and ward off the many horrors of the wild.

### **Castle Cadogan**

Lord Draego and his son Cadogan live in Castle Cadogan, a towering structure built into the region's tallest mountain, and the village of Umbra lies at the castle's base. The vampire lord has few interactions with the villagers below, though they dwell always beneath the castle's shadow.

### **Wolf's Head Peak**

Far to the north, a pack of werewolves have made their home in Wolf's Head Peak. Their alphas, Tavion and Solane, have led the pack for the last decade, but a rogue member of their pack, Vicq, vies for power.

### **Green Vale**

The Green Vale resides in the southern reaches of Steymhorod and is the sole remaining fae forest in the land. The first several acres of forest are disguised by a false Witchwood, but within its borders, a conclave of fae and druids remain in harmony with the land. However, they are divided as to their responsibility to the rest of Steymhorod. Over the years, a few different groups have attempted to revive the Sisters' Fanes while others

have made pacts with the vampires, werewolves, or the witches.

While some residents of the Vale would say that they are unaware of whether or not Lord Draego knows of their whereabouts, the wisest among them would hold this as a certainty—when he destroyed the Sisters, Draego became one with the land. He knows of all within its borders.

### Four Fanes

There are four fanes, or sacred sites of the Sisters. In Draego's rage at the Sisters' betrayal, he destroyed the fanes, and the records of their locations were lost over time. Each Sister had a fane at the heart of her element: Diannan, the Forest Fane; Arduenne, the Mountain Fane, Eronia, the Field Fane; and Lena, the River Fane.

## People Groups of Steymhorod

Steymhorod is a region primarily populated by humans. It is ruled by a vampire lord and also home to werewolves, witches, fae, and *saudad*.

### Vampires

Lord Draego, the first vampire, created several others in the early throes of his immortality. His deal with Braemorn inflicted his son with his curse, and he passed the bloodline on to a few others, most notably his military commander Malthael and his chief political strategist, Hugo. All vampires remain under Draego's thrall and are connected to him on some level, but he cannot directly harm them, just as he cannot harm himself.

Draego's blood flows through the veins of all vampires. The further they are from the original bloodline, the weaker they are in their cursed state. There are two remaining vampires of the elder bloodline: Malthael and Hugo. Malthael's servants are violent and bloodthirsty, wreaking havoc on the prime plane of Azuria with large-scale slaughters. Hugo's descendants are more conniving, selecting their targets with care and concocting intricate schemes to avoid detection.

The campaign's primary villain is a vampire named Lord Nassarq. The former human nobleman's transformation occurred with the help of an ancient relic that he discovered in his castle in the kingdom of Linolynn that belonged to Braemorn's servants. He directly imbibed Hugo's blood, reviving the elder line and amassing great power to himself over a short period of time. Three vampires—Rodian, Olya, and Anya—owe their souls to Hugo, either through their transformations or on behalf of deals they

made with him, and they are likewise bound to serve Nassarq, Hugo's blood-reincarnation.

### Werewolves

With Steymhorod's fall, the curse of lycanthropy worsened in Steymhorod. The pack originally served Arduenne, the Fae goddess of the mountains, but without her presence, their wolf side was corrupted alongside all the native wolves of the region. They remain loyal to Arduenne, worshipping an aspect of her spirit, the Wolf Mother. Lycanthropy in Steymhorod cannot be healed save for the intervention—and therefore resurrection—of Arduenne herself.

*Note: We suggest keeping this information concealed from your players until they are interacting with werewolves in the adventure. These altered curse rules are meant to help increase the threat of curses and diseases which lose a lot of their power with even low-level spellcasting. Being a cursed land, Steymhorod enhances these predicaments, but ultimately, this change is up to you as the GM. You can read more about altered rules for lycanthropy in Appendix B.*

### Witches

The witches were once the devoted followers of Diannan, the leader of the Sisters and the Archfae ruler of the forest. When their fae goddess disappeared, the witches' magic twisted, the spirits they called warped by shadow. Their desire to protect the Forest Fane remains, and they hunt trespassers through their lands, especially those who stray from the Spindle Path that winds through the woods, crossing rivers and valleys.

The witches hold sway over two other groups that roam the lands of Steymhorod as well: the wildlings and the wights. The wildlings traverse the forests, hunting creatures and travelers alike. If called upon, they will do the witches' bidding for a favor or a fee, though they are also willing to work for the vampires.

The wights travel in a mounted herd, roaming the fields between the vast forest and the city of Barasov in ghostly armor. Several rumors circulate through the lands as to the nature of their hunts, be they for food, vengeance, entertainment, or another cause. Their leader is missing her right hand, lost in a battle long ago.

### Fae

Fae from both the Bright- and Shadowlands reside in the Green Vale, teaching a conclave of druids, green witches, and other fae beings their ways. A few other

fae roam the lands of Steymhorod in disguise, disrupting the habits of the other people groups save the saudad, for whom they have a fondness.

## Saudad

The saudad are interplanar travelers, displaced from the city of Orison after it was swallowed by the ocean as Reka's sacrifice to Alessandra. A small enclave of saudad were traveling through Steymhorod when it fell into the Shadowlands, and they have been trapped ever since, unable to venture the multiverse. The saudad are storytellers and maintain much of the lore of old, down to when Lewellyn and Pandora brought the planes into existence. They travel freely across Draego's lands unhindered by vampires, his responsibility for their plight resulting in a rare moment of compassion on behalf of the vampire lord.

Their extensive cultural memory helps to protect them from the evils that walk the land as well. While many of the townsfolk and those hiding behind the walls of Steymhorod's cities remain unaware of how to protect themselves from the wandering undead, witches, and werewolves, the saudad remember, passing the knowledge down through generations. Their leaders have ties to the Sisters, and many saudad have a close relationship with the natural world as keepers of her stories.

## Steymhorod Major NPCs

The key people and story details for the Land of Vampires campaign.

### Lord Draego, Ruler of Steymhorod

Lord and ruler of the land of Steymhorod, Draego observes the party from afar, especially their interactions with the Fae Sisters. He is the first vampire, his undeath brought about in his desperation to save his son, Cadogan, from the same illness that took his wife, Elena, from him.

*[We have not written in many direct encounters between the party and Draego, but our hope is that Draego takes on a unique personality and relationship with the party at your table. Overall, he is more curious about the party than hostile toward them, and his prowess as a mage is great enough that however the party feels about him, they are not a threat. He may also act to ensure the PC remains in Steymhorod after they destroy Nassarq.]*

*Lord Draego understands that the PC is destined to change his realm. The exact parameters of this destiny become more clear in Land of Vampires Part Two, the campaign arc to follow this one, where the PC*

*confronts a greater threat to Steymhorod than even Lord Nassarq posed.]*

## Lord Nassarq

A twisted, power-hungry vampire who has run out of places to escape to, Lord Nassarq continues in his mission to amass greater strength and advantage to himself. By the end of Part Two, the party understands that Nassarq has set his eye on adding them to his ever-expanding army of capable, versatile vampiric thralls. But the vampire does not intend for such a fate to be benevolent. The party has worked against him enough that he wishes to demonstrate his own strength before manipulating them to his will. They will suffer loss and pain, and then, when the time is right, he will take everything from them. And once the party is his to command, nothing will stand between him and Draego's rule.

## Archfae in Azuria

Depending on the party's origins, they may be well-versed in or relatively unaware of the Archfae of Azuria.

Thousands of years ago, the Titan of Nature, Verdigris, asked her lover, the Titan of Space, to help her prevent a war between the forces of Darkness and Light by showing how the two might intermingle. Izadra embraced Verdigris for the last time, and the two transformed back into their bodies that contained entire worlds. The vastness of space divided nature into three—three lands, three expressions, separated from one another but held in the close grasp of the black, starry sea. Verdigris's sacrifice created the three Planes of Life: the Shadowlands, the prime plane (known as Eldura, in the past and Azuria now), and the Brightlands.

The Archfae emerged out of the divisions of the three planes as the granddaughters of Verdigris. Their power, when bound to a landscape, is similar to that of a demigoddess. Four of Verdigris's granddaughters, the daughters of Lyric, bound themselves to the enchanted lands of Steymhorod where they ruled alongside Draego's family for a few thousand years before the lands fell into darkness.

## The Four Fae Sisters

Ages ago, before the fall of Steymhorod, the four Fae Sisters held sway over the natural domains of the region. Each Sister had a fane at the heart of her element: Diannan, the Forest Fane, Arduenne, the Mountain Fane, Eronia, the Field Fane, and Lena, the River Fane. The first vampire Lord Draego betrayed The Sisters and divided their essence as he plunged their hearts and homes into corruption along with his kingdom.

### Eronia, Lady of the Fields

Said to be clad in sunshine, the Lady of the Fields oversaw the bountiful harvests of Steymhorod and

ensured that all within her domain had plenty. Throughout the year, planting and harvest feasts honored Eronia and asked for her blessing.

*Arduenne, Lady of the Mountains*

Arduenne was ever a lover and protector of the beasts of the land, especially Steymhorod's wolves, who found solace and protection in the embrace of her mountains. The Archfae maintained a special relationship with Fenrir, the wolf god, and housed his second people, the Lycan, when they fell under threat. After Steymhorod fell, the Lycan's blessing became a curse, a transformation and aggression they could no longer control.

## **Guides**

During their time in Steymhorod, the party has encountered several powerful NPCs who can serve as helpful allies. Typically, these NPCs have regional knowledge, are in a leadership position, or have powerful abilities that could assist the party in furthering their goals. We refer to these NPCs as guides, and GM's should select the guide that makes the most sense for their table at a given time. Potential guides that the party has met so far include: Sebastian of St. Sebastian, the Blessed Father of the Ring of Light, Trista of the Guardians of the Green Vale, or Arethusa of her Enclave.

Guides make for a great resource when the party is lost, unsure, or discouraged. They help remind adventurers of their true path and purpose and assure them that fate is working in their favor, however dark events around them seem.



# Chapter One: A Dark Destiny

## Prologue: Snatched

With classic flair, the campaign opens in a tavern. While there, the PC overhears rumors about children going missing across the seaside city of Linolynn. No one seems to know the cause. The PC can react to this as they wish. Then, on their way home, without warning, a child vanishes before their eyes. Are they courageous enough to give chase and discover where the child has gone?

## Campaign Hook Background

For several weeks now, disturbing disappearances have wreaked havoc across the city of Linolynn, loosing untold heartbreak for the families of the rich and poor. Most of the victims are children though adolescents are not immune. The City Watch and Royal Guard have followed many a dead end in their attempts to uncover who is behind the attacks but thus far have been unsuccessful.

### *Who is Responsible?*

The attacks began a week after the return of Lord Victorio Nassarq to Io Keep when the vampire began to prey on the children of the Earth and Water Wards of Linolynn, working his way up to the Air

Ward as well. Nassarq lures the children into the catacombs beneath Io Keep. Some he transforms into **vampire spawn** while others he sacrifices to Xarmev, god of undeath. Nassarq hopes to increase his own power by cutting short the lives of Linolynn's children.

Over the course of the introductory arc (Chapters One and Two), the PC learns of Lord Nassarq and of his sudden relocation to the Nocturne estate. They discover his dedication to Xarmev and his foul work in the bowels of Io Keep, but the depths of his corruption and his larger plans for himself and his service to Xarmev do not become apparent until they find the vampire at Nocturne.

The trajectory of Chapter One points toward Lord Nassarq. Once they find and track him down at the end of Chapter Two, the PC pursues him into Steymhorod, potentially leaving behind everything and everyone they have ever known. At this point in the adventure, of course, the PC is not yet aware of what awaits them.

The other backstory goal we have for this introductory adventure is for the PC to develop a hatred for Lord Nassarq that will drive their pursuit of him through Steymhorod over the course of the campaign. Depending on the character creation choices you have made at your table, this hatred of vampires (or the undead) may already exist or may develop during the adventure.



## The Three Sisters' Pub

The Three Sisters' is a two-story inn and tavern located in the Earth Ward near the intersection with the Air and Water Wards. Imelda, Rosalind, and Guinevere inherited the building from their mother Evaline, a prominent herbalist and apothecary for Linolynn's citizenry. Guinevere still carries on her mother's work, while Imelda and Rosalind see to the daily running of the inn and tavern.

*A map for the area around the Three Sisters' Tavern and the tavern itself is located in Appendix D.*

As your adventure begins, read or paraphrase the following:

Lantern light shines from the mottled glass windows of the Three Sisters' Pub, casting a faint glow on the cobblestone streets and the two-story structure's gray exterior stones. You catch sight of Rosalind through the window, her signature red apron and curly brown hair making her easy to distinguish from the weary postures of her guests. The heavy wooden door creaks on its hinges ahead of you as a few smiling patrons step out of the tavern and into the twilight.

The PC's backstory and personality shape how they're received in the Three Sisters'. A few things to consider as you set the scene:

- Does the PC have any allies here? Is this a tavern they've frequented before, or have they only just arrived in the city?
- What's brought the PC to this tavern? Do they come every day after work? Did a trusted friend recommend the tavern to them or are they searching for someone here?
- What do they already know about Linolynn, and what might they be trying to learn?
- How well do they blend into the hard-working, primarily human populace having an ale or two following their day's labor?

### Rumors

The PC has the opportunity to pick up gossip from around the city inside the Three Sisters', especially as it's one of the few inns frequented by residents of the Earth, Water, and Air Wards. The rumors vary in their degrees of truth, but their trajectory should propel the PC toward finding out more about the children and their disappearances.

Depending on the PC's social standing in the tavern and their chosen demeanor, ask for Charisma checks for their interactions with the other patrons and vary the DC accordingly. For example, a DC 12

Charisma (Persuasion) check would allow a PC familiar with the Three Sisters' to probe a fellow tavern-goer for more information while the same roll would draw a suspicious eye for a newcomer with the dust of the road from far-off places still clinging to their cloak.

- A middle-aged woman holds her hand over her mouth, her eyes wide. "It's true," her companion whispers, "gone without a trace." If the PC keeps listening and/or interacts with the women, they learn that the pair's mutual acquaintance Alianore awoke that very morning to find her sweet young Henri, a precocious boy of 8, missing from his bed.
- Imelda pours drinks at the bar, her silver-streaked brown hair pulled back in a tight braid. She listens intently as a group of farmers discuss seeing strange shapes in the clouds and a dark shadow hanging over the city. "It's unseasonable weather, this. Winter hasn't yet released her claws. It's a sign of Zivena's (goddess of spring) displeasure."
- Guinevere's workroom sits tucked away down the hall from the main tavern. She's seen an increased demand for all sorts of protective herbs from commoners and the Royal Guard alike, but she hasn't yet been able to discern a pattern in all the reports. A friend of hers, Ismael, is part of the City Watch. He's worked a few of the cases, and he should return the next morning after his shift with news.



## Disappearing Witness

As midnight approaches, the atmosphere in and around the tavern begins to change. Read or paraphrase the following:

As night wears on inside the Three Sisters', voices grow more hushed and shoulders hunch over closely held drinks. Beyond the tavern walls, a heavy fog rolls over the streets, clinging to the shadowy corners between buildings. Howling winds rattle the windows and screech past the peaks of the tavern roof. The wind stops, and for a moment, all is quiet... until a woman's scream pierces the stillness outside: "Lily!"

In the house next door to the Three Sisters', Matilda Greene has just found her seven-year-old daughter Lily missing from her bed. Ideally, the PC and several tavern patrons spring outside to uncover what has happened.

If the PC hurries outside the tavern, they find:

- A distraught human woman in her early thirties (Matilda) screaming her daughter's name and running back and forth across the street, trying to find her.
- A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a darting shadow at the end of the street. If the PC pursues, ask for another DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to determine the shadow's direction. [On a success, the PC finds that the shadowed silhouette is moving toward the Tri-Ward Crossway, where the Water, Earth, and Air Wards intersect, a few blocks away.]
- A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the PC to find a faint trail through the mud of small, shallow footprints. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the same information as above, that the footprints are heading toward the intersection of the three wards.

*[Having the player make a Perception or an Investigation check is up to the GM's discretion. We recommend having the player describe their actions once their PC steps outside the tavern and then you can decide which roll best fits their description. (For new players, this is a great spot to encourage descriptions in the first person, e.g. "I run outside and look around" rather than "My character runs outside...") Alternatively, you may wish to select whichever stat is higher and make that your default throughout the campaign in situations where the two skill checks would result in similar information.]*

If the PC is not in a hurry to leave the tavern, Matilda runs inside, begging for help. The PC arrives too late

to perceive the shadowy figure, but they do arrive in time to search for the trail of footprints.

*[If the player chose the Personal Loss character backstory, you might revise this scene to play out the loss of a child the PC knows or have an NPC the PC trusts speak with them after the incident and see if they open up about the child missing in their own life.]*

### WHAT IF THEY MISS THE FOOTPRINTS' TRAIL?

If the PC fails the checks above, a like-minded member of the City Watch (like Ismael) can assist them in uncovering the trail of footprints. The City Watch arrives shortly after Lily's disappearance, too late to spot the shadow but early enough to help. They've assisted with enough of the disappearance cases by now to be careful not to disrupt any evidence that may be hidden at the scene.

If the PC struggles to find the footprints even with assistance, someone with knowledge of the city can helpfully deduce from the inn's proximity to the Tri-Ward Crossway that this is a likely direction for the culprit to have gone.

### Calling the City Watch

If the PC calls for help or seeks out the City Watch, they encounter Guinevere's friend Ismael, a capable guard who has worked his way up the ranks of the Watch for the last several years. Though he is generally regarded as a reliable, level-headed serviceman, Ismael grows more disillusioned by the inefficiencies of the Watch with each passing day.

*Ismael uses the guard adventuring companion stat block (Appendix).*

### The Tri-Ward Crossway

However the PC finds their way to the intersection, ask for a new DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check once they reach the area. On a success, the PC notices a paired set of footprints—one small and one adult-male-sized—leading into the Air Ward. The trail fades away a few blocks into the wealthy ward, but this is a better clue than the guards have found in weeks. *[Similar clues appear in the sections below if the PC fails this Perception check.]*

Ismael claps the PC on the shoulder and thanks them for their help. He says that they've all been working extra shifts, and it's started to wear on the guards and the castle's soldiers. He heard of three getting put on leave after they invented a story of a horrifying encounter beneath the castle itself.

The guards invite the PC out for a drink if they wish to join. Ismael plans to return to the Three Sisters' to

tell Matilda what they discovered about her daughter. The PC is welcome to accompany him as well.

## Part One: The Search Continues

Three days of searching for Lily pass unsuccessfully, and the guards give up on finding Lily after another child disappears from the Water Ward. However, this doesn't mean that the PC needs to be idle or their searches fruitless during this time. *[As much as possible, allow the player to direct what they're investigating and when. Alternate between roleplay encounters with possible witnesses and the PC's contacts inside the city and summaries of how the PC spends their time.]*

- If the PC wants assistance in their search for Lily, Ismael arranges a few days off-duty to help the PC in their search.
- The PC can follow up on Ismael's lead about the soldiers dismissed from Io Keep. Use the **Three Shaken Soldiers** sidebar below to guide the PC's finding and questioning of the soldiers.
- Next door to the Tilted Cup, where the PC finds the three soldiers if they so choose, they meet a second possible adventuring companion, Evony Ferne, an apothecary apprentice. Her mother, Leilena Ferne, is the proprietress of The Happy Herbalist, a quaint, well-kept shop where the PC can pick up healing potions or other materials they might need on their adventures... if they have the money to pay, of course.

*Evony uses the crafter adventuring companion stat block (Appendix A).*

### Three Shaken Soldiers

The three dismissed soldiers are washing away their troubles in a beloved bar in the Air Ward, the Tilted Cup. Marti, the bartender, first ensures the PC means the three soldiers no harm. He's been keeping an eye on them since they returned, distressed, after making their report to their superiors. Marti warns the PC that the three are still rather jumpy after their encounter, but he thinks they're telling the truth.

**What happened:** Gavron, Sal, and Lacey were following up on strange sounds they heard coming from the catacombs while they were off-duty and having a drink or two in the Water Ward. The tunnels are closed off, so there shouldn't be anyone down there, and certainly not late at night. Lacey galvanized her companions, and the three decided to investigate.

They found the catacombs gate unlocked, a bad sign. But there was worse to follow. The three soldiers followed the noise as best they could, though they got turned around a

few times. Then, somewhere deep in the tunnels, a shadowy force attacked them! It shattered their lantern, and they've been plagued ever since by haunting visions of screeching bats and croaking ravens. Sal still sees ghosts around every corner.

### An Undead Encounter

You can incorporate this encounter at any point during the PC's three days of searching, ideally at night. A **shadow** waits for them, hiding in the corner of an alleyway, sent by its master to track down those responsible for asking too many questions.

As they comb the city streets for clues, ask for a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by the shadow's Dexterity (Stealth). [Remember to use the shadow's Shadow Stealth ability.] The **shadow** attacks the PC once the PC steps within 40 feet of its hiding place. *[Use caution with the Strength Drain to avoid PC death on bad rolls. This encounter should heighten the stakes while maintaining fun.]*

### Another Clue Washes Up

Back in the Three Sisters' Tavern (or wherever the PC spends their time in the city) they overhear a second, more aggressive set of rumors passed between a group of the tavern's patrons.

A thin man with a bushy mustache holds four of his fellow patrons enraptured as he recounts a strange occurrence in the Water Ward. "One of them parents finally lost it, I think," he says. "That's why the guard washed up. They're just too afraid to say it. What if we all turn on them? Won't be so high and mighty then."

If the PC continues listening or decides to get involved, they learn that a soldier's body washed up from one of the sewer entrances that connects to the catacombs beneath Io Keep that morning. The body suffered grievous wounds, and they're still working to identify who the deceased is. Who- or whatever was behind the soldier's killing drained almost all his blood before tossing his corpse into the sewers. It's only by some twisted luck or fortune that the body found its way to the sewer entrance nearest the catacombs instead of washing out to sea.

Either Ismael or Evony tells the PC that they heard rumors of a new arrival in the city who had experienced similar disappearances in her village home in the Frostmaw Mountains. She tried to speak to the guards upon her arrival in Linolynn a few months ago, but they ignored her. Now, she works as an apprentice for a talented weaponsmith, learning the trade. The shop, The Flame and the Forge, is located in a central neighborhood of the Earth Ward.

Perhaps they should travel there first before taking their trip into the catacombs.



## The Final Ally

The Flame and the Forge is a well-respected smithy in Linolynn's Earth Ward, named after an ancient hero, Garreth Stozdack, whose particular story is lost to most but revered by smiths Azuria-wide. Inside The Flame and the Forge, a young human female with fierce, white-blue eyes greets the PC coldly, saying her mentor is out. It takes some careful persuading to draw Reina out of her carefully crafted shell. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check piques her interest in the PC's work in Linolynn. The PC rolls with advantage if they mention that they are trying to find the missing children.

*Reina uses the crafter adventuring companion stat block (Appendix A).*

If the PC convinces Reina to open up to them, she reveals the following information:

- Her village in the Frostmaw Mountains saw similar disappearances. Her two younger brothers and her mother disappeared, and her father died trying to find them.

- Reina's father believed the disappearances held some connection to the Nocturne Estate, though he could never say for certain why.
- Nocturne is part of Linolynn's territory, and the noble, Lord Nassarq, lives here in the city some of the time. That's why Reina came here.
- Some of her experience in the mountains led her to believe that the thing responsible has some sort of connection to or interest in undead creatures. *[Unless the PC is incredibly persuasive {successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check and carefully phrased questions} Reina avoids revealing that she saw her younger brothers turned into zombies.]*

## A Second Undead Encounter

A **specter** waits in the shadows outside The Flame and the Forge, drawn by Reina's anger over the loss of her family and the lingering scent of death Nassarq placed over the PC during the encounter with the shadow. *[Similar to the shadow encounter, use caution with Life Drain to avoid PC death. As we note in Special Stakes Considerations at the end of the chapter, you can use NPC death as a way of heightening the stakes of the encounters, building up the PC's hatred of Nassarq, but near-death experiences of close companions are often just as meaningful without pushing the player's emotions.]*

## Part Two: The Catacombs

After speaking with Reina, the party follows up on the clues of the bloodless soldier's body washing up from the sewers that run beneath Io Keep and the three soldiers experiencing some sort of spectral attack in the catacombs. They travel to the edge of the Water Ward and its intersection with the Air Ward, where entrances to the sewers and the catacombs beneath Io Keep lie.

Once there, read or paraphrase the following:

Concerned guards and curious citizenry mill outside the entrance to the catacombs following the discovery of the soldier's body.

The PC's companion remarks that it might be easier to sneak into the catacombs after dark instead of trying to persuade one of the guards to let them pass. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the guards to let the PC into the entrance of the catacombs. They make this check with advantage if Ismael is with them. If the PC is sneaking in, a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check lets them past the guards undetected during the day and a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check lets them past the guards at night.

The areas listed below correspond to the **Catacombs Beneath Io Keep** map found in Appendix D. Unless marked otherwise, there are no light sources inside the catacombs aside from what the PC brings with them and uses. *[The PC's adventuring companion may help them prepare for the darkness of the catacombs before venturing into the tunnels. This is also a good place for the player to practice consulting their inventory if that is an enjoyable part of your play-style.]*

## Area One: Entrance

A series of stairs and winding tunnels lead from the edge of the Air Ward to the carved reaches beneath the castle of Io Keep.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals an abandoned leather pack. While it appears inconsequential, the pack is actually a *bag of holding*. It contains one *potion of healing* and 15gp.

## Area Two

This room marks the entrance to the Nassarq family crypts beneath Io Keep.

Double doors open onto a large tomb where two marble caskets lie in state. The bronze-etched plaques that sit on top of the caskets read "Here lies Amelia Romeli Nassarq, beloved mother and wife" and "Here lies Justus Donovan Nassarq, beloved father and husband."

## Area Three: Nassarq's Bedchamber

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the lock for this room's heavy wooden door is broken.

Lanterns flare to life the moment the thick oak door swings open. Inside, burgundy tapestries hang from the walls, and two coffins rest on an elevated barrow with an altar piled with bones and candles between them. The room's two recesses also hold altars of bones and candles.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the altar on the left-hand side of the room honors the dark goddess Alessandra and the altar between the two coffins honors the god of undeath, Xarmev. If anyone steps within 5 feet of the altar on the right, the **will-o'-wisp** that Nassarq left in the room

reveals itself and attacks. The will-o'-wisp has the following changes to its stat block:

- Its shock attack averages 4 (1d8) lightning damage.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check made near the coffins reveals that the coffin on the right has been opened recently—its top is not fully closed.

The coffin on the left is sealed and trapped. If someone tries to open it, a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check sets off the trap. Pressurized acid bursts out of the gap between the coffin and its lid, dealing 4 (1d8) acid damage.

## Secret Door

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or Intelligence (Investigation) reveals the secret door that leads from the entrance to Area Three to Area Four.

*[If the check fails the first time, before the PC investigates Area Three, they hear a child's cry through the wall when they return to the area next to the secret door.]*

## Area Four: The Open Prison Doors

Four empty stone cells rest on the right-hand side of this dank catacomb hall. Their metal doors have swung open.

At the end of the hall, crouching in front of closed door to a second tomb, **1x young vampire spawn (Appendix A) per character** lies in wait. The spawn attack as soon as they realize that the creatures coming down the hall are not Nassarq.

This is a close-quarters fight, but the party does not have to remain in this hall for the combat. When the young vampire spawn attack, they might retreat into either Area Two or Area Three to have more space to combat the child vampires.

After three rounds (or sooner if the PC is near death), metallic footsteps come pounding down the hall. Help has arrived.

## Saved by the Stormguard

Just in time, Stormguard Basha (**knight**), the leader of Linolynn's army and personal guard of King Arontis, bursts into the chamber with **4x guards** and **1x priest** at his side. They help the party finish off the remaining **young vampire spawn** and close the combat.

## Area Five: Lily's Hiding Place

Muffled sobs echo out from the crack below the closed wooden door to this tomb.

The cries are coming from Lily, who is hiding from the young vampire spawn on the floor behind the coffin that rests inside this burial chamber. She has wrapped her hands around her head and made herself as small as possible.

Once someone finds Lily and convinces her that they mean her no harm, she agrees to come with them and asks to taken back to her mother.

Lily desperately wants to return home and escape the horrors of the catacombs, but if someone asks her about her experience, she relays the following information about her captor:

- A pretty song woke her from sleep, and she followed it to see the faery it was coming from.
- When she got outside, there was a pale man instead, but he was very nice and offered her cake if she would just take his hand and walk a short way down the street.
- She doesn't know how she got to this scary, dark place.
- The man who took her talked to her, and he looked much scarier than he did the first time. His teeth were so long, just like the other children who were with him.
- The man left Lily behind, and he unlocked the other cells where he was keeping the children with long teeth. She ran into this room and hid from them.

Lily does not remember how she got from her home to the catacombs. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check allows the party or the priest to conclude that she has been held under some sort of sleeping draught or stunning charm. The priest assures the party that aside from the emotional trauma she's experienced, she should be able to make a full recovery.

*[If the PC's selected backstory entails that a child they know has gone missing, they may find that child here, or, at GM's discretion, that child might remain missing for the time being, to be found at the Nocturne Estate in Chapter Two.]*

Basha commends the PC and their companions for their bravery and asks that they come with him to his office in the castle to debrief. *[If the PC wants to escort Lily back to Matilda, Basha requests that they*

*visit Io Keep to speak with him as soon as can be.]* The priest and two guards stay behind the cleanse the area and dispose of the bodies.

## Part Three: Preparing for Pursuit

Needless to say, Matilda is overjoyed at the return of her daughter. King Arontis grants the young family a special dispensation of 100 gp per annum to provide for their needs and a prestigious education for Lily once she is old enough. The soldiers and City Watch split the duties of discovering which children Nassarq transformed into young vampire spawn and which ones remain missing.

The guards at the castle gates allow the PC and their companion(s) admittance into the castle and bow as they pass. One of the captains, clad in the king's colors of periwinkle and gold, leads the party to the stormguard's office.

Basha rises as the PC enters and asks that they take a seat, offering them any refreshment they desire. With great emotion, he thanks them for their service to the city and its children. Because of their bravery and dedication, the whole of Linolynn can sleep soundly this night.

The wretched noble, Lord Nassarq, left the castle only a few days ago to return to his northern estate of Nocturne. Basha lays his palms on his desk and fixes his brown eyes on the PC: Are they willing to see this quest through? Will they travel to Nocturne and drive a stake through the villain's heart, ending this horror once and for all? Hopefully, the PC accepts the call to adventure and agrees to travel north to Nocturne, which we'll cover in the next chapter.

### Reward

Before they set off, though, Basha has a special reward for the PC: either a *ring of protection* or a *cloak of protection* and a *+1 weapon* of the PC's choosing. He also gives them *two potions of healing* and one *common potion* of GM's choice.

*[GMs, this is a great moment to personalize a magical item for the PC or for the Stormguard to commission a special weapon from Reina's mentor. You can also take advantage of the PC's relationship with Evony and her mother and include a special potion that they've crafted for the PC.]*

Basha also gives the PC 300gp as a reward and 100gp to their companion(s).

### Leveling Up and Making Choices

At the close of this chapter, the PC should level up to level two. It's also a great time for the PC to choose their adventuring companion. Once their selection(s) is made, level up the companion(s) to level two as well.

Have the PC wrap up any additional business they have in Linolynn as the next adventure picks up with them setting out from the city gates. If applicable, they may want to RP with their existing friends or family members in Linolynn and bid farewell to any

of their new acquaintances who are not coming with them to Nocturne.

### Special Stakes Considerations

At GM's discretion, allow the PC to take more than one adventuring companion with them to Nocturne if they so desire. Though the PC does not know it yet, the close of Chapter Two ends with them stepping through a portal into Steymhorod. The PC and any and all of their surviving companions have to decide if they want to set aside all they've ever known to pursue Nassarq or not.

# Appendix A

This appendix holds stat blocks for creatures and NPCs, magic item descriptions, and backstory details for NPCs and adventuring companions. NPCs are listed in alphabetical order by their name rather than their creature type (for example, Evony Ferne as opposed to “crafter adventuring companion”).

## Creatures and NPCs

### Anya Petrovetta, Vampire

#### Assassing

*The conniving, insecure, and treacherous assassin. Undercut, floppy brown hair, grey eyes.*

Anya Petrovetta is the most recent addition to Lord Nassarq’s perverse little family. She was the thirteenth child born to the powerful Petrovetta family of Barasov. Perpetually overlooked and undervalued, she found solace in quiet and shadow and solitude away from the boisterous antics of her massive family. Mostly unseen and ignored, she grew to deeply resent her family and one night wished for all of them to just go away.

That night there was a massive uprising in the city. The downtrodden of Barasov raided the outskirts of High Garden where the Petrovettas and other wealthy families lived. Anya watched from a hiding spot as her family was drug out into the streets, humiliated, and killed by the crowds. After they moved on, she fled.

The mean streets of Barasov were unkind to the petty Anya. One night, after suffering a beating for petty theft that left her teetering on the brink of death, a wealthy, handsome young man appeared. Her life was over, but a new one had just begun.

#### Anya Petrovetta (Vampire Assassin)

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (11d8 + 11)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Wis +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +7

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** the languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Assassinate.** During its first turn, the vampire has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn’t taken a turn. Any hit the vampire scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

**Evasion.** If the vampire is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the vampire instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, the vampire deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the vampire that isn’t incapacitated and the vampire doesn’t have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Nondetection.** The vampire’s true nature cannot be discerned by a *detect evil and good* or equivalent spell, increasing their effectiveness as an assassin.

**Regeneration.** The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn’t in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn’t function at the start of the vampire’s next turn.

**Spider Climb.** The vampire can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** The vampire has the following flaws: *Harmed by Running Water.* The vampire takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.

*Stake to the Heart.* The vampire is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

*Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Claws. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. **Hit:** 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage. Instead of



dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## Awakened Pine

Before the fall of Steymhorod, witches awakened trees to share in their worship of the Fae Sisters, but after, the woods' corruption tainted these sentient beings as well. Most of the awakened pines are content to watch the goings-on in the woods, serving as spies for the Witchwood's darker denizens. However, there are others who take a more active approach to invaders in their homeland and wish to investigate trespassers for themselves.

### Awakened Pine

*Large plant, neutral*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d12 + 14)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Stealth +0

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the pine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

**Invisible Whispers (3/Day).** While the pine tree remains motionless, it can cast *vicious mockery* (spell save DC 10) three times per day so long as the target is not native to the Witchwood. Instead of an insult, the target hears frightening whispers in the depths of the forest.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Needle Spray.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d6 - 2) piercing damage.

## Bloodflies

Much of the fallen lands of Steymhorod have been drenched in blood, but no place more so than the Killing Fields in the western reaches of the region. There, Lord Draego and his army slaughtered a massive coalition of kingdoms that had united against him to stop the Blood Wars shortly before the fall.

Nature does not forget such trauma. Instead, it adapts. The soil of the Killing Fields has been purging itself of the oceans of blood that were spilled into it. The bloodflies feed on this ichor.

A normal bloodfly uses the **stirge** stat block, but unlucky adventurers and battlefield scavengers sometimes have the misfortune of running into other, more dangerous breeds.

### Bloodfly Broodqueen

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 104 (11d10 + 44)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Str +5, Con +7

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** Darkvision 30ft., tremorsense 60ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The broodqueen has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Bloody Ichor.** The area in a 30ft. radius from the broodqueen is saturated with sticky, bloody ichor rendering it difficult terrain.

**Spawn.** At the beginning of its turn, the broodqueen ejects 1d4-1 **bloodflies (stirges)** from her abdomen.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The broodqueen makes 3 blood suck attacks.

**Blood Suck.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage and 8 (1d10+3) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the broodqueen regains hit points equal to half that amount. Necrotic damage lost this way cannot be healed except by a long rest.

## REACTIONS

**Sacrificial Cover.** As a reaction, the broodqueen can call her bloodflies to shield her body with theirs granting +5 AC until the beginning of her next turn. She can only use this reaction if she has 2 or more bloodflies within 30 ft. of her.

## Blood Witch

Way of Blood witches study creatures and the lifeblood of the universe. Their magic takes sacrifice, but for that, is all the more powerful. Blood magic isn't received well in all cultures, and these Sisters of the Way tend to live in exclusive, highly structured covens. They specialize in creature-binding and blood magic.

### Blood Witch

*Medium humanoid (usually human), any neutral alignment*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +4, Nature +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The witch is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following witch spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, chill touch, true strike*  
 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, expeditious retreat, shield*  
 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, scorching ray*  
 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Blood Spirit.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* As an action, the witch summons her blood spirit familiar. The spirit has a well of 15 hit points. Like the flow of lifeblood, the witch can use this spirit's energy to harm or to heal. As a bonus action, the witch adds up to 5 points of the spirit's hp to a healing spell or up to 5 points of the spirit's hp as force damage to a magical attack. After the witch expends all of the spirit's hp, it disappears and does not return until the following dawn. The spirit occupies a space directly beside the witch but maintains an ephemeral form.

## Bloody Zealot

Bloody Zealots are evil humanoids that have completely given themselves over to the worship of vampires as the highest order of being. In return for their devotion, bloody zealots are granted a small measure of blood magic which they use to spread the influence of their vampiric overlords.

### Bloody Zealot

*Medium humanoid, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 37 (6d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4

**Saving Throws** Dex +3

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** The zealot has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** The zealot is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The zealot has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*  
 1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*  
 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

**Seize Control.** In a flourish of blood, the zealot performs a blood sacrifice on themselves. The zealot takes 9 (2d8) slashing damage, forcing all creatures that can see the zealot to succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a *mass suggestion* spell.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fanatic makes two dagger attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## Brother Lafayette, Brotherhood Captain

One of the most powerful and charismatic members of the Ring of Light, Brother Lafayette is equally capable of charming his opponents as he is subduing his foes. Violence is not his first resort, but he is more likely to attempt a show of force if he is surrounded by other members of the Brotherhood.

### Brother Lafayette (Brotherhood Captain)

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 55 (10d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Deception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Antithesis.** The minion of darkness cannot be in a space illuminated by bright light and is instead ejected into the nearest available space that is not in bright light. It takes 1 damage for each foot it is forced to travel. This happens immediately.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Brotherhood captain makes three attacks: two with its rapier and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, the captain can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw.

The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the captain. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the captain is incapacitated.

## REACTION

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

## Bumpkin

Large-eyed walking pumpkins, bumpkins represent one of many hazards of life in Steymhorod. Until close enough to be within range of its withering glare, they remain indistinguishable from both regular pumpkins and jack-o'-lanterns, but they are far more dangerous than either the garden vegetables or the wandering spirit (or guard against wandering spirits, depending on whom you ask).

### Bumpkin

*Small undead plant, any neutral or evil alignment*

**Armor Class** 9

**Hit Points** 18 (4d8)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

**Languages** one language known by its creator but cannot speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (100 XP)

**False Appearance.** When the bumpkin remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary pumpkin.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the bumpkin to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the bumpkin drops to 1 hit point instead.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The pumpkin makes 1d4 Rotting Touch attacks.

**Rotting Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

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## Daimon Wolf

A few true daimon still walk the land of Steymhorod inside the protection of the Green Vale. The daimon's powers and gifts differ depending on their plane of origin. Daimons descended from the earliest generations and touched by the power of the wolf god Fenrir are called Alphas, and they lead the most elite packs. The daimon wander the Vale in pairs or small packs, and they protect the forest's residents from werewolf incursions.

### Daimon Wolf (prime plane)

*Large fey, neutral*  
**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 65 (10d10 + 10)  
**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	14 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +3  
**Senses** passive Perception 15  
**Languages** Common, Sylvan  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Thunderous Bark (Recharge 5-6).** The wolf barks at a creature it can see or hear within 60 feet, emitting a thunderous force. Any non-fae creature in the area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be pushed 10 feet away from the wolf.

### Variant: Plane of Origin

Referred to simply as daimon in the Fae Brightlands and the Shadowlands, the wolves possess unique abilities depending on their plane of origin. Instead of the haunting howl of the daimon wolf, they gain the following actions:

#### Fae Brightlands Daimon

**Languages** Elvish, Sylvan  
**Warding Growl (Recharge 5-6).** The wolf growls at a creature it can see or hear within 60 feet. Any non-fae creature in the area must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be outlined in vibrant green light for 1 minute. Any attack roll against an affected creature has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature or object can't benefit from being invisible.

#### Realm of Shadow Daimon

**Languages** Elvish, Sylvan  
**Haunting Howl (Recharge 5-6).** The wolf emits a terrifying howl to scare off a creature it can see or hear within 60 feet. Any non-fae creature in the area must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.

### Variant: Alpha

Descended from the original Daimon, these wolves are powerful and adaptable. Their magnificent antlers set them apart from later generations and speak to their status within the pack. They can also use their antlers to aid them in combat.

#### Alpha Daimon

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Elvish, Sylvan  
**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Hunt.** If the alpha moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with an antlers attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, the wolf can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

**Interplanar Adept.** At home in any of the three Planes of Life, the Alpha Daimon has the haunting howl, thunderous bark, and warding growl abilities.

## Druid of the Hawthorne Conclave

Hawthorne Conclave Druids maintain a close connection with the fae forest of the Green Vale and often use shadows and mist in their castings. The Hawthorne Conclave believes that the Green Vale must be protected from the evils that creep across Steymhorod—whether animal, creature, spirit, or blight. They accept that the forest has a will of its own, one that is not immune to the land's darkness, which they must learn to wield and even embrace.

### Druid, Hawthorne Conclave

Medium humanoid (usually elf, half-elf, or human), any chaotic alignment

**Armor Class** 12 (16 with *barkskin*)

**Hit Points** 44 (8d8 + 8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Insight +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The druid is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *poison spray*, *resistance*  
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *moonbeam*, *pass without trace*

3rd level (3 slots): *plant growth*, *sleet storm*

4th level (1 slot): *hallucinatory terrain*

### ACTIONS

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.



## Evony Ferne, Apothecary Adventuring Companion

*Half-elf female in her mid-twenties; walnut-hued skin and dark brown eyes; black-brown hair worn tied back in a kerchief*

Evony Ferne has learned much working at her mother's side at The Happy Herbalist, but the young half-elf has begun to chafe under the lack of variety and adventure to be found inside the walls of Linolynn's Air Ward. Evony is certain that somewhere, out in the wider world, there are people, plants, and experiences just waiting for her discovery. And when she finds them, she intends for her burgeoning powers as an apothecary to grow to heights she cannot yet even imagine.

**Character's Goal:** Evony is anxious to get out of The Happy Herbalist and to do something, anything, important. Yes, she is happy to aid her mother in curing colds and other uncomfortable ailments, but

the wonders of the natural world, enhanced by cleverness and magic, hold so many intricacies and inventive surprises. When the call to adventure sounds, she plans to be ready to answer.

*Evony uses the **crafter adventuring companion level 1 stat block.***

### Crafter Adventuring Companion, Level 1

*Medium humanoid, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +4, Intelligence +4

**Skills** Arcana +4, Medicine +2, Sleight of Hand +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common and one other language

**Ritual Spellcasting.** The crafter is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following ritual crafter spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *light*

1st level (2 slots): *alarm (ritual)*, *detect magic (ritual)*

#### ACTIONS

**Light Hammer.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

## Great Worg

Among worg packs, a leader may arise, a worg of significant might and ability able to assert itself over the pack. Worg-riders with keen eyes and a strong hand raise these great worgs as the mounts for their own leaders. Oftentimes, the sight of a great worg is enough to scatter the riding party's foes.

### Great Worg

*Large monstrosity, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d10 + 8)

**Speed** 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	8 (-10)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Worg

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The worg has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The worg makes two bite attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## Green Witch

Green Witches, or practitioners of the Way of Roots, study the natural elements and seek to harness the spiritual and energetic power of the plants, earth, rocks, and creatures around them. They are closely attuned to the old spirits of the world and seek the wisdom of the ancients, such as trees, mountains, and crystals. They specialize in potion-making and alchemy, and tend to live in covens, where they share herbs, recipes, and enchantments. Green witches who live in mixed covens (those with several different types of witches) contribute healing magics and preventative medicines to their communities.

### Green Witch

*Medium humanoid (usually human), any neutral alignment*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Animal Handling +4, Medicine +3, Nature +3,

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The witch is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit

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with spell attacks). It has the following witch spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, poison spray*  
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, detect magic, illusory script, protection from evil and good*

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane eye, web*

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

### Hedge Witch

Hedge witches share some similarities with green witches, though they are more often solo practitioners rather than members of a coven. A hedge witch's magic remains rooted in the earth around her, growing more powerful as her spells and tinctures mature. Instead of binding spirits, hedge witches tend to bind themselves, intertwining their magical energies with the grove, field, hillside, or swamp where they've made their home.

#### Hedge Witch

*Medium humanoid (usually human), any neutral alignment*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +4, Wis +6

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +6

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The witch is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following witch spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, minor illusion, ray of frost*  
1st level (4 slots): *false life, find familiar, silent image, sleep*  
2nd level (3 slots): *levitate, misty step*  
3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, glyph of warding, phantom steed*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye, private sanctum*

5th level (1 slot): *creation*

#### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

#### Witch or Wizard?

In Steymhorod and other locations in Azuria, the term “witch” is gender-neutral rather than the feminine form of “wizard” or “warlock.”

Witches tend to be more closely tied to nature than bookish wizards, and they embrace experimentation in their practices. There is a subset of witches, the Way of Words, whose practices share some similarities with those of wizards. They specialize in grimoire magic, and they bring to life the characters, worlds, creatures, and ideals of the texts and stories they study.



### Ismael Mornbow, Guard Adventuring Companion

*Human male guard in his early thirties; olive-toned skin and black hair*

Ismael is a human male in his early thirties who is an experienced member of Linolynn's City Watch who has been feeling... underutilized in recent months by his commanders. He was poised for a promotion to the rank of captain just before children started to go missing across the city. This occurrence led to an understandable halt to promotions among the guards, but the disturbance to the city's peace has also left Ismael with new eyes to perceive not just

the City Watch, but Linolynn itself. And Ismael doesn't like what he sees.

The guard comes from a hardworking family and grew up in Linolynn's Earth Ward. His mother worked as a seamstress, occasionally helping the high-end boutiques of the Air Ward, and his father served as a guard as well. When Ismael was fifteen, his father was killed in the line of duty, trying to catch a robber who had been preying on impoverished families in the Water Ward. The pension for his father's service to the city allowed his mother to retire from her work, a blessing as her knuckles had grown swollen from all her years of labor, but she has never recovered from the heartbreak of the family's loss.

Ismael's younger sister works as a tutor to a group of the tradespersons' children in the Air Ward. She lives with and watches over their mother when she's not working, especially now that Ismael's hours have increased.

**Character's Goal:** Ismael wants to find justice for the missing children, and he's disappointed that his superiors aren't fighting harder to find them. To Ismael, it seems as though the Watch's commanders are more concerned with maintaining the appearance of safety in the city as opposed to genuinely securing said security. Ismael has been looking for an opportunity, for someone brave and bold enough to help him strike out on his own and get to the bottom of the missing children.

### Guard Companion, Level 1

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d10 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Strength +4, Dexterity +4

**Skills** Athletics +4, Investigation +2, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common

### ACTIONS

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

## Lazarus

Once the preeminent physician for the powerful and nefarious Rhumtalle noble family in Barasov, Lazarus was forced to flee that exalted position after a failed resurrection of their heir apparent, Farrand. Instead of returning Farrand's soul to his body, Lazarus's spell cast the young man into an ancient artifact, binding the young man's soul to the magical item for all eternity. Try as he might, Lazarus could not reverse what his spell had done. The only being who might be powerful enough, he learned, was Lord Draego.

What the Rhumtalle family was unaware of at the time was the threat on Lazarus's life by the Red Coven, a group of powerful witches with close ties to Barasov's vampiric legacy. Trapped between two powerful forces and having somehow fallen afoul of Arinnia, the sun goddess's love, Lazarus fled to find a life of redemption in St. Sebastian.

Through his first several months in the walled city, Lazarus tried to set his old temptations to understand the space between life and death aside. However, once he learned the truth of Sebastian's condition, a new challenge arose, one that would be the greatest of his life—he would be the one to understand the vampire's curse. And once he did, he would present his findings to Draego in exchange for him rescuing Farrand from his failed spell. By undoing his mistake and ending the cycle of undeath, the cleric knew that Arinnia would find a way to forgive him. After Steymhorod was returned to the light of the sun, he would be richly rewarded, he was certain.

Lazarus uses the **priest** stat block with the following change:

- Lazarus bears the *eye of Arinnia* (Appendix A). Once attuned, the wearer of this ancient amulet can cast *raise dead* or *greater restoration* once per month, provided the amulet has the opportunity to recharge under the light of either the noon sun or the full moon. Once the amulet has been used in this way, the wearer cannot cast the spell again until the amulet recharges and twenty-eight and a half days have passed.



# Appendix C

## Character Backgrounds

In what follows, we've outlined a few unique character backgrounds for your Land of Vampires campaign.



### Saudad

Your nomadic, communal lifestyle growing up combines with the long memory of your people to make you an intriguing companion to almost anyone you met, at least among those who bear the saudad no ill will. Life on the road has been dangerous, and you learned from an early age to keep a sharp eye in the wilds and among “civilization.” You are a skilled interpreter of the signs of Cassandra, the goddess of fate, and treasured for the unique role you play in your muster.

**Skill Proficiencies:** History, Performance

**Languages:** Saudad and one other language

**Equipment:** A musical instrument (one of your choice), implements for interpreting Cassandra's favor (cartomancy, astrology, palmistry), a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### Feature: Fortune's Favor

Should you find yourself in need of fortune, friends, or favor, your identity as a saudad grants you an extension of trust on behalf of local sages, herbalists, and performers alike. Between the three, you're sure of a welcome and a place to lay your head.

Additionally, it's almost impossible for you to travel near a festival or past a fairground market without being asked to speak Cassandra's favor into the lives of those you meet. Your careful insight into the desires of others, quite often, leads to favorable results at these sorts of gatherings.

### Suggested Characteristics

The life of a traveler is one of interchanging dualities. You know better than to trust the reception of yourself and your people—the world is a fickle place, filled with pain and joy, beauty and devastation. As one blessed with an extended communal memory, you have a strong sense for when you should share and in whom you should confide. But the constant you can always depend on is the careful eye of the goddess of fate, Cassandra. The saudad are her most blessed followers, traveling through the realms on threads of fate. But behind the cheerful façade, you share a melancholy with the rest of your people—beyond Cassandra's Eye, a single constant remains—you can never return home.

### Further Context about the Saudad

The saudad are the interplanar travelers of Azuria who have journeyed widely through Tor'stre Vahn, Caldara, and even the Brightlands and Shadowlands. At the dawn of every decade, the saudad meet in Steymhorod for an assembly, a gathering of the many saudad musters traveling the known realms. Shortly after Steymhorod's fall into the Shadowlands, their homeland Orison was also destroyed and fell into the sea where it has remained hidden for millennia. The saudad who found themselves in Steymhorod at the time of Orison's fall have been unable to leave since. Their musters condensed into a single group that travels Steymhorod. They know many of Lord Draego's secrets and, as permanent outsiders to his lands, have worked out an understanding with the vampire lord and his heirs. No vampire is to touch one of the saudad and they, in turn, agree to leave the citizens of Steymhorod's cities to their own limited memories. Only they, the fae, and the other vampires are aware of how long the land has been submerged in the lands of shadow.

## To be from Steymhorod or to not be from Steymhorod . . .

Saudad from Steymhorod are cautious around outsiders. Those from beyond Steymhorod's borders have proven to be of great interest to Lord Draego before, and their first concern is to protect their muster, in part by avoiding conflict with the vampire lord. These saudad know that it has been the desire of their Seers for generations for someone to restore the Fanes, but they closely guard this information. It is difficult, in Steymhorod, to know who may be listening.

Saudad who are not from Steymhorod have a general understanding of the land's history. They are aware, for example, that Lord Draego has been in charge of Steymhorod since the land fell and that he is not to be trifled with. They are also aware that history has progressed much less over the last several centuries (it has actually been several millennia) in Steymhorod than it has in Azuria. While Azuria's ancient cities can trace their history back at least three thousand years to the great flood, in Steymhorod, the past is much fuzzier. When one can convince the city-folk to reminisce, it appears that the entire history of Steymhorod can be condensed into a few hundred years. And of those years, it is only rare Steymhorod natives—outside the fae, saudad, and vampires—who are aware of what has transpired more than twenty or, at most, fifty years in the past.

## Vampire Hunter

There are many who wish to ignore the monsters disguised beneath the veneer of civilization . . . but not you. You've spent your adult life studying creatures who hide in plain sight, with specialization in those that drift along the borders between the wilds and organized settlements like vampires and werewolves. You have spent most of this time among the Hunters of Tor'stre Vahn, sworn to serve the ancient city of Andel-ce Hevra or perhaps you fell into this path after devastation struck your family, and one who had undergone a similar loss adopted you into their cunning, close-knit fold.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Intimidation, Perception

**Tool Proficiencies:** Tracker's Kit

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** A leather journal containing notes of your past hunts and your prey's habits and

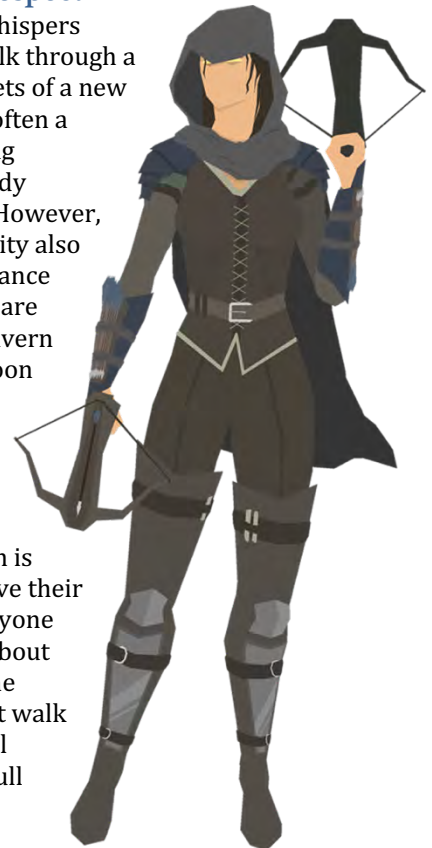
proclivities, a tracker's kit, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

### *Tracker's Kit*

This kit contains a variety of instruments such as mechanical traps, wooden stakes, holy water, shards of silver, and measuring implements for gauging size and type of bite. Proficiency with this kit lets you add your proficiency bonus to any ability check you make to identify or study tracks, bite marks, and lairs of civilization-adjacent monsters like vampires and werewolves.

### Feature: Cautious Respect

You're accustomed to whispers following you as you walk through a tavern or along the streets of a new town. Your presence is often a harbinger of approaching disaster if it hasn't already reared its greedy head. However, your bravery and intensity also draw like-minded assistance to you. Victims' families are quick to offer you aid; tavern owners recognize the boon you'll bring to their evening's business. Local law officials are less predictable, but when they do come to rely on you, the situation is dire enough that you have their full support. If only everyone could be so open-eyed about the hidden dangers of the world, the monsters that walk under the light of the full moon and beneath the full brightness of the sun.



### Suggested Characteristics

Years of study have granted you a great deal of knowledge about the creatures you hunt and their patterns. You've seen where their variances lie between one environment and another. But it is the witness you've paid to the aftermath of their dark deeds—the smoldering villages, slaughtered families, decimated lives—that has truly shaped you. The horrors you've seen have carved hollows behind your eyes. Few understand the separation between fear and hatred, action and reaction, like you do.

# Appendix D

Appendix D contains the maps referenced throughout the adventure, listed in the order in which they appear. You'll also find supplements and ephemera to help with immersion, such as Shrikehonor's Summons and a map of Steymhorod. Be sure to check out the "Land of Vampires Printables" (with your adventures downloads purchase and on [dndduet.com](http://dndduet.com)) for a full-page version of the maps and additional materials.

## The Three Sisters' Pub



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# Street and Area Surrounding The Three Sisters' Pub



## Linolynn Region Map

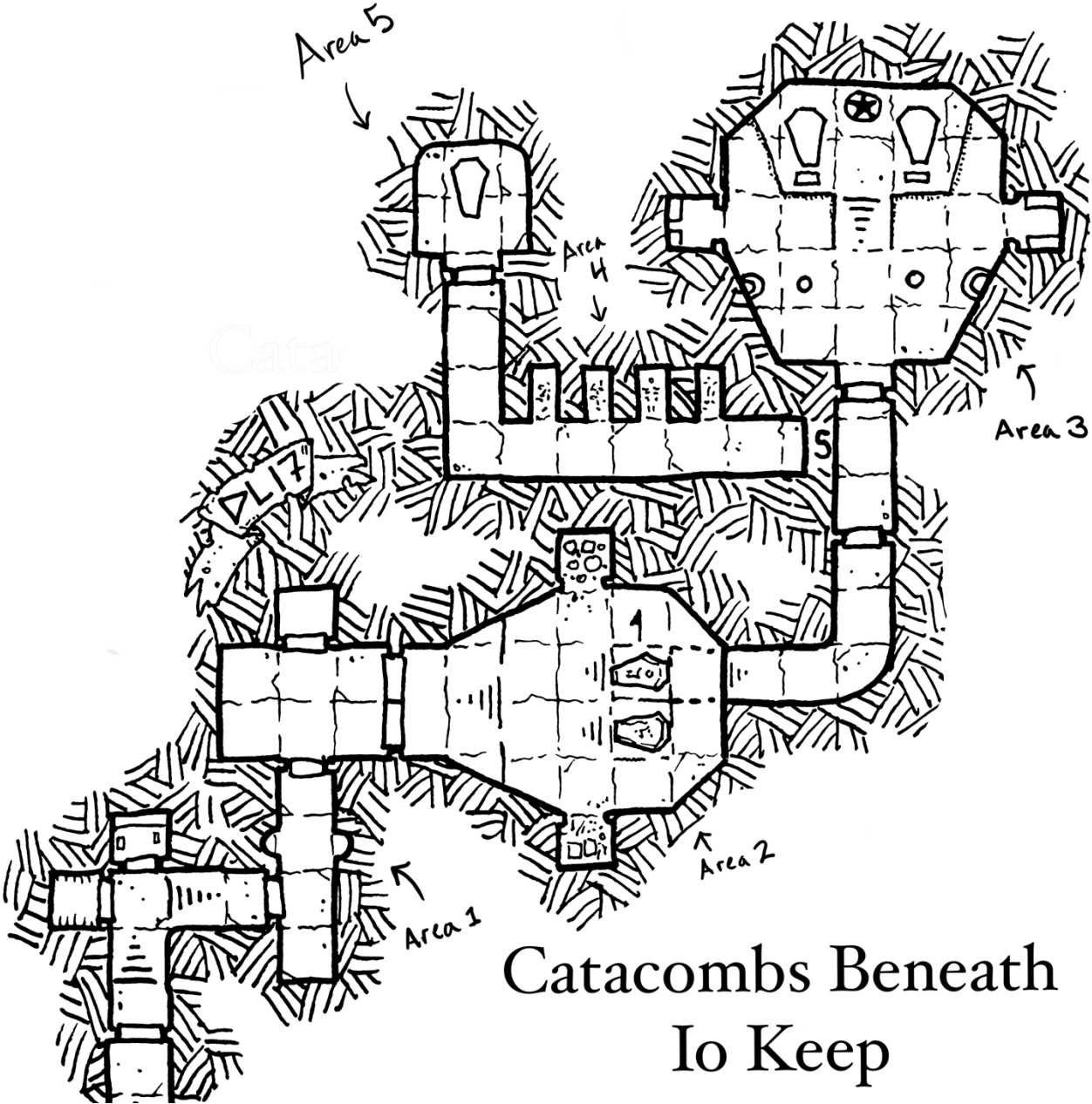
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## Azuria World Map



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Catacombs Beneath Io Keep



# Catacombs Beneath Io Keep

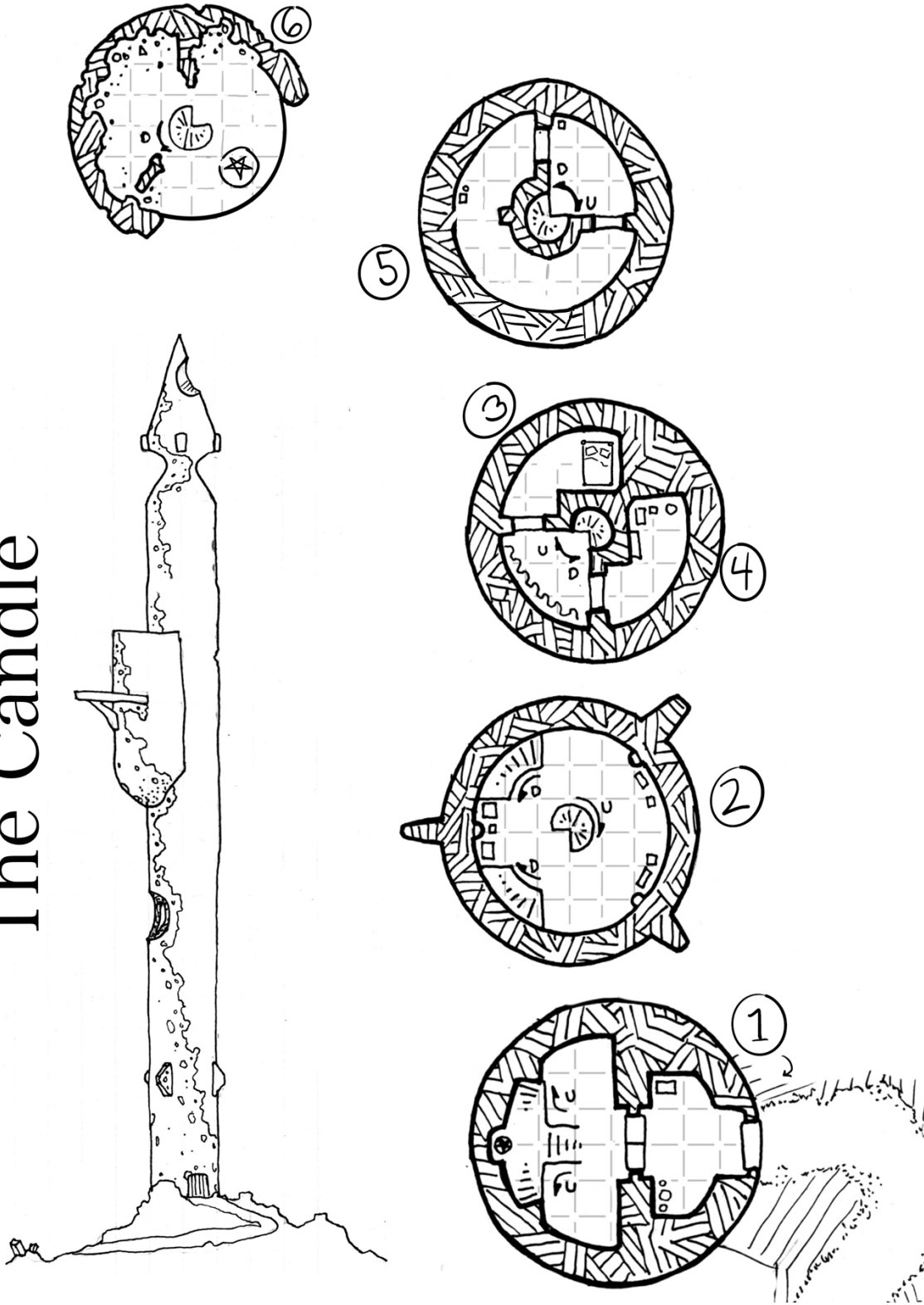
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# Map of Steymhorod



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# The Candle



## Renwick's Manor Map

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