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As Gamemasters, we do a lot of preparation in order to put on a good show for our players. Fairly often, all of our work goes right out the window when the party zigs where we expect them to zag. The Tangents series are designed to help the Gamemaster in these situations. We've done most of the hard work for you; creating a detailed location complete with a map, NPCs, plot hooks to get the players involved, and myriad content and ideas to cover your campaign as much or as little as you need. Each Tangent is system-less, generic enough to fit in any genre-appropriate setting, and contains enough content for at least one night of gameplay.

Note: The term "Gamemaster Knowledge" refers to information that is only available to the gamemaster (GM). Everything else is available to the players as the GM deems necessary or appropriate.

SETTING

FLAGSTONE

At its founding, Flagstone was built a day's travel to the north of its current location, near the mines at the foot of Vinson's Peak. Over time the major trade routes bypassed the small colony, and in the interest of commerce the settlement was moved. For over a decade Flagstone survived on a trickle of common ores that were bartered for below market value on necessities such as food and clothing.

When a thick, black ichor began to seep from the walls, at first the townsfolk were terrified. Rumors of demonic possession, hexes, and a hundred varieties of newly imagined evils spread. However, the substance was found to be a rare alchemical reagent; high in demand among the great thinkers of the north.

Suddenly, merchants began taking significant detours to ensure they passed through Flagstone and the city flourished.

An old friend of the party, Orum Greybeard, runs a successful tavern on the outskirts of the city. Through him you learn of some alarming wolf activity in the area. Purportedly, over a month ago, ten miners made the trek to the mines but only one returned. Until now, wolves in the area have only been responsible for a few missing pigs or an occasional dog.

The Honorable Mayor, Lysander Beurhorn, immediately closed the mines. He made vague claims about the danger, including the possibility that a group of wolves had taken shelter in the mines. Several requests were made to form and send a militia, but the mayor refused.

Since the incident, Orum has felt his coin purse grow noticeably lighter. The party owes him a favor, and he has asked that they investigate. Ideally, he would have you kill a few wolves and make a big show of it in front of his patrons.

More importantly, however, the mines must be cleared of anything dangerous so that excavations may continue.

GAMEMASTER KNOWLEDGE

The miners have uncovered a portal to one of the lesser realms of chaos buried deep beneath the earth. Many small demonoids have been escaping through this crack. The wolves in the area are Dire Wolves that escaped from the pit or mutated from the demonic aura.

THE DAY'S END

The Day's End is a notably large mercantile tavern near the outskirts of Flagstone. The tavern is a local business hub. Dozens of shops set about the perimeter, and a few well-paying merchants peddle their wares in designated locations throughout the interior. Nearly one hundred years since its construction, the pine walls have warped and grayed, but the facility is well-maintained, warm, and comfortable.

The tavern boasts a massive common room where patrons enjoy exotic meats, cheeses, and rare delicacies from the distant east. Orum Greybeard keeps the tavern well-stocked and well-oiled. He offers the party room and board at an unimpressive discount for the remainder of their investigation.

Those selling their protection, and other intangible goods, gather by the fire in the far corner.

GAMEMASTER KNOWLEDGE

Initially the party will be treated very well, with discounted food and free cleaning services. However, Orum grows increasingly annoyed at the growing expense if the party stays too many days without resolving his troubles in full. This may manifest in lower quality meals or a complete lack of them. Over time, the prices increase above standard, and eventually Orum will evict the entire party. At the GM's discretion, this change may take place in a matter of days alone, signifying Orum's impatience. Once crossed, it takes more than an apology to get back on the stubborn dwarf's good side.

Only two characters wait near the fire: Ellena Starchaser whose unorthodox services may be purchased for a price, and Gnobble Knicklespur, whose unorthodox services are difficult to refuse. These characters are likely to be around any time the party should have need of them; however, the GM may decide to add additional NPCs to complement the party. Over the course of several days, these supplemental characters are likely to change in order to represent that the mercenaries have been hired or moved on to other areas.

BLACK ICHOR MINES

Set in the mountains among the half-ruined dwellings of the original colony, the Black Ichor Mines lay a day's travel from

Flagstone. With the discovery of the valuable alchemical reagents within the mine, excavation exploded in an excited, albeit unorganized, rush for the shimmering black gold. The area is far from well-maintained, with abandoned and wrecked carts littered about the opening. It seems anything viewed as lower value than the ichor has simply been shoved out of the way.

Hundreds of feet of rope lay water-logged and rotting in the sun. Barrels of oil, a large expensive supply, have simply been scattered into the trees, having rolled some distance along the uneven ground. A few have even broken open, leaving a dark stain on the soil.

Inside, the mines are an unmapped maze of winding tunnels with few landmarks to discern location.

GAMEMASTER KNOWLEDGE

A wise party will mark their path in some way when venturing into the mines. Adventurers will need a light source or exceptional vision to enter the mines. Fortunately, there are dry torches near the entrance and plenty of fuel for lanterns or whatever the party decides.

Local miners navigate by counting the turns, though few would be able to produce an accurate map from memory. The mines are filled with lesser demons that scurry from light like cockroaches. If the party attempts to mark their way physically, the mischievous demons will do their best to erase or change the markings.

These demons will do their best to avoid combat, and in a fight they resort to escape at all costs. Though they move to cause anguish to others in whatever way they can, they are simply too terrified of humanoids to pose a real threat.

Adventurers may pass a test to return to the entrance or any other location they have been before.

Locations of Interest:

- A. A trail of blood leads to a den of Dire Wolves. The party finds evidence of a human meal, but even the bones have been devoured by the demonic wolves.
- B. A watery grey liquid drips from the walls. In dryer areas it has begun to flake and peel.
- C. The substance on the walls begins to blacken as the group wanders deeper into the mines, but it has no metallic sheen. See quest [\[The Cleric's Errand\]](#).
- D. Thick, black liquid with a metallic sheen oozes from the walls. Additionally, the party notices a red light emanating from a crack in the wall. One edge of the crack is bordered by runed ironwork. A discerning adventurer may recognize this as the edges of a partially buried dimensional portal. See Encounter [\[Dire Arachnid\]](#).
- E. The party finds the body of a female miner that has been blasted with some sort of magical fire. The

walls are blackened and the entire corpse is burnt to a crisp, save for the right hand, which bears a plain tin ring. The ring offers some magical resistance to fire but obviously not much.

BEURHORN MANOR

Beurhorn Manor is the largest dwelling in Flagstone and home to Mayor Lysander Beurhorn.

After the recent death of the lady of the Manor, Lucilla Beurhorn, the mayor dismissed the help and a number of armed guards. Beurhorn rarely makes public appearances now that he is a widower.

Beurhorn Manor was one of the first dwellings built in the new colony; however, the Manor is considered modest by some taking into account the mayor's substantial wealth.

Beurhorn Manor consists of two stories and a small cellar; several rooms are well-furnished for the comfort of guests.

The mayor and his wife have never been considered ostentatious in dress or manner, but humble and giving in nature. Before her death, the Lady Beurhorn often served the injured at Rephidi's temple. She was even known to offer her home as temporary shelter to those in need.

GAMEMASTER KNOWLEDGE

The Manor serves a major role if the party decides to investigate the mayor's curious behavior. Inside, everything is covered in a layer of dust, save for bare footprints leading to the cellar and a locked room on the second story. In the cellar, the party finds evidence that someone has been sleeping on the dirt floor. If the party manages to enter the locked upstairs room, they find the gory remains of several miners and other humans stripped to the bone by sharp teeth. The only other item of note in the room is a shattered amber necklace. A capable adventurer may identify that the object was once enchanted. With considerable effort, the adventurers may determine that the necklace once held a True Sight charm.

The remainder of the Manor shows no signs of habitation.

REPHIDI'S TEMPLE

Despite the attendance of the town's sole cleric, Malik, the temple has fallen into a state of dilapidation. Currently the temple administers to routine illnesses only since the cleric lacks experience. Upon visiting the temple, the party finds only two patients: a small girl with the flu and an old man with rickety knees.