



Animal & Adventures

Secrets of Gullet Cove



Sourcebook







Credits

Creator & Designer

Russ Charles

Lead Writer & Designer

Richard August

Adventure Writing

Rachael Cruz

Jason Durall

Additional Writing & World Lore

Gaz Bowerbank

Kate Charles

Barry Stevens

Editing

Richard August

Emma Benfield

Russ Charles

Ben Clapperton

Isa Shaw-Abulafia

Cover Art

Cindy Avelino

Character Concept Design

April Prime

Illustrations

Cindy Avelino

Paul Canavan

Cynthia Fernandez

GarciaViktoria

Gavrilenko

Ilse Gort

Katy Grierson

Becca Hallstedt

Leesha Hannigan

Suzanne Helmigh

Sam Hogg

Forrest Imel

Valeria Ivanova

Christina Kraus

Tom Lishman

Sam Santala

April Prime

Andrea Radek

Glynn Seal

Katie Winchester

Sculpting

Russ Charles

Ben Charles

Tom Lishman

Holly Woolford

Graphic Design & Layout

Tom Hutchings

Cristina Ruiz

Abigail Thornton

Production

Matt Elliott

Tom Rochford

*An extra-special thanks
to our amazing 5,884
Kickstarter backers who
helped bring this project
to life!*

Steamforged Games Team

Co-Founders

Mat Hart (CCO)

Rich Loxam (CEO)

Chairman

Simon Spalding

Non-Executive Director

Ian Livingstone CBE

Design

Alex Hall

Sherwin Matthews

Development & QA

Richard August

Bryce Johnston

Samantha Laydon

Steve Margetson

Fraser McFetridge

Jamie Perkins

Dominic Westerland

Sculpting & Art

Ben Charles

Russ Charles

Tom Lishman

Doug Telford

Holly Woolford

Graphic Design & Layout

Cristina Ruiz

Abigail Thornton

Production

Ben Clapperton

Matthew Elliott

Emma Foster

Louis Moore

Aitch Parker

Tom Rochford

Finance & IT

John Higham

Adam King

Vanessa O'Brien

Marketing & Community Management

Derek Baker

Charlotte Cloud

Sean Dooley

Jamie Giblin

Chynna-Blue Haycastle

Ronan Kelly

Licensing and Commercial

Emma Benfield

Toby Davies

Firoz Rana

Human Resources & Operations

Gareth Reid

Fulfilment & Logistics

Mike Appleton

Alex Black

David Fear

Judy Guan

John Hockey

Lee Hughes

Richard Jennings

Callum Jessop

Animal Adventures: Secrets of Gullet Cove is Copyright © 2020 Steamforged Games Ltd. No part of this product may be reproduced without specific permission. Steamforged Games is a trademark of Steamforged Games Ltd. Steamforged Games Ltd is located at Unit 1 Kestrel Road, Trafford Park, Manchester, M17 1SF, United Kingdom and can be contacted by telephone on +44 161 429 0000 or by email to support@steamforged.com. Retain this information for your records. Actual components may vary from those shown. Designed in the United Kingdom and made in China.

Contents



Introduction7

Dogs: New Race and Class Features.....8

Canine Traits.....9

Canine Sizes.....9

Breed Abilities.....10

New Background: Awakened Dogs12

Suggested Characteristics14

Class Options17

Cats: New Race and Class Features.....30

Feline Traits.....31

Feline Sizes.....31

Breed Abilities.....32

New Background: Awakened Cat34

Suggested Characteristics35

Class Options39

Welcoming Dark Rules.....52

Religions and Guilds.....53

The Good Mother.....54

Aspects of the Good Mother ... 55

Cat Religion.....56

Animal Guilds.....58

Joining a Guild.....58

The Cradle.....58

The Houndlings.....59

Order of the Golden Collar... 60

The Watchers.....61

Guild Marks.....62

Gullet Cove Gazetteer...64

A Brief History of Gullet Cove...68

Awakened Animals

and Gullet Cove.....70

Geographical Features.....71

Key Town Locations.....74

Guild Houses.....97

Minor Guilds.....101

The Gullet Cove Year.....102

The Isle of Dogs104

History.....104

Inhabitants.....105

Conditions.....105

Key Locations.....106

Adventures on
the Isle of Dogs.....109

Mutt & Bailey and the

Legend of the Golden Crab... 109

NPCs and Bestiary:

Villains and Minions.....113

Denizens of Gullet Cove.....129

New Heroes.....147

Magic Items.....160

Gullet Cove Magic Items....161

Animal Magic Items.....168

Cat Magic Items.....168

Dog Magic Items.....170

Campaign Guide.....172

Adventure 1:

A Gullet Cove Hello176

Adventure Overview.....176

Arriving in Gullet Cove....177

Stop! Thief!.....177

The Alleyway.....178

Master Pettifer's Emporium..179

The Watch.....181

The Market.....183

The Master's Retreat.....184

The Cellar.....185

The Garden.....186

Wrapping Things Up.....186

Adventure 2:

Tooth & Paw187

Adventure Overview.....187

A Plea for Help.....188

First Things First.....189

The Watcher.....190

Working with the Watcher...191

Inside the Warehouse.....191

The Pet Shop.....195

Adventure 3:

The Enemy of My Enemy 195

Adventure Overview.....195

Opening Scene.....196

Sewer Explosion.....197

Rampaging Rataclysm!.....198

Mob Rule.....199

So...What's Next?.....199

Assault on Pawcinct 13.....200

Graveyard.....203

The Mausoleum.....203

Wrapping Things Up.....204

Adventure 4:

Kill Ten Rats205

Adventure Overview.....205

Scene One: Going Gold!....207

A Visit to the

Port Warden's Office.....208

Asking Around at the Docks..209

Meeting with the Thieves Guild..210

The Mangers' Hideout.....211

The Obstacles.....213

The End of the Tunnel.....214

The Rat Queen.....214

You Thought it Would End

Without a Fight, Did You?...215

Wrapping Things Up.....216

Adventure 5: Dark Doings

at Grimmsmouth Hall ..217

Adventure Overview.....217

Fur-ther Breakdown

and Secrets.....218

So What's Really Happening?

(Spoilers).....218

Grimmsmouth Hall.....219

The Outside.....219

Top Dog, Top Floor,

Cursed Door.....222

The Drawing Room.....223

The Big Bad Battle.....225

The Final Confrontation....226

Notes and

Licensing Agreement...232







Introduction

Welcome to *Animal Adventures: Secrets of Gullet Cove!*

This book provides you with everything you need to tell exciting tales (or should that be tails?) of derring-do, featuring the bravest adventurers on four legs! Whether it's comprehensive rules for creating brave animal adventurers, an intriguing setting with plot hooks galore, or a gripping adventure for you to play, you'll find what you're looking for in these pages!

What do you need?

This book is a supplement, designed to offer you a new way of playing the world's favourite roleplaying game. To make use of its contents, you'll need the three core books, a set of dice, some pens and pencils and, of course, some friends who want to make awesome animal adventurers! Everything else is in this book — If you want to fully immerse yourself, you can also add the incredible miniatures and maps from Steamforged Games' Animal Adventures range!

What's in this book then?

That's a good question...well, let's start with all new and expanded rules for creating and playing animal characters. Want to be a formidable barbarian pug? The rules are here. Want to be a sneaky feline thief? Turn to the appropriate page. Everything you need to build a unique animal adventurer is here. With new class features and unique feats, whatever you want your cat or dog to be, they can be.

Curious about Gullet Cove? Well, there's an extensive gazetteer, showing you everything you could possibly need to know about this enigmatic port, revealing its mysteries, and detailing its more interesting residents. Fancy a visit to the Home for Retired Pirates, Buccaneers, and Other Practitioners of Derring-do? What about applying for membership in the Seafarers Guild? It's all here, ready to explore. Just turn to page 62 and you're there!

Maybe you want to get straight to playing? Well, we've provided you with a host of pregenerated player characters and some adventures to help you do exactly that! You'll find these on page 127 and page 174.

So why are you holding me up with this introduction?!
We're sorry!

We just wanted to say, finally...have fun exploring Gullet Cove! It's a small town but big on adventure, and we hope you enjoy exploring it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

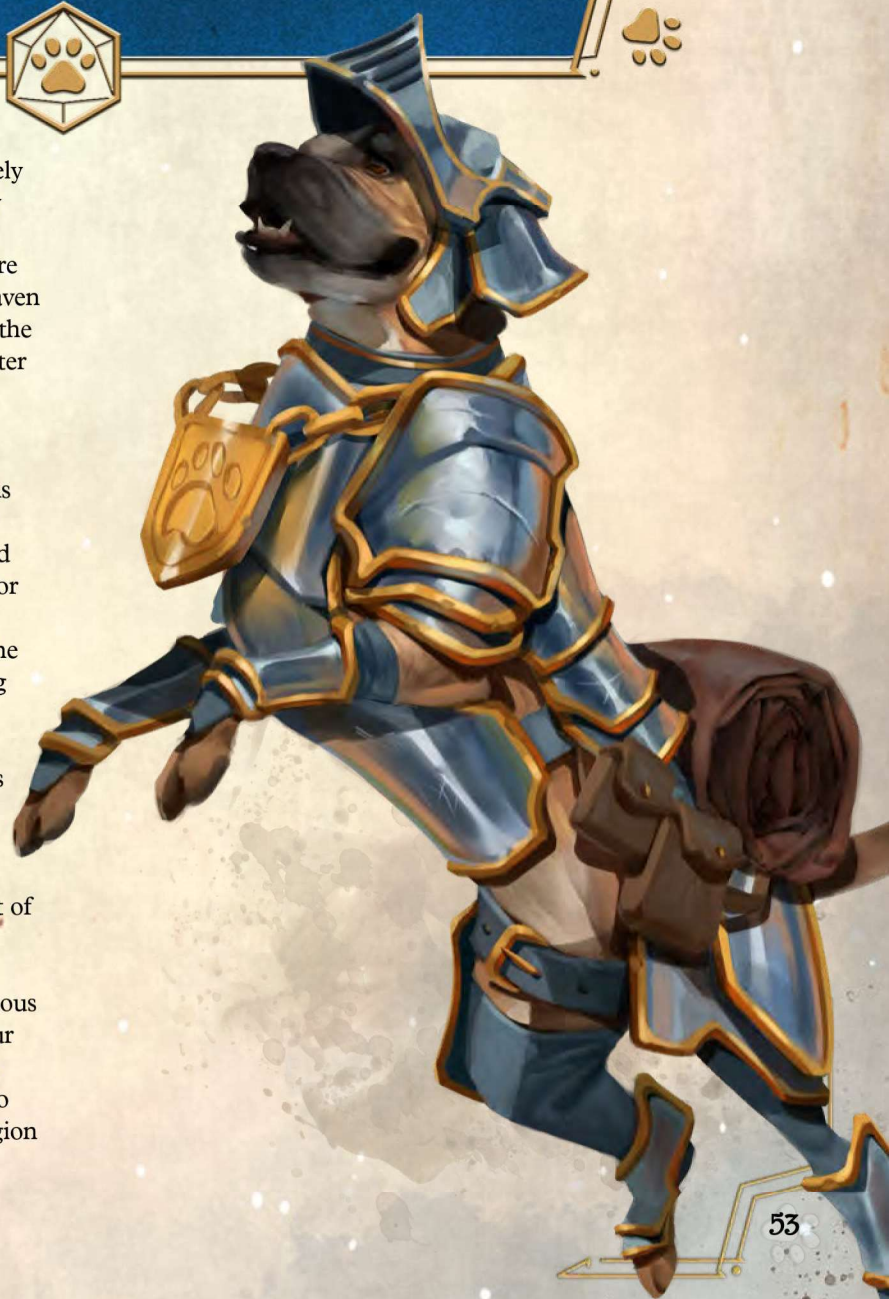
So what are you waiting for?
Turn over the page and start your adventure!

Religions and Guilds

Awakened animals occupy a world that is at once intensely familiar and utterly alien. The old certainties replaced by new opportunities, yes, but also with new anxieties and fears. The world has grown, the universe expanded. Where once there was just appetite and sleep, now there is a heaven and a hell, and there are whispering voices and forces in the darkness which demand allegiance. Being your own master is great, of course, but its also a lot of work!

The first awakened animals were alone and struggled to find themselves a place in the world. But not anymore. As the awakened animals came to understand the nature of their world, feel the tides of magic flowing through it, and to recognise the powers of the gods, they began to look for their own deities. And they found them. Great scholars debated whether such deities were called into being by the animal's need, or whether they were always there, waiting for their children to fully understand the nature of the voices in their head, guiding them and protecting them. Either way, now that they do, and now there are religions dedicated to the deities which cats and dogs discovered, guilds have formed to represent the interests of both species. So too has the Order of the Golden Collar — an order of animals devoted to representing the very best of their kind and to driving out evil wherever they find it!

This chapter presents lore and rules concerning the religious life of your animal adventurers, allowing you to shape your game world to accommodate them as much or as little as you choose. Remember, not every animal has to belong to one of the religions in this chapter. They can join the religion of any god you feel most appropriate for the character.





The Good Mother

All awakened dogs know of the Good Mother. This is an instinctive understanding, something all dogs sense. To awakened dogs, there is much more than merely feeling. There is knowledge, recognition even. There are memories, and visions, of a being who nurtures them, who tends to them, even in the darkest of times. Some see a vast white bulldog with piercing green eyes, defending them against a cruel master. Others remember the warmth of a sheep dog's fur they could nuzzle against, even out in the cold. The Good Mother is always there, even if she isn't always seen and can't intervene.

Belief in the Good Mother is universal amongst dogs. That is not to say that all follow her or choose her as their deity, but none deny her existence. She is a presence in the lives of all dogs, even if only as a silent and unwanted one, and even if replaced by a belief in another god more directly pertinent to a given dog's life. There is no aspersion against dogs who choose to worship another deity in place of the Good Mother. To be so judgemental betrays the Good Mother herself. Amongst all true believers in the Good Mother there is a ferocious antipathy towards any dog who lives cruelly, who commits violent acts against the innocent. The Good Mother's faithful seek to bring her tenderness into the world, and to bring the comfort of a good cuddle with a dog in front of a glowing fire to those who lack it.

Dogs are deeply committed to their faith, once chosen. They believe deeply in the tenets of the Good Mother, believing that through her they might finally arrive at the Great Hearth — the vast kitchen that all good dogs are granted access to. Here, there is always enough food, always a roaring fire to curl up next to, and always a fellow dog to chase and nip and play with. There is no hell which bad dogs are consigned to. The Good Mother is always bereft at the loss of any of her children, but amongst those canines who are attuned to the beyond, they say that bad dogs might be lost, wandering alone, and searching for the Great Hearth. It is said that every prayer uttered to the Good Mother helps to guide a lost dog to her side, and to the warmth of the Great Hearth.

The Great Hearth is always the principle behind the design of the many temples and shrines dedicated to the Good Mother. Such places of congregation can be found throughout the land. While they vary in size and state of repair, each offers any traveller (of any species) a warm welcome, a good meal, and a soft bed (or basket). Safety, comfort, protection. The essential qualities of the Good Mother are held as absolutely sacred in any place dedicated to her worship. Any adventuring party is always pleased to see a Temple of the Good Mother, and all dogs do their utmost to protect them, contributing in whatever way they can to maintain these sanctuaries.

Aspects of the Good Mother

The Good Mother is a god of many different aspects. Each dog cleaves to a different facet of the Good Mother's spirit, finding that part of her that reflects them best. Each aspect is different, unique, and manifests itself as each individual dog requires.

- 🐾 The most commonly worshipped aspect of the Good Mother is She Who Nurtures, manifesting as a large Labrador with deep, dark brown eyes and an expression of purest joy spread across her features, not to forget a constantly wagging tail. She Who Nurtures is the aspect commonly invoked by those awakened dogs in search of comfort, of home and warmth. She is also often honoured by clerics, bards and some druids, who seek to spread the joy and comfort the Good Mother offers to those who need it. The symbol of She Who Nurtures is the basket.
- 🐾 Beloved of rangers and rogues, She Who Hunts is the aspect of the Good Mother committed to the pursuit of the chase — whether for the fun of the game or in earnest. But She Who Hunts is not only concerned with tracking the quarry. Those dogs who follow She Who Hunts do so to celebrate the companionship formed between groups of friends who set out on dangerous journeys, or those who work towards a common goal no matter how risky the outcome might be. The symbol of She Who Hunts is the splayed paw.
- 🐾 She Who Protects is the chosen aspect of most who live by their skill with a weapon or jaws. monks, paladins, fighters...all place their faith in the bared teeth of the protector, drawing on the fierce determination that She Who Protects feels towards all her many children. No matter the odds, no matter the risks, those who commit themselves to She Who Protects always interpose themselves between the innocent and defenceless and anything that seeks to do them harm. It's a path that comes with a lot of hardship but those who walk it do so gladly. The symbol of She Who Protects is the tooth.
- 🐾 This aspect takes a great interest in shaping the lives of the dogs who pledge themselves to her, as She Who Corrects is the part of the Good Mother that helps those who seek it to find redemption. Those who choose to follow She Who Corrects are those who fear that they might be, or might become, bad dogs. Warlocks are often conscientious followers of She Who Corrects, believing that only through balancing the demands of their patron with the positive influence of She Who Corrects can they reach the Great Hearth. The symbol of She Who Corrects is the collar.
- 🐾 For those dogs whose power is drawn from the beyond, there is the aspect known as She Who Seeks. This is the part of the Good Mother that looks beyond, explores, discovers those things which were lost in the darkness or were buried and need to be unearthed through dedicated digging. Sorcerers and wizards are most drawn to She Who Seeks; her restless hunt for that which has been lost mirroring their own obsessive hunt for knowledge to guide and shape their power. The symbol of She Who Seeks is the pricked-up ear.
- 🐾 It is rare to see She Who Bonds worshipped directly. Her role amidst the myriad aspects of the Good Mother is more enigmatic. She is the aspect that brings together all dogs, all canine species, with other species. Some beasts are incapable of being tamed. Dogs are not such a species; they quickly become friends with humanoids, other beasts, and other dogs. They form deep attachments. They love deeply and devotedly. This is the gift of the Good Mother, the capacity to care. So deeply entrenched is this aspect of the Good Mother in all dogs, though, that few feel the need to dedicate themselves to it. It simply is. An inalienable and undeniable part of each and every dog. The symbol of She Who Bonds is the tail.



Cat Religion

While awakened dogs recognise a single deity, cats are less picky. Their religion is far stranger and more obscure, with most of its rites and rituals being entirely secret — spoken only in the Feline language of touch, gesture, and scent. Cats rarely disclose any of the many secrets of their various gods. They don't mention the Welcoming Dark, the place where all cats retreat to when worn down or hurt.

The deities of the cat pantheon are curious beings, never entirely static. But no matter how they change and alter depending on the needs of their believers, cats all think is very proper. Gods are never just one thing; they represent a number of different aspects of life and elements of belief. Cat belief, like cats themselves, is highly individual and changes depending on the believer. Cats avoid dogma for many reasons - not the least of which is the word itself! While the various temples of the cat gods have rituals they enact, these are often not imitated in other temples or churches of the same god. Cat worship is deeply personal and deeply variable. Often the most devout followers of Tom o'th'Alley never visit one of his shrines, believing (not unreasonably) that any true devotee of the trickster god must be trying to fleece visitors of their money. The same is true of many felines who follow the faith of the Old Striped One...why visit a temple dedicated to his worship, they opine, when they could be in a library or in a curious old shop, trying to learn more of the ways of the universe.

Cat beliefs are fluid, often changing depending on circumstance. Cats might cleave to the trickster when young, before becoming more interested in Urbaste as they grow older and nearer to death. The Old Striped One might be a lifelong companion, someone the cat thinks of fondly like an old friend, but never dedicates a prayer. This constant shifting of faith is often considered quite odd by most races, who tend to devote themselves to a single god. Cats simply shrug and wonder...why? Cats change, they say, people change...why should they not change their gods to suit such adjustments? And why shouldn't gods?



Urbaste

Acknowledged by all cats to be the head of the pantheon and the most powerful of the gods, Urbaste is beloved by almost all cats and is the most widely worshipped member of the Ailurokin—the name for the deities worshipped by felines. Some cats believe her to have once been mortal and proclaim her ‘great mother,’ tracing their lineage back to her. Others believe that all forms of cat were once unified in Urbaste but that, as she aged, she began to decay and fall to pieces. Her left-arm, as it dropped from her, became the lion, her right-leg became the tiger, and eventually, when nothing else was left, her heart became the first cat. Who knows what the truth is? What is known is that Urbaste now reigns over the Fields of Yarn - a cat heaven, where everything can be played with, chased, and chivvied. Her followers worship her through acts of ‘cat-ness’, whether that be chasing a mouse, stealing food, creeping over roof tops at night...all are considered tributes to Urbaste. While she adores her children, Urbaste is not a huge fan of humanoid races, considering them to be frequently cruel to her offspring.

Tom o’th’Alley

Cats are mysterious, enigmatic creatures. It is no surprise that they should worship a god whose very nature is equally uncertain. Tom o’th’Alley is a mercurial deity; sometimes charming and seductive, sometimes capricious and cruel. Such is the nature of a trickster god and Tom o’th’Alley is most certainly a trickster. Of all the Ailurokin, it is Tom who is most often seen by awakened cats. He generally takes the form of a large, ginger feline with bright green eyes. These eyes are always gleaming with something like mischief, always friendly, always welcoming — even if Tom is yowling loudly at just the wrong time, bringing an irate human with a cleaver after you. Tom is not always ginger, of course. What self-respecting trickster god wants to be fixed in one shape forever? Certainly not Tom. As a result, all followers of Tom treat every cat they meet with a wary respect, who knows when they might meet the great thief himself?

The Old Striped One

The most mysterious of the cat deities is undoubtedly the Old Striped One. He has no more definite name than this peculiar sobriquet and, whenever he is mentioned, cats close their eyes as though asleep. The Old Striped One is invoked both as a protector of cats and as a possessor of strange and hidden knowledge. While most feline gods are thought of as being loners, the Old Striped One maintains a court of friends — which, according to the scant clerics of the god, includes mice, birds, and other creatures which are traditionally food for cats. This results in clerics of the Old Striped One being thought of as a little odd amongst their kin. They are, however, those most capable of bringing cats together and use their influence and gentleness to ensure that their god’s message — that all species must endeavour to live together in harmony — may one day see fulfilment.

Shadow Mover

All cats possess a part of the Shadow Mover in their souls. That predatory grace which cats display, even as they roll in leaves or bat at an overhanging flower with their paws? That’s the Shadow Mover. The strange expression of peace which suffuses a cat’s face as it readies to spring on prey, even if that prey is only a sunbeam? That’s the Shadow Mover. The Shadow Mover is the essence of feline lethality, the quintessence of that part of every cat which is a hunter. Usually imagined as a vast, ever-shifting black phantom, seeping round corners, identifiable only by the glint of golden eyes. Few cats directly praise or worship the Shadow Mover, but all revere him and long to see their reflection in those placid, golden eyes as they leap to the attack. The Shadow Mover never intervenes in the world, never defends or assists his children. To do so would be to grant unfair advantage to the predator, and the prey must have a chance. To this most mysterious of deities, there is no joy in a hunt guaranteed of success. The hunt is a game, a contest, and the Shadow Mover wants his children to be the best at it. To intervene would defeat the purpose. A true cat must hunt by itself.



Animal Guilds

Guilds get everywhere; most towns and cities have them in some form. Collections of people who practice the same trade and same craft, working together to protect their interests. Or, at least, that was the original idea. Now the term is used more broadly, describing organisations of people and animals banded together through common goals.

Certainly, where the animal Guilds are concerned, this is the case. The animal Guilds are a loose confederacy of different groups (very different groups) all organised for and populated by awakened animals. Initially, each of these different organisations worked separately but, recognising the need to quickly prove their resilience to humanoid Guilds — with their hundreds of years of history and experience of ruthlessness behind them — the different factions put aside (most) of their differences for long enough to form an alliance. The alliance guaranteed the rest of the Guilds had to pay attention to those of the awakened animals. The Animal Guild (as opposed to the individual organisations that make up the whole) is little more than a name; the individual component factions operate on their own terms, enforce their own laws and police their own members. Animal Guilds still produce Guild Marks, however, allowing any animal to gain entrance to the hall of another Guild, and to bribe their way past the Watch... if the Watch is feeling forgiving (for more on Guild Marks, see page 62).

Joining a Guild

As part of character creation, a cat or dog player character can declare that they belong to one of the component organisations that make up the animal Guilds. They must explain how they joined and ensure that they observe the laws detailed in the individual Guild write-ups below. The individual Guilds expect their members to be able to look after themselves, though they do provide a degree of support, quietly, when absolutely necessary. Examples of the kinds of support provided by each Guild is also discussed below.



The Cradle

How did the Cradle form? That's a mystery with no answer. It was kind of always just there. Cats were born to be thieves... capable of climbing sheer walls, moving absolutely silently over the creakiest floorboards, and concealing themselves in tiny spaces, cats inherently possess the abilities most thieves spend years trying to perfect. So, as soon as cats became awakened, there simply was a feline Thieves Guild.

The Cradle's inner workings can appear exceedingly complex, but this is deliberate. The cats maintain a constant back and forth of apparently coded messages (in reality, complete nonsense) in order to spread disinformation. The ciphers these messages are written in can be broken, but even then, there is a second layer of obfuscation — and of course, none of the mysterious figures referred to in the letters are real. The Grim Watcher, Jinglepaws, Pale Eyes... all utter nonsense but quite capable of deceiving those foolish enough to try and infiltrate the Cradle in such unsubtle ways.

Joining the Cradle is not a simple business. Firstly, only cats can join. The cat must be fully mature (no kittens allowed, the Cradle aren't keen on inducting innocents into a life of crime), and a prospective member must deliver a stolen jewel to a Cradle hide-out. As Cradle hide-outs change regularly, and are never easy to find, this is quite a challenge. If a cat manages to do this, then they must swear to abide by the Code of Shadow (the Cradle is quite fond of grandiose names), swearing to never reveal any secret of the Cradle to an outsider, never divulging the location of a Cradle meeting place, and never leaving a single cat to face justice alone. Two cats working together, the Cradle believes, can escape any prison. And, if two cats can't escape a prison, no cat should face their fate alone.

Once sworn in, the members of the Cradle are given the passwords and gestures to allow them to enter any of the Cradle's hide-outs, along with the secret of finding them. They are also given a small pouch of Animal Guild Marks. The history of the Cradle is a long and varied one. Initially hated by the Thieves Guilds in whichever city they visited, they soon proved talented and useful enough at their filching, and to be accepted into the broader brethren of thieves. This influence made their inclusion in the broader Animal Guild vital. The Cradle has great respect in the underworld and considerably less so elsewhere...

A cat player character can belong to the Cradle, if they wish. It is most common for rogues, bards, and warlocks to belong to the Cradle but other classes can be useful members too.

Members of the Cradle gain the following items:

🐾 Burglar's Pack

🐾 3 Guild Marks

Support from the Cradle comes in these ways:

- 🐾 Small deposits of money, or Guild Marks, are occasionally found in the pockets of the cradle member.
- 🐾 Occasionally, mysterious messages are delivered containing hints at potential targets for profitable robberies.
- 🐾 If arrested or captured, doors are often left mysteriously unlocked or windows open.

The Houndlings

The Houndlings were founded as a way of allowing young dogs, particularly those with pretensions to martial professions, to receive training and let off their excess energy (and young dogs always have excess energy). The intention was for the Houndlings to trail various merchant caravans as they left Gullet Cove, practicing various survival skills and orientation techniques. This changed when a caravan was attacked by a group of goblins looking for easy prey. The Houndlings immediately hurled themselves into the defence of the caravan, driving the goblins off and returning to the town filled with pride.

Since then, the Houndlings have grown into an organisation dedicated to providing security to whoever requires it (and is prepared to pay, of course). Joining is relatively easy, as long as you're a dog and capable of putting up a good fight...and try finding a dog who doesn't fit that description! A member must be introduced to the Houndling Chapter Master (an impressive sounding title, but in reality, simply the longest service Houndling in a particular town or city),

by an existing Houndling. There, the prospective Houndling is sworn in, uttering the three short barks symbolising loyalty, courage, and resourcefulness. They must also promise not to breach the three laws of the Houndlings:

1. Never betray a client or leave them defenceless
2. Never run from a fight (unless a client, or a friend already has and you need to defend them)
3. Never eat eggs.

No one is quite sure how that third one snuck into the list, but it's been there too long to be changed now.

The Houndlings became an increasingly highly-trained and highly organised guild, dedicated to offering their clients the full range of security services — whether that's an armed and alert escort for a travelling caravan stocked with freshly imported goods, or a bodyguard capable of hiding in the shadows before bounding forward to defend their employer.

The skill of the Houndlings, and their reliability, has made them extremely sought after. So much so that they no longer operate in Gullet Cove to nearly the extent they once did. Originally, the Houndlings possessed a lodge on the edge of Gullet Cove, but they have since moved to a much larger city. No longer possessing a Guild House, the Houndlings are represented only by a diverse range of their various members who still ply the trade of the mercenary to those who require it — the old lodge itself is now empty and slightly melancholy looking. But those Houndlings still in Gullet Cove are as busy as ever. It is said that several prominent humanoid Guild Members employ Houndlings as secret bodyguards, passing them off as cute pets or even strays they've encountered. Until, of course, they are needed.

A dog player character can belong to the Houndlings if they wish. Fighters, barbarians and paladins are the most common classes for members, but other classes can join too.

Houndlings gain the following items:

- 🐾 Light Crossbow, 1d8 piercing, 5lb. Ammunition (range 80/320), loading, two-pawed.
- 🐾 2 Guild Marks

Support from the Houndlings comes in the following ways:

- 🐾 Fellow Houndlings offer advice on fighting potential enemies, or on how trustworthy certain clients are.
- 🐾 Extra ammunition, spare rations, and replacements for broken armour appears at the door of a member's lodgings.
- 🐾 Armourers and blacksmiths offer a 20% discount to Houndlings — so long as they don't push things too far.

Order of the Golden Collar

Dedicated to the protection of all creatures, the Order of the Golden Collar is the most prominent and most famous of all the organisations founded and run by awakened animals. Both cats and dogs belong to the Order, representing the best of awakened animals and committed to helping those who require it, whatever struggle they might face. The Order was founded by a dog and a cat, two of the first awakened animals, who came to the rescue of an orphan and the orphan's rabbit, when the pair were being threatened by a brutish shop owner. The cat and the dog chased the callous owner away and then helped find the orphan shelter and ultimately, a safe haven. This, the pair decided, was important work. Work too vital to simply stop doing. The Order proceeded from this idea — that those in need should be helped and that, if no one else would assist the needy, then animals could and would. In order to dedicate themselves to this cause, the pair had golden collars crafted for themselves and for those who soon joined them. These collars represented dedication to the goal of offering true help, wherever and whenever it was needed.

The Order of the Golden Collar grew quickly, hundreds of cats and dogs pledging their oaths to the organisation, seeking to do good. After all, there is a great deal of cruelty and injustice in every land, and always those in need of help. The Golden Collar committed itself to overcoming such problems, whatever it took. The founders of the Order have long since passed on, but the Order is headed, in their image, by a cat and a dog. Individual sanctuaries of the Golden Collar also follow this model. The most important member of any sanctuary of the Golden Collar, however, is always the Warden. The Warden is the member of a sanctuary best representing the Order's values.

The process of becoming a member of the Order is similar to that of joining any other Guild. All prospective Collar Bearers — as all members are known within the walls of a sanctuary — must perform some act of selflessness or great bravery in front of witnesses to earn the right to join; but, if such an act has been performed, all that remains to be done is intone the words of the collar:

***I shall protect all those who need my protection
against any threat***

This is the sacred vow of all those who would wear the Golden Collar. Once the vow has been uttered, the applicant is issued their golden collar (with the vow they've just made inscribed on it). The vow is both the means by which an animal becomes a member of the Golden Collar, and the single rule they must abide by. Any animal who forsakes one in need of help can no longer wear their collar. Some rumours claim that once an animal breaks their vow, the golden collar dissolves into nothing, though there's little evidence to support this as no one who joins the Order of the Golden Collar would ever break their vow.

Any awakened animal character may belong to the Order of the Golden Collar if they wish. Any class is welcome in the Golden Collar, and indeed, the Order likes to have a wide variety of skilled members to call upon.

Members of the Order of the Golden Collar gain the following items:

🐾 Golden Collar, AC +2, Weight 1lb.

🐾 2 Guild Marks

Support from the Order of the Golden Collar comes in the following ways:

🐾 Local shops provide potions and scrolls to members of the Order.

🐾 Many of the inhabitants of Gullet Cove (and other towns and cities) have been helped by the Order, and they try and help you in return.

🐾 The Watch and other Guilds look kindly on you and may turn a blind eye to your antics.



The Watchers

Certain members of the Order of the Golden Collar felt that, as laudable as the aims of the Order were, more could be done. While offering protection was the right thing to do, it was better still to venture into the wilds and hunt down those things which threaten the innocent, and deal with them before they even got a chance. This belief, deeply held by a small but notable proportion of the Order of the Golden Collar, was extremely controversial — after all, if the Order began to hunt down the wicked, or the evil, wouldn't the wicked and evil then require protection? Such moral philosophising was unimportant to those who saw the defence of the innocent as more important than anything else.

Eventually, after numerous debates and arguments within the halls of the Golden Collar, there was a schism. Those who believed that it was the true duty of the Order to hunt down creatures that might one day come to pose a threat left, abandoning their golden collars on the steps of the Sanctuaries in which they'd been given them. In place of the collar, the dagger was chosen instead. Made of highly polished silver, so clean and smooth you could see your face in it, a new Guild was formed: The Watchers. They would watch over the land, rooting out evil and darkness wherever it festered, and, in so doing, protect the innocent from what might wait in the wilderness or in the sewers of an apparently civilised place. The Watchers chose the dagger for two reasons: the first was its keen edge, cutting through anything that might harm the defenceless. The carefully honed sheen of the blade was so that each Watcher could always see themselves when using it, forced to be sure that they employed it for the right reasons and against the right target.

The Watchers eschew most of the trappings of other Guilds. They have no meeting places, no formal means of joining. The only way to become a Watcher is to be inducted into the group by a current member. Watchers meet relatively few people; they spend most of their (often short) careers stalking the wild, pursuing the cruel, the wicked, and the evil. Sometimes, they venture into towns and cities, but usually only on a particular mission — tracking a criminal or a monster they didn't manage to take down earlier. There is little in the way of comfort in a Watcher's life but there are those who put the defence of the innocent before their own lives. The Watcher's code is simple and blunt: *hunt the wicked*. And as long as a member of the Watchers continues to do so, they are more than welcome to count themselves amongst this small but famed organisation.

Any animal player character may become a Watcher, if they wish. Any class might become a Watcher, and indeed, possessing a range of different skills and abilities is useful when attempting to survive in a forbidding wilderness.

Watchers gain the following item:

🐾 Silver Dagger, 1d4 piercing, 1lb. Finesse, light, thrown (range 20/60). 'Inflicts an extra +2 damage to all evil aligned creatures.

🐾 1 Guild Marks

Support from the Watchers comes in these ways:

🐾 A new or better blade left beside you, while you sleep.

🐾 A book, with a page marked indicating a monster's weakness.

🐾 An ally may emerge to aid you in a particularly dangerous fight, before vanishing. But don't count on it.



Guild Marks

In Gullet Cove (and in many other towns where Guilds hold sway), the Guilds produce their own coins. Each Guild manufactures their own mark and possessing a pouch of marks is a token of Guild membership. They also act as a currency, but only between Guilds (after all, you don't want non-Guild members getting their hands on them). Guild Marks form part of the complex network of debts, favours, and other connections which bind the Guilds of Gullet Cove together. A Guild mark from a rival guild is extremely valuable and can be used with any other member of the mark's Guild in place of money. Of course, gold can be used instead, and most Guild members prefer it that way...giving away a Guild Mark is a big deal and it obliges you to the person you're paying with it. Your Guild must honour that mark, providing a favour or service of equal value. Given that there's no agreed upon value for an individual Guild Mark, this can get quite expensive at times, with each Guild attempting to negotiate the price of their own marks up and their rivals' down. Using Guild Marks to purchase products or services from non-Guild businesses, however, is strictly forbidden. Any Guild member who did so would be quickly removed from their Guild and blacklisted. Some rules must be obeyed. Guild Marks are for Guild members only (and Watchmen who get a bit too nosy...but the Guilds consider the Watch a kind of Guild for idiots anyway, so that's fair enough).

The Animal Guild, when it was formed, knew that it needed its own tokens. Thus, the Animal Guild Mark was minted and remains in use, accepted as casually as any other Guild Mark and just as valuable.

An Animal Guild Mark can be used to:

- 🐾 Purchase goods or services from another Guild.
- 🐾 Prove your membership of the Guild.
- 🐾 Bribe a Watchman or other person of authority (of course, this depends on whether the Watchman is susceptible to bribes...but offering a Guild Mark instead of coin grants advantage on an Charisma test to persuade a Watchman to accept a bribe).
- 🐾 Gain entry to a rival Guild Hall or other location...they might not want you there, but Guild treaties mean they likely let you in with the right inducement.
- 🐾 Guild Marks are worth about 40gp on their own. Some traders and merchants accept them as money, others don't. Some buy them, but only ever offer 20gp (after all, they're useless in other towns). But they're best held onto...in Gullet Cove, Guild Marks buy things gold is rarely enough to secure...





Gullet Cove Gazetteer

Welcome, mateys, to Gullet Cove! It's an interesting town you've arrived in — interesting and, if you're not careful, pretty dangerous. So it's a good job you've met me first. I'm one of the few honest people you're likely to meet in these parts. Honest as the day is long, I am. Oh sure, I've been a pirate, but you won't find too many in Gullet Cove who haven't done a trip or two on the briny and come back richer with another person's gold. Just as you won't find many people who aren't...reluctant to pay the right tax to the authorities in these parts. There's a lot of tunnels around and about and all sorts of exciting things get brought up and sold on the markets. You can find just about anything in Gullet Cove if you know where to look...and you're careful about who sees you doing it, of course. This isn't an entirely lawless town...more's the pity. But the head of the Watch isn't a bad sort, really. She'll chase you down if you get violent, but, if things are kept quiet, chances are she'll turn a blind eye to a bit of light thievery. A town like Gullet Cove runs on crime...she understands that. Doesn't mean she's an easy touch, though...far from it. She's as tough as they come.

You've come to the right place if you're an animal with a bit of smarts about them, though. Lots of us here. There's work for a cat onboard a lot of ships keeping vermin under control - and there're warehouses and other places which a smart dog can guard...some might even pay you! Me, I'm sort of a...dog of all trades, I suppose you might say. I'm a friendly sort, and I can always find out what's going on. That's a handy skill in a town like Gullet Cove. I get paid very well for what I know, though, so this little introduction should, by rights be costing you. But I'll let you off, given as how you're new.

Quick word of warning before I go, nothing to be frightened of. Well, nothing to be too frightened of, anyway, so long as you have a sword and don't mind using it from time to time. Watch out for the sewers. Something ugly brewing around there, some sort of turf war. Best to be wary. Oh, I know who's involved alright, but me telling you? That's valuable knowledge I'm afraid.

So, I'll bid you farewell. Should you need a little more guidance, you can find me at the Scratching Post. A fine old pub on the east side of the town. My name is Colonel Algernon Finlay Rozvanson. But you can call me the Colonel. Most people do. Go careful now and enjoy the town!



Gullet Cove is old, much older than it often looks. The only real clue to its age is the remains of the walls and towers which surround the modern town. These are crumbling and unsafe, but the residents of Gullet Cove are extremely superstitious about repairing them. Certain of the older inhabitants of the place, particularly dwarfs, repeat a little rhyme whenever a new visitor asks why no one does something about the state of the town walls. It goes:

*I will not touch the outer walls
No matter what your plea
Else all of Gullet Cove should fall
Into the hungry sea.*

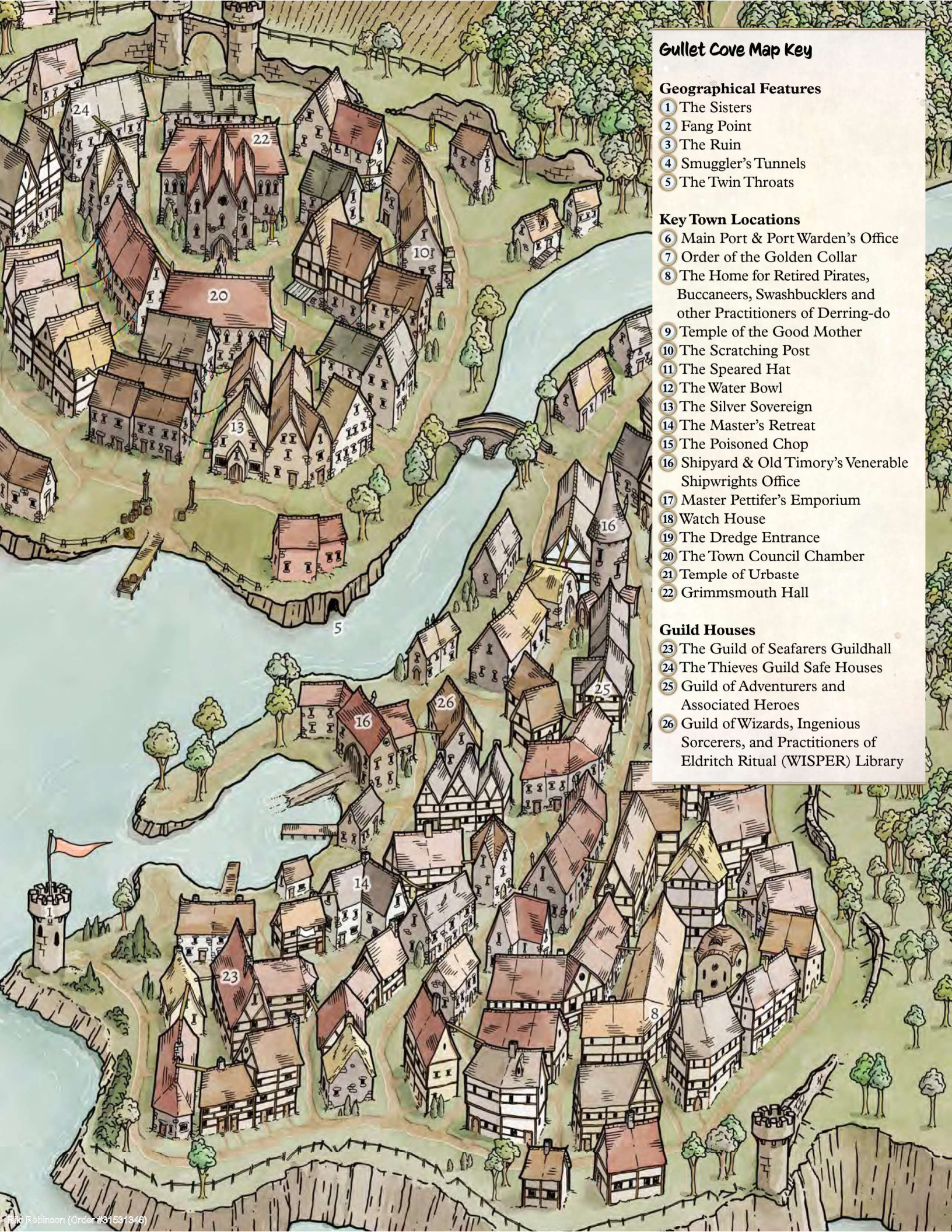
There's a lot of essential facts about Gullet Cove tied up in this little rhyme. The first of which is: tradition is important. Things change in Gullet Cove, just like they do in all port towns, but certain things remain defiantly the same. Fashions come and go, but the Code of the Cove remains the same. The second is that the sea is both a friend and an enemy; those who live in Gullet Cove for long enough eventually adopt the town's habit of referring to the sea as 'Old Fury.' Most of the time it's an affectionate name. Yes, the huge waves rushing into Gullet Cove can cause flooding, and even level a few buildings during the rough winter months, but the sea is also what makes Gullet Cove rich. Old Fury is as much an inhabitant of the town as Morganna Veries, the implacable leader of the Seafarer's Guild and unacknowledged head of the town's Council. Gullet Cove is a town that understands its own history. It's the present it's a little less sure about!

So...who's reading this?

This chapter is written to be read and enjoyed by both players and GMs. Most of what's below is the kind of information that anyone would pick up after a few days exploring Gullet Cove. At certain points in the text, however, there are call-out boxes like this one. Don't read these if you're planning to play in a game set in Gullet Cove! These contain information and plot hooks for the GM only! We're trusting you here...!







Gullet Cove Map Key

Geographical Features

- ① The Sisters
- ② Fang Point
- ③ The Ruin
- ④ Smuggler's Tunnels
- ⑤ The Twin Throats

Key Town Locations

- ⑥ Main Port & Port Warden's Office
- ⑦ Order of the Golden Collar
- ⑧ The Home for Retired Pirates, Buccaneers, Swashbucklers and other Practitioners of Derring-do
- ⑨ Temple of the Good Mother
- ⑩ The Scratching Post
- ⑪ The Speared Hat
- ⑫ The Water Bowl
- ⑬ The Silver Sovereign
- ⑭ The Master's Retreat
- ⑮ The Poisoned Chop
- ⑯ Shipyard & Old Timory's Venerable Shipwrights Office
- ⑰ Master Pettifer's Emporium
- ⑱ Watch House
- ⑲ The Dredge Entrance
- ⑳ The Town Council Chamber
- ㉑ Temple of Urbaste
- ㉒ Grimmsmouth Hall

Guild Houses

- ㉓ The Guild of Seafarers Guildhall
- ㉔ The Thieves Guild Safe Houses
- ㉕ Guild of Adventurers and Associated Heroes
- ㉖ Guild of Wizards, Ingenious Sorcerers, and Practitioners of Eldritch Ritual (WISPER) Library

A Brief History of Gullet Cove

The area on which Gullet Cove now stands was, in the extreme and distant past, a meeting place of the gods. The curving rocky promontories which provide some shelter from the sea are distinctive for the peculiar stepped formation they assumed. This was not the action of erosion, but the deliberate crafting of the divinities who held debates in an amphitheatre created for that purpose. The gods abandoned the place eventually, breaking the outer wall of their auditorium to allow the sea to flow in. The magical residue of so many beings, possessed of so much power, still marks Gullet Cove. It is for this reason that so many awakened animals are drawn to it, the lingering flavour of ancient magic clings to everything, bringing together creatures themselves touched by magic. Gullet Cove, in its current form, is three hundred years old, though other settlements stood here before it. The few scholars who inhabit the town, and spend time examining the various clusters of ruins found in the nearby landscape, opine that a large elvish city once occupied the area - a town of opulence and extraordinary advancement.

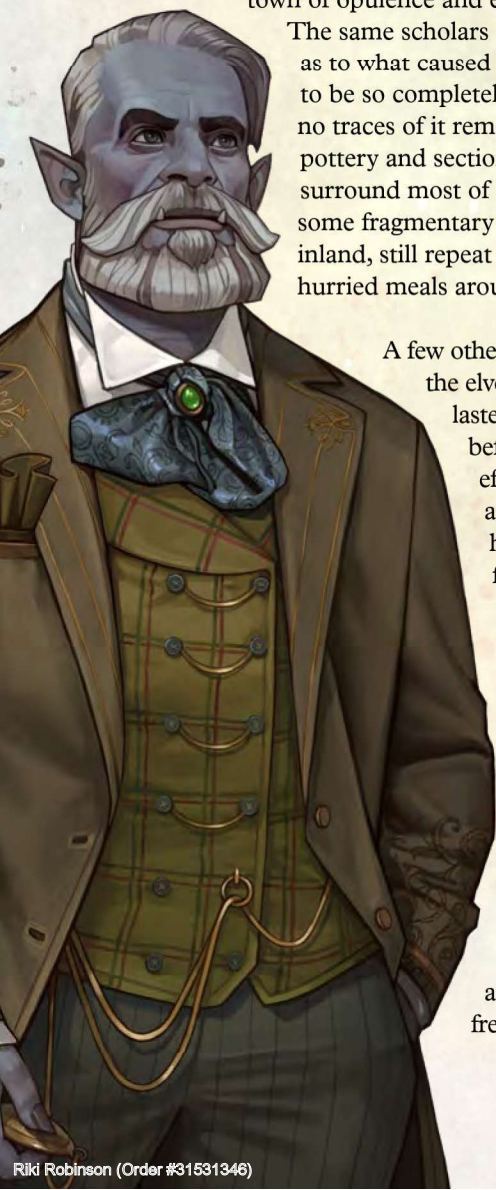
The same scholars are less happy to speculate as to what caused a town of such dimensions to be so completely destroyed that almost no traces of it remain, save for broken pottery and sections of the town walls which surround most of Gullet Cove. There are some fragmentary legends which elves, further inland, still repeat around mugs of ale, or over hurried meals around campfires.

A few other minor settlements replaced the elven conurbation, but few lasted more than a dozen years before, finally, Gullet Cove was effectively founded. There are a number of stories detailing how the town was supposedly founded, though the most persistent involve a group of pirates who grew tired of the various perils of life, settled down, and created a port town deliberately less encumbered by... legality, than other, similar places. These semi-mythical founders are commemorated in a number of different aspects of Gullet Cove's architecture and traditions, but, most frequently, in the curse: 'four

founders!' Of course, some claim there were five founders, or only two, but the oath is always the same: four founders. No more and no less. Some claim that this proves there were four founders. Others, more sensibly, tell these people to shut up. The four founders were some combination of human, elf, dwarf, and either a dog or a cat. No one is too sure on the precise configurations of the original four, but everyone is entirely confident that a very unusual and extremely intelligent animal was among them — and was possibly the leader of the group. Despite, or perhaps because of, the uncertainty surrounding what kind of animal acted as one of the town's founders, Gullet Cove is a haven for animals of all kinds, particularly awakened animals.

Gullet Cove is named for its unusual topography, which, when viewed from the air, appears to remember a vast throat. As one of the town's first cartographers said: 'It looks as though the land were trying to drink the sea'. The shelter the cove offers to ships made it an ideal location for defending. Clearly, those who first settled here agreed, as the oldest constructions dating to after the foundation of Gullet Cove are the Sisters — the two watchtowers which stand on each side of the entrance to the bay. These were soon followed by the bridges which span the two rivers spilling into the cove. There was an attempt to further reinforce the town's defences, reconstructing the existing town walls. This was abandoned, however, when a number of the engineers and masons working on the walls vanished entirely, leaving behind a few scraps of clothes and a few drops of blood. Various attempts were made to root out the cause of this disappearance but to no avail. The engineers were gone. The walls remain untouched.

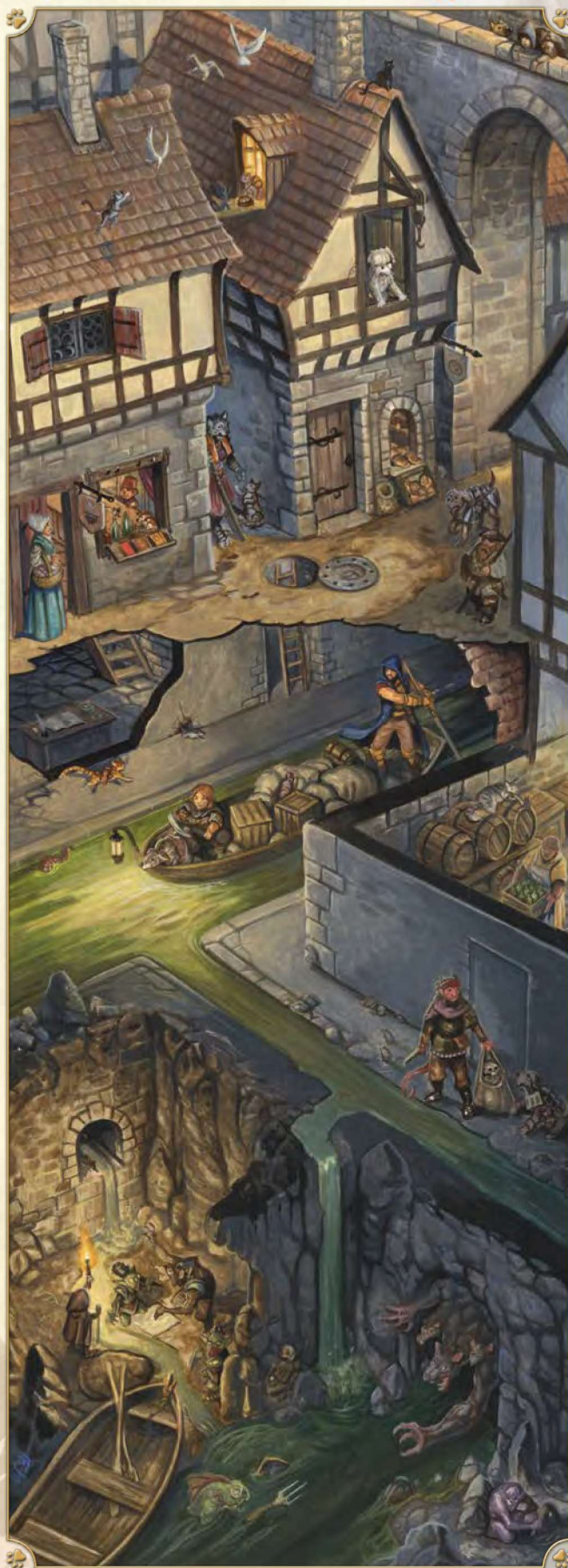
The leadership of the town has changed considerably since its foundation. Whoever the four founders (or three, five, twelve...) were, they were soon replaced by the first true Mayor of Gullet Cove. Septimus Mugluk rose to prominence in Gullet Cove by dint of two things: being bigger and tougher than everyone else and being friendlier and smarter than them too. A half-orc, Septimus Mugluk became the town's first mayor through a combination of careful negotiation and equally careful violence. Mugluk remained the town's mayor for fifteen years and spent most of that time forging the town into a rough approximation of what it remains to this day. He was the first to welcome awakened animals and render Gullet Cove something of a haven for such creatures. Mugluk's major extravagance was the construction of Grimmsmouth Hall, his enormous residence, on top of the bluff which looks down into the cove. Enormously lavish, Grimmsmouth Hall left Mugluk almost bankrupt and the mayor died soon after its completion. Strange stories abound about the interior of the house and



the various rooms which Mugluk had built within it. Since his death, very few lived there for long and the house has earned a reputation for strangeness - though how much of this is founded in reality, and how much is deliberately cultivated by smugglers who, some rumours claim, discovered tunnels that run from the shore to the hall's basement is anyone's guess.

After Mugluk's death, a number of men and women attempted to replace him, though all proved unpopular and were unseated either through political means or more direct ones (the violent uprising against the dwarf, Englin Forgeworth, who tried to style himself Prince of the Port, being the chief example). So unstable was the town's governance that it seemed, briefly, as though Gullet Cove would collapse. Instead, out of the turmoil, the Town Council was formed. The Council is composed of the six most prominent figures in the town - the head of the Seafarers Guild, the Port Warden, and a select representative from the Guild of Heroes and Adventurers, the Guild of Wizards, Ingenious Sorcerers and Practitioners of Eldritch Ritual (WISPER), and a delegate sent from the Temple of the Good Mother or from the Church of Urbaste. The final member of the Council is the sitting mayor, who has the casting vote and is elected once every three years by the Council. While far from incorruptible, this system of rulership has at least maintained a degree of stability and allowed Gullet Cove to thrive in the hundred or so years it has been in place.

The Council's members depend for their influence and power upon the Guilds, who after Mugluk's demise slowly established themselves as the true power in Gullet Cove. While chaos ruled the town, the Guilds assembled and determined that the best way to ensure their continued pre-eminence was to support the Council, ensuring that it was populated with their members. This culminated in the signing of the . The Treaty of the Guilds, now over a century old, has been observed and maintained through a combination of Guild money, the loyalty of Guild members, and, rarely but when needed, the odd spot of violence. The relationship between the Guilds has been fraught in recent years, as a number of peculiar events have shaken the always-fragile trust between the different factions. There are some who asseverate that an outside force is attempting to turn the Guilds against each other, though to what end, these wild rumours stop short of saying.



Awakened Animals and Gullet Cove

There are few places in the land that *hate* animals. After all, cats and dogs have been the companions of the humanoid species for millennia, helping them and comforting them in exchange for food and shelter. It is an ancient relationship, one based on mutual appreciation and trust. But it's a little more than that in Gullet Cove. The town's legendary founders included an awakened animal — though no one is quite sure whether it was a cat or a dog — and as a result, Gullet Cove has always taken care of any animal who arrives in port. This is especially true for awakened animals; most places in Gullet Cove have some form of adaptation to make them accessible for animals. Whether that is low shelving in shops, displaying produce close to the ground for cats and dogs to inspect just as an elf or a human might with the same goods higher up, or cat and dog-flaps built into the town gates, the animal population within Gullet Cove is as important and valued as any other race or species.

Animals are a key part of the fabric of the town. They form a part of the Council, and all major political decisions usually consider the impact of them on the animal population; after all, different things affect creatures without opposable thumbs differently. The town has temples for the preferred deities of awakened animals, as well as one of the Order of the Golden Collar's sanctuaries. It is also rumoured that the Cradle — the feline Thieves Guild — operates within Gullet Cove's perimeter, stalking the roof tops and sneaking through windows to steal away whatever they can lay their paws on.

In some places, such behaviour might turn people against awakened animals.

In Gullet Cove, however, such things are expected. The Thieves Guild is one of the town's most powerful organisations and the cat version is no different, beyond being slightly more adorable. This attitude of interspecies cooperation extends to most occupations; rat-catchers employ cats to accompany them into the cellars, tavern keepers employ a dog along with a half-orc bruiser as their bouncers should things get ugly, the Watch has a sniffer dog to help them track criminals (whenever the Watch actually gets around to doing that). The whole of Gullet Cove is populated by awakened animals, and they are as inextricable from the nature and identity of the town as the sea is.

The sight of awakened animals on every street, in every tavern, and negotiating, fervently, with a merchant over every market stall is vaguely unsettling for those new to the port, but it quickly becomes something one is accustomed to. For others, it is a lure to find a town where there is such equality and where races and species cooperate so freely. Even if much of that cooperation is about planning robberies, choosing the next merchant ship ripe for plundering, or trying to determine the best way of exploiting foolish customers. But equality means the equality to be every bit as larcenous as a halfling rogue with his hands in a safe...and anyway, who could believe that the cheery sheepdog with the lolling tongue could be anything but a good boy in need of a pat? He definitely couldn't be there to distract you while his partner, a mean-looking sphinx cat, filches all the money from your purse...could he?

It is common to see animals at all of the locations in this chapter. They are all accessible to them and frequented by them. All of these locations have some form of adaptation to suit the animals who make use of the places; these aren't always listed but they're always there. In Gullet Cove, these aren't noticed or commented upon, architects and masons don't spend hours agonising over how they can include a point of access for an animal, it is just a natural response now.

So, whether you are an animal adventurer or merely the fortunate companion of one, go forth and explore this town of pirates, scoundrels, and lovely fluffy animals that just want a cuddle. Who knows what you might find?



Geographical Features

1 The Sisters

Glowering over the entrance into Gullet Cove, the Sisters are the twin watchtowers guarding the bay itself. They haven't been used for their primary defensive purpose in almost a hundred years — though they are kept ready, just in case. The Sisters each possess a pair of vast iron hinges which jut from their sides, set into mortar and magically reinforced. Should Gullet Cove ever be attacked, a net can be stretched between the two to prevent enemy craft from sailing into the harbour. This, so goes the theory at least, allows the massed forces of WISPER to launch fireballs and other offensive spells into the ships of the foe.

The Sisters are always occupied by members of the Watch. Though, as Gullet Cove has become increasingly prosperous and peaceful, what used to be a crew of four is now down to one. And that one guard is usually asleep. It's not called nap duty in the Watch House for nothing... especially as sleeping means that they don't hear the voices on the wind, whispering promises of immortality or wealth if they just *open their minds*. But that too, is just part of the job. The Watch refer to them as 'the listeners', as the bargains extended seem plucked from the minds of those sat in the watchtower — the gambler is offered money, the lonely offered companionship, the bored offered something new. The Watch seek anyone who can explain these ethereal voices, and many have tried, though no exorcism or spell has managed to stop them. It is notable, however, that almost no members of WISPER ever make the journey to the Sisters to diagnose the origin of the disembodied voices. No one is quite sure why.

2 Fang Point

Pointing out into the bay, on a rugged spit of land known as Fang Point, the lighthouse of Gullet Cove is a familiar feature to many sailors who make port their home. Its role is vital — the coast around Gullet Cove is rugged and there are numerous patches of submerged rocks. In the past, ships were lured onto these rocks, deliberately wrecked, and then pillaged by the Gullet Cove smugglers and pirates. In these more civilised times, Fang Point guides ships into the harbour where they can be pillaged by legal, if no less ruthless, means. Fang Point Lighthouse is relatively new. It was built approximately fifty years ago, after the previous lighthouse collapsed.

It is a solid, well-kept tower with a large, magically powered lamp in its peak. The lamp itself is a marvel of dwarven engineering. Shaped into the likeness of four tiger heads, light blazes forth from their maws, teeth bared and roaring across the bay. It is one of the first things most visitors to Gullet Cove see, and one of the last things they forget.

Crewed by three keepers — a dwarf called Migran, a bobtail cat known as Ginger Mick, and the grizzled, white-haired veteran of a decade of hard sailing, Grion Whistle — the lighthouse is reliable, which, as the sailors say, is all it damn well needs to be. All three of the keepers are experienced, committed, and usually to be found smoking a pipe (even Ginger Mick...*especially* Ginger Mick) or sipping from a flask (bowl) filled with rum. The three speak relatively little but they see every ship heading into Gullet Cove...always useful information for those willing to invest time into winning their confidence.





3 The Ruin

The remains of the previous lighthouse, long since crumbled into a mass of moss swarmed stone, are referred to by the inhabitants of Gullet Cove as 'the Ruin'. Few visit the site; none dares build there. What precisely reduced the previously impressive lighthouse to a mound of detritus remains entirely mysterious, though there are dozens of theories. The most pertinacious is that the former lighthouse was constructed on the ruins of the ancient elvish town, perhaps even on top of the lighthouse which the elves had used to guide their sleek ships through storm and gale. There is little beyond superstition to justify this belief, of course, but that has not stopped the ruin becoming a place of fear for many Gullet Cove residents, most of whom keep far away from the wreckage, murmuring about the ominous stories they've heard.

4 Smuggler's Tunnels

The cliff tops surrounding Gullet Cove are a veritable mass of tunnels. Some are natural and others are decidedly not... smuggling is a common pastime of long time Gullet Cove residents. After all, when the Guilds charge tithes on so much that enters the town, anything you can get for free becomes that much sweeter (and potentially profitable)! Over the last century, magic has been deployed to gradually burrow deeper and further into the hillside. The tunnels are usually hidden with carefully placed foliage, or something which enables the tunnels to blend into the scenery. Some smugglers disguise the entrance to their most commonly used tunnels as abandoned mines, hoping to dissuade people from investigating with signs claiming imminent risk of collapse! The tunnels are typically used only by smugglers and, while some of the Guilds advocate for shutting them down or catching those who use them, the more sensible quickly realise that tracking down those who use them is both futile and costly. Instead, the Guilds simply let this illicit trade go...for now at least.



5 The Twin Throats

Two rivers, known as the Twin Throats, disgorge into Gullet Cove. The rivers run a considerable distance in rough parallel before diverging as they cleave their way in-land. The Twin Throats are the town's main source of fresh water and are dammed and tapped at various points, diverted streams being used to irrigate the few farms near to the town, and ensuring that the sewage system is highly effective.

The right-hand river which exits into the bay is the Malkin, that to the left is the Mastin. The Malkin is renowned for being by far the faster and more dangerous of the two, with a section of rapids only a few miles from the town which has left a number of the more ambitious (or greedy, or impatient) merchants and prospective sailors with smashed boats and lost cargo. The Malkin is a dangerous river, and those that travel it do so warily.

The Mastin is far more gentle, placidly making its way from the foothills some miles from Gullet Cove before spilling into the bay. The path of the Mastin is marked by small farms, villages, and inns. Barges frequently travel along it, bringing goods to be transported overseas. The relative prosperity found along the Mastin brings with it its share of peril though; river pirates frequently strike at the unsuspecting, posing as fellow merchants before stealing everything they can get their hands on!

Approximately once a year, a tidal bore races down both rivers, caused by a combination of seasonal rain and the melting of winter snow. Called 'the choke', this bolus of water floods the bay, rattling ships against the stones of the dock walls, deluging the warehouses too near the harbour and preventing any ships making berth. The town has come to celebrate these days of inactivity, with Choke Day becoming something of a holiday — the Guilds taking to providing street entertainment, the taverns staying open later, and a general atmosphere of frivolity gripping the whole of Gullet Cove. Of course, the Guilds also use this as an opportunity to settle scores with each other; while no other business is being conducted, vicious political (and not-so political) negotiations occur in the background.

Key Town Locations

6 Main Port

Gullet Cove is many things. But most importantly, it's a port. Ships are supplied and fitted out here for lengthy voyages; they also end their trips here, dropping off vast quantities of cargo which the Guilds and the hundreds of merchants and traders all quickly descend on, picking out the best bits and making ready to sell them on - at a tidy profit! The port is the town's most important and busiest place. It is constantly busy - even at night, sailors wander the streets (most of them having just been thrown out of one tavern and already looking for the next) and those merchants who are happy to make their money by illegal means as well as lawful do a little extra business on the side.

The port consist of the docks, always crowded with ships both large and small, and the various warehouses in which goods are stored before they can be sold on. The streets near to the broad, open sweep of sea and the various mooring points are close and claustrophobic. The warehouses are large, looming buildings and, as Gullet Cove has become a richer and busier town, more have been built in a space scarcely able to accommodate them. At night, when the mist drifts in from the sea, and the few lanterns which hang from isolated way-posts or the signs of small, grim-looking taverns cast shadows, the docks can quickly become a dangerous and threatening place to be. It is perhaps this which has resulted in such sinister rumours gathering around the place - no respectable citizen visits the docks after the sun has begun to set. Strange creatures are said to venture up and into the streets during the night, prowling the secluded streets, or breaking into the warehouses to filch whatever they can. Who knows what truth there is in such wild claims? Certainly, it is difficult to believe the claims of skulking men with the visages of rats. Or of rats which move with the coordination and intelligence of humans. But the stories persist, nevertheless.



Less outlandish are the stories of the secret meeting spots dotted around the docks, in which black market deals are struck and bargains are made. These are all kept concealed from the town's Watch, but are, it is said, tacitly approved of by the Council who recognise that a certain degree of illicit trade is, in fact, good for business. The late-night deals are conducted in carefully protected and carefully concealed trading houses. These are sometimes at the back of the various rough taverns which nestle in between warehouses, sometimes in the side-rooms of warehouses. Other times, the deals require even more clandestine locations: it is well known that the Thieves Guild and the Cradle possess secret hiding places throughout the town and, for the right price, those in the docks can be accessed. Of course, it isn't cheap and requires a long-term contract being signed with the Thieves Guild which is, or at least can be, somewhat dangerous for those who don't read the fine print. The Thieves Guild aren't just good at picking pockets literally; they are also extensively skilled at tying the unsuspecting in legal knots and taking their money that way. For those merchants who can afford the exorbitant rates (or have lawyers as good as the Thieves Guild's), such meeting spots are the best place to conduct the shady business for which the docks are infamous.

Crime. Crime is everywhere at the docks. The Thieves Guild basically looks at the docks as a kind of free-for-all buffet, pillaging any merchant's pocket and any unguarded packing crate. This often leads to eruptions of violence and, more problematically, the Thieves Guild having access to things they shouldn't. And the Rat King's goons operate here, using the Thieves Guild's activities to cover their various thefts, but what, exactly, are they hoping to build? The Rat King is discussed in more detail in the call-out box on page 93.

🐾 The Thieves Guild purloined something very dangerous — a magical flute which, if played, just might bring a demon king crashing down into the earth. Someone needs to get it back. And possibly talk with the wizard who ordered it in the first place!

🐾 The Rat King's minions infest a warehouse; every night there are rattles and mechanical shrieks as they slowly assemble a machine. But what is it, and what do they intend to do with it?

🐾 Merchants have been disappearing and are demanding protection, threatening to forsake Gullet Cove altogether. The only link between the vanishing merchants is that they all had cargo onboard a ship called *Virtue's Folly*. Someone needs to investigate what's going on before the whole town riots!





6 Port Warden's Office

A small, dilapidated, and thoroughly dirty little building stuck between two large warehouses, the Port Warden's Office is the nominal point of authority in the docks. What this means, in reality, is slightly less clear...while once, the Port Warden was a position of respect, this hasn't been the case for some time. Now, the Warden is usually awarded to an old member of the Seafarers Guild who isn't too drunk or too corrupt. That, at least, is the aim. It doesn't take long for the Warden to find the money in their pocket is far more enjoyable than the supposed duties of the Port Warden. When the position was established, the Warden was meant to be an impartial arbiter - ensuring that mooring fees were paid, that crime was controlled, that smuggling wasn't too rampant. There was even, once, a team of Port Guards who served under the Warden, policing the various merchant ships and pirate craft that used the docks. Now, however, the Port Warden is considered something of a joke, when they are thought of at all. The ships that do bother to pay mooring fees usually pay directly to the Thieves Guild (to persuade them not to steal the cargo) or to the Seafarers Guild. As the power and prestige of the Port Warden declined, so did the office...what was once whitewashed, clean and carefully maintained is now all grimy glass windows and peeling paint. The door is clinging to its hinges and sways maniacally in the sea wind that has also left most of the office's roof a mass of broken tile and mouldering wood. Within, there are several desks and chairs, and, at the back, what was a small prison cell for those who attempted to dodge paying taxes and fines. Now, it lies open and is mainly used to store the confused tangle of paper, slates, and vellum scrolls on which the Port Warden's records are kept. The cell is the only dry place in the office now, and the records are the only reason the door to the office is ever kept locked. Who knows what information might be found, hidden in amidst stacks of receipts for mooring?

The current Port Warden is Gaius Vandel. Gaius is well-known throughout the docks as reasonably honest as far as Port Warden's go. A tall man who walks with a pronounced stoop having spent far too long below decks during his life, Gaius isn't flagrantly corrupt (unlike several of his forebears) and considers himself a dutiful seneschal, opening the office every day, and even occasionally moving some of the papers in the cell around, to make the place look tidy. While Gaius doesn't spend more than an hour a day in the office, to open it at all is a considerable improvement on many who held the post. For the rest of the day, Gaius wanders along the docks, ostensibly to keep an eye on things, but in actuality to enjoy himself in the various pubs which dot the area and keep an ear open for the kind of useful information he might be able to sell on to his contacts in the various Guilds. Gaius was never a particularly loyal member of the Seafarer's Guild, unlike most who become Warden, and, as a result, he is able to make a tidy living picking up tidbits from those who made their way into dock. This makes him a valuable resource for those hoping to find out precisely what is going on in Gullet Cove. He's also friendly, though cautious, until he's had enough to drink of course. Though he isn't always the most reliable of informants once he's had too many.

Central Market

The central peninsula of Gullet Cove hosts a huge market three times a week. Despite the modest size of Gullet Cove as a town, the importance of the place as a mercantile hub has ensured that the market is well attended. Traders from most major towns frequent at least one of the markets every week, and other merchants from further afield venture to attend on the off chance that a particularly interesting arrival might have reached the docks. The competition for stall space is intense and frequently turns violent, with various traders resorting to intimidation (or a good old-fashioned punch in the face) in order to secure the pitch they want. Most of the Watch's time on duty is spent ensuring that these punch-ups don't get too nasty. Those who visit the market are typically able to find anything they seek, though the prices are never exactly cheap. Gullet Cove attracts the canniest of negotiators and they don't let their wares go without ensuring they've made every penny they can from them.

Gullet Cove Pricing

Player characters wanting to buy things in Gullet Cove should be encouraged to. This is a port town, and it thrives on such purchases. Most standard items can be bought for the usual price listed in the fifth edition of the world's favourite roleplaying game. The town is also famed for the strange artefacts ending up in shops and market stalls. What the GM wants to make the player characters pay for such items is up to them...but it definitely shouldn't be cheap!



Vandel's Real Activities

Whilst he may look like an absent minded drunk (which is not altogether untrue), Vandel is also something of a spy master — he trades information with everyone in the port, especially the Guilds, but he also has contacts throughout the world. Want to know the price of fish in a port on the far side of the ocean? Vandel can probably tell you. Information is Vandel's main concern, and his constant wandering from pub to pub is as much about determining who is on the way up and who is on the way down as it is about drinking. Vandel's passion for collecting information has led him to become a sort of on-again, off-again spy. Several foreign powers pay him considerable sums to keep a track on precisely who is docking at Gullet Cove, something which his Guild paymasters — most of whom aren't aware of each other — might not look so kindly on. Vandel is always looking for potential agents he can pay to do some of the work for him...less chance of being caught out.

- 🐾 'Fancy earning a bit of cash, you lucky people?' Vandel needs some friends to help him out. All they must do is sneak into the bed chamber of the head of the Seafarers Guild and take a particular letter, kept in a particular draw. But what does the letter contain? And what does Vandel want it for?
- 🐾 Sheltering in a gutter, Vandel has been badly beaten. A tavern brawl he lost, or is someone hunting the spy? Begging for help, Vandel promises money, information, whatever is needed if they'll keep the assassin from finishing the job.
- 🐾 You're sure Vandel is tracking you, keeping a log of your activities. But why? What's so special about you? And who cares enough to pay Vandel to trace you?





7 Order of the Golden Collar

Gullet Cove's reputation as a haven for awakened animals is well earned. The town has a large population of intelligent animals, and as this population has grown, so too has the number of organisations representing and aiding these remarkable creatures. The Order of the Golden Collar is the most immediately noticeable, and spectacular, of the locations in Gullet Cove where awakened animals gather. A large, square building erected in the centre of the town, built with marble and quartz, decorated with meticulously crafted statues of heroic exemplars of animal virtue, the Golden Collar Sanctuary is unmistakable. It is an extensive, and extensively equipped, building too. It possesses bedrooms (for both animal and humanoids), an armoury, a training ground and gymnasium (though this is suitable only for animals), along with a sparring ring and gallery from which the combatants below can be watched. There is also a large meeting chamber, in which the leaders of the Golden Collar within Gullet Cove can gather to discuss those matters which require ruling on – sometimes, this is deciding on which prospective members are worthy of joining the hallowed orders of the Golden Collar; at others, it is determining whether the Golden Collar needs to send its most trusted representatives to assist the Watch in apprehending criminals, or hunting pirates.

The Golden Collar is devoted to performing good works and to protecting animals and the places where those animals live. Its position in Gullet Cove is a delicate one – there's far too much crime and villainy to ever contain it all, for a start. And much of it involves the more roguish kind of animal adventurers. The Golden Collar knows that the elite band of cat thieves, the Cradle, operates in Gullet Cove. While the Golden Collar might attempt to thwart some of the Cradle's more outrageous schemes (such as emptying the town's entire treasury...), it doesn't, however, try and drive them from the town as it might elsewhere. The rules are different in Gullet Cove, however, and the power of the Guilds means that the Order has to be a little more circumspect in some of its activities. The Guilds don't take kindly to their activities being interfered with, no matter how well-intentioned the interference, and far more people are willing to back the Guilds than are committed to the ideals of the Order. This goes for awakened animals as much as for humanoids. Sure, the membership of the Order is made up of dogs and cats devoted to helping their fellow creatures and to defeating evil, but there are also a lot of animals who see the protection the Guilds provide (and the kind of warm basket which money can provide) and decide their lot might be better there!



Despite this, the Golden Collar is seen as a force for good in Gullet Cove and is often turned to by animals and humanoids who recognise that the Watch is often powerless to help them. Instead, they put their trust in the Order who utilise their considerable resources to ensure that justice is done. This involves hunting down thieves (or at least thieves who aren't sticking to the practices of the Guild), chasing off evil magic-users and protecting the innocent. Admittedly, there aren't huge numbers of innocents in Gullet Cove, but those that do turn up there are under the protection of the Order.

In Gullet Cove, the Order is represented by a cat - Sir Bertram of Greyholt, a large, stern Maine Coon - and a dog - Griselda dePugh, a thin and resilient greyhound. Between them, these two attempt to both uphold the code of the Golden Collar and navigate the awkward political waters that Gullet Cove often finds washing down its streets. Such a delicate position requires considerable finesse and, as a result, there are often disagreements between the two leaders. Sir Bertram, a cat with a great deal of honour and integrity but little subtlety struggles to keep his temper with the various Guild representatives, Council lackeys, and other factions who make up the real power in the town. Griselda, meanwhile, is a skilled political operator, who easily navigates such tumult but who also constantly risks compromising the impartiality of the Golden Collar as a result. These contrasting approaches to life and the role of the Order in Gullet Cove results in frequent friction between the two, which their superiors further afield consider very healthy. Griselda ensures that the Golden Collar is always aware of what is going on in the town and can respond effectively to the political chicanery without becoming a part of it, though she does so without Sir Bertram's help. Sir Bertram finds himself pulled into the reckless currents of Gullet Cove politics all too often. Both Griselda and Sir Bertram maintain their own loyal assistants within the Gullet Cove branch of the Order, performing secret tasks for each when required. However, while Sir Bertram and Griselda are the leaders of the Golden Collar in Gullet Cove, the true hero and the face of the Order in the mind of Gullet Cove's residents is its Warden.

The Warden of the Golden Collar is the most honoured and esteemed position in each chapter. A Warden does not lead a chapter of the organisation but they best represent it. The Warden is appointed from those animals who belong to the Order and most fully embody its ideals. They are the noblest, the truest, and the most faithful amongst all their peers. They are brave, decent, and utterly committed to protecting the innocent and helping the needy. In Gullet Cove, the Warden is a rough collie by the name of Orlan. Orlan is beloved throughout the town for their relentless good-naturedness and willingness to help anyone, however complex their problems might be. This is coupled with a skill in combat that few can parallel. Orlan is both adored by those who seek help and feared by those who crossed their path. Things tend to get extremely ugly for any who are cruel to animals or children should Orlan learn of their deeds. Orlan's past is a mystery, and one Orlan does not speak of. None are sure how they became awakened, where they come from, or even what gender they are. The Order of the Golden Collar has many adherents dedicated to the highest of ideals; few are as committed to enacting these ideals in real life as Orlan.





8 The Home for Retired Pirates, Buccaneers, Swashbucklers, and Other Practitioners of Derring-do

Perhaps the strangest looking building in the town, the Home for Retired Pirates, Buccaneers, Swashbucklers, and Other Practitioners of Derring-do is at least half constructed from bits of old ship. Rigging hangs from most of the circular windows, there are several crow's nests emerging from the roof in place of chimneys, and a series of cannons protrude from crudely made holes in the walls (though these are at least decorously covered with lids). As the name of the building - emblazoned in crude paint across a large, tattered black flag suspended from the entrance - states, the place houses an assortment of...colourful characters, most of whom once made a living looting unlucky ships up and down the coast. This makes for a lively house, filled with drunken song and drunken laughter. And drunken fighting. The Pirate House (as it is known by those with better things to do than recite the whole name) is frequently visited by the Watch about the noise of clashing cutlasses, roaring, and general chaos which regularly spills out onto the streets. Just as frequently, members of the Watch are pursued down the street by Admiral Ten Bones, the piratical sheepdog who guards the place. The Pirate House is, perhaps unsurprisingly, in constant need of repairs. Holes in the wall made by wildly brandished cutlasses are common, as are falling roof tiles and cracked windows - all the result of rum bottles flung by drunken hands. Despite this, the Pirate House is extremely opulent - most of its residents put together a considerable sum before retirement. Each cabin is beautifully appointed with a padded hammock, its own cabinet for grog, and a series of cleverly concealed chests in which various treasures can be hidden...though most are occupied by clothes and the bric-a-brac of a life now lived on land. Some of the concealed chests, however, hide much stranger things...magical things brought back from far off lands. A thief might do very nicely should they be able to navigate the strange architecture. The ships don't only appear on the outside...the whole building consists of narrow corridors which creak beneath even the lightest of treads. It's the only way many of the residents can feel at home on dry land.

The residents themselves are typically grey-haired and cantankerous and most have some form of undeniably piratical accoutrement. Whether it's a tricorne hat they are never seen without, a golden earring, an eyepatch, peg-leg, or parrot, someone in the Pirate House has it. A few of the most notorious inhabitants wear all of them simultaneously. While most of the residents long since gave up plying their trade, or at least so they claim, in truth, most of those who dwell in the Pirate House are still involved in piracy — owning shares in different ships and, for some of the younger and more sprightly, participating in smuggling. A life without the thrill of larceny is not a life at all.

Owning shares in ships also ensures that the old pirates are still up to date with what is going on in the teeming ocean, beyond the sheltering walls of Gullet Cove. It also brings several younger pirates to the place, to discuss future raids, to divide loot, or simply for advice. These young pirates often stay for a little while, enjoying the relative impunity with which they are treated in Gullet Cove. No angry naval officers pursue them here and the Watch might visit the Pirate House but only to ask them to keep the bloodshed to a minimum. Currently in residence is the infamous tiefling Pirate Queen Ysandre. The reputation of the Queen of the Northern Straits precedes her - she is clever, cunning, and utterly ruthless. To anyone who opposes her. She is also extremely good company and a loyal friend to those she learns to trust.



Your Tiedfling Friend...

Ysandre is in hiding in Gullet Cove. Well, as close to in hiding as a tall, ferocious Tiedfling pirate captain gets. Prior to turning up at the Home for Retired Pirates, Ysandre was involved in a raid on an extremely well-guarded ship she was certain contained enough gold for both her and her crew to retire on. She was right about one thing. The ship was well guarded. Ysandre's ship was devastated by magic and advanced weaponry, most of her crew killed, and she barely escaped with her life. Since then, she has travelled throughout the land, trying to shake off the dogged bounty hunters sent after her. The Home for Retired Pirates has proven a good hiding place for the last few months but Ysandre is increasingly convinced that she's been discovered, her location given away. Strange figures stalk her when she wanders the streets at night — stifled footsteps echo down empty alleyways. Strong and focused as she is, even Ysandre's will is beginning to fragment. She needs help and anyone who spends enough time to develop a bond with her quickly identifies this. Ysandre also adores animals, and, since she fled, has missed her cat, Rinaldo, dreadfully.

🐾 Ysandre is being tracked. But not by anything human. An Invisible Stalker has been set on her trail and is preparing itself to strike. How can it be stopped, and how can its summoner be found before they send another?

🐾 The person Ysandre attempted to steal from is Verskol Hammersson — a sorcerer of formidable power. He's recently arrived in town, accompanied by a bodyguard consisting of some of the nastiest, meanest killers in the oceans and is intent on finding Ysandre. Can he be scared off? Bribed? Or are things going to get ugly?

🐾 The Home for Retired Pirates has taken good care of Ysandre, and she's determined to take good care of them in return. One of their number, the ever-charming Captain Pog the Pug, has been robbed. Ysandre is going to find the thief and make them return what they took. But she wants back-up...



9 Temple of the Good Mother

There are many Temples of the Good Mother found throughout the land; the example located in Gullet Cove is like many of them - warm, protected, and with a vast kitchen at its centre. The temple is built in the remains of the former Council Chambers. Before the construction of Grimmsmouth Hall, and the creation of the current Council Chambers, the various rulers of the town met here to debate, argue, and occasionally fight their way to a consensus. It's a large, well-made house, though plainly adorned and sturdy. Made of timber and brick, the building has stood up to the storms and squalls which sweep in from the ocean regularly, and even the roof is remarkably intact, its tiles still firmly lodged in place. Plainly, the Good Mother watches over her children and her places of worship. The sanctuary is always open to any who need sustenance and help. Around the central kitchen are baskets and benches in which exhausted dogs - and, less regularly but no less welcome, humanoids and cats - can sleep and recover. Food is always available, as is healing - the temple is run by a redoubtable cleric of the Good Mother, a spaniel called Father Gwyn. He is ageing now, but is renowned for his wit, wisdom, and inability to be phased. Father Gwyn has seen everything. Twice. He can't be shocked and, while he'll never directly contribute to a crime, he also won't turn away anyone. That doesn't mean he can be taken advantage of. A few of the less honourable denizens of the town tried to manipulate or dupe Father Gwyn. One particularly insalubrious elven pirate attempted to take the venerable priest captive. But venerable doesn't mean vulnerable, and Father Gwyn's spells are not solely for treating the sick!



Five Main Inns

As in any port town, there are dozens of inns dotted throughout Gullet Cove. These range from rough shanty huts on the dock, where cheap grog can be purchased for a copper coin, to the establishments close to the Council Chamber, where lavish meals prepared with the finest of ingredients can be found along with bottles of wine imported from distant lands. There are however, five inns which are undoubtedly the most popular and widely known of the different taverns - though each attracts a different clientele and has a different reputation.

10 The Scratching Post

The Scratching Post is one of Gullet Cove's most notorious inns, and its owner, the legendarily cheery barkeep, Helga Drumkin, is almost as notorious, albeit for different reasons. The Scratching Post is notorious for its clientele (all the Cove's most formidable pirates, and former pirates, drink there) and for Helga's left hook, which has been known to be capable of felling an Ogre with a single blow. Helga's reputation has, however, helped to make the Scratching Post as undoubtedly popular as it is - bonhomie and brutality, in equal measure. The various authorities are able to leave the place alone, knowing that little violence is going to erupt despite the number of dangerous customers because Helga keeps them in line - despite being warm, welcoming, and possessed of a smile so broad people suggest using her teeth as a beacon for passing ships, she's also capable of becoming the most ferocious tavern brawler in the port. Or any port.

The various pirate captains, none wanting to be added to Helga's dreaded Wall of the Barred, all do their best to keep the peace, everyone enjoying and respecting the sanctity of the Scratching Post. A number of brash young sailors have been quietly, but firmly, smacked over the back of the head with a tankard by their own friends to prevent them jeopardising a welcome at the tavern. This reputation for safety has led to the Scratching Post becoming a neutral place for different pirate factions who can arrange a 'sit-down', to try and achieve a truce in some ongoing feud or other. Helga's ever-watchful eye is considered a guarantee of both good behaviour on the part of the attendees and of neutrality. Helga is utterly incorruptible. In the early days of her stewardship at the Scratching Post, a high-ranking member of the Thieves Guild attempted to buy Helga's fealty and allow the use of her pub as a front. The story goes that he was later found, stripped to his underwear and hanging upside down from the weathervane on-top of the Thieves Guild headquarters, muttering something about 'never having seen someone so angry!' No one has attempted to bribe Helga since. And this is despite the popularity of Helga's Healing Draught - a beer so wholesome that it has been known to cure the dead. While a slight exaggeration of its properties, the beer is a potent tonic for virtually any illness and Helga offers free samples to well-behaved customers. However, anyone hoping for a second drop has to bring the bottle back - unscathed!

While Helga has a punch first and ask questions after you've punched them again attitude towards unruly humanoid customers, she is extremely tolerant of animal foibles. The eccentric spaniel, Colonel Algernon Finlay Rowanson III (or Finn, to his friends), is perhaps the Scratching Post's most recognisable patron. Sought after for his wisdom, his endless supply of jokes, and the fact that he knows *everyone*, the Colonel is as much a draw for Helga as Helga is protection for him. The Colonel has something of a past... one that, occasionally, comes back to nip at his tail.



11 The Speared Hat

Populated almost exclusively by merchants (and merchants of the most well-to-do and successful variety), the Speared Hat is only a few hundred yards from the Council Chambers and, as such, has become known as a sort of preliminary debating chamber. The place is typically filled with traders, merchant explorers, and various ambassadors from different cities, all seeking to curry favour with the Council and using the availability of alcohol and rich food to convince either a Councillor or one of their known advisors of the importance of their suit. This has made the Speared Hat one of the most desirable locations in Gullet Cove and obtaining a table can be difficult. From the outside, the inn is unobtrusive but plainly well cared for. Within, the seating is plush, the tables large and heavily varnished, and the bar mounted with a series of bottles of extremely rare alcohol - all temptingly expensive. The owner of the Speared Hat is an elf with a typically elvish sense of his own importance. Gidleth Veryon, the elf in question, is pompous, egotistical but, if you're prepared to dig down far enough, ultimately good hearted. Those who want to gain influence over the Council, or simply wish to determine what is going on in the upper echelons of Gullet Cove society, typically end up trying to get on Gidleth's good side. This usually requires presents — Gidleth is a collector, and like all collectors is easily swayed by fine examples of the art he treasures. Gidleth's presiding obsession is small water colours, particularly of animals.

12 The Water Bowl

For an inn, especially an inn in Gullet Cove, the Water Bowl is unusually solemn. It is often mistaken for a small church, or even a mortuary...but there's a good reason for that. The Water Bowl is the smuggler's tavern of choice, and, as a result, both keeps a very low profile and often has more patrons carefully moving illegal goods into its cellar than it does filling the tap room. The Water Bowl, at first sight, is the smallest of the main taverns in Gullet Cove — a small, thatched building, its walls a mixture of stone and brick, with crudely fitted windows. The true extent of the Water Bowl is not visible from without. The small cellar of the inn stretches out into a series of tunnels, a network of subterranean passages ultimately leading to the cliffs overlooking the sea. The tunnels also connect to the town's sewers...and the smugglers in the inn whisper stories of strange things seen in the darkness of those foul-smelling passages, of rats grown too large...of rats which whisper in the darkness. But, of course, it's possible that's just a combination of alcohol and sewer fumes. Certainly, that's the opinion of Leila and Foil, the couple who run the Water Bowl. The husband and wife team are known for their utter lack of pretension, their ability to talk their way out of any situation, and their tendency to dismiss anything they haven't seen with their eyes as mere nautical superstition. They're usually right. But not always.

13 The Silver Sovereign

The town's oldest inn, and one which has seen Gullet Cove grow from a pirate enclave to something resembling an outpost of civilization (though civilisation might be stretching it). The building reflects its humble origins; it's half-collapsed in parts, while others are clearly recently added — with the aim of propping up the older parts, or so it appears. Most of the clientele, and the inn's owner, reflect the inn's past rather than whatever future it might possess. Tending to have white hair, some form of beard, and a habit of murmuring fervently that 'they don't know what Gullet Cove has come to...' Precisely what this means, most people aren't sure. It might well mean that the minor amount of law and order now in place in Gullet Cove is still too much...these are ageing pirates after all! The Silver Sovereign is where a person goes when they want to find out about the past of the town. Gullet Cove has little in the way of records (or records available to non-Guild members) and it certainly doesn't have a library. It does possess a lot of pubs whose patrons remember snatches of history, peculiar remnants of lore, or the name of the previous Port Wardens, the last cleric at the Temple of the Golden Collar, or the real name of the old dwarf who lives under the docks. No one is entirely sure who the owner of the Silver Sovereign is — some claim that it belongs to one of the leaders of the Guilds, or to a Councillor. Wilder rumours offer stories of strange wizards, or dogs with red glowing eyes who are the tavern's true masters. Whatever the truth, the burly human barman — Brynn — is the person in charge of the day-to-day running of the Sovereign. Brynn rarely speaks and possesses formidable strength. He is not one to be messed with, but he does pour an excellent pint.



14 The Master's Retreat

While most of Gullet Cove is extremely welcoming to awakened animals, there are those who don't like the presence of 'uppity creatures,' and avoid them whenever possible. This is chiefly the crowd who gather at the Master's Retreat, the very name of which reveals what the owners think of the relationship between animals and humans should be...these owners are a pair of former Thieves Guild members who left once the Guild struck their pact with the Cradle. Opening the Master's Retreat together, Swindell Groan and Buller Croon turned the tavern into a cruel, unpleasant little place. Their beer is watery, and their clientele manage to be unpleasant to other humanoids, let alone animals. Swindell and Buller are responsible for trying to stir up protests and attacks on local awakened animals and, when enough free beer has been given out, their drinkers are prepared to listen. In recent times, however, their attitudes have changed. A strange, shambling dwarf in a coat visited the Master's Retreat and, after a long discussion, left grinning. Since then, the Master's Retreat has ceased to act so aggressively towards awakened animals. Some are even invited inside... they don't always re-emerge.

15 The Poisoned Chop

Extremely difficult to find, the Poisoned Chop is the inn chosen by the Thieves Guild and all those connected to the trade of pilfering, purloining, and otherwise prying items from their original owners' hands. This makes it one of the few inns where beer can be acquired in exchange for an item of antique silverware, rather than coin. The Poisoned Chop's owner, a halfling called Quentin Sharp, is the town's most notorious fence. Capable of taking any item — no matter how recently stolen or how potentially dangerous and selling it on at a profit, Sharp is loquacious, funny, and absolutely not to be trusted. While he has a reputation for dealing honestly with those who bring items for his professional attentions, anything else is entirely up for grabs. Coins vanish from every wallet in Sharp's vicinity, as does jewellery. But, to the regular drinkers at the Poisoned Chop, that's just the inevitable consequence of their chosen tavern. And what kind of Thieves Guild members would they be if they couldn't steal their goods back from Sharp's pockets?

Sharp is also known for funding the most outrageous heists he can conceive of — apparently, just for the fun and the intellectual exercise. His office at the back of the tavern is festooned with maps of major cities, with their banks and treasure houses all scrupulously marked, potential escape routes noted, and estimates of what might be found in the well-protected vaults scrawled alongside. Quentin Sharp is an interesting figure in Gullet Cove's underworld. Who knows what you might make of him? Or what insane scheme he might involve you in! Finding the Poisoned Chop usually requires a guide, but it is worth the effort. Hidden at the back of a shop called Ma Glimmer's Motes of Magic, the Poisoned Chop is cramped, noisy, and surprisingly friendly. Not unreasonably, few people cause trouble in a place frequented by thieves, cutthroats, and other ne'er-do-wells. Indeed, so crammed with Thieves Guild members is the Poisoned Chop now that a great deal of Guild business is conducted within its heavily-graffitied walls, making it an excellent place to find out what the Guild is up to. Of course, you don't want to be seen eavesdropping but, for those who are careful, there's much to be learned.

Swindell and Buller: Kidnappers!

The pair aren't exactly stupid. But the scheme to lure awakened animals (or any animals, at a push) into their inn and then sell them on definitely isn't one they came up with. Swindell and Buller are now in league with the Cunning Man. A dwarf possessed of little conscience and a great deal of twisted charisma, the Cunning Man is the kind of merchant that a place like Gullet Cove occasionally attracts. The kind who prefer money to anything else (for more on the Cunning Man see page 119). Swindell and Buller are just one of the Cunning Man's ways of capturing awakened animals he can then sell on as pets to the very wealthy, or to circuses and carnivals. It's a profitable business and he has managed to employ a small group of Goblin 'Nappers who specialise in pinching awakened animals off the streets and spiriting them away. Swindell and Buller lure animals in with the promise of food, friendship, and reconciliation. Then they bundle them into the cellar and wait for the Cunning Man's goblin friends to arrive. It's making them a great deal of money and they are starting to branch out into new avenues. Someone needs to stop them, and soon...





The Gutterings

Found throughout the town, the gutterings are a network of rooftop passageways used exclusively by cats to navigate Gullet Cove at a speed that borders on the supernatural. Discovered and created in equal measure by the Cradle, the feline Thieves Guild, the gutterings are an open secret. No cat ever expressly admits the existence of the gutterings, but anyone involved in the town's underworld knows of them — just not how to find them.

There are two varieties of guttering: some are merely planks, placed over the gap between buildings, others are carefully hidden away, obscured with meticulous care. The unhidden gutterings are used by all felines and even some smaller dogs. A rooftop community has grown up around the unhidden gutterings. Small market stalls sell food to those making their way over the rooftops. Feline merchants offer discount rates for those willing to purchase from merchants 'in the sky' as opposed to 'on the ground'. There are even unofficial repair teams who venture across the rooftops fixing the broken boards, the listing tiles, and anything else which is in danger of falling.

Only certain roofs have the cunningly reinforced gutter runs, the hidden gutterings, which those cats who know of them use. They race along these tunnels at incredible speeds, aided by the fact that the Cradle keeps them lightly greased. This does lead to a few minor accidents, with various cats colliding in the cramped confines of the gutterings — but most cats are sufficiently dextrous to leap out of the way or avoid their fellow felines, even as they surge along the tunnels. The Cradle uses the gutterings as a means of keeping itself informed of what is going on in the town — pretty much anywhere can be accessed from the gutterings and this ensures that information can be acquired quickly and easily. Once it's been gathered, its jotted down in pawsword (the Cradle's secret language). These messages are sent along the gutterings, ensuring that the cat Thieves Guild is one of the best informed in the town. This led to the Thieves Guild officially recognising the Cradle as a cousin; in order to get access to the detailed information the Cradle always has on hand (or paw). A few animals who aren't members of the Cradle are also offered the privilege of utilising the gutterings, typically other cats but a few small dogs are also told the secrets of inveigling themselves into spaces which seem implausibly small. For those lucky enough to be allowed in, there's no safer or quicker way to travel.

16 Shipyard & Old Timory's Venerable Shipwrights Office

Pirates and merchants need ships. And someone needs to make them. That's why there are shipyards. The shipyard in Gullet Cove is small and run by the cantankerous gnome referred to on the sign outside the shipyard as Old Timory. To those who have to deal with him more regularly, however, he has a host of other, much less polite sobriquets. Timory both owns the shipyard and is the eponymous venerable shipwright. While he is an extremely awkward and obstreperous old man, Timory is a shipwright of rare skill. The issue is, of course, that very few are prepared to endure either his perfectionism or the barbs he directs at anyone he deems to be of inferior intellect to him. Which is, of course, everyone. As a result, the shipyard is, for the most part, a mass of unfinished hulls, begun and abandoned. The place is also littered with Timory's various inventions for the improvement of sea travel; these bizarre contraptions are formed from scraps of copper and iron, wood and string... and all now sit streaked with rain and gradually decomposing. Timory's shipyard is essentially defunct now; the gnome is so infamously difficult that even the most desperate seafarer would rather travel up the coast than engage with him. None doubt his peculiar genius or the magnificence of the ships he built, but bar a few commissions from other shipwrights who request specially designed compasses to be installed within the helm of a ship they are in the midst of constructing, Timory is rarely employed these days. Timory resents working for such inferior talents, but, as the shipyard moulders around him, can't in all good faith deny his need for money! If you can withstand the viciousness of his tongue, Timory is the greatest shipwright in the land and, currently, extremely affordable. He is, however, likely to test even the most patient and forbearing people to the limits of patience.

Unfinished Experiments!

Old Timory is a genius. An obstreperous one, sure, but a genius. If he hadn't been quite such a difficult, cantankerous person, he'd likely be extremely rich. As it is, he has a shipyard filled with junk and his incomplete experiments. Some of these are purely for helping onboard navigation, or bailing out the hull...others are bizarre, dangerous, or simply odd. Venturing into Timory's shipyard is something of a risk (he really doesn't like trespassers...or anyone, really), but it might just pay off.

🐾 An orb, encrusted in copper, that hums and rumbles whenever it is touched. At certain times it emits bright rays of light which scorch unusual patterns on the wall. Even Old Timory doesn't know why.

🐾 A wand, fashioned from the figurehead of a long since scuppered vessel, Timory intended this to become part of a device for tracking the position of the stars. What it is now, he isn't sure, except that when waved near water, peculiar things seem to happen...

🐾 A leather satchel Timory has long since buried beneath a pile of heavy wood and iron. Because it won't stop singing.

For more on these items, see page 159. You just never know when they might be useful for!





17 Master Pettifer's Emporium of Exotic Wonders and Divers' Objects of Interest

Located in the heart of the town, Pettifer's is a shop in the loosest sense of the word. A sprawling assortment of shelves, items, cabinets, glass cases, cupboards...all crammed with the strangest and apparently useless assortment of bric-a-brac conceivable, Master Pettifer's possesses an inescapable lure for the curious. What might be found in the deeper recesses of the place? The answer is *anything*. Pettifer's has been here a long time, and Gullet Cove has always attracted merchants who specialise in the obscure and unusual varieties of artefact. While his shelves may indeed be crammed with vials of sand, crumpled balls of ribbon, or verdigris-stained lumps of copper, they are as likely to be stocked with daggers steeped in magical energy, a coin that can buy the inattention of the gods for an hour, or a book which contains a list of the hidden numbers between 0 and 1.

The outside of the shop is fairly ordinary, a few tables are erected displaying a host of ephemera, and the windows are dusty and smeared with hand prints where prospective buyers pressed have against the glass, unable to restrain their curiosity. Master Pettifer is a somewhat mysterious figure, rarely seen within the shop itself though he is occasionally found pottering around somewhere deep in the endless ranks of shelves.. The money for items is usually taken by an old awakened dog, at the small counter near the front of the store. When he is seen, Master Pettifer is usually clad in a specially tailored maroon smoking jacket and cap from

which dangles a long and worn tassel. He is a slender hairless cat, forever leafing through the pages of a large, leather-bound volume in which he records each item for sale in the Emporium. This book is Pettifer's most beloved item and he never allows anyone to glance within its pages — leading many to believe that its contents are something more than simply the shop's inventory. This is also true of his shop. It is...*too big*. From without, the shop seems to be a small, cramped place. And it is. But it keeps stretching back. And back. And still further. The shelves stretch on and on, miles of shelves, formed into a clumsy labyrinth of stock and storage. There are some who claim that the Emporium is infinite, and that that Master Pettifer is a god, exiled from the heavens to earth. Others that Pettifer is simply an eccentric wizard who created a shop to contain all the curios and other trinkets that fascinate him. Still others insist that the dog, Rufus, who sits at the entrance and counts the coins, is the true owner of the shop and that Master Pettifer is merely his faithful assistant and stock taker. Who knows what is true? For those prepared to spend their time looking, just about anything can be found in Master Pettifer's Emporium. Just don't try and steal it. Master Pettifer has been known to deal very harshly with thieves (or at least, very few of them emerge from his shop unchanged though they won't talk about what they experienced) and even the Thieves Guild has declared the Emporium 'valueless'...the most dire warning the Guild can apply to a place.



Beware what you might find...

There are many shops like Master Pettifer's scattered throughout time and space. Mysterious shops, shops that no one can remember ever *not* being there. Shops that people sometimes enter and never emerge from. There are corners in such shops which even the owners don't go in. You never know where they might lead...but despite the risks, places like Master Pettifer's are always filled with opportunities for those who know the risks. The place is filled with forgotten magic and potential paths to adventure...

🐾 The eye of a dead demi-god, still moist with brain fluid. Some say it can be used to see into the past. Others, that looking into it can drive you insane but grant astonishing strength. Still others claim that it's a manky old eye that should be thrown away. Want to find out which is right?

🐾 A bag filled with teeth...and someone is stealing them one at a time. Master Pettifer can't work out who it is, or what they're doing with the teeth. He does believe that the sudden spate of ancient skeletal warriors raging around town might be linked to it though. He's prepared to offer money if you can apprehend the thief.

🐾 Right at the front of Pettifer's shop is a chest. Even Master Pettifer doesn't know where it came from, or what's inside it. He won't allow anyone to open it...but there are a number of prominent citizens who believe they know what's kept within. And they want it for themselves. They'll do anything to get hold of the chest — or just prise the lid open. Will you help them, or thwart them?

For more information on items found in Master Pettifer's Emporium, check page 159.

18 Watch House

Every town has one. A Watch House where those who enforce the law within the town limits can equip themselves, secure prisoners, and generally organise, ready to do their duty. Gullet Cove's Watch House is a large, resolute building, constructed in the earlier days of the port and built with the notion that it might one day have to repel an attack from the sea. This ultimately proved unnecessary — Gullet Cove instead found a strange balance between civilisation and lawlessness, an equilibrium which continues to this day. A balance, indeed, which has left the job of the Watch, and the purpose of the Watch House, a little ambiguous. Most of the thievery in the town is unpoliced, save by the Thieves Guild themselves. Murders and kidnapping are rare, but, while the Watch investigates them thoroughly, few arrests are made. Most of the perpetrators simply disappear...and so, often, do the victims.

The Watch is thought of fondly by most of the inhabitants of Gullet's Cove, in much the way one thinks of an inept friend. They don't expect the Watch to be of any assistance should some incident befall them, but it is nice to see them all the same. Usually, when redress for a grievance is required, or something dreadful has befallen someone, they visit the Guilds or the Order of the Golden Collar. The Watch House is now mostly a kind of cafe...friends of the members of the Watch pop in from time to time and the occasional arrests the Watch do make are kept in the back and treated with mild disdain. The Watch House consists of a series of small cells at the back, in front of which are a series of small offices and an armoury, which is poorly stocked and left unprotected most of the time as a result.

The most well-maintained area of the Watch House is the kitchen, where the Watch personnel all make endless cups of tea, waiting for something to do. The current head of the Watch, the stern but thoroughly decent dwarf, Filamena Gruth, has long ago accepted the essential irrelevance of the Watch in the current age. As a result, though she chafes against her inactivity, she spends most of her time trying to avoid upsetting any of the entrenched political blocs within the town and ensuring that the officers under her command are safe. Sometimes from themselves. Despite this, Filamena is ready to embrace any opportunity to restore the Watch's reputation and to undermine the grip of the Guilds on power within the town. Wherever she goes, Filamena is accompanied by her self-appointed bodyguard — the small, white-haired terrier called McKenzie. McKenzie is always angry and always convinced that Filamena is in danger; determined to defend his captain to the death. He thus far hasn't had an opportunity to demonstrate quite how deep this dedication runs, but he remains ever hopeful he might get the chance to one day. A committed and determined group of adventurers might well be able to persuade Filamena to return to the streets to fight crime and make the Watch a force for good in Gullet Cove. If McKenzie lets them get close enough, that is...

Forlyth's Blacksmith

The best smithy in Gullet Cove is Imelda Forlyth. A dwarf with forearms almost as wide as her anvil, Imelda comes from a long line of dwarven crafters and artists. She came to Gullet Cove after a long spell at sea, working as the onboard carpenter for a merchant company. Upon landing in Gullet Cove and seeing the dire need for a blacksmith with a modicum of skill, Imelda decided to use her shares from the ship's latest venture to buy a small outhouse at a run-down tavern on the fringes of town. Within three months of beginning to work metal, Imelda was the most sought-after metal worker in the town. Within six, she had bought the rest of the inn and converted it into a full-scale blacksmith's and taken on a number of apprentices. The metal work produced by Forlyth's Blacksmith is superior in virtually every way to that found elsewhere in Gullet Cove. Produced using ancient dwarf techniques, along with Imelda's particular individual flair, anyone who can afford Forlyth's expensive rates always pays them. Forlyth's weapons remain sharper, their nails are stronger, their anchors rust more slowly. The other blacksmiths in the town might have been jealous, if it weren't for the fact that Imelda is happy to share expertise; her arrival resulted in an improvement in metal working throughout the town. Despite this, Forlyth's is still the best, no one possesses the same combination of technical competency and flair that she does.



19 The Dredge Entrance

The sewer system beneath Gullet Cove is extensive, spreading out beneath every street and every house, in a vast, spiderish sprawl of tunnels. Surrounding these are the dredges, smaller tunnels designed to filter off excess sea water when the tide is high during the winter. These dredges are dangerous, but, for creatures of the right size, make an excellent means of making their way around the town without being detected. Of course, the dredges are also used by thieves and smugglers for stashing their various illicit goods and by the drunk for sleeping in. There are a number of entrances to the dredges located around the town, nominally for maintenance, though, in truth, the Thieves Guild saw to this; recognising that the dredges, while they might be cramped, would provide a decent hiding place for their more incautious members fleeing from angry property owners!

The dredges also lead into the larger and deeper sewers, making these entrances a means of navigating the undertown, perfect for a thief to escape their pursuers — as long as they don't mind dealing with the stench of the sewers or the onerous task of dragging themselves along the narrow, low-roofed confines of the dredges. In recent times, however, the thieves avoid the dredges and the sewers. Strange things are transpiring down there, they claim. There are stories of battles between creatures which should have died long ago, of sinister voices whispering through the tunnels, of a vast beast that preys on anyone foolish enough to cross its path. The Thieves Guild has sponsored a few expeditions into the sewers but all return claiming to have seen nothing...only the dank walls of the sewer and the chittering of rats. But what else would one expect?

The sewers are also notable for the remnants of the old towns and fortifications which can be found scattered throughout their length. Some of this is merely crumbling brickwork, but there are tales of strange inscriptions carved into ancient walls, of tablets on which are forgotten runes, even of treasure just waiting to be discovered. Of course, how far anyone believes any of these stories is dubious, but that there is something more in the sewers than waste is almost certainly true. And the only way in is via the dredges...



Beware the Rat King!

The sewers and the dredges are indeed home to thousands of rats. But some of them are...a *little different*. Several years ago now, a talented but foolish wizard attempted to create a new form of awakened animal — a hyper-intelligent rat. The experiment worked...but too well. The rat in question was not simply smart, he possessed powerful psionic gifts. Hypnotising his creator, the rat escaped into the sewers. Crowning himself the Rat King, he soon began to compel other rats to follow his commands, but soon, as his power began to spread, others joined willingly. Wererats tired of having to hide their true nature, giant rats that recognised an opportunity for a free meal and others...all drawn by the Rat King's powers of persuasion. And his vision of a world where rats rule over humans. Just as the Rat King rules over his creator and former master...the unfortunate wizard is now only known as Gripe and is treated as a pet by the Rat King. The Rat King controls the entire sewage system of Gullet Cove and uses this network of tunnels to infiltrate anywhere in the town, utterly unsuspected and utterly untraceable. The Rat King waits to unleash his brilliant strategies upon the surface world, convinced of his inevitable victory. Given the hideous abominations he has managed to create in the stinking darkness, he may achieve his aim. Only the truest of heroes could stand against the mighty Rataclysm and live.

20 The Town Council Chamber

Considering its prominence in Gullet Cove, the Council Chamber is somewhat unimposing, though that is at least in part due to the size and extent of Grimmsmouth Hall which stands so close to it. The outside of the Council Chamber is carefully crafted but made chiefly from brick. The only touch of opulence is the town's symbol, carved into marble and mounted above the Chamber's entrance. A short flight of stone steps leads to the large, wooden doors, which in turn gives way to an impressive welcome chamber. Furnished with highly polished wood, the entrance hall is everything the outside of the Chambers is not. Ludicrously grand, with twin curving staircases covered in red carpet, sumptuous couches for those forced to wait for the Council to hear their pleas and grievances, and a fountain depicting the town's first mayor — Septimus Mugluk — being blessed by the sea, it is ostentatious in every respect. The same is true of the Council Chamber proper, reached by climbing the flight of stairs.

The Council Chamber is large, wood-panelled, and contains a vast table lined with seats for the Councillors and their various aides, advisors, and amanuenses. There is also a chair set back from the table upon which the light from the room's largest window shines uncomfortably; this is the Seat of the Suppliant...any member of the public may petition the Council for their case to be heard and judged. There is always an extensive waiting list to be heard by the Council, though few are pleased by the outcome.

The Council may express disappointment or support for the suppliant but avoid any judgement which requires them to do anything. That would be going too far... unless, of course, the suppliant is from a Guild in which case, things tend to happen rather quickly. Very few Guild members ever sit in the Seat of the Suppliant, however. That is the spot for those without connections. And who listens to them?

Beyond the Council Chamber, there's the mayoral offices. The mayor be a role with little more than symbolic power, but maintaining the symbol is important. Marble, silk, velvet...the mayor's office is decorated in all of these. The furniture is studded with gold, the art exquisite, and the quills used by the mayor to sign various meaningless statements of goodwill and general friendship to all are plucked from a griffin. Luxury is the Council's (and mayor's) main concern, and they are more than capable of maintaining themselves in a state of almost excessive comfort.

The current mayor is Leurner Abbrux, an elvish minstrel who was once famed for his singing and for his talent when it came to seducing the wives of the land's most powerful aristocrats (and, on several occasions, the aristocrats themselves). Deciding that his easy charm and good looks might not last forever (he was nearing three hundred at the time), he opted for politics. A slightly feckless but ultimately good-natured elf was ideal for the Council's purposes and Abbrux was soon enjoying the comfy seats and finery that comes with being mayor. There is, however, an ongoing tension between Leurner and the Council who put him in his position — Leurner is determined to help people, rather than simply preserve the Guild's status quo. The Council has attempted to dissuade him from this approach, growing increasingly frustrated with Abbrux's determination to involve himself in the affairs of the town. Currently comprising Mervynner the Frozen, from the Guild of Wizards, Ingenious Sorcerers and Practitioners of Eldritch Ritual; Boris Byeldun, the representative of the Thieves Guild; Alexin One-eye, head of the Adventurers Guild; the Port Warden (when sober enough); Shriill, chief priestess of Urbaste; and Morganna Veries, the leader of the Seafarers Guild; the Council is weighing its options and debating whether to remove Abbrux before his term is over. It is risky, the mayor is increasingly popular among the populace of Gullet Cove, but the Council much prefers a quiet life, so that they can get on with the real business of running the town from their Guild Houses...





The Lair of the Necromastiff

Grimmsmouth Hall is haunted. And was haunted. It's complicated. When Septimus Mugluk died, his spirit stayed in his house — the house he had poured so much of himself, and his money, into. He drove the first few families out with a combination of throwing books around and some hideous shrieking. All fairly generic phantom tricks. Mugluk, even as a spirit, cares about people and his town. The stories of a haunted mansion attracted the attention of an extremely dangerous being — the Necromastiff (for more on the Necromastiff, see page 115). A dog of exceptional intelligence, even for an awakened animal, the Necromastiff recognised an opportunity. Sneaking into Grimmsmouth Hall, he quickly trapped the spirit of Septimus Mugluk in a black bottle.

Using various minor illusions, the Necromastiff kept up the house's reputation for being haunted and built himself a laboratory, deep in the bowels of huge manor. From here, he has begun to create a force capable of taking over Gullet Cove and making it into the haven for the undead that the Necromastiff has always dreamed of. Skelly cats, the Necromastiff's chosen servants, are starting to roam abroad and the doggie master of death is readying the next stage of his plan...but who is going to stop him?

21 Temple of Urbaste

Less grand than the spectacular edifices dedicated to the Good Mother, or to the Order of the Golden Collar, the Temple of Urbaste is the chief point of worship for felines in the town. As is typical of those locations designed for praying to the typically disinterested Urbaste, the temple is understated and quiet. Converted from an old and once half-ruined market hall, the temple has been carefully designed for cats. Old packing crates can be found everywhere, ramps leading to elevated perches crisscross the open space where the small but beautifully carved statue of a cat head sits, functioning as the only point of obvious religious iconography.

All are welcome to enter the temple, though it is certainly not as inviting or welcoming as the Temple of the Good Mother. It is, however, a warm and safe place and there is always food to be found — though it is usually concealed behind chairs, secreted on top of a pile of furs and blankets, or tucked into tiny gaps. Whoever makes the food ensures that those who want to eat work for it. And of course, no one is sure who does make the food. The Temple of Urbaste is full of such little mysteries. Who cleans it? There are none employed to do so, but every morning it has been rendered immaculate. None of the cats (or the small number of dogs and humanoids who occasionally spend the night there) were awoken or noticed anyone. The same is true of the gifts which each visitor receives but which are never purchased or distributed. They simply appear in the pockets or satchels of anyone who visits the temple and offers up a quiet and sincere prayer — they are not extravagant gifts, just small items of minor interest: a ball of yarn, a small image of a cat, a bell on a string.

The high priestess of Urbaste in Gullet Cove is Shrill, a tortoise-shell cat of extreme age. Shrill is a member of the Council, and as such commands respect throughout the town; she is known for her wit, her individual approach to politics, and her commitment to Urbaste. Though being committed to Urbaste is not a hard task. The god doesn't require much in the way of displays of faith. Just the odd quiet word and small tribute of a bowl of water or a scrap of

food every now and then. The Gullet Cove temple is perfectly in keeping with Urbaste's faith and its followers; quiet, safe, and ever so slightly strange, such things remain.

22 Grimmsmouth Hall

Built by Septimus Mugluk, the "Old Hall" or "Grim House", as it is usually called by Gullet Cove residents, was once the most beautiful home in the town. The half-orc mayor poured gold into the place, seeking to create a residence that would both suit his particularly grandiose tastes and situate Gullet Cove firmly as a place for the wealthy, for those of taste and refinement. Mugluk died before Grimmsmouth Hall was completed, and, while a number of occupants attempted to dwell in the hall since its eventual completion, all left shortly after. The reason? The place is haunted. Obviously.

It's a gigantic manor house on a cliff top. How was it not going to end up haunted? Unless, of course, that was the point; Septimus Mugluk intended for the hall to stand as a monument to his achievements, to the way he had formed Gullet Cove, shaping it from a collection of huts and shacks to a real town. Now his enormous house rests over the town, gazing down upon it, its huge cracked windows like shadow-sunken eyes, its doors reeling on rusted hinges, as though the hall were Mugluk himself, keeping careful — and not altogether benevolent — eye on the consequences of his efforts, now so long ago.

Tales of strange events, of sinister creatures crawling across the ceiling, of noises emerging from the cellar, of lights blazing from empty rooms...such things drove four different sets of occupants from the house. Since the last family of wealthy aristocrats were sent running in terror from the place it has stood entirely empty. But that hasn't put a halt to the stories. Much of the furniture and fittings installed, at enormous expense, by Septimus Mugluk still remains in place, and, so goes the reasoning, might be Mugluk's famous treasure horde. Hundreds of thieves and explorers have attempted to explore the hall. All encountered something horrifying there. Most returned terrified and shaken, a few returned with their minds broken, and a few haven't returned at all. Clerics of most major faiths attempted to cleanse the house of its unquiet spirits, driving out whatever creatures might reside there. None have succeeded and, over the years, the hall has become accepted as a 'place to avoid'.

The mystery surrounding the hall has increased over the years, and recently there have been notable signs of dark magical activity there. Red light streamed from the windows, a rain of eviscerated fish splattered the hall in guts, stumbling undead creatures seen stumbling through the long grass. When this has been tentatively investigated by the Watch, no traces of such things remain. Only rumours, memories, and fear.



Guild Houses

Guilds hold the power in Gullet Cove. They dominate the Council, control the flow of money, and watch over the port. Sure, they are always squabbling amongst one another, trying to earn a few more scraps of power and prestige, but, as most of the inhabitants of the Cove say, they keep things running smoothly. Most people in the town work for the Guilds in one way or another. It's just how things are. Most businesses pay some form of tithe, whether it's to avoid being burgled by the Thieves Guild, or to ensure that they get first pick of the loot.

23 The Guild of Seafarers Guildhall

The most prominent and wealthy Guild in the town, the Seafarers Guildhall is the most ostentatious building in Gullet Cove. As it would be, of course. The Seafarers Guild consider themselves the real rulers of the town; benevolent guides shepherding the various groups of pirates, thieves, and merchants towards a bright future. Most of the pirates, thieves, and merchants see the Seafarers as a group of arrogant, pompous idiots who haven't set foot on a boat in years. Certainly, the upper echelons of the Seafarers are far more comfortable in a large armchair, with a brimming glass of brandy and the first of seven or eight courses laid out before them. But that doesn't mean that a large number of honest merchant sea-goers don't rely on the Seafarers to look after their interests — ensuring that wages or shares are properly apportioned, and that onboard conditions are kept as habitable as possible...even on the longest of sea voyages. The Seafarers is an old Guild (though not as ancient as the Thieves Guild which, so they say, is as old as the gods) and, over the years, it has evolved. In the past, it fought against pirates, seeking to protect those who pledged themselves to the Guild. This proved, ultimately, an insurmountable wave to crest. Sink one ship, there were always others to take its place. The Seafarers almost conceded defeat, until they realised that pirates could be brought into the Guild with the lure of money...and that the best people at catching and dissuading other pirates from attacking ships were other pirates.

Visiting the Seafarers Guildhall is a daunting affair. It is usually guarded by a handful of toughs, wielding knives or cutlasses and directing piercing looks at anyone who so much as glances in their direction. Getting through the large doors — built with timber taken from the Guild's first ships — requires notes of guarantee, a deposit (usually 3 gold pieces per person), and the turning over of all weapons. And that simply leaves you in the waiting room. There, a small army of assistants crowd around to ensure that all visitors are left thoroughly confused; no matter how simple the visitor's request, or how short the meeting they hoped to

conduct, everything has to be looked-over and ratified by a dozen different assistants, secretaries, and factotums. Then, if all the paperwork is correct, then you might, *might*, be ushered into a meeting room. The Seafarers Guildhall is a twisting labyrinth of different meeting rooms, sitting rooms, small libraries, and archives. If you can manage to get inside the Seafarers Guild, it contains the only true record of the history of Gullet Cove. And the history of Gullet Cove contains many secrets — where the treasure of the legendary pirate Bloody Billy is buried; or why won't giants draw near to the town; or what actually happened to the elven town that once stood on this spot? It is claimed that the records of the Seafarers contain answers to these questions, or, at least, fragments which might lead the curious to a solution.

The current head of the Seafarers is the relentlessly ambitious dragonborn, Morganna Veries. At least, this is the name she is known by now. Not too many years ago, she was dubbed Grim Morgan and was reputed to be the most feared pirate on the coast. With a boatful of plunder and a head for intricate politics, she bought her way into the Seafarers and soon rose to the top. Not least as a result of her ability to cow those few freebooters who refused to give up piracy and throw in their lot with the Guild. Morganna Veries is the most powerful individual in Gullet Cove, its leader, and more than willing to use her power to preserve the dominance of the Seafarers and the almost endless flood of money which their pre-eminence in Gullet Cove guarantees them. Morganna is always accompanied by a fierce chihuahua, who lost an eye in a frenzied fight with a bulldog. A fight the chihuahua won. Some rumours claim that Morganna's dog — Little Bleeder — is secretly awakened and one of her owner's most reliable advisors. Other rumours insist that Little Bleeder has been somehow corrupted...that he advises Morganna but takes his orders from a darker master. But who credits such ludicrous notions? Only those jealous of the Seafarers power.



24 The Thieves Guild Safe Houses

No, of course the Thieves Guild doesn't have a single Guild House. They might be a venerable institution (so venerable that several deities are claimed as founding members), but that doesn't mean they aren't thieves... Instead, the Thieves Guild has a series of safe houses and dead drop points where messages can be left for the attention of the Guild's leaders. Of course, no one is sure who those leaders *are*. The Guild's representative on the Council is Boris Byeldun...but Boris is no thief. Or, at least, he hasn't been for some considerable time. No one is quite sure who Boris is, except that he speaks with the floridity and eloquence of a highly paid lawyer. He is also not a man to cross — Boris has conducted more than one vendetta against Council members and their aides who snubbed him. Most end up being removed and replaced by their Guilds. The Thieves Guild is a valuable ally and an extremely irritating enemy — something which the other Guilds learned many years ago and remembered ever since. So long as their demands are not exorbitant, the Thieves Guild tends to gain the little perquisites it requests. Better than having half your treasury suddenly vanishing...

Who precisely heads up the Thieves Guild is one of the organisation's most closely guarded secrets. Is it a group of skilled burglars, a council of sorts? Perhaps. Or perhaps it is a single man or woman. Or dog. Or cat. Who knows? It's entirely

possible that the head of the Gullet Cove's Thieves Guild has never set foot in the town, conveying messages through various carefully appointed deputies. With the Thieves Guild, everything is a game, a test. Secrecy is vital — if not for those members in Gullet Cove, where thieving is almost a respected profession, than for those in places where it is strictly punished. No two safe houses or dead drops are quite the same, and, once they have been used two or three times are abandoned. The Guild puts out word that the system is being reset, that a certain place is now 'drowned' and that a new site is to be used instead. These new locations are carefully encoded, and only Guild members are given the means to break the cipher.

Gaining induction into the ranks of the Guild is extremely difficult and requires being recommended by at least two existing members, and thieves don't go throwing such recommendations around. The Guild has a strict code of secrecy, and anyone thought to be a risk of breaking that code is often...dealt with, quietly. Employing freelancers to take on certain jobs that thieves aren't suited to is common policy, so that, while joining the Guild might be extremely difficult, many work closely with the thieves without ever being a true member. Who knows when you might be called upon to do a little favour for the criminals whose influence touches every facet of Gullet Cove life? Well, at least the money's good!





25 Guild of Adventurers and Associated Heroes Training Ground

Those who perform might and daring deeds need somewhere to go to recover and, most importantly, boast about their might deeds. It's vitally important, if you're a hero, that everyone knows you're a hero, isn't it? Why else go into those horrible dungeons or face those horrific sea beasts if you won't get a good seat at an inn and a pint of ale afterwards? Why sail the world's tempestuous seas and discover lost civilisations if a room full of people don't sit and listen attentively to your stories when you get back? The problem is that adventurers tend to get quite annoyed when people aren't listening...and that leads to tavern brawls.

The Guild of Adventurers and Associated Heroes was founded by an increasingly disgruntled tavern keeper. Having his inn trashed every night by drunken heroes needed to be stopped. So, he invented the Guild of Adventurers. With donations from dozens of other tavern owners, he bought a building in Gullet Cove and refurbished it with great paintings of epic battles and the mounted heads of manticores, giant snakes, and dragons. Then, he installed a bar and opened for business. Since then, the Guild has become one of the most widespread in the world, with locations open in dozens of major cities.

Each night, heroes crowd into the Guild House and take it in turns to regale each other with their most extraordinary stories, stupendous feats, and improbable victories. This is accompanied by drinking and various fights...because too many heroic egos in a single room is likely to result in a scrap.

Since its foundation, the Guild of Adventurers in Gullet Cove has grown. It now includes a large training ground, equipped with mechanical contrivances designed to simulate dragon attacks, goblin raids, and other common hazards of the adventuring life. This is extremely popular with younger and less experienced adventurers who flock to Gullet Cove to hone their skills and pick up tips from those who've fought orcs and killed trolls for real. These hardened veterans are only too pleased to be bought drinks and listened to with the rapt attention they know is their due. The Adventurers Guild is regularly employed by the other Guilds when some dirty work is required. Does WISPER need an artefact recovering? The Thieves Guild worry about its members being attacked in the sewers? Send in the Adventurers! This means that despite the fact the Adventurers Guild is considered a nuisance — too many Council meetings get disrupted by recounting of various minor duels between heroes and other trivialities — they are also indispensable.

The current head of the Guild is Alexnin One-Eyed. Despite the name, he is no great hero or adventurer. In fact, the Guild has never appointed a hero to lead it...they always opt for excellent bartenders who know when to dodge once punches (and arrows, axes, knives, swords, and spears) start flying. While Alexnin is regarded as one of the sanest and one of the most competent Guild leaders the Adventurers have ever had, he wasn't quite quick enough to dodge *all* the various projectiles during one of the more energetic brawls. Hence the name. He is, however, approachable, and willing to listen to those who need help. Just don't mention the lost eye. He *really* doesn't like that.

26 Guild of Wizards, Ingenious Sorcerers, and Practitioners of Eldritch Ritual (WISPER) Library

The decision of magic-users to group together into a Guild was a difficult one. Wizards tend to dislike sharing their research (what if a rival makes a breakthrough first?) and warlocks tend to be too paranoid to join any group at all. That's before you get to sorcerers, spending most of their time looking in a mirror and trying to decide exactly how charismatic they should be today? After the creation of the Guild of Adventurers, most magic-users concluded it was probably necessary to have some kind of representation of their might when it came to influence in the town. And so, the Guild of Wizards, Ingenious Sorcerers, and Practitioners of Eldritch Ritual was founded. Or, as it's usually called, WISPER. It contains, in its very name, all of the most typical characteristics of the three kinds of magic-user who make up its membership. It's an acronym — a typical little wizardly joke; it flatters sorcerers; and warlocks aren't mentioned directly. It took six months of hard negotiation to settle on the name. This is fairly typical of WISPER...things move slowly if they move at all. There are far too many people all trying to prove their cleverness at a WISPER meeting, far too many voices all vying to be heard and all striving to make the most articulate and effective point. Listening to the endless rhetoric is enough to put even the most attentive scribe to sleep.

WISPER's Guild House is everything you'd expect a place exclusively occupied by wizards and sorcerers to be. It is arrayed with vast stone gargoyles and other sinister gothic imagery without; the windows are draped in cobwebs and the doors open and close by themselves. The door knockers — grotesque creatures holding the opening rings

in clawed hands — make cruel remarks about the physical appearance of those passing through. Within, however, the place is warm, comfortable and lined with books on every conceivable subject. The food served at the WISPER Guild House is also without compare in the town, and, as a result, other Guild members often find excuses for lengthy meetings at the place. This is one of the reasons the door knockers were enchanted to be so relentlessly unpleasant — WISPER members are extremely protective of their cuisine.

WISPER is relatively unconcerned with the politicking that usually consumes the Guilds. It still takes part in it all, of course, but most of its members are more interested in their own, strange arcane studies than they are with working out how to gain the highest share of the various merchant taxes. This disinterest is countered by the fact that a large group of people flinging around fireballs tends to pose quite a threat...so that even if they don't really care what's going on in the town it's best not to upset them too much!

The head of WISPER is Mervynner the Frozen, a respected dwarven wizard who does his very best to look like the head of a wizard guild should. As a young wizard, he somehow managed to enchant himself so that he exudes an aura of constant, icy cold. This renders him extremely unpopular as a regular visitor to the Guild House (where people tend to like the warm) but effective as a negotiator. Only Morganna Veries, head of the Seafarers Guild, is willing to sit in a room for hours with the perpetually chilly WISPER representative. There's a reason she's the *de facto* head of the Council.



Minor Guilds

Those Guilds listed above are Gullet Cove's major Guilds. They are the organisations which shape the future of Gullet Cove, which bend the town to their will. There are others, though. Far smaller, perhaps, but still with their own but the town is home to many others. While these may be small, they can wield impressive influence and authority, capable of forcing the bigger Guilds to, at the least, pay attention to their requirements, and at the most, alter plans and policies to suit them. Guilds are always being formed, dissolved, merged, bought out, or otherwise changed. It's what such organisations do... One such Guild is discussed in more detail on the right.



The Goldsmiths

A lot of money flows into Gullet Cove in one form or another. Some of it is even via legal means! The Guilds each keep their own accounting staff, of course, but there needs to be someone impartial. Someone to oversee the apparently limitless supplies of bullion being brought in by pirates, cash from merchants, and gold from the various business shenanigans of the Guilds themselves. This resulted in the foundation of the Goldsmiths. Or, as the Goldsmiths themselves have it, their recognition by the major Guilds. For the Goldsmiths claim they are the most ancient of Guilds, conceived of and founded by a goddess. Some claim the goddess Ernutet created the Goldsmiths; others, that it was the deity called Melody. None are quite sure, and the Goldsmith protect their secrets with all the rigour of the bigger Guilds. They do claim that the goddess gave them their symbol, seen emblazoned on every building they own: a knotted, golden ring.

The Goldsmiths are one of the few truly neutral Guilds in Gullet Cove. They treat every Guild in precisely the same fashion, expecting their fees to be paid in a timely fashion and, beyond this, caring little for the political games and machinations which so consume the major Guilds of the town. They supervise all monetary payments from one Guild to another, ensure that all coins in use in Gullet Cove are legal, and, most importantly, offer the use of their enormous and heavily guarded vault as a bank. They are invaluable and indispensable to all businesses in Gullet Cove. Despite this, they seek little power, and less acclaim. Indeed, quietly fulfilling their function is all the Goldsmiths seek to do. They are a deeply religious organisation, and to seek to gain power for themselves would be to betray these principles.

These principles are, so it is claimed, more than simply good business sense. They are part of a mystical bond the Goldsmiths share with their goddess. Each head of the Guild is chosen, marked with a secret and invisible birthmark, the symbol of the goddess Ernutet herself. Of course, none believe this...who would believe such a story? But nevertheless, the tale persists. The current head of the Guild is the elderly Lady Rhanda Yrestalle. She is a woman of remarkable perspicacity, and beloved by those who work for her. She is, however, extremely ill and has yet to name a successor. This is deeply troubling to much of Gullet Cove.

So, there you have it. That's the place you've found yourself in. Plenty to explore, eh? Plenty to poke your nose into. Though you'll want to do that carefully. Even cute little dog noses like the one I've got aren't always welcome...can't think why! Anyway, there's enough to keep you out of trouble (or plunge you deeper into it) for a little while at least. You run out of things to do, you come find me. Stand me a drink at the Silver Sovereign and I'll tell you whatever you want to know!

The Gullet Cove Year

Every town has its festivals, its feast days, and time set aside for revelry. Gullet Cove is certainly no exception. The Guilds each hold their own holiday, as do most of the major temples. Festivals in Gullet Cove are always extremely well attended and, most importantly, well-funded. The Guilds each attempt to offer the most generous donation, or to bedeck the town in the most ostentatiously expensive decorations. The people of Gullet Cove, very sensibly, encourage such lavishness in the Guilds, and any Guild failing to provide food, gifts, and excitement to the various festival goers is likely to find its windows smashed. Or at the very least, find fewer applicants for membership. Below is a table of major Gullet Cove festivals and events...who knows what might happen on such an occasion?

Event Name	Season	Details
New Flame Day	Spring	The first event of the new year is New Flame Day, when the old fire — left to burn out over the course of winter — is rekindled, three months after Old Fire Night. How long the fire takes to catch is then taken as a prognostication of the year ahead. If it catches quickly, the year is certain to be extremely hot and busy. If the flame catches slowly, the year is to be temperate but successful. If it does not catch at all, the year is to be wild or icy cold, and the town is certain to suffer hardships. How accurate these omens are is debated throughout the year, as all fortune — good or ill — is then attributed to the New Flame. The accompanying festival is usually fairly raucous, even if a flame hasn't kindled. People celebrate the imminence of spring with considerable energy.
Choke Day	Spring	Choke Day is the single biggest event in the town, occupying everyone and filling every street with revellers. For more detail on Choke Day, see page 70.
Feast of the Open Sea	Summer	As summer reaches its height, the Seafarer's Guild hosts the entire town at the edge of the town's most prominent cliff edge. An enormous feast is arranged, vast tables are laden with every sort of food, and entertainers from across the land give performances. The Guild also uses the Feast as an opportunity to do a great deal of business, once its rivals are thoroughly drunk. One of every course of food, and every bottle of drink, is donated to the sea to thank it for its benevolence and for tolerating the existence of Gullet Cove. Places are set at each table for a myriad of sea gods. Very occasionally, one of them even attends.
Hero Watch	Summer	The Guild of Adventurers' Guild day is the least impressive in terms of spectacle of all the Guilds. It might also be the most popular. A series of large tents are set up in the marketplace, and heroes from throughout the land gather to take part in trials of strength and combat in front of large crowds who place bets and howl their encouragement. This takes place over the course of a twenty four hour period, culminating in an almighty feast and party. One which everyone in Gullet Cove attends.
Carnival of Magic	Autumn	Equally impressive, though in a very different way, the WISPER festival is a night of enchantment. Each WISPER member is expected to perform one feat of magic and sorcery, designed to impress and enthrall those watching. Throughout the town, dozens of spontaneous magical performances erupt, drawing the attention of hundreds. This continues throughout the evening, until at midnight the grand spell is woven — a vast illusion that hangs over the town for hours. Sometimes it depicts famous events from the town's history, sometimes ferocious sea battles. Every year, WISPER struggles to top its spectacular illusions of the previous years.
Festival of Masks	Autumn	As the year changes, the inhabitants of the town don ornate masks, reflecting the transition to winter, the dying of the year. The celebrations are initially muted, with a procession through the streets, escorting summer from the town. However, as the night draws in, alcohol and food are consumed in huge quantities and the party starts, welcoming winter in.
Old Fire Night	Winter	The final event of the year is Old Fire Night, when the town gathers to build a vast fire at the entrance to town — welcoming in new visitors who need somewhere to stay during the coldest months of the year and symbolically driving away evil spirits. It is unusually sombre for a Gullet Cove celebration — though there is still music, dancing and drinking. Just less of it.
Steal Day	Winter	The Thieves Guild's festival, Steal Day, is especially looked forward to by children. The Guild sets up various parades and fairs throughout the town, and children are encouraged to try and pick the pockets of the adults there — adults with sweets filling their pockets. Later in the evening, the festival becomes one celebrating the escapades of famous criminals. Large theatrical performances are put on, ale runs freely, and raucous singalongs of ballads fill the air.





The Isle of Dogs

It is rarely glimpsed, the coastline. A jagged shore, strewn with sand. Beyond that, the pine forests gesture upwards, obscuring the strange remnants of the island's past. This is the Isle of Dogs. Dangerous, strange, isolated...it resides on the edges of reality, caught between the physical fact of its existence and its perpetual absence. Its mysteries remain wreathed in the whirling eddies of an eternal tempest, hidden save for a brief window, once a year.

History

The Isle of Dogs once belonged to the mainland, forming part of the landscape that would become Gullet Cove. Part of the ancient elven city that once dominated this area of the coast was constructed here. The precise details of what the elves built upon this piece of former shoreline has never been determined. A few brave (or, at least, sufficiently reckless) scholars make their way to the island during the week in which it is accessible. Those few who return recount buildings which scarcely seem real; fractured walls float upwards and apart, floors detach themselves from the ground and bob, listlessly up and down, as though suspended in water. These bizarre effects have led to the rumours that the island once housed the elven city's tower of mages. There's little proof of this, but the rumours persist, and, to most residents of Gullet Cove, the Isle of Dogs is, and was, a locus of elven wizardry and power. Certainly, whatever tore the island from the mainland and cast it into the sea was intensely powerful, but the myth claiming that it was the result of elven sorcery grown corrupt and decadent is just that: a myth. Whatever truth the myth might contain is impossible to determine. There are other tales; that the elves incurred the ire of a passing god of war who cracked the earth with his flail —

the distinctive shape of Gullet Cove is attributed to the impacts of the flail. Other claims include that the elves refused to pay the giants who built much of their city for them. In revenge, the giants ripped off the most beautiful part of the city and dragged into the midst of the sea. The most plausible explanation is that, when the elven city began to crumble, magic was used to attempt to save part of it. The attempt both failed and succeeded, preserving the land but leaving the city to fall into utter ruin. Such is the nature of magic.

Since it was flung into the sea, the island has remained a place of mystery. Pirates used the island to hide from their rivals and from the authorities hunting them, leading to yet more tales accreting around the place. Claims of vast mounds of gold and jewels, chests stuffed with doubloons and the looted relics of forgotten gods can be heard in every inn in Gullet Cove. There is, however, some truth to these claims, outlandish though they may be. Such stories are the lure for most who visit the place — ineluctably drawn by the promise of wealth. Even if the tales of gold are coupled with tales of spectral protectors, pirates dragging themselves from shallow graves, and creatures too terrible to describe.

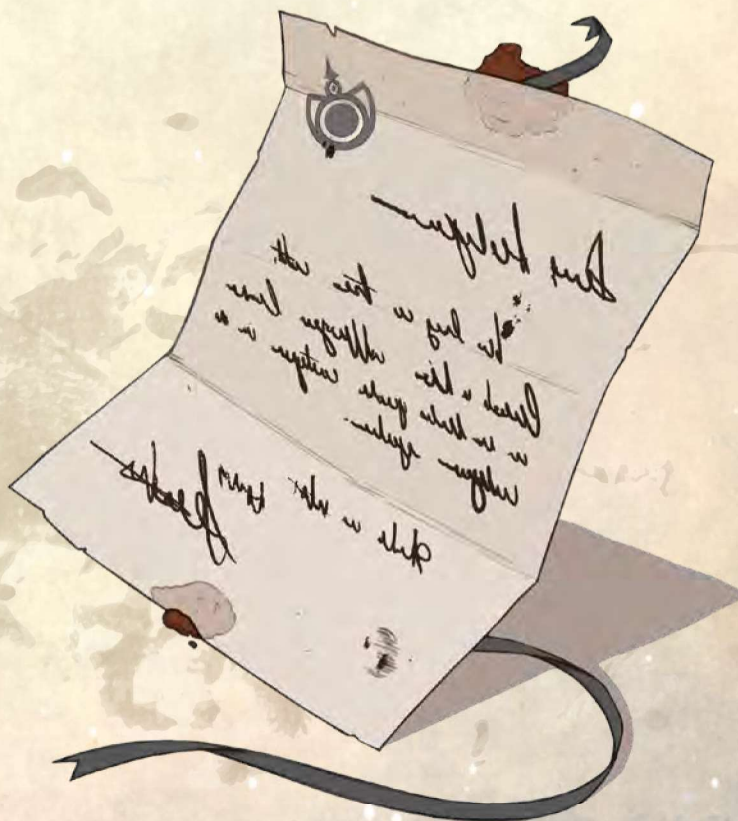
The island's name derives from the two animals who proclaimed themselves its rulers. Some fifty years before Gullet Cove reached its current size and mercantile influence, two rottweilers journeyed to the island, hunting for gold. They never returned, but letters written by the pair did. They declared that the island was now a place for canines only. That it had become a kingdom of the dogs, a kingdom over which the pair would rule. There was some shock at this amongst the whole of Gullet Cove; the two dogs had been keen followers of the Good Mother, never sought power or office for themselves. An expedition — mainly consisting of awakened animals — set out to discover what had driven two such creatures to make such drastic behaviour. Neither were found, having entirely disappeared. The expedition recovered a series of other letters, penned to the leaders of the land's major nations, declaring the independence of the Isle of Dogs from Gullet Cove, and inviting the rulers of the mainland to a grand coronation. These peculiar missives were found at the bottom of two enormous statues — statues of the two rottweilers, carved from onyx, each forty feet high. Impossibly big, the mystery of their creation remains unsolved. But the inexplicably large statues have remained one of the island's most striking sights (it says something of the nature of the Isle of Dogs that they aren't the most striking sight) and they give the strange place its name.

Inhabitants

There are almost no creatures on the Isle of Dogs with human, or near human, levels of intelligence. While the occasional warband of ogres or ettins roams the Grendel Wood, in the main only unawakened animals live on the island. The majority are docile, unafraid of the infrequent visitors who arrive each year. There are a large number of savage predators who stalk the island's interior, making little distinction between their typical prey and the newcomers entering their domain once a year. There are also rumours, almost constant rumours, of elvish survivors of millennia before — beings of pure spirit, or of implausible physical dimensions, or creatures now more tree than flesh. None of these claims have ever been verified but they persist. One more enigmatic feature of the endlessly strange island.

Conditions

Given the almost permanent and extremely violent storms circling the island, many visitors are surprised to find that once they make it past the coast, the weather is temperate and often much warmer and more pleasant than on the mainland. Even when the sun is obscured in Gullet Cove, it still seems to filter through the canopy of Grendel Woods. Rain is fairly common, but usually light. It sparkles in the air, dropping to the ground and leaving everything kissed with dew. The best way to describe the conditions of the Isle of Dogs is...a little *too* perfect.





Key Locations

Sheltered from the outside world as it is, the geography of the Isle of Dogs is unfamiliar and largely unmapped. Even those who venture there with the intention of compiling charts come back without any true sense of exactly *where* the things they have seen are in relation to the rest of the island. Space seems to contract here or expand there. Things don't remain in the same place; shifting from day to day, hour to hour. People who planned to visit the Isle of Dogs for a single day can find themselves consigned to a year of waiting for the storms to abate once again. The reason for this is simple: magic. The Isle of Dogs is wrapped in magic; the source of the endless storms that keep it hidden, and the other bizarre occurrences that make the island so mysterious. Ancient power courses through its earth. Anyone who places their ear to the ground on the Isle of Dogs can hear the deep, rhythmic thrum of the energy bound within the island itself. It seethes in every particle of soil, every scintilla of sand, every mote of pollen. Even the sunlight twists, filtering through leaves as though through water, refracted by the magic permeating everything.

The Elven City

The oldest part of the island is also one of the strangest. Perhaps that should be no surprise. The magic woven into this place is older, has had longer to mature and deepen its hold. The remains of the elven city are steeped in this magic. The stones themselves spark and coruscate with energy. When approaching the ruins of the city, the air is thick with glinting iotas of magical discharge and flecks of ethereal gold, vanishing the moment one reaches out a hand.

Most of the ruins themselves are too dilapidated to provide any clues about their previous uses — temples, palaces, libraries...who can tell? Mostly, they're rubble or isolated walls protruding from the earth like the sails on the backs of lizards. Even so, the level of sophistication and skill in the architecture is obvious; the meticulously inscribed whorls in each stone are evidence of the level of artistry invested in even the least significant aspects of each structure. The ancient elves who built this place did so with care and astonishing skill.

Most visitors to the city pay little attention to these aspects of the city. It's hard to really care about these architectural features when time and space is collapsing all around you. The remnant fragments of the city shift and fluctuate constantly. Walls detach themselves from the ground and drift upwards into the sky, trailing tendrils of moss. Other chunks of stone simply vanish for weeks at a time before re-manifesting on an unfortunate visitor's foot. Sometimes it seems as though these disappearances are orchestrated by a mischievous intelligence, pranking those who explore the ruins seeking something other than floating splinters of stone. Stones materialise just at the right moment to trip the unwary. Gaps between walls are suddenly blocked up by a rock-fall that won't happen for another hundred years but is suddenly transported backwards in time, seconds before an explorer attempts to walk through.

This is rarely malicious — a few bruises and scrapes are the worst injuries received — but it is nevertheless disconcerting. Some claim that the ghosts of the city's inhabitants remain here as protectors. Others that this is the paranoid superstition of the clumsy. There are even some who insist that the original elven inhabitants of the place evolved, becoming beings of pure spirit who still live in the city undetected. Or that the city is now sentient — the magic saturating the place coalescing into something like thought. Who knows what is true in such a place? Perhaps some particularly dedicated adventurers might be able to uncover an answer.

There is only a single edifice from the elven city still largely intact. An enormous dome rises from the earth, its crown stretching 60 feet into the air. Formed from obsidian, its outer surface interlaced with seams of gold, outlining what seems to be paths between the stars, the dome is a vast astral map — though where it leads, none dare to guess. There are a number of entrances into the dome; some once formal doorways, others are fissures in the rock grown big enough to allow ingress. The inside of the dome is a mass of passages, rooms, and antechambers. The rooms themselves are peculiar; few have any uniform shape or repeated features and whatever contents they possessed were long ago taken, leaving behind only gleaming black walls. For those who venture into the temple at night, things are radically different. When moonlight strikes the dome, the interior is suffused with light. Images of the past spring from the walls. These images move, recreating strange scenes in solemn, ritualised fashion. Few stay to witness these shimmering phantoms undertake their ancient roles. Perhaps they should...perhaps, in the eternal recurrence of these blue-tinted living memories, there is some clue as to what this dome was used for. It merely requires courage...

The Statues

Huge, carved from ancient stone, and unbearably cute, these canine statues are some of the strangest artefacts on an island filled with such things. How Pubriel and Eglert (the two rottweilers depicted in the statues) carved these exquisite things, who can possibly guess? What did the dogs experience and encounter on the island that sent them both mad — so mad they sought to make themselves kings, so mad that they created 30-foot-tall statues of themselves in the midst of a forest. Another mystery.

As for the statues themselves, they are beautifully crafted. Where you might expect to find roughness or chisel marks, there is only smoothness. The likeness of the dogs is captured with exquisite skill and accuracy. The state of Pubriel — the large onyx statue on the left — has a look of genuine canine happiness, tongue lolling and big eyes staring out in delight. The statue on the right, carved in the likeness of Eglert is just as lifelike, though the expression on Eglert's face is more confused than delighted.

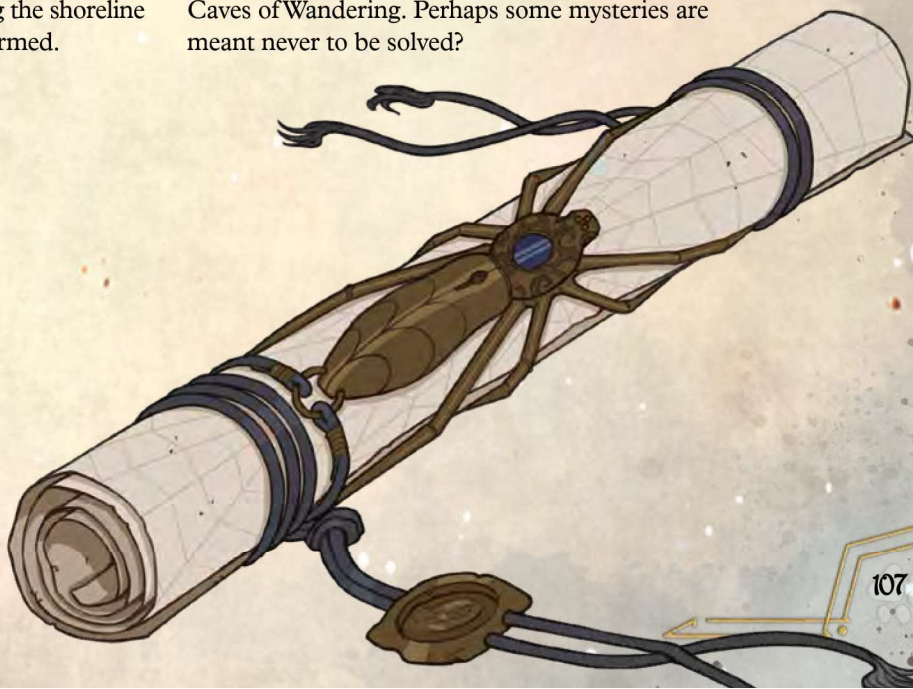
The bases of the statues are always covered in flowers, but not plants that have sprouted naturally. Great bouquets of aromatic flowers are placed with care and delicacy. Huge bunches of bluebells, crocuses, orchids, picked and assembled as offerings. The Isle of Dogs is renowned for the verdancy of its plant life, and here, some of its most beautiful examples are carefully arranged, as though in tribute. No one is sure where these flowers come from, why they are placed so carefully, or who or what arranges them. But they are always there, replaced when they begin to fade. Some have opined that perhaps the followers of the two self-appointed rulers of the Isle of Dogs revere their leaders still...it is possible, though there is no other sign of such intelligent life on the island. The oddest of all the theories claim that the statues aren't in truth statues at all. That these towering stone animals are the two canines themselves. They found something, goes the story, capable of suffusing them with power, rendering them immortal. The stories claim the statues animate when not watched, venturing through the island, watching the shoreline of Gullet Cove to ensure that no animals are harmed.

The Caves of Wandering

Few, if any, people live on the Isle of Dogs. A few pirates or careless adventurers get stranded there for a year, but soon leave once the storms relent. The creatures making their homes on the island do so in remote areas, seeking shelter whenever and wherever they can. These caves, located not far from the remnants of the elven city, are home to dozens of different species. The network of caves runs throughout the island, describing a parallel world of half-light just beneath the surface. The creatures living here are locked into their own bizarre eco-system, feasting on each other amidst the underground chambers.

There are, it is said, other things to be found in the Caves of Wandering. As long as you're prepared to actually wander in them. Like much of the Isle of Dogs, the magical energies pervading the island render the space virtually illimitable. Corridors twist in upon one another, rooms blend into walls blend into sudden openings in the exposed earth below. Despite their incredible depth and expanse, it is never hard to find an exit. The caves seem to respond, in some strange way, to the thoughts and feelings of those wandering them. Whenever an exit is needed, one seems to materialise. This is one of the odd paradoxes of the Caves of Wandering; it is extremely difficult to become lost in them, and it's only through becoming lost that the treasures concealed within them can be found. This renders exploring them a peculiar experience, with adventurers desperately trying not to think of the fact that they're lost, even though they are — just in case their minds then turn to leaving.

Large predators stalk the passages of the Caves of Wandering. Fungi in astonishing colours and unsettling shapes erupts from every wall. Earth elementals stumble along the passages speaking in their ominous, guttural language. The array of creatures found in the tunnels has led some to suppose that they were once some form of ancient, elven zoo. This explanation doesn't account for the strange relics sometimes found hidden in the deepest recesses of the Caves of Wandering. Perhaps some mysteries are meant never to be solved?





Grendel Wood

Most of the Isle of Dogs is obscured by the thick Grendel Wood, sprawling across the centre of the island and making journeying through the interior difficult and exhausting. Most of the trees in Grendel Wood are conifers, dark-trunked and dense with foliage. It is often difficult to see more than a few feet ahead, so tight is the press of branches. Despite this, for those prepared to shove their way through the outstretched fronds, the wood is filled with things that draw adventurers to an area.

The first of these are the springs of water pouring from the oldest and tallest of the trees. There are no rivers on the Isle of Dogs, but fresh water pours from the boughs of certain trees. Others ooze a delicious syrup. Still others exude thick unguents which heal even the worst of wounds, or cure poison. There are tales of some trees that emit a substance which guarantees immortality...or removes it. There are claims that, from time to time, gods visit the Isle of Dogs in order to forsake their divinity. Of course, the direct opposite is also claimed; that some who have come to the island and never returned drank the broth of godhood, ascending to the heavens. Truth or falsehood, it hasn't stopped many from visiting the woods in search of these elixirs.

There are also the stories that the elves who created the city still inhabit the wood but are now merged with the trees. To those who press their ears to the trunks of the trees, it's possible to commune with the spirits of the ancient elves. Sometimes, the elves still detach from the trees they now inhabit and walk through the woods. If discovered, they are capable of offering impossibly accurate prophecies of the future. Or knowledge of the world hidden to all but them — the location of the king's lost heir, the answer to the riddle of the dying silver sphinx, the best way to prepare a starling for a cat's dinner. Again, the veracity of such claims is unclear, but many attempt to have their questions about the world answered by elves who have become part of the earth itself.

The forest is far from idyllic, though. Ogres and ettins hunt there in small bands. Even hill giants are occasionally found forcing their way through the trees. It's not clear where these beasts come from, certainly they don't seem to belong on the Isle of Dogs. Does the island itself bring them here? Or is there a sinister intelligence buried within the forest, perhaps whatever caused the island to be torn from the shoreline. There are scholars who suggest that the elves magic called something dark and cruel to the earth... perhaps it survives here, trying to gather an army to itself. Or perhaps these beasts simply stumble out of the Caves of Wandering.

Mewling Pits

One of the most peculiar places on the island can be found on its southern coast. The Mewling Pits are so-called because of the noise that emanates from them constantly. A high-pitched, distinctive mewling noise, like a cat seeking to be picked up and cuddled. No one knows what lies at their bottom, though when objects are dropped into the pits the mewling stops for the briefest of moments, before starting again with redoubled urgency. The peculiar noises, and the pits' apparent hunger, have led to some opining that these are the dimensional throats of several vast cats who exist between universes, always hungry but placated, momentarily, by whatever falls into the pits.

The pits are routinely visited by adventurers and especially by treasure seekers who abseil down the insides of the pits to collect the various treasures thrown into them. These frequently end up lying on an outstretched rocky ledge or twisted up in the creepers and vines winding their way up the interior of the pit. To those without much concern for their own lives, or for those who *really* like treasure, these make extremely rich pickings. Again, it's not entirely clear who hurls so much gold, jewellery, and other valuable trinkets into the pit, but to those willing to swing from rope over an illimitable fissure in the earth, such things don't really matter.

Some are concerned by the fact that, on an apparently empty island, an endless supply of treasure is hurled into a series of holes in the ground. As ever, some opine that the spirits of the ancient elves who first inhabited the place are responsible. Others claim, without a hint of irony that the Isle of Dogs was ripped from the mainland by the spirits of several vast cats who are now constrained within the heart of the island and placated through regular sacrifices of treasure. Others insist that the pits themselves manifest this treasure in order to try and convince those crazed by the lure of gold to lower themselves down, where the pits can draw on their essence, or their greed.

It is said that a few of the bravest souls have let themselves fall into the pits, using magic to soften their landing. That, while their companions never saw them again, they still receive cryptic messages from them. Messages referring to strange worlds concealed in the centre of the earth, just waiting to be explored. These tales are treated with extreme scepticism, even by the most gullible of the Isle of Dogs' visitors. But some still wonder, just a little, whether or not there might be some hint of truth to the claims.

Adventures on the Isle of Dogs

Mutt and Bailey Need Some Help!

Everyone knows who Mutt and Bailey are, right? But sometimes even they need a bit of assistance. Chasing the Golden Crab is the main reason they're going to the Isle of Dogs, but they've got a lot of other things to do while they're there. They intend to try and map the island for a start—everyone knows how difficult that can prove to be—and then they want to explore the ruins. So, like all sensible adventurers, Mutt and Bailey are looking for companions. They need to be tough, courageous, willing to hunt for giant crabs, and, most of all, able to put up with Bailey's constant bad jokes. In Mutt's opinion, that last part is likely to be the hardest part of the entire trip. So, what do you say? Are you in?

Mutt & Bailey and the Legend of the Golden Crab

What have our favourite adventurers been up to exactly? Well, answering that would take too long. Let's just say that, right now, they're pursuing the rumours of a vast haul of purloined gold...gold a canny pirate protected with his pet crab. Easy pickings? Not exactly. The crab in question is supposed to be gigantic, its pincers capable of snipping a limb off with a quick flex. And there's that other thing. The thing no one seems to realise.

The golden crab of legend isn't just the guardian of a vast treasure chest. The treasure chest and the crab are one and the same. The treasure chest forms part of the crab's impenetrable carapace, a bejewelled shell studded with gold and iron and wood. The crab roams across the Isle of Dogs, bearing its hoard with it everywhere, cutting apart any other creature approaching too closely, nibbling at what's left over once it has chopped them apart. Dozens of foolish, gold-hungry adventurers chase the golden crab each year, descending on the Isle of Dogs in the week when the storms recede. None have come close to claiming the motherlode, perching atop the furious crustacean. Hunting the crab is a difficult matter; the creature hides amidst a network of jagged rocks, tidal pools much deeper than they appear, and sea weeds which sometimes strike out, wrapping themselves around the limbs or throat of an unfortunate passer-by. The golden crab navigates this treacherous coastline with an impossible dexterity, its six legs scuttling over apparently sheer drops, clinging to shale slopes, clambering over seams of granite.

But when has danger ever stopped Mutt and Bailey? That's right. Never. So the intrepid pair are on the trail of the golden crab. They'll pursue it to the ends of the earth. Or the ends of the Isle of Dogs anyway. They aren't sure how much further they can realistically chase it anyway. Nevertheless, the two are on the trail. They've never failed before. They aren't going to do so now. For more on Mutt, Bailey, and the golden crab, see page 109 of Chapter 6!

So, you want to take your player characters off the shore line...get them out of town for a bit, show them something different. The Isle of Dogs is an ideal location for some high fantasy expeditions; there's something new and strange every few feet, any creature you want can be hidden in the endless caves and shifting forest, any treasure you can dream of can be awaiting discovery in the ruined city. On the next page are a few ideas for how to get your players characters to the Isle of Dogs!





Cave Diving

In need of a strange elven artefact of extreme antiquity? Well, the Caves of Wandering are the place to find it. Pursuing a criminal fleeing to the Isle of Dogs and hiding? Chances are they're concealing themselves in the endless caverns. Yep, it's that kind of place. The magical flux of the Isle of Dogs has made what might once have been a small network of passages and rooms into an island-spanning maze of shifting geology. Finding your way through such an impossible morass of tunnels and passageways is a laborious process, forcing you to delve deeper into a labyrinth you can't map and can't control...and spits you out whenever you think about it too hard. The problem is, whatever (or whoever) you're searching for can manipulate the tunnels. They aren't subject to its rules in the same way as you; this makes your life that much more difficult. Now factor in that something is stalking you through the halls, something big and hungry and terrifying. Welcome to the Isle of Dogs! What are you going to do and how are you going to do it? It's worth getting this sussed out before you get crunched between the teeth of the hideous thing stalking you through the winding tunnels that don't want you there...

We Need Answers!

There's something you need to know, desperately. What it is doesn't matter, save that it's important and urgent. And hidden. Perhaps it's a secret to preserving the realm. Perhaps it's the identity of your true parents. You need to hunt out the truth but at every turn you're denied. But then you hear the rumour, the rumour of a place where all your answers might be supplied — if you can get there: the Grendel Wood on the Isle of Dogs. So, you've waited, you've travelled there, and now you need to find a way of asking your question. Much easier than it sounds. First you must avoid the patrols of ogres and trolls, who really don't know how they ended up in this forest and are looking to eat someone in order to assuage their confusion. Then you need to find a way of luring the sleeping spirit of an ancient elf out of a tree. If it lives in the tree. It's not exactly a nice relaxing walk in the forest, is it?



