

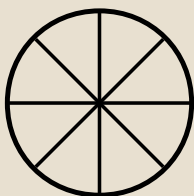
THE ETERNAL COURT

CITY LOCATIONS GUIDE

WORLD BUILDING & LORE

JESSE ALEXANDER

THE ETERNAL COURT
FILE · EC · CITYLO · EDITION I · MDCCXCIII



City Locations

A Companion to the Streets

*The Bastion Inn, the Kereskedo, the trench-lines, the under-
streets of Terra Sotto — keyed for play.*

KORMOR KIRAK · VIDEK · ANNO 1793

FORMAT

Guide · A5

SETTING

Kormor Kırak

USE

At Table

City Locations Guide

Playable Locations for Gamemasters

From the world of

CAPITULUM

THE ETERNAL COURT

Based on the screenplay by

Jesse Alexander

System-flexible location material

CAPITULUM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CAPITULUM

THE ALBION EMBASSY



CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

The Albion Embassy occupies a four-story stone townhouse on Merchant's Height, a quiet street in the better quarter of Kormor Kirak, just three blocks from the grand plaza where the neutral city's markets operate.

The building was once the mansion of a wealthy merchant family, seized by Queen Kiraline's government when the Century War made foreign representation necessary. Ambassador Barron Whitehallow has transformed it into a perfect miniature of imperial authority: the wrought-iron fence is polished monthly, the Albion standard -- gold and crimson, bearing the double eagle -- hangs from an iron bracket above the entrance, and a pair of soldiers in the distinctive red jackets and tall bearskin caps of the Imperial Guard stand watch in rotating shifts.

Walking past the Embassy is like stepping sideways through a door into the Albion Empire itself. Inside the iron fence, the cobblestones are swept clean, the flagstones gleam with beeswax, and Albion servants move with military precision. Yet the building is surrounded by the cramped, winding streets of Kormor Kirak, where vampire servants hurry past on errands and the night air carries the sound of Red Guard patrols. This contrast -- Albion's hard ceremonial formality imposed upon a vampire city perched in the mountains between two hostile kingdoms -- gives the Embassy an almost surreal quality. It is a bastion of order in a place where danger is always negotiable and peace is maintained only by fear.

CAPITULUM

THE EMBASSY EXTENSION AND GATE

The iron fence stands eight feet tall, its wrought-iron spikes fashioned in the shape of stylized crowns and eagles. Two stone pillars flank the gates, each carved with the Imperial cipher. A bronze plaque beside the gate reads: "EMBASSY OF THE ALBION EMPIRE -- By appointment of Her

Majesty's Government." The gates themselves are heavy, painted black, and always attended. Beyond the fence, a small courtyard separates the street from the building's main entrance. The flagstones are laid in a precise geometric pattern -- no sign of the disorder that creeps across the rest of Kormor Kirak.

Two Imperial Guards stand permanent watch at the gate, rotating shifts every four hours. They wear the dress uniform of the Imperial Guard: scarlet jackets with gold trim, black trousers, tall bearskins, and highly polished boots. Each carries a saber and a rifle -- an almost ostentatious display of weapons in the neutral city. The guards are trained to be polite but unyielding. They know every face that should enter the Embassy, and they check all others. A small logbook records every visitor.

The Embassy flag -- the double eagle in gold on a crimson field -- hangs from a wrought-iron bracket above the main door. On ceremonial occasions, smaller flags are hung along the fence. The effect is meant to signal: this is Albion soil, and Albion law holds here. Everyone in

Kormor Kirak understands the message, whether they respect it or fear it.

GM Notes

THE GATE IS THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR ANY PC TRYING TO ENTER THE EMBASSY OFFICIALLY. THE GUARDS ARE WELL-TRAINED AND PROFESSIONAL, NOT CORRUPT -- BRIBES OFFEND THEM. HOWEVER, THEY CAN BE SOCIALLY MANEUVERED. THEY RESPECT RANK, MILITARY BEARING, AND ALBION ACCENTS. A PC WITH A GOOD STORY AND ALBION CONNECTIONS MIGHT TALK THEIR WAY PAST. THE LOGBOOK IS IMPORTANT: ANY VISIT TO THE EMBASSY IS RECORDED, WHICH HAS CONSEQUENCES. IF OLIVIA FAREN WORKS FROM THE EMBASSY, SHE HAS AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE GUARDS -- THEY LOOK THE OTHER WAY AT CERTAIN HOURS. PCs SPYING ON THE EMBASSY CAN WATCH THE GATE, COUNTING HEADS AND NOTING WHO ENTERS AND EXITS.

Connections

THE RECEPTION HALL IS DIRECTLY BEYOND THE FRONT DOOR. THE COURTYARD'S CORNERS OFFER DECENT VANTAGE POINTS FOR SURVEILLANCE. THE STREET ITSELF IS BUSY ENOUGH TO ALLOW OBSERVERS TO LINGER WITHOUT DRAWING THE RED GUARD'S ATTENTION -- YET.

CAPITULUM

THE RECEPTION HALL

A grand entrance, two stories tall, with a soaring ceiling of white plaster decorated with gilded molding. A chandelier of genuine crystal

-- a luxury in Kormor Kirak -- hangs from the center. The floor is polished black marble with veins of white, creating a subtle chessboard effect. Two sweeping staircases curve upward on either side, meeting at a landing on the second floor where a long portrait of the current

Emperor hangs in a frame of carved mahogany. The portrait is formal and imposing: a man in his sixties, in full ceremonial dress, one hand resting on the pommel of a sword, his gaze direct and unyielding.

Beneath the portrait of the Emperor stand three smaller portraits: former ambassadors to neutral territories, a reminder of diplomatic tradition. The walls are painted a soft cream color, and the room is lit by the chandelier and by tall windows that overlook the street below.

The windows have heavy damask curtains that can be drawn for privacy.

The Reception Hall serves as a waiting area and as the first impression given to visitors. Visitors are received here, offered refreshment (tea or water), and either conducted further into the Embassy or politely declined. A formal desk sits to one side, attended by an Albion secretary who screens visitors and manages the appointment book. Behind the desk is a closed door marked "STAFF ONLY" that leads to the administrative corridors and kitchen.

GM Notes

THIS ROOM IS DESIGNED TO INTIMIDATE AND IMPRESS IN EQUAL MEASURE. THE EMPEROR'S PORTRAIT WATCHES ALL CONVERSATIONS. A PC MEETING AN NPC HERE FEELS THE WEIGHT OF FORMAL POWER. THE SECRETARY -- A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN NAMED MISSUS CRANE -- IS CAPABLE AND OBSERVANT. SHE NOTES EVERYTHING: WHO VISITS, WHEN, WHAT MOOD THEY'RE IN WHEN THEY LEAVE, WHETHER THEY WERE NERVOUS OR CONFIDENT. SHE IS LOYAL TO AMBASSADOR WHITEHALLOW AND WOULD REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, SHE IS ALSO PROFESSIONAL AND CAN BE SOCIALLY ENGAGED; SHE MIGHT REVEAL SMALL DETAILS ABOUT THE EMBASSY'S OPERATIONS IF HANDLED CORRECTLY. THE SECRETARY HAS A LEDGER OF ALL APPOINTMENTS, CURRENT AND PAST, KEPT IN A LOCKED DRAWER.

Connections

THE AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE IS ACCESSED THROUGH A DOOR TO THE RIGHT OF THE PORTRAIT. THE DIPLOMATIC SALON IS TO THE LEFT. THE SERVANTS' CORRIDOR AND KITCHENS ARE BEHIND THE DESK. THE STAIRCASES LEAD TO THE SECOND FLOOR, WHERE PRIVATE QUARTERS AND THE CIPHER ROOM ARE LOCATED.

CAPITULUM

THE OFFICE

AMBASSADOR'S

A large, well-appointed room on the first floor, with tall windows overlooking Merchant's Height. The desk is a substantial piece of furniture, mahogany with leather inlay, positioned to face the door --

Ambassador Whitehallow likes to know who enters before they speak to him. The walls are lined with bookshelves containing diplomatic texts, reports from other Albion embassies, and volumes of Albion law and precedent. A large-scale map of Kormor Kirak hangs on one wall, marked with colored pins indicating key locations and known sympathizers. A more detailed map of the Albion Empire's border with Terrassia is behind the desk, marked with military positions.

To one side stands a substantial drinks cabinet of dark wood, its doors carved with hunting scenes. Crystal glasses sit on a silver tray. The office smells of leather, furniture polish, and ink. Several comfortable chairs are arranged for meetings. On the desk, papers are organized in precise stacks: diplomatic correspondence, intelligence reports (marked

"CONFIDENTIAL"), and drafts of formal letters in Albion's careful script.

The office reflects Barron Whitehallow's character: formal, military in its organization, yet comfortable enough to put a guest at ease. A small but genuine painting of the Albion coastline hangs above the desk -- a piece Whitehallow brought from home, a reminder of the sea he served on before becoming a diplomat.

GM Notes

THIS IS WHITEHALLOW'S OPERATIONAL BASE WHEN NOT AT THE CASTLE. HE SPENDS MORNINGS HERE, REVIEWING REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE. THE MAP OF KORMOR KIRAK IS UPDATED REGULARLY AND CONTAINS SENSITIVE INFORMATION -- SHOWING EXACTLY WHAT THE ALBION INTELLIGENCE SERVICE KNOWS AND WHAT THEY'RE WATCHING. THE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS IN THE STACKS ARE CLASSIFIED; PCs ACCESSING THEM COULD GAIN CRUCIAL INFORMATION BUT WOULD BE DISCOVERED IF THEY LINGER. THE PAINTING IS A DETAIL THAT HUMANIZES WHITEHALLOW -- HE IS NOT A PERFECT POLITICAL AUTOMATON. IF FEENEY IS ENCOUNTERED, HE MAINTAINS THIS OFFICE WITH MILITARY PRECISION AND WOULD NOTICE IMMEDIATELY IF ANYTHING WERE DISTURBED. THE CABINET OF DRINKS HAS A HIDDEN PANEL AT THE REAR, ACCESSIBLE ONLY IF YOU KNOW TO LOOK FOR THE CARVED DETAIL ON THE THIRD SHELF -- WHITEHALLOW'S PERSONAL INSURANCE, CONTAINING DOCUMENTS OR ITEMS OF GENUINE IMPORTANCE.

Connections

THE RECEPTION HALL IS THE MAIN ENTRANCE. A SIDE DOOR CONNECTS TO A PRIVATE CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE DIPLOMATIC SALON. A SERVANT'S PASSAGE TO THE KITCHENS IS BEHIND THE DESK. THE STAIRCASE TO THE SECOND FLOOR IS ACCESSED VIA THE RECEPTION HALL.

CAPITULUM

THE DIPLOMATIC SALON

A comfortable room of moderate size, furnished for conversation rather than formality. Three soft chairs and a low sofa are arranged around a fireplace where a fire burns on cold evenings. A side table holds a decanter of sherry, glasses, and a selection of small cakes and savories prepared in the Embassy kitchens. The walls are painted a warm gray-green, and several smaller paintings -- pastoral views of the

Albion countryside -- hang at eye level. Two tall windows overlook a small courtyard garden. The room is carpeted, which muffles sound and creates an atmosphere of privacy.

This is where informal meetings happen. When a dignitary or contact visits, they are entertained here rather than in the formal office. The setting is deliberately unthreatening: comfortable seating, offered refreshment, the sounds of the city muted by carpet and heavy curtains.

Yet the room is also a space of subtle observation. The host has positioned themselves where they can read the guest's reactions, where the light from the windows falls on the guest's face but not the host's, where the conversation remains private from the rest of the

Embassy.

GM Notes

THIS ROOM IS SUITED FOR NEGOTIATION SCENES, SECRET MEETINGS, AND INFORMATION GATHERING. THE COMFORT OF THE SURROUNDINGS PUTS PEOPLE AT EASE, ENCOURAGING THEM TO SPEAK MORE FREELY THAN THEY WOULD IN THE FORMAL OFFICE. HOWEVER, THE ROOM IS NOT TRULY SECURE -- SERVANTS MOVE THROUGH IT REGULARLY TO MANAGE THE FIRE AND REFRESH REFRESHMENTS. CONVERSATIONS CAN BE OVERHEARD BY THOSE WHO LINGER IN ADJACENT CORRIDORS. OLIVIA FAREN MAY USE THIS ROOM TO CONDUCT MEETINGS WITH LOCAL CONTACTS, PRESENTING HERSELF AS A MINOR ATTACHÉ RATHER THAN A SPY. THE WINDOWS OVERLOOK THE GARDEN; IF A PC IS IN THE GARDEN AT THE RIGHT MOMENT, THEY CAN OBSERVE CONVERSATIONS HAPPENING IN THIS ROOM BY WATCHING FIGURES MOVE ACROSS THE WINDOWS.

Connections

THE RECEPTION HALL CONNECTS DIRECTLY. THE AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE ADJOINS VIA A SIDE DOOR. THE SERVICE CORRIDOR PASSES BEHIND ONE WALL, ALLOWING SERVANTS ACCESS WITHOUT ENTERING THE ROOM PROPER. THE GARDEN IS VISIBLE THROUGH THE TALL WINDOWS AND ACCESSED VIA A DOOR IN THE RECEPTION HALL.

CAPITULUM

THE CIPHER ROOM

This locked room on the second floor is the nerve center of Albion intelligence operations in Kormor Kirak. It can be entered only with a key held by Ambassador Whitehallow, Lord Wooster, and the chief cipher clerk -- a stern, quiet woman named Miss Eleanor Venn. The room is small, barely twelve feet across, with a single window that is permanently sealed and covered with heavy curtains. A writing desk holds pens, papers, and a leather-bound code-book kept in a locked box.

Pigeonholes line one wall, each containing documents sorted by date and classification level. A small brazier in one corner allows for the burning of sensitive papers, and a log beside it records what was burned and when.

The walls are plain, the furnishings sparse. There is no comfort here, only function. The security of this space is paramount. The door is solid oak, fitted with a steel lock. There are no windows overlooking adjacent buildings. The single desk is positioned so that any person entering the room can immediately see its contents, and anyone at the desk can see the door. A journal in the locked box records the visits of everyone who has entered the Cipher Room -- the date, time, and purpose.

GM Notes

THIS ROOM IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR A PC TO ACCESS WITHOUT EXTRAORDINARY MEANS. IT IS GUARDED BY LOCK, HABIT, AND THE CONSTANT AWARENESS OF THOSE WHO USE IT. HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION STORED HERE IS PRECISELY WHAT INTELLIGENCE SERVICES ARE MOST INTERESTED IN: ENCRYPTED MESSAGES FROM THE ALBION GOVERNMENT, DECODED INTERCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS FROM TERRASSIA, AND INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ON LOCAL FIGURES AND THE VAMPIRE COURT. IF PCs SOMEHOW ACCESS THE CIPHER ROOM, THEY COULD UNCOVER MAJOR PLOT THREADS. THE CIPHER-BOOKS USE A MILITARY CODE THAT REQUIRES SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE TO BREAK; UNDERSTANDING THEM WOULD REQUIRE EITHER THE CODE-BOOK ITSELF OR A SKILLED DECODER. MISS ELEANOR VENN IS NOT A PERSON TO BE UNDERESTIMATED. SHE IS CAPABLE, PARANOID, AND DOES NOT SLEEP WELL. IF THE CIPHER ROOM HAS BEEN DISTURBED, SHE WILL KNOW.

Connections

THE SECOND-FLOOR CORRIDOR LEADS TO PRIVATE QUARTERS AND OTHER ROOMS. IT IS ISOLATED FROM THE PUBLIC AREAS OF THE EMBASSY, ACCESSIBLE ONLY VIA THE MAIN STAIRCASE AND CAREFULLY GUARDED.

CAPITULUM

JACK WINBOW'S COVER QUARTERS

A separate wing on the second floor, consisting of a small barracks for the military contingent of the Embassy -- currently six soldiers including Jack Winbow, the senior attaché. The quarters are spartan: narrow cots with military blankets, footlockers at the end of each bed, a simple table for meals, and a washroom with cold water (hot water is a luxury the soldiers consider unnecessary). The walls are whitewashed, the floors bare wood. The only decoration is a single portrait of the

Emperor in uniform, hung above the senior officer's cot.

A locked tack room adjoins the loft, containing harness, feed ledgers, carriage tools, and a concealed weapons cache that Jack maintains himself: a few well-kept blades, a compact crossbow, ammunition, and travel gear hidden behind ordinary stable clutter. The staff who pass through here assume Jack is merely diligent. In truth, he uses the room to watch arrivals, departures, and which visitors are worth remembering.

GM Notes

THIS SPACE IS OFF-LIMITS TO CASUAL EMBASSY VISITORS BECAUSE IT APPEARS TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A WORKING SERVICE AREA. PCs WHO GO LOOKING FOR JACK HERE FIND A MAN WHO HAS BECOME VERY GOOD AT SEEMING ORDINARY. HE KEEPS HIS SPEECH PLAIN, HIS POSTURE LOOSE, AND HIS EYES ON THE HORSES UNTIL SOMETHING MATTERS. JACK IS OBSERVANT, PROTECTIVE, AND BETTER INFORMED THAN HE FIRST APPEARS. HE COULD BE AN ALLY FOR PCs WHO EARN HIS TRUST, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE TRYING TO PROTECT OLIVIA, EXPOSE THE CULT, OR KEEP INNOCENTS ALIVE. STABLE WORKERS AND CARRIAGE STAFF HEAR EVERYTHING; IF A PC GAINS THEIR TRUST, THIS AREA BECOMES AN EXCELLENT INFORMATION SOURCE.

Connections

THE LOFT IS ACCESSED BY A BACK STAIR NEAR THE STABLE YARD, SEPARATED FROM THE DIPLOMATIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS. THE CONCEALED CACHE IS INTERNAL TO JACK'S COVER QUARTERS.

CAPITULUM

THE KITCHENS AND SERVANTS' AREA

A large, hot, busy room on the ground floor behind the Reception Hall.

Industrial copper pots hang from hooks on the walls. A substantial iron stove dominates one end of the room, currently attended by an Albion chef -- Monsieur Pierre, a proud man in his fifties who insisted on coming to Kormor Kirak to maintain proper Albion cuisine standards.

Several local kitchen staff assist him: a mix of hired Kormor Kirakis who may or may not be reporting to the Red Guard or other interests.

Adjacent to the kitchens is a servants' hall where staff take meals and rest between tasks. Beyond that is a storage room for provisions: cured meats from Albion, cheeses wrapped in cloth, preserved fruits, flour, and other staples. Some local produce is purchased from city markets, but the core supplies are imported from home. The kitchens are clean, efficient, and the air smells of cooking food, wood smoke, and the faint staleness of being underground.

A narrow staircase leads from the kitchens to the second floor, used by servants to bring food and drink to the upper rooms. This staircase is separate from the grand stairs in the Reception Hall, allowing servants to move through the building without being seen by visitors. A basement level beneath the kitchens stores additional supplies and connects to the wine cellar.

GM Notes

THE KITCHENS ARE A GATHERING PLACE FOR INFORMATION. SERVANTS ARE EVERYWHERE AND NOTICE EVERYTHING. MONSIEUR PIERRE IS LOYAL TO THE ALBION CAUSE BUT A GOSSIP -- HE GRUMBLES ABOUT THE QUALITY OF INGREDIENTS, COMPLAINS ABOUT THE PROVINCIAL TASTES OF KORMOR KIRAKIS, AND SHARES HIS OPINIONS FREELY WITH ANYONE WHO LISTENS. HE IS NOT A SECURITY RISK; HE TALKS CONSTANTLY BUT ABOUT TRIVIAL MATTERS. THE LOCAL STAFF ARE MORE COMPLICATED. AT LEAST TWO OF THEM ARE LIKELY INFORMANTS FOR EITHER THE RED GUARD OR OTHER FACTIONS SEEKING INTELLIGENCE ON ALBION ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT THEY SAY, BUT THEY LISTEN INTENTLY. A PC POSING AS A COOK OR LABORER COULD MOVE THROUGH THE SERVANTS' AREAS RELATIVELY FREELY, LISTENING TO CONVERSATIONS AND OBSERVING ROUTINES. HOWEVER, THE ACTUAL ALBION STAFF WOULD EVENTUALLY RECOGNIZE AN IMPOSTER. THE BASEMENT LEVEL IS COLDER AND DAMPER, WITH THE SMELL OF STONE AND MOLD.

Connections

THE MAIN RECEPTION HALL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS ARE ONE FLOOR ABOVE. THE BASEMENT IS ACCESSED VIA STAIRS IN THE STORAGE ROOM. THE PRIVATE DINING ROOM OF THE AMBASSADOR IS ON THE FIRST FLOOR, CONNECTED TO THE KITCHENS BY THE SERVANTS' STAIRCASE.

CAPITULUM

THE EMBASSY GARDEN

A walled garden behind the main building, approximately forty feet square, enclosed by a ten-foot stone wall that separates it from the neighboring properties. The walls are ancient, possibly dating to the previous occupant, and are now covered with ivy and climbing roses that bloom in late spring. The garden contains a small fountain -- non-functional in the current season but filled with leaves and water

-- several stone benches, and raised beds for herbs and vegetables maintained by the servants. A gravel path winds through the garden, and the paving stones are old, uneven, and scattered with moss.

This is the only place within the Embassy walls where conversations might be conducted privately, away from the listening ears of servants or the eyes of those within the building. Yet it is not truly private.

The walls do not prevent observation from the surrounding buildings; the neighbors' windows overlook the garden. The Queen's Red Guard patrols the streets and alleyways that run behind the Embassy. On still evenings, voices in the garden can carry.

The garden is pleasant in warmer months but grim in winter, when the plants die back and the stone becomes slick with ice. Ambassador

Whitehallow walks the garden occasionally in good weather, thinking.

Feeney uses the garden to hang laundry. Some of the servants have attempted to cultivate vegetables here, with limited success in the

Kormor Kirak climate.

GM Notes

THE GARDEN SERVES AS A LOCATION FOR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, MEETINGS, AND SMALL SCENES. HOWEVER, EVERY CONVERSATION CONDUCTED HERE SHOULD CARRY AN UNDERTONE OF DANGER -- OBSERVERS IN SURROUNDING WINDOWS COULD BE WATCHING, OR MIGHT WATCH IF THE CONVERSATION INTERESTS THEM ENOUGH. A PC AND AN NPC MEETING IN THE GARDEN HAVE RELATIVE PRIVACY FROM THE EMBASSY STAFF BUT NOT FROM THE CITY ITSELF. THE FOUNTAIN IS A LANDMARK; MANY SCENES MIGHT BEGIN OR END HERE. AT NIGHT, THE GARDEN IS DARK, POORLY LIT, AND COULD CONCEAL SOMEONE WAITING IN AMBUSH. THE IVY AND CLIMBING ROSES PROVIDE PARTIAL COVER. THE STONE BENCHES ARE COLD AND UNCOMFORTABLE, SUITABLE FOR TENSE CONVERSATIONS RATHER THAN RELAXATION. IF A PC IS CONDUCTING SURVEILLANCE ON THE EMBASSY, THE GARDEN IS A VANTAGE POINT ACCESSIBLE FROM THE STREETS BEYOND THE WALLS.

Connections

THE GARDEN IS ACCESSED FROM THE MAIN BUILDING VIA DOORS IN THE DIPLOMATIC SALON AND FROM A SECONDARY DOOR IN THE KITCHENS. THE WALLS CONNECT TO THE SURROUNDING STRUCTURES AND ALLEYWAYS, WHICH COULD PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE ACCESS WITH A SUCCESSFUL CLIMB.

CAPITULUM

THE WINE CELLAR AND DEAD DROP

Beneath the Embassy, accessed by stairs from the kitchens or from hidden doors in the basement storage room, lies the wine cellar. It is cool, dark, and keeps the temperature steady even in warm months. Wine bottles rest on wooden racks that line the walls -- imports from Albion, as well as some local vintages selected carefully to avoid insulting Kormor

Kirak's limited wine producers. The air smells of cork, dust, and the earthy scent of stone.

At the far end of the cellar, behind a section of wine racks that can be moved, is a space used for intelligence operations -- a "dead drop" where messages, documents, or physical items can be left for pickup by agents without the parties directly meeting. The wall here is unmarked, but there is a loose stone at a specific height, behind which items can be concealed. A coded message left in a specific location indicates that something is waiting to be picked up. A small log book, hidden in a separate crevice, records drops that have been made and retrieved, written in cipher.

The cellar is not heavily guarded -- there are no locks on the wine racks themselves, and the hidden door is concealed but not impossible to discover if someone is looking for it. However, the cellar is not a regular visiting area. The Albion staff has a key, and Feeney maintains an inventory of the wines, checking the cellar regularly. Activity here would eventually be noticed.

GM Notes

THE WINE CELLAR IS THE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ESPIONAGE. IF OLIVIA FAREN OR OTHER INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES USE THE EMBASSY AS A BASE, DROPS ARE MADE HERE. A PC DISCOVERING THE HIDDEN SPACE AND THE LOG BOOK COULD GAIN SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION: NAMES (IN CIPHER), DATES OF DROPS, AND AN INDICATION OF WHAT IS BEING COMMUNICATED OR TRANSFERRED. THE CIPHER MIGHT BE THE SAME ONE USED IN THE CIPHER ROOM, OR IT MIGHT BE A SIMPLER FIELD CODE. THE LOG BOOK ITSELF IS A MAJOR INTELLIGENCE ASSET. ALTERNATIVELY, A PC COULD USE THE DEAD DROP THEMSELVES, LEAVING MESSAGES OR EVIDENCE FOR OTHERS TO FIND. THE TEMPERATURE OF THE CELLAR MAKES IT A PLACE OF STILLNESS AND QUIET -- CONVERSATIONS HERE ARE HUSHED, AND EVERY SOUND ECHOES. A PC HIDING IN THE CELLAR COULD OBSERVE WHO ENTERS, AND FROM WHAT DIRECTION, PROVIDING INTELLIGENCE ON THE BUILDING'S SECRET ROUTES OF ACCESS.

Connections

THE MAIN BASEMENT STORAGE AREA IS DIRECTLY ABOVE. THE KITCHENS ARE ONE FLOOR UP. THE HIDDEN DOOR PROVIDES ACCESS TO THE WINE CELLAR'S FAR END; THE ENTRANCE VIA THE MAIN STAIRS IS THROUGH THE STORAGE ROOM.

CAPITULUM

LORD QUARTERS

WOOSTER'S

On the second floor, in a suite of rooms that open onto a corridor overlooking the Reception Hall, Lord Wooster has accumulated what can charitably be described as controlled chaos. Papers cover every available surface -- letters, official correspondence, personal notes, even sketches of Kormor Kirak's notable buildings (Wooster fancies himself an amateur artist). His sitting room contains more furniture than it can comfortably hold: wingback chairs, small tables, bookcases crammed with volumes on diplomacy, Albion history, and field guides to local plants and wildlife. A stuffed owl -- shot by Wooster himself, according to a plaque on its wooden base -- surveys the room from atop a cabinet.

The bedroom is equally overstuffed: a four-poster bed with heavy curtains, a wardrobe bursting with clothes, a dressing table littered with grooming supplies and small curios collected during his travels.

Everything in the suite suggests that Wooster is interested in everything and capable of organizing nothing. And yet, the chaos is not random -- Wooster knows where things are. He knows which stack of papers contains the correspondence with the trade minister of Terrassia, and where that half-finished sketch of Queen Kiraline's palace is tucked. He is bumbling in manner but sharper than he appears.

The quarters also serve a secondary purpose: they are an excellent listening post. Because Wooster's suite is so disorganized, people assume he is harmless and speak freely around him. Servants come and go, servicing the rooms, and Wooster overhears their conversations and gossip. Visitors meeting with

Wooster often relax in his sitting room, comfortable in its cluttered, unstudied atmosphere, and speak more openly than they would in the formal office. Wooster remembers everything he hears and reports it all to Whitehallow, who understands that his apparently bumbling colleague is actually quite astute.

GM Notes

WOOSTER'S QUARTERS ARE EASIER TO ACCESS THAN OTHER SENSITIVE AREAS OF THE EMBASSY. THE MESS MAKES IT APPEAR UNIMPORTANT, AND WOOSTER HIMSELF IS FRIENDLY ENOUGH TO ALLOW AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR TO SIT AND CHAT FOR A WHILE. A PC VISITING WOOSTER COULD GATHER INFORMATION, EITHER BY BEING QUESTIONED BY WOOSTER HIMSELF (HE IS GENUINELY CURIOUS ABOUT PEOPLE) OR BY OBSERVING THE PAPERS IN HIS ROOMS. THE SKETCHES AND NOTES REVEAL WHAT WOOSTER HAS BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO IN KORMOR KIRAK. IF A PC CAN GAIN WOOSTER'S TRUST, HE BECOMES A VALUABLE INFORMATION SOURCE AND POSSIBLY AN UNWITTING ALLY. HE IS NOT INVOLVED IN THE DARKER INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS BUT HAS HIS EAR TO THE GROUND ON DIPLOMATIC MATTERS. HIS APPARENT HARMLESSNESS IS A COVER; HE IS QUITE CAPABLE OF DEFENDING HIMSELF IF NECESSARY AND IS MORE POLITICALLY ASTUTE THAN HIS MANNER SUGGESTS. THE MESS ALSO PROVIDES A GOOD HIDING PLACE -- A SMALL ITEM CONCEALED AMONG WOOSTER'S PAPERS MIGHT REMAIN UNDISCOVERED FOR WEEKS.

Connections

THE SECOND-FLOOR CORRIDOR CONNECTS TO OTHER DIPLOMATIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS. A SERVICE STAIRCASE PROVIDES DISCREET ACCESS TO THE MAIN FLOORS. WOOSTER'S WINDOWS OVERLOOK MERCHANT'S HEIGHT AND THE STREET BELOW.

KEY NPCs

MISSUS CRANE, Embassy Secretary

A woman in her mid-fifties, sharp-eyed and efficient, with steel-gray hair worn in a strict bun. She has served the Albion diplomatic service for thirty years and takes pride in her work. She is the first person most visitors see when entering the Embassy, and she controls access to

Ambassador Whitehallow's calendar and the flow of official correspondence.

Secret

MISSUS CRANE'S DAUGHTER MARRIED A TERRASSIAN OFFICER BEFORE THE WAR INTENSIFIED. SHE HAS NOT HEARD FROM HER DAUGHTER IN TWO YEARS AND FEARS THE WORST. SHE HAS PRIVATELY MADE INQUIRIES THROUGH NEUTRAL CHANNELS BUT HAS TOLD NO ONE IN THE EMBASSY. SHE CARRIES A LOCKET WITH A PORTRAIT OF HER DAUGHTER, WHICH SHE TOUCHES OCCASIONALLY WHEN SHE THINKS NO ONE IS WATCHING.

GM Notes

MISSUS CRANE IS LOYAL TO THE ALBION CAUSE, BUT HER DAUGHTER'S SITUATION GIVES HER DIVIDED LOYALTIES. A CLEVER PC COULD POTENTIALLY APPEAL TO HER BY OFFERING INFORMATION ABOUT HER DAUGHTER OR SUGGESTING THAT A PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION MIGHT EVENTUALLY LEAD TO REUNION WITH HER FAMILY. SHE IS NOT CORRUPT, BUT SHE CAN BE MOVED BY THE RIGHT EMOTIONAL LEVER. SHE KEEPS METICULOUS RECORDS AND NOTICES EVERYTHING; ANY IRREGULAR ACTIVITY AT THE EMBASSY WILL EVENTUALLY REACH HER ATTENTION.

MONSIEUR PIERRE, Chef

A man in his early fifties with the bearing of someone who has worked in the great kitchens of Albion's nobility. He is proud, occasionally temperamental, and deeply invested in maintaining proper culinary standards. He complains constantly about the quality of available ingredients and the "provincial tastes" of Kormor Kirak, but he does excellent work.

Secret

MONSIEUR PIERRE HAS FALLEN INTO A QUIET AFFAIR WITH ONE OF THE LOCAL KITCHEN STAFF -- DESSA, A YOUNG WIDOW WHO WORKS PART-TIME IN THE EMBASSY KITCHENS. HE IS TERRIFIED OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE ALBION STAFF DISCOVERED THIS RELATIONSHIP, AND HE HAS BEEN SLIPPING DESSA SMALL AMOUNTS OF EXTRA PROVISIONS TO HELP SUPPORT HER HOUSEHOLD.

GM Notes

MONSIEUR PIERRE IS NOT A SECURITY RISK; HIS GOSSIP IS CONFINED TO CULINARY COMPLAINTS AND OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PERSONALITIES. HOWEVER, HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH DESSA CREATES A POTENTIAL VULNERABILITY. IF AN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WERE TO CONTACT DESSA AND PRESSURE HER, SHE MIGHT TURN TO MONSIEUR PIERRE FOR HELP, CREATING A CHAIN OF COMPROMISE THAT COULD PULL HIM INTO UNWANTED ACTIVITIES. HE IS FUNDAMENTALLY DECENT AND WOULD STRONGLY RESIST ANYTHING THAT THREATENED DESSA'S SAFETY.

MJSS ELEANOR DENN, Cipher Clerk

A woman in her early forties, severe in appearance, with sharp features and pale eyes that miss nothing. She speaks rarely and in clipped, precise tones. She has worked as a cipher clerk for the military intelligence services and was transferred to the Embassy specifically to manage coded communications.

Secret

MISS VENN IS NO LONGER CERTAIN SHE BELIEVES IN THE ALBION CAUSE. SHE HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY DISILLUSIONED BY THE CENTURY WAR AND BY THE CYNICISM SHE OBSERVES IN THE INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS. SHE CONSIDERS THE WAR IMMORAL BUT FEELS TRAPPED BY HER POSITION AND OATH. SHE WOULD NEVER ACTIVELY SABOTAGE ALBION OPERATIONS, BUT SHE IS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF THAT MAKES HER COMPLICIT.

GM Notes

MISS VENN IS NOT CORRUPTIBLE IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE, BUT SHE IS VULNERABLE TO EMOTIONAL OR MORAL APPEALS. A PC WHO COULD CONVINCE HER THAT A PARTICULAR COURSE OF ACTION WOULD SHORTEN THE WAR OR PREVENT BLOODSHED MIGHT GAIN HER COOPERATION. HOWEVER, SHE WOULD NOT BETRAY HER OATH LIGHTLY -- PERSUADING HER WOULD REQUIRE A COMPELLING ARGUMENT AND SIGNIFICANT EFFORT. SHE IS INTELLIGENT AND DISCIPLINED; SHE WOULD NOT BE EASILY MANIPULATED. SHE IS ALSO PARANOID ABOUT SECURITY, FOR GOOD REASON. APPROACHING HER IS DANGEROUS; SHE WOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT CONTACT TO WHITEHALLOW UNLESS THE PC HAD A VERY LEGITIMATE COVER STORY.

FEENEY, Valet and Personal Attendant to Ambassador Whitehallow

A man in his sixties, lean, unremarkable in appearance, with gray hair and a measured manner of speech. He manages Ambassador Whitehallow's personal affairs, maintains his quarters, and serves as his confidant and advisor. He is supremely observant and is underestimated by nearly everyone he encounters.

Secret

FEENEY WAS A SOLDIER BEFORE ENTERING SERVICE, AND HE HAS KILLED PEOPLE IN THE AMBASSADOR'S SERVICE WHEN NECESSARY. HE MAINTAINS THIS CAPACITY QUIETLY, WITHOUT FANFARE. HE IS AWARE OF MUCH OF THE EMBASSY'S INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AND IS POSITIONED TO INTERVENE IF THE AMBASSADOR'S SAFETY IS THREATENED.

GM Notes

FEENEY IS NOT AN NPC TO BE TRIFLED WITH. HE APPEARS HARMLESS BUT IS HIGHLY CAPABLE. HE WOULD BE POLITE TO A VISITOR BUT ALSO OBSERVANT AND IMMEDIATELY ALERT TO ANY THREAT OR IRREGULARITY. HE IS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF INFORMATION IF A PC CAN GAIN HIS RESPECT, BUT TRUST WOULD REQUIRE DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE AND LOYALTY TO ALBION INTERESTS OR TO THE AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY. HE KNOWS THE RHYTHMS OF THE EMBASSY INTIMATELY AND WOULD NOTICE IF ANYTHING WERE OUT OF PLACE.

CAPITULUM

CAMPAGN USE

CAPITULUM

DEAD DROP DISCOVERY

The party discovers evidence of the Embassy's dead drop system, either by accessing the wine cellar or by following an agent to a pickup. They are forced to decide: do they steal the materials being passed? Do they replace them with false information? Do they alert the Embassy to the security breach? Each choice leads to different consequences. If they steal materials, Albion intelligence will know they have been compromised and will adjust operations accordingly. If they leave false information, they could set intelligence services on a wild chase or provoke open conflict. If they alert the Embassy, they might gain favor with Whitehallow but also reveal their own capabilities and interests.

CAPITULUM

THE PARTY

AMBASSADOR'S

Ambassador Whitehallow hosts a formal reception at the Embassy for various dignitaries of Kormor Kirak, including members of the Red Guard and neutral city officials. The party is both a social event and a gathering for intelligence and influence. The PCs are invited (or attempt to attend) and must navigate the complicated dynamics: maintaining formal decorum while listening for secrets, attempting to make contacts without being noticed by the Red Guard, and avoiding any incident that might create a diplomatic crisis. A murder or theft during the party could trigger major complications.

CAPITULUM

SERVANT CONSPIRACY

The party discovers that at least one servant in the Embassy kitchens is reporting to the Red Guard or to a rival faction. They must decide how to handle this: expose the servant and risk disrupting the Embassy's operations? Turn the servant into a double agent? Use the servant's contacts for their own intelligence gathering? The conspiracy deepens if they learn that the servant is acting not out of conviction but out of coercion -- the Red Guard has leverage over them (family held hostage, debt owed, etc.).

CAPITULUM

THE CIPHER ROOM INFILTRATION

The party is hired or compelled to obtain the contents of the Cipher

Room -- intelligence documents, the code-books, or information about current communications. This requires them to bypass the lock, avoid detection by the staff, and escape with the materials without triggering an alarm. If they succeed, they gain access to valuable intelligence but also become a target for Albion retaliation. If they fail, they are captured and face the question of what Whitehallow does with them -- imprisonment, negotiation, or execution.

CAPITULUM

THE WOUNDED SPY

Olivia Faren (or another Albion intelligence operative) arrives at the

Embassy badly wounded, pursued by agents of another faction. She needs help and medical treatment but cannot be taken to a normal physician without revealing her identity. The party must decide whether to help her and if so, how. They might bargain with her for information in exchange for aid. They might attempt to shelter her within the Embassy, navigating the complications of that space. Or they might hand her over to her pursuers and face the consequences of that betrayal when the

Albion intelligence apparatus eventually learns of it.

CAPITULUM

ROSS'S CURIOSITIES



CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

Koss's Curiosities occupies a narrow four-story building squeezed between a textile merchant's warehouse and a shuttered tavern in Kormor

Kirak's merchant quarter, three blocks north of the city's main plaza.

The building's facade is a riot of copper patina and dark wood, with a painted sign hanging above the street-level entrance: a clockwork gear meshed with a question mark. Tall windows display rotating collections of mechanical wonders -- astrolabes, music boxes, brass orreries, intricate locks -- arranged with the careful chaos of a genius who knows exactly where everything is but would never waste time organizing for anyone else.

Inside, the shop hums with purpose. The air carries the permanent scent of machine oil, brass polish, and solder smoke. Clockwork ticking echoes from invisible mechanisms. Most visitors see a thriving business run by an eccentric Terrassian craftsman, a place where wealthy collectors acquire expensive curiosities and ordinary people marvel at mechanical toys. Few notice the second shop within the shop -- the one hidden behind locked doors and concealed panels, where intelligence devices are assembled and espionage communications are encrypted. Devorlen Koss has spent seven years building this cover, and he's meticulous enough that both sides of his business run flawlessly. He genuinely loves the mechanical work. It's just that his loyalty to Terrassia comes first.

CAPITULUM

THE SHOP FRONT

The moment a visitor pushes through the copper-framed door, a small bell chimes -- a melodic sound, nothing threatening, perfectly charming. The front room is roughly twenty feet wide and thirty feet deep, with a ten-foot ceiling that creates an intimate, almost cave-like feeling despite the generous windows facing the street. Every vertical surface holds something interesting.

Glass display cases line the walls at eye level: delicate clockwork songbirds that sing when wound (prices 80 gold and up), intricate mechanical puzzles that take hours to solve, brass compasses with multiple needles for different purposes, finely-crafted locks and lockpicking tools (sold only to people Koss trusts), optical lenses ground to precise specifications and set in copper frames. A tall cabinet near the back displays several music boxes, each one playing a different tune, their sounds layering into an odd, haunting chord.

The counter is positioned three-quarters of the way back, a massive slab of dark wood scored by years of tool marks and small burn scars from soldering work. Behind it, shelves hold inventory: bottles of specialized oils, packs of gears in various sizes, wooden spools of brass wire, imported crystal from the northern mountains. A leather-bound ledger sits open on the counter's right side -- the shop's official accounts, perfectly legitimate and boring. To the left sits a small brass bell for summoning assistance, though Koss usually appears before customers ring it. He watches from upstairs.

The floor is wooden, worn smooth in traffic patterns. It creaks in certain spots -- a natural security system that tells Koss where his visitors are moving. A few chairs are scattered about for customers to sit and examine purchases. Near the window sits a comfortable reading chair with a small table, where customers

often lose track of time turning the gears on a mechanical puzzle or watching a music box wind down.

GM Notes

THE SHOP FRONT IS WHERE MOST INTERACTIONS HAPPEN. KOSS IS PRESENT AND CHARMING HERE, ASKING CUSTOMERS ABOUT THEIR INTERESTS, SUGGESTING ITEMS HE'S JUST ACQUIRED, REMEMBERING DETAILS ABOUT PREVIOUS PURCHASES. HE USES THIS SPACE TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE -- TRADERS MENTION WHERE THEY'RE TRAVELING, NOBLES DROP HINTS ABOUT THEIR ENEMIES, MILITARY CONTRACTORS LET SLIP SUPPLY ROUTE INFORMATION. THE CREAKING FLOORBOARDS GIVE KOSS WARNING OF ANYONE APPROACHING FROM THE BACK OF THE SHOP, AND THE POSITIONING OF MIRRORS ON THE SHELVES ALLOWS HIM TO SEE INTO THE WORKBENCH AREA WITHOUT TURNING AROUND.

Connections

A DOORWAY BEHIND THE COUNTER LEADS TO THE WORKBENCH. A NARROW STAIRCASE IN THE FAR BACK CORNER (PARTIALLY HIDDEN BY A TALL CABINET OF MUSIC BOXES) LEADS UPSTAIRS TO THE LIVING QUARTERS. A LOCKED DOOR BENEATH THE COUNTER PROVIDES ACCESS TO THE BACK OFFICE.

CAPITULUM

THE WORKBENCH

This space spans the right side of the building's ground floor, perhaps fifteen feet wide by twenty deep, separated from the shop front by a low wooden partition that allows customers to watch Koss work. High windows facing the side street provide excellent natural light. The entire room smells of machine oil and heated metal.

Every surface holds the tools of Koss's trade: wooden racks hold soldering irons, files, gravers, and picks. A thick bench of scarred wood runs along the back wall, its surface a palimpsest of burns, chemical stains, and deep gouges. A jeweler's loupe on a swing arm is permanently mounted at the bench's center. Wooden drawers beneath the bench -- eight of them, each labeled in Koss's precise handwriting -- hold springs, screws, gears, and jewels in organized compartments. More hanging pegs hold half-finished projects: a brass hand-crank mechanism waiting for its housing, a pocket watch missing its escapement, a mechanical lock whose tumblers need refining.

The room's most impressive feature is a lathe, mounted on a stone block in the corner to minimize vibration. It's the size of a small desk, operated by either foot pedal or hand crank, with various attachments for cutting, polishing, and shaping metal. Beside it sits a small forge with a foot-operated bellows, coal dust coating the stone around it. The forge rarely needs to reach extreme temperatures -- Koss works with precision rather than brute force.

A narrow workbench along the left wall holds finishing supplies: bottles of stain, cans of polish, small brushes. Completed works waiting for delivery sit on a higher shelf, wrapped in cloth, tagged with customer names and prices.

The air here carries a faint metallic taste. In winter, the heat from the forge keeps this room warm. In summer, it can become uncomfortably hot. Koss sometimes works here late into the evening or early morning hours, when fewer people are on the streets outside.

GM Notes

THIS IS WHERE KOSS'S GENIUS BECOMES APPARENT TO ANYONE PAYING ATTENTION. HIS HANDS MOVE WITH ABSOLUTE PRECISION. HE HUMS WHILE WORKING -- OLD SONGS IN TERRASSIAN, WHICH HE CATCHES HIMSELF DOING AND CUTS SHORT IF STRANGERS ARE WATCHING. ANY CRAFTSPERSON WHO WATCHES HIM WORK FOR MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES WILL RECOGNIZE THAT HE'S NOT JUST MAKING CURIOSITIES; HE'S AN ARTIST AND AN ENGINEER OF EXCEPTIONAL SKILL. THE DETAILED ORGANIZATION SUGGESTS OBSSIVE HABITS. PARANOID HABITS, EVEN.

Perceptive visitors might notice something odd: among the half-finished projects are several pieces that don't match the shop's usual inventory. A small brass sphere with internal mechanisms visible through glass panels. A miniature humanoid figure with jointed metal limbs. A strange angular device that resembles a surveying instrument but doesn't quite match any known tool. Koss is usually vague if asked about these, claiming they're experiments or commissions he's keeping confidential.

Connections

LEADS BACK TO THE SHOP FRONT. A SMALL DOOR ON THE BACK WALL (LOCKED, KEYHOLE VISIBLE) PROVIDES ACCESS TO THE HIDDEN WORKSHOP. A NARROW MAINTENANCE LADDER LEADS UP TO A STORAGE LOFT ABOVE THE WORKBENCH, ACCESSIBLE ONLY FROM THIS ROOM.

CAPITULUM

THE DISPLAY ROOM

Up a narrow flight of stairs from the shop front, on the second floor of the building's front half, Koss maintains a more exclusive showroom.

This room is roughly square, perhaps twenty feet per side, with tall windows facing the street that are usually shuttered with wooden panels to protect the merchandise from fading.

The walls are lined with shelves of varying heights, each displaying items of particular craftsmanship or value. Here sit the expensive pieces: an orrery the size of a large globe, its brass planets suspended on delicate arms that rotate when wound, showing the actual current positions of the planets in the night sky. A music box of extraordinary complexity, with four separate cylinders and over forty small bells, capable of playing different pieces or weaving them together into a cacophonous symphony. Optical instruments -- telescopes with lenses ground to impressive precision, each one in a wooden carrying case lined with velvet. A library of surveying equipment: theodolites, compasses with rare magnetic properties, transit instruments for measuring angles.

Several larger mechanical devices occupy pedestals in the center of the room. A working armillary sphere of brass and copper, nearly five feet tall, its rings demonstrating the positions of stars and the movements of celestial spheres. An elaborate mechanical clock face, six feet across, showing not just hours and minutes but lunar phases, days of the week, and astronomical events. A miniature city constructed entirely of brass and wood, with functioning drawbridges, rotating towers, and mechanical gates, clearly taking Koss months to construct.

The room is lit by oil lamps hanging from the ceiling (no candles here

-- they're dangerous around dust and fine materials). A few velvet chairs and a low table in one corner allow buyers to sit and examine items or discuss custom commissions. A small desk holds writing materials for recording orders.

The air here is different than the shop front -- quieter, more rarified. Dust motes hang in the light from the shuttered windows. The smell of oil is fainter, almost replaced by the scent of fine wood and brass.

GM Notes

THIS IS WHERE KOSS CONDUCTS BUSINESS WITH SERIOUS MONEY. NOBLES, WEALTHY MERCHANTS, THE OCCASIONAL COLLECTOR FROM ALBION (AS LONG AS THEY'RE PASSING THROUGH AS CIVILIANS). HE'S DIFFERENT HERE -- MORE FORMAL, SPEAKING CAREFULLY, ASKING PROBING QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS BUYERS' INTERESTS AND BACKGROUNDS. HE REMEMBERS EVERYTHING. A PERSON WHO WAS HERE SIX MONTHS AGO ASKING ABOUT ASTRONOMICAL INSTRUMENTS WILL BE GREETED BY KOSS MENTIONING HIS RECENT INTEREST IN STAR NAVIGATION.

Several of the larger pieces could actually be something other than what they appear to be. The mechanical city's internal mechanisms could include encoded symbols. The astronomical clock could have dials that indicate something beyond celestial positions. The orrery's movements could spell out a message to someone who knows the cipher. Koss would never admit any of this, and casual examination won't reveal it, but someone studying these devices closely might notice irregularities that suggest hidden purpose.

Connections

THE STAIRCASE LEADS DOWN TO THE SHOP FRONT. A LOCKED DOOR AT THE ROOM'S BACK CORNER PROVIDES ACCESS TO A SMALL HALLWAY CONNECTED TO THE BACK OFFICE. A CONCEALED PANEL BEHIND THE ARMILLARY SPHERE OPENS TO REVEAL A PEEPHOLE ALLOWING OBSERVATION OF THE SHOP FRONT BELOW.

CAPITULUM

THE BACK OFFICE

This small room, ten by twelve feet, is tucked behind the Display Room and above the partition separating the workbench from the shop front.

It's the most secure room on the ground floor level, with a heavy door reinforced with iron strapping and a lock requiring a key.

The room contains a desk of expensive wood, its surface nearly bare -- a few blank pages, a pen stand with two good pens, an inkwell. Beneath the desk, a set of wooden drawers holds the shop's official records: leather-bound ledgers recording sales, purchases, and expenses; correspondence with suppliers in different cities; invoices and receipts filed by date.

A second drawer, hidden behind a sliding panel in the front of the desk, contains Koss's real records. Papers in cipher and code that track his intelligence network. Letters from Terrassian military intelligence, written in obscure terminology and disguised as business correspondence about "supply difficulties" and "new inventory from associates in the south." A detailed map of Kormor Kirak with certain buildings marked in coded symbols. Sketches of patrol routes, schedules, notes on guardsmen's routines. A small leather journal containing Koss's personal thoughts, written partly in Terrassian and partly in a private cipher.

The walls are lined with bookshelves holding reference works on engineering, metallurgy, mathematics, and practical mechanics. Several books on military history are present, though some of these have notes in the margins -- nothing that stands out obviously, but a careful reader might notice they're annotated in a way that suggests personal interest rather than academic curiosity.

A small safe is built into the wall behind a framed countryside painting. It's a masterwork of engineering -- Koss built it himself

-- with a combination lock that requires precise manipulation to open.

The room is lit by a single lamp hanging from the ceiling, which provides adequate light for reading and writing but creates shadows in the corners. The air is still and cool. No windows. The only sound is the muffled ticking of mechanisms from the workbench below.

GM Notes

THIS ROOM IS KOSS'S REAL CENTER OF OPERATIONS FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE WORK. HE SPENDS TIME HERE EVERY EVENING, UPDATING RECORDS AND SENDING/RECEIVING ENCODED MESSAGES THAT ARE THEN TRANSMITTED VIA ROOFTOP HELIOGRAPH TO DISTANT CONTACTS. THIS IS WHERE EVIDENCE OF HIS ESPIONAGE WOULD BE FOUND, BUT KOSS HAS MULTIPLE CONTINGENCIES TO ENSURE THESE RECORDS ARE DESTROYED QUICKLY IF DISCOVERED.

The ledgers on the front desk are completely legitimate and would satisfy any casual inspection. The hidden drawer is difficult to find unless someone knows to look for it or makes a successful DC 18

Perception check after spending at least 10 minutes examining the desk carefully. The combination to the safe is written down nowhere -- Koss knows it by heart, and he changes it monthly.

If the party discovers this room, they've found something potentially explosive. Koss will absolutely deny everything, and he has prepared a cover story claiming the "encoded correspondence" is just a personal code system for organizing his engineering notes. The coded map might be explained away as a system for tracking which of his customers live in which districts, for delivery purposes. But a person trained in intelligence work or cryptography could expose these lies.

Connections

LEADS BACK TO THE DISPLAY ROOM. A NARROW LADDER IN THE CORNER (HIDDEN BEHIND A HANGING FABRIC PANEL) LEADS DOWN TO A TRAP DOOR IN THE CEILING OF THE HIDDEN WORKSHOP BELOW.

CAPITULUM

THE HIDDEN WORKSHOP

Accessed only through a concealed door in the back wall of the regular

Workbench, or via the trap door ladder from the Back Office above, this space is Koss's true center of operations. The concealed door is disguised as part of the workshop's back wall -- a section of shelving that swings inward when the correct small gear is rotated on what appears to be a purely decorative brass mounting on a shelf of oil bottles.

This workshop occupies the entire back quarter of the building at ground level, but the rest of the structure and the street outside have no idea it exists. The room is perhaps twelve feet wide and twenty feet deep, with no windows. It's lit by a series of oil lamps positioned to provide bright, shadowless light over the work surface. The walls are lined with additional storage: locked cabinets holding parts Koss wants to keep private, shelves of volatile chemicals in clearly labeled bottles, a weapons rack holding several crossbows and a collection of small blades.

The centerpiece of the room is a heavy wooden workbench, different from the one in the public workshop. This bench is lower, designed for lying on stomach to do delicate work, with a powerful oil lamp mounted on an adjustable arm overhead. Beside it stands a jeweler's loupe of extraordinary quality, mounted on a brass stand. The drawers below this bench hold materials that would be instantly identifiable as spy equipment to anyone who knew what to look for: tiny gears and springs designed for miniaturization, glass components smaller than a fingernail, specialized metals in alloys not commonly used in civilian applications.

In one corner sits a collection of small wooden boxes, each containing a completed clockwork scout -- a device roughly the size of a large beetle, with mechanical legs, internal clockwork, and (if examined closely) a small crystal lens mounted where a head would be. These devices are waiting for delivery to Terrasian intelligence contacts.

Another corner holds a collection of the components for the Man with the

Clockwork Arm, though it's unclear to any observer whether Koss is building these arms for his own agents or acquiring them for some other purpose. A spare arm -- complete, detailed, elegant -- hangs from a wooden stand, its jointed fingers capable of delicate manipulation.

A narrow cot is positioned against the left wall, with a single pillow and blanket. A small shelf beside it holds a flask of water and a few books on military strategy. Koss sometimes sleeps here during periods of high activity or paranoia, preferring not to be separated from his workspace.

The air in this room is cool and carries the scent of specialized lubricants and metal. It's utterly silent when the lamps are lit and

Koss is not working -- the kind of silence that feels almost alive.

GM Notes

THIS IS WHERE THE TRUTH OF KOSS'S WORK BECOMES APPARENT. A SKILLED INVESTIGATOR DISCOVERING THIS ROOM HAS FOUND SMOKING GUN EVIDENCE OF ESPIONAGE. THE CLOCKWORK SCOUTS ALONE ARE INCRIMINATING -- NO LEGITIMATE CIVILIAN PURPOSE EXISTS FOR SUCH DEVICES. THE PRESENCE OF MILITARY-STANDARD EQUIPMENT, THE MAPS AND CODES HIDDEN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE BUILDING, THE COMPONENTS FOR THE CLOCKWORK ARMS -- ALL OF THIS POINTS TO SYSTEMATIC INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND EQUIPMENT FABRICATION.

Koss keeps this room locked from the hidden door side with a mechanism that requires a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to manipulate silently (a failed check alerts him). The entrance from the ladder above is simpler but still sealed. If Koss discovers the room has been accessed without his permission, he will abandon the shop within 24 hours, leaving behind only the items he doesn't have time to remove or destroy. He will set several small fires as distractions to cover his escape and the escape of anyone helping him.

The clockwork scouts are fascinating from a technical standpoint. They could be examined closely, and someone with knowledge of magical devices might recognize that they contain a small crystal component that suggests arcane rather than purely mechanical operation. These are precision instruments, worth hundreds of gold pieces each.

Connections

ACCESSED VIA THE CONCEALED DOOR FROM THE WORKBENCH, OR VIA THE TRAP DOOR LADDER FROM THE BACK OFFICE ABOVE. A SMALL TUNNEL HIDDEN BEHIND THE WESTERN WALL (REVEALED BY MOVING A HEAVY CABINET) LEADS TO THE CELLAR BELOW, APPROXIMATELY TWELVE FEET DISTANT HORIZONTALLY.

CAPITULUM

THE LIVING QUARTERS (UPSTAIRS)

The second and third floors of the building's front half comprise

Koss's private living space. A narrow staircase near the back of the shop front leads upward; a second set of stairs from the Display Room provides an alternate route.

The second-floor sitting room is perhaps eighteen feet square, with two tall windows overlooking the street. The furniture is comfortable but worn -- a good sofa upholstered in dark cloth, two reading chairs, a side table holding a current book and a glass of water (Koss is always reading something). Bookshelves line two walls: texts on engineering, metallurgy, mathematics, magical theory, and military history. Several volumes in Terrassian. A few fiction novels in multiple languages. Maps pinned to the walls -- not of the city, but of distant places. The southern coastline. The mountains between Terrassia and Albion. Notation has been made on these maps in light pencil: small marks and dates.

A small fireplace provides heat in winter, though Koss rarely lights it.

He prefers the cold. A small desk sits near one window, where Koss sometimes reads or writes personal correspondence. The desk's drawer holds several pages in progress -- letters to people, in Terrassian, discussing mechanical problems and news from home. These letters are never sent; they're private thoughts that happen to take written form.

The bedroom, connected by an interior door, is small and sparse. A single bed, neatly made with military precision. A wardrobe holding perhaps twelve

outfits, all practical and neutral in color. A mirror hung above a small washing table. No decorations. Under the bed, a locked chest holding personal items: a journal, several letters from his mother, a small portrait of a woman (Koss would never explain who). At the very back, beneath the floorboards accessible only to someone taking apart half the bed frame, lies an additional set of forged documents identifying him as "Delvin Kaine," a Albion citizen with a different occupation. An escape identity.

The kitchen is cramped, barely more than a closet, accessed from the sitting room. It holds a small stove, a few shelves of basic supplies, minimal cookware. Koss eats most meals at nearby taverns or brings food up to the shop. He doesn't cook. The kitchen is for tea and coffee, nothing more.

The bathroom is equally minimal: a hand pump bringing water from a cistern outside, a wooden tub for washing, a small mirror. Everything is functional. Nothing is comfortable.

A third, narrower flight of stairs leads to the rooftop.

GM Notes

KOSS'S LIVING SPACE IS EXTREMELY AUSTERE. ANY VISITOR WILL NOTICE HE LIVES LIKE A SOLDIER, NOT LIKE A SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT WHO COULD AFFORD COMFORT. HIS BOOKS REVEAL HIS OBSESSIONS AND INTELLIGENCE -- THE MARGINALIA IS EXTENSIVE, NOTES ON MILITARY HISTORY WRITTEN IN THE HAND OF SOMEONE DEEPLY THINKING ABOUT TACTICS AND LOGISTICS.

The hidden escape documents are potentially devastating if discovered.

The identity "Delvin Kaine" could be investigated, revealing that the documents are unusually high quality and professionally forged. The journal beneath the floorboards contains personal thoughts that would confirm Koss's true loyalties and his awareness of his precarious position.

The presence of the alternate identity is interesting from a narrative perspective. Koss doesn't just have one escape plan -- he has multiple contingencies layered on top of each other. The fireplace contains a hidden compartment (requiring a DC 17 Perception check to spot) that holds a small wooden box of gold coins (200 gold) in various Terrassian and neutral city denominations, ready for emergency travel.

Connections

THE SITTING ROOM CONNECTS TO THE BEDROOM AND KITCHEN. STAIRS LEAD DOWN TO THE SHOP FRONT AND DISPLAY ROOM, AND UP TO THE ROOFTOP.

CAPITULUM

THE ROOFTOP

A narrow stairs leads to a flat section of roofing, roughly twenty feet by fifteen, enclosed on three sides by low walls and on the fourth by a sloped section of the building's exterior. The roofing material is dark slate, well-maintained and relatively quiet underfoot.

Koss has equipped this space as a signal post. In one corner stands a wooden frame holding several mirrors of varying sizes, each mounted on gimbals allowing them to be angled precisely. These mirrors are used for heliograph communication -- reflected sunlight sent to distant recipients, encoded in a pattern of flashes. On a clear day, line-of-sight communication is possible to receivers posted in the mountains where Terrassian military forces maintain positions.

Opposite the mirrors, a small telescope on a tripod points toward the mountains. Ostensibly, this is for stargazing and astronomical observation -- an extension of Koss's interest in the mechanical models he builds. In reality, it's used to observe distant peaks and watch for return signals.

A small wooden shelter, barely large enough for a person to stand in, occupies one corner. Inside are several items: a journal, a mechanical cipher wheel (a device with rotating rings of letters and numbers used for encoding), a small lantern with colored glass panels (for signaling at night), and a single spyglass. A leather case holds the mirror control mechanisms -- small devices that allow precise angle adjustments without touching the mirrors directly.

The rooftop offers excellent views of the city. From this vantage point,

Koss watches the patterns of Red Guard patrols, observes movements in surrounding buildings, and maintains awareness of who comes and goes in the neighborhood. The merchant quarter is relatively calm, but patterns are important. A particular guard who always walks a certain route might indicate a new patrol schedule. A carriage that appears every third day at dawn might be a delivery route or a surveillance pattern.

A series of small stones, seemingly randomly placed along the roof's edge, actually marks compass directions and distances -- part of a system for calculating signal angles and target bearings.

GM Notes

THE ROOFTOP IS WHERE KOSS'S ESPIONAGE ACTIVITY BECOMES MOST OBVIOUS. THE HELIOGRAPH SYSTEM IS NOT SUBTLE TO ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS MILITARY COMMUNICATION. THE PRESENCE OF THE CIPHER WHEEL IS INCRIMINATING. THE TELESCOPE, BY ITSELF, IS INNOCENT; COMBINED WITH THE MIRRORS AND CODED JOURNAL, IT'S PART OF A CLEARLY COORDINATED INTELLIGENCE OPERATION.

Koss accesses the rooftop rarely and never predictably. He's extremely cautious about patterns that might be observed by the Red Guard. If he believes he's being watched, he won't visit the roof for extended periods, allowing suspicion to die down.

A careful observer stationed on a nearby roof with a spyglass could potentially see Koss conducting signal communications here. The reflected light from the heliograph system could even be noticed by people in the city streets, though most wouldn't understand what they're seeing.

If the party discovers evidence of the signal system and can decode the cipher wheel's settings, they might be able to read Koss's recent communications --

intelligence reports about Red Guard movements, supplies needed for manufacturing, confirmation of received orders from Terrassia.

Connections

A LOCKED HATCH WITH A WOODEN LADDER LEADS TO THE THIRD-FLOOR LIVING QUARTERS BELOW. A GAP BETWEEN ROOFS PROVIDES POTENTIAL ACCESS TO THE ADJACENT BUILDINGS, THOUGH CROSSING IS TREACHEROUS (DC 15 ACROBATICS CHECK, 20 FEET UP WITH NO SAFETY).

CAPITULUM

THE CELLAR

Descended via wooden stairs from the ground floor's far back corner (which customers usually don't even notice), this space runs beneath the entire building. It's roughly fifteen feet deep at maximum depth, with a low ceiling (seven feet) that forces tall characters to duck.

The western section of the cellar serves as legitimate storage: wooden shelving holds excess inventory from the shop, bolts of material waiting to be incorporated into displays, raw brass and copper stock, crates of incoming parts from suppliers. The air is cool and slightly damp. A few oil lamps on chains provide sufficient light for the storage function.

The smell is of metal and dust.

The eastern section, hidden behind a carefully constructed false wall of stacked storage crates (removable if you know which three crates to pull), contains Koss's emergency supplies. Several large wooden boxes hold crossbow bolts, a few daggers, and one particularly well-crafted longsword wrapped in oiled cloth. Another box contains stacks of documents -- copies of everything in the Back Office, some written in plain text for quick reference, others in coded form. A locked iron safe, smaller than the one in the Back Office, holds 500 gold pieces in mixed denominations and several small vials of a clear liquid (poison, though labeled merely as "reagent" on the small brass tags attached to their necks).

Most importantly, the eastern wall of this hidden section contains a sealed tunnel entrance. It's a wooden door disguised as part of the wall, requiring knowledge of its location to find. The tunnel beyond is narrow -- barely wide enough for a single person -- and slopes downward gradually. It extends

roughly 40 feet before opening into a small chamber carved from natural stone. From there, a series of metal rungs set into the stone wall allows ascent to a grating that opens into an alley four buildings distant from Koss's Curiosities, obscured from street view by stacked crates and a drainage system that's been deliberately disused to discourage investigation.

The tunnel is Koss's primary escape route. He's walked it dozens of times and could navigate it in complete darkness. The air inside is cool and slightly musty. Water seeps through the stones in places, and the floor is slick.

GM Notes

THE CELLAR'S HIDDEN SECTION REPRESENTS KOSS'S CONTINGENCY PLANNING. HE'S PREPARED TO ABANDON THE SHOP AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE CITY'S LOWER PASSAGES AND SIDE ALLEYS WITHIN MINUTES IF NECESSARY. THE TUNNEL IS HIS INSURANCE POLICY.

The contents of the emergency cache paint a picture of a person who lives with one foot always on the door. The poison is interesting -- not enough quantity to suggest plans for mass casualties, but enough to suggest someone who might choose death over capture.

The tunnel is a potential path for adventure. If the party discovers it, they might try to follow it to learn where it leads. If they're pursuing Koss and he flees this way, they face the choice of following him into a narrow, dark passage where he has the advantage. If they attempt to blockade the exit, they might capture him -- but Koss will have already triggered a fire somewhere in the building to destroy sensitive documents, creating confusion and chaos.

The poison vials are concerning from a roleplay perspective. Koss isn't suicidal, but he is realistic about the consequences of his work being discovered. If he's cornered and captured, he will attempt to keep his secrets by whatever means

necessary, including taking his own life. This is not something he's mentioned to anyone, but it's implicit in his preparations.

Connections

STONE STAIRS LEAD UP TO THE GROUND FLOOR REAR CORNER. THE HIDDEN TUNNEL PROVIDES EMERGENCY ESCAPE. THE TUNNEL CAN ALSO BE USED BY ASSOCIATES TO CONTACT KOSS DISCREETLY WITHOUT ENTERING THE SHOP.

CAPITULUM

THE OBSERVATION NOOK

A bay window in the second-floor sitting room, equipped with a cushioned window seat, overlooks the street below. The cushion is soft but worn, and an indentation shows where Koss sits regularly. The window glass is clean and clear, providing an excellent view of the merchant quarter's main street, the buildings opposite, and the alley beside his shop.

This is where Koss spends significant time, apparently reading but actually watching. From here, he tracks the daily patterns of the city: which guards walk past and on what schedule, which merchants open their shops when, which buildings receive deliveries and at what times, which individuals appear multiple times and seem to have no obvious business.

He notices changes in routine. He observes people watching his shop.

A small notebook sits on the window seat cushion, currently closed, containing observations written in Koss's precise handwriting. Dates, times, descriptions of people, notation of unusual events. It looks like the personal journal of someone obsessed with the minutiae of city life, which is partly true. It's also a record of surveillance patterns that would be immediately recognized by any trained intelligence operative as what it truly is: systematic gathering of city information for purposes of espionage.

The position is ideal for observation. The cushion is deep enough to sit comfortably for hours. The light is good during day. The angle provides view of the key approaches to the shop -- front, side alley, and the street beyond. Koss can observe without being obviously observed. Most people walking past don't look up. Those who do see only a man reading in a window, a perfectly normal sight.

GM Notes

THIS WINDOW SEAT IS WHERE KOSS'S PARANOIA IS MOST VISIBLE. THE NOTEBOOK'S DETAILED OBSERVATIONS OF RANDOM PEDESTRIANS, GUARDS, AND DELIVERY SCHEDULES REFLECT SOMEONE WHO LIVES WITH CONSTANT AWARENESS OF POTENTIAL THREATS. THE FACT THAT HE MAINTAINS THESE DETAILED RECORDS SUGGESTS BOTH EXTREME DILIGENCE AND EXTREME ANXIETY.

If the party becomes aware of Koss's true nature and stakes out his shop, he will notice them eventually. His awareness of the city's patterns and rhythms means that people out of place stand out to him. A party attempting to watch his location should understand they're working against someone with home-field advantage and the habits of someone trained in noticing observers.

The notebook itself is potential evidence of criminal observation of the Red Guard and other city officials. A prosecutor or military intelligence operative could use these records to establish that Koss has been conducting systematic surveillance.

Connections

THIS IS A FEATURE OF THE SITTING ROOM, OVERLOOKING THE STREET FROM THE SECOND FLOOR.

CAPITULUM

KEY NPCs

MIRJEE COSTA, Koss's Assistant

ROLE: The public face of the shop when Koss is unavailable. She handles sales, repairs small items, maintains the displays.

DESCRIPTION: A woman in her mid-thirties, originally from the northern territories where craft traditions run deep. She has callused hands from years of work and bright, quick eyes. Her dark hair is usually pulled back in a practical braid. She dresses simply in work clothes, always with pockets to carry small tools.

Secret

SHE KNOWS MORE ABOUT KOSS THAN SHE LETS ON. SHE DOESN'T KNOW THE FULL TRUTH ABOUT HIS ESPIONAGE, BUT SHE'S CAUGHT GLIMPSES -- THE LOCKED WORKSHOP, THE UNUSUAL ITEMS, HIS LATE-NIGHT TINKERING SESSIONS. SHE'S MADE A QUIET DECISION TO NOT ASK QUESTIONS, AND SHE EXPECTS HIM TO NEVER ASK HER TO CROSS CERTAIN LINES. SHE'S LOYAL TO HIM AS AN EMPLOYER AND AS A FRIEND, WITHIN LIMITS.

GM Notes

MIRIEL IS LIKEABLE AND HONEST. SHE MAKES A GOOD ENTRY POINT FOR DIALOGUE ABOUT KOSS. SHE'LL DEFEND HIM AGAINST ACCUSATIONS, BUT ONLY ABOUT HIS CHARACTER. SHE WON'T DEFEND ACTIONS SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. IF PRESENTED WITH CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT HE'S ENGAGED IN ESPIONAGE, HER LOYALTY WILL SHIFT TOWARD THE LAW, THOUGH SHE'LL DO IT RELUCTANTLY. SHE'S NOT STUPID, AND SHE WON'T HELP WITH ANYTHING VIOLENT. SHE'S ALSO THE SHOP'S INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY -- SHE KNOWS WHERE ALL THE TOOLS ARE, WHICH SUPPLIERS CAN BE TRUSTED, WHICH PAST CUSTOMERS ARE LIKELY TO RETURN. IF KOSS DISAPPEARS SUDDENLY, SHE'S THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN KEEP THE SHOP RUNNING.

AGDRJE DENN, Regular Customer and Collector

ROLE: A wealthy merchant from the city's southeastern quarter who frequents the shop every few weeks, purchasing expensive items and commissioning custom work.

DESCRIPTION: A man in his fifties, with silver threading through his dark hair and the soft hands of someone who makes his wealth through trade rather than craft. He dresses expensively but not ostentatiously.

He carries himself with the confidence of someone accustomed to getting what he wants. He speaks with the accent of someone born to money.

Secret

HE'S MORE THAN A SIMPLE MERCHANT. HE HAS CONNECTIONS TO THE ALBION EMPIRE'S INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS, AND HE'S BEEN WATCHING KOSS FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, TRYING TO DETERMINE IF THE RUMORS OF ESPIONAGE ARE TRUE. HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO PROVE ANYTHING, BUT HIS SUSPICIONS RUN DEEP. HE VISITS REGULARLY TO MAINTAIN CONTACT AND GATHER INFORMATION. HE GENUINELY APPRECIATES KOSS'S WORK, WHICH MAKES HIS SURVEILLANCE COMPLICATED.

GM Notes

ALDRIC IS DANGEROUS IN A SUBTLE WAY. HE'S NOT A FIGHTER, BUT HE'S PATIENT AND WELL-CONNECTED. IF THE PARTY IS INVESTIGATING KOSS, ALDRIC MIGHT ALREADY BE INVESTIGATING HIM TOO. HE MIGHT APPROACH THE PARTY, OFFERING INFORMATION IN EXCHANGE FOR KEEPING HIM INFORMED OF THEIR FINDINGS. OR HE MIGHT PRESENT HIMSELF AS A POTENTIAL PROBLEM IF HE LEARNS THEY'RE HELPING KOSS. HE COULD BE AN ALLY, AN ANTAGONIST, OR A COMPLICATION, DEPENDING ON WHICH SIDE THE PARTY FALLS ON.

TORVIN "BEAR" KELBER, Supplies Contact

ROLE: A supplier from a smaller city to the south who brings raw materials and rare components to Koss every three to four weeks, traveling by cart.

DESCRIPTION: A large man with greying beard and the distinctive calluses of someone who works with metal. He has a cheerful demeanor that masks careful business sense. He dresses practically in heavy fabrics suited for travel.

Secret

TORVIN IS NOT WHAT HE APPEARS. HE'S A TERRASSIAN MILITARY SUPPLY OFFICER USING MERCHANT COVER TO DELIVER MATERIALS AND RECEIVE INTELLIGENCE FROM KOSS. THE "SUPPLIES" ARE CAREFULLY CODED. CERTAIN ITEMS MEAN CERTAIN THINGS. HIS DELIVERIES CONTAIN EVERYTHING FROM REPLACEMENT COMPONENTS TO MESSAGE CACHES HIDDEN IN FALSE BOTTOMS. HE'S BEEN WORKING WITH KOSS FOR SIX YEARS.

GM Notes

TORVIN IS CRUCIAL TO KOSS'S OPERATION. IF THE PARTY CAN CONVINCE TORVIN TO REVEAL THE NATURE OF THE SUPPLY OPERATION, THEY BREAK OPEN SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF KOSS'S INTELLIGENCE NETWORK. HOWEVER, TORVIN IS FULLY COMMITTED TO TERRASSIAN INTERESTS AND WILL PROTECT THE NETWORK WITH HIS LIFE. HE'LL LIE, DESTROY EVIDENCE, AND KILL IF NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE OPERATION. BUT HE'S ALSO A PROFESSIONAL -- IF HE'S CAPTURED AND THE PARTY CAN CONVINCE HIM THAT OPERATING IN KORMOR KIRAK IS NOW COMPROMISED, HE MIGHT AGREE TO SAFE PASSAGE IN EXCHANGE FOR TESTIMONY ABOUT THE EXTENT OF TERRASSIAN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

CAPITULUM

CAMPAGN USE

CAPITULUM

THE HIDDEN WORKSHOP DISCOVERY

If the party discovers the hidden workshop through exploration or lucky accident, they've stumbled onto something massive. The presence of clockwork scouts and the components for Clockwork Arms immediately indicate military intelligence activity. The question becomes: what do they do with this information? Alert the city watch (which might include

Red Guard who are partially sympathetic to Terrassia)? Confront Koss?

Steal equipment for leverage? Use the workshop themselves as a base of operations? This discovery should feel like finding a loaded weapon in the city's heart.

CAPITULUM

THE
NETWORK

GEOGRAPH

If the party observes Koss conducting signal communications from the rooftop and can decode his cipher wheel, they gain access to raw intelligence about Terrassian military movements and interests. The complication: the information is current and relevant. If Koss's network is compromised, Terrassian intelligence will want to eliminate the threat. The party might end up being hunted by Terrassian agents, even if they're working to stop Koss. Alternatively, the party could use the signals themselves to feed false information back to Terrassian handlers, creating a counterintelligence operation.

CAPITULUM

THE EVACUATION CHOICE

When Koss realizes his cover is blown, he doesn't fight directly.

Instead, he triggers his evacuation protocol, setting fires in the shop to destroy evidence and moving toward the cellar escape tunnel. The party must decide how to respond: pursue him through the tunnel (disadvantaged terrain), block the tunnel exit (splitting their forces), secure the shop to prevent evidence destruction (fighting the spreading fires), or something else entirely. This encounter should feel urgent and improvisational, forcing the party to make difficult tactical choices.

CAPITULUM

THE INTELLIGENCE TRADE

After capturing Koss or learning significant details about his operation, intelligence groups become interested in recruiting the party. The Terrassian military offers a deal: provide them with information about city watch capabilities and political sympathies, and they'll pardon Koss and protect the party from Albion retaliation. The city's intelligence services offer a counter-deal: work as their agents in monitoring Terrassian activity, and they'll ensure the party gets official recognition. Albion's representatives in the city also make an offer, promising gold and position in exchange for deep cover work. The party is suddenly valuable to multiple factions, but accepting any deal entangles them with powers far larger than themselves.

CAPITULUM

THE APPRENTICE'S CHOICE

Miriel confronts the party after Koss's exposure. She's angry, but she's also practical. She offers them a deal: help her move the shop's inventory and equipment to a safe location, and she'll provide everything she knows about Koss's routine, contacts, and secrets. Not as an act of betrayal, but as an act of pragmatism. Koss made his choices. She's making hers. She wants to survive and keep her career intact. This presents a moral complication -- Miriel isn't evil, she's just trying to save herself. Does the party help her? Do they inform her that helping her violates law? Do they try to protect her from her own choices?

CAPITULUM

THE KORMOR KJRAK
MARKETPLACE



CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

The Kormor Kirak Marketplace sprawls across the heart of the city like a wound that refuses to close -- always bleeding, always restless, always full of people and voices and the smell of blood and spice. It is the central artery of commerce in the neutral city, where merchants from the

Albion Empire and the Kingdom of Terrassia meet on equal ground because

Queen Kiraline's Red Guards tolerate no violence without just cause, and wealth is the best just cause. The marketplace never sleeps. Even when the formal stalls close their shutters at dusk, the alleyways hum with deals made in darkness, information traded in whispers, and the quiet business of a city that profits from the Century War by selling to both sides.

The marketplace is chaos given shape. Hundreds of people pack the stalls and squares on any given day -- soldiers on leave spending their wages, merchants arguing with money changers, children darting between legs to pocket dropped coins, beggars singing for food, Red Guards watching from elevated positions, and criminals conducting business in plain sight while pretending to sell winter cloaks. The ground is worn smooth by centuries of footsteps, stained with wine and blood and spilled grain.

The noise is constant: the bark of merchants, the clink of coins, the crack of the auctioneer's gavel, the hiss of steam from food vendors, the clatter of carts. The smell cuts through everything -- roasted meat, human sweat, leather, woodsmoke, incense, the sweet rot of spoiled food, horses, and underneath it all, the mineral smell of the Videk

Mountains.

CAPITULUM

THE GRAND SQUARE

The Grand Square is where the marketplace's heart beats loudest. At least two acres of open cobblestone, surrounded on all sides by permanent shops, guild halls, and formal stalls. The center of the square holds an ancient fountain -- a stone structure carved with horses and swords in the pre-war style, now dry for fifteen years. No one maintains it. The fountain has become the unofficial center of the marketplace: merchants use it as a landmark for meeting points ("by the old fountain's north corner"), children play in its dry basin, and at night, homeless people sleep inside its bowl.

The cobblestones are uneven after centuries of wear, creating natural puddles after rain and pools of stagnant water in the heat. They're also grooved and worn in certain directions where foot traffic is heaviest -- toward the guild hall, toward the food vendors, toward the alleyways where most people don't ask questions. The square gets sunlight in patches; buildings shadow different areas depending on the time of day. This makes it a favorite spot for cutpurses and pickpockets, who work the bright zones where sight lines are worst.

The edges of the Grand Square are lined with semi-permanent stalls: wooden frames with canvas awnings that can be taken down or set up in a matter of hours. These are rented from the Merchant Guild at set prices.

The stalls sell everything -- wool, pottery, metalwork, cloth, rope, candles, basic foodstuffs. These are the "respectable" merchants, those with enough coin to afford Guild recognition and space. The transient merchants -- the ones with less capital and more desperation

-- crowd into the alleys and side streets.

Notices are posted on several wooden boards near the fountain: guild regulations, Red Guard proclamations, notices of goods for auction, and a constantly-updated list of banned merchants (those who've cheated the Guild or offended someone powerful). The notices are hand-written in a mixture of Albion and Terrassian script, with an interpreter or the Guild's scribe available during business hours to translate for those who can't read.

GM Notes

THE GRAND SQUARE IS WHERE MOST SIMPLE BUYING AND SELLING HAPPENS. IT'S PUBLIC, IT'S SUPERVISED, IT'S RELATIVELY SAFE -- OR AT LEAST, VIOLENCE IS PUNISHED QUICKLY ENOUGH THAT MERCHANTS AND CITY VISITORS FEEL COMFORTABLE CONDUCTING LEGITIMATE BUSINESS. HOWEVER, THE SQUARE IS ALSO WHERE THE MARKETPLACE'S POWER STRUCTURE BECOMES VISIBLE. MONEY CHANGERS CLUSTER NEAR THE GUILD HALL. THE WEALTHIEST MERCHANTS OCCUPY THE BEST STALLS. RED GUARDS APPEAR MOST FREQUENTLY HERE, MEANING CRIMINALS EITHER CONDUCT BUSINESS ELSEWHERE OR DISGUISE IT. USE THE GRAND SQUARE FOR:

-
- Public encounters with NPCs (merchants, guards, other players)
 - Simple commerce and supply purchasing
 - Observing the rhythm of the market
 - Hearing rumors and overhearing conversations
 - Noting the presence (or conspicuous absence) of merchants who normally operate here

The Grand Square also connects to all other major areas of the marketplace. GMs can treat it as the hub; characters will naturally return here between visits to other sections.

CAPITULUM

THE ALBION QUARTER

The Albion Quarter occupies the eastern side of the marketplace, where goods arrive by the road from the Imperial territories. The stalls here are organized with military precision -- nearly identical wooden structures, goods arranged with mechanical efficiency, and price lists written clearly. Clerks work the counters with the brisk, no-nonsense manner of a supply depot. This quarter smells of machine oil, fresh-cut wood, and the peculiar metallic smell of industrial production.

What sells here is practical and mass-produced: precision tools for craftspeople (wrenches, calipers, fine-toothed saws), military surplus (uniforms with Albion insignia still stitched on, leather armor that's been used hard, helmets dented from actual impact), manufactured cloth from the mills of the northern Empire (often dyed in grays and earth tones), steel blades of all sizes, nails, screws, chain, cordage, and the occasional working gun or crossbow. The quality is generally high but the craftsmanship is uniform -- nothing unique, nothing touched by a master smith's hand. Everything is reproducible and replaceable.

The merchants here tend to be middle-class Albion nationals: former soldiers, guild members, licensed traders with official papers. They speak quickly, abbreviate their words, and make deals on handshakes and simple tallies. A few are obviously Imperial agents, gathering intelligence on who's buying what and from where. The customers are soldiers, mercenaries, builders, farmers needing tools, and anyone practical enough to want reliable goods at set prices.

Near the back of the Albion Quarter stands MASTER HARDING'S WEAPONS

STALL, a semi-permanent establishment run by a grizzled Albion craftsman who makes his own blades and repairs weapons. Harding doesn't sell mass-produced junk; he buys worn-out swords and axes and teaches his two apprentices to restore them. His stall always has work piled up -- customers waiting days for repairs. Harding himself is tattooed with the marks of the Albion Artificers' Guild, chain-smokes a pipe, and speaks only when he has something to say.

GM Notes

THE ALBION QUARTER REPRESENTS COMMERCIAL NORMALCY AND LEGITIMACY. MERCHANTS HERE ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE CRIMINALS (THOUGH IMPERIAL AGENTS MAY BE). PRICES ARE FAIR BY MARKETPLACE STANDARDS, GOODS ARE AS DESCRIBED, AND DISPUTES ARE RESOLVED THROUGH THE GUILD SYSTEM RATHER THAN FISTS. HOWEVER, IT'S ALSO THE DULLEST PART OF THE MARKETPLACE -- MOST DRAMATIC ENCOUNTERS HAPPEN ELSEWHERE. USE THIS QUARTER FOR:

- Restocking supplies on fair terms
- Meeting Albion merchants or Imperial agents
- Learning about military movements (merchants hear everything)
- Encountering soldiers spending wages
- Spotting Albion nobility incognito, shopping for practical goods

The Albion Quarter connects to the Grand Square to the west, the Money Changers' Row to the north, and narrows into alleys toward the Red Guard Watch Post.

CAPITULUM

THE
QUARTER

TERRASSIAN

The Terrassian Quarter sprawls across the western side of the marketplace in deliberate disorder. Stalls here are decorated with cloth, plants, handwritten signs, and personal touches. Merchants call out their wares with song-like rhythm, arguments over prices can last hours, and deals are sealed with wine and bread rather than on paperwork. The smell is rich and agricultural -- cheese, wine, dried herbs, cured meat, the green smell of fresh produce when it's in season.

What sells here is crafted rather than manufactured: wheels of cheese of different ages and sharpness, wine in bottles and skins, cured meats (sausages, dried pork, salted fish), leather goods crafted by hand (belts, boots, saddles with tooled designs), woven textiles in bright colors (scarves, blankets, wall hangings), wooden tools and furniture, pottery, candlesticks, jewelry made from copper and silver, dried herbs in bundles, honey, and other goods from Terrassian farmlands and craftspeople. Nothing is identical to anything else. Each piece bears marks of its maker.

The merchants are farmers, craftspeople, and Terrassian nationals proud of their homeland. They're slower to deal than their Albion counterparts -- more likely to offer tea to potential buyers, more interested in haggling as conversation than as pure economics, more likely to remember customers who return. Many are women. Many speak with rural accents that merchants from the capitals mock. But the quality of their goods is undeniable, and regular customers swear by them.

Near the center of the Terrassian Quarter sits MAMA CASSIA'S STALL, run by a heavy woman in her sixties who somehow knows everyone in the marketplace and everyone's business. Mama Cassia's official stock is herbal remedies (tea for aches, salves for wounds, powders for sleep), but her real business is information and favor-trading. She extends credit to people she likes, refuses to do business with people she doesn't, and has influence over several other Terrassian merchants. She speaks slowly and carefully, with a warm accent, and her stall is always crowded with people who claim to be buying medicine but are actually gathering news.

GM Notes

THE TERRASSIAN QUARTER IS WHERE THE MARKETPLACE FEELS MOST HUMAN AND PERSONAL. PRICES ARE NEGOTIABLE, MERCHANTS HAVE MEMORIES, AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTER. THE QUALITY IS HIGH BUT INCONSISTENT -- YOU MIGHT GET A BEAUTIFUL HAND-MADE SADDLE OR A POORLY-DYED BLANKET, DEPENDING ON THE CRAFTSPERSON'S ATTENTION THAT DAY. THIS QUARTER ATTRACTS:

- Soldiers buying gifts to send home
- Crafters looking for inspiration or supplies
- People seeking herbal remedies (legitimate and otherwise)
- Customers who value relationships over efficiency
- Refugees and displaced people from Terrassia, connecting with their countrymen

The Terrassian Quarter connects to the Grand Square to the east, the Food Vendors to the south, and opens into narrower streets toward the Black Market Alley. The atmosphere here makes it easy for characters to get distracted and spend time; use that.

CAPITULUM

THE NEUTRAL STALLS

The northern edge of the marketplace, between Albion and Terrassian territory, is where Kormor Kirak's own merchants operate. These are traders from the city itself and from independent regions beyond the war

-- mountain people, nomadic caravans, merchants whose loyalty is to profit rather than nation. The stalls here are practical but decorated, solid but creative. The smell mixes everything: spice and metal, leather and herbs, wood and stone.

What sells here is what the mountains provide and what no one else carries: furs of mountain predators (snow fox, mountain bear, the rare and expensive white wolf), minerals and gemstones in raw and worked forms (quartz, garnet, tourmaline, occasionally emerald), worked leather and hardened skins (leather water bottles, protective armor for specialized work, polished hides as decoration), preserved mountain fish and game, honey from high-altitude bees, tools designed for mountain work (climbing gear, specialized ropes, mining equipment), wool of exceptional quality, and the occasional strange goods that wander in from far-off places.

The merchants here are independent operators -- some native to Kormor Kirak, others from distant places attracted by the city's neutrality.

They're shrewd, they're cosmopolitan, and they ask few questions. They accept payment in both Albion and Terrassian currency (at whatever exchange rate they're currently claiming is fair), and they have connections to the underground economy. These merchants are less likely to report crimes to the

Red Guard and more likely to handle disputes privately. Many have connections to the criminal underworld.

In the middle of the Neutral Stalls stands KORMUND'S MINERALSHOP, a permanent wooden building with a heavy door and locked window displays.

Kormund himself is a dwarf of uncertain age, taciturn and scarred. He buys raw minerals from miners and mountain folk, cuts and polishes the valuable ones himself, and sells them to jewelers, nobles, and adventurers. Kormund doesn't haggle, doesn't explain, and has locked away in a back room a collection of stones that he claims aren't for sale. He also acts as a de facto banker for adventurers and mercenaries, accepting deposits of precious items for safekeeping. Everyone trusts

Kormund because he's never betrayed anyone's trust, and the Red Guard themselves don't interfere with his business.

GM Notes

THE NEUTRAL STALLS REPRESENT AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE. MERCHANTS HERE ARE LESS REGULATED THAN IN THE ALBION OR TERRASSIAN QUARTERS AND THEREFORE MORE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL GOODS ON THE SIDE. IT'S ALSO WHERE THE MARKETPLACE'S COSMOPOLITAN NATURE BECOMES MOST VISIBLE -- THESE MERCHANTS DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE OR WHO YOU'RE WORKING FOR, ONLY WHETHER YOU HAVE COIN. USE THIS AREA FOR:

- Purchasing unusual, specialized, or high-quality items
- Meeting independent traders with no allegiance to either nation
- Discovering goods from far-off places
- Finding people willing to help with morally gray work
- Accessing secure storage or banking services

- Encountering other adventurers and wanderers

The Neutral Stalls connect to all other major areas, serving as a crossroads. Kormund's shop provides a focal point for more serious transactions.

CAPITULUM

THE FOOD VENDORS

The southern end of the marketplace is a riot of cooking smoke, sizzling meat, and shouted offers. This is where the marketplace's poor congregate and where hunger overrides politics. A dozen or more merchants have set up simple stalls and carts with food that's ready to eat: meat on wooden sticks (beef, chicken, sometimes goat, occasionally unidentifiable), bread fresh and stale, cheese in wedges and crumbles, hot drinks (spiced wine, herbal tea, a thick brown liquid that might be coffee), pastries filled with meat or fruit, dried fruits, nuts, and simple stews ladled into bowls for eating on the spot.

The quality is variable. The most popular vendors are those who keep their fires clean and their meat fresh, visible to their regulars by the crowds at their stalls. Less scrupulous vendors get away with questionable practices because customers are hungry and the food is cheap. The smell is overwhelming -- roasted meat, woodsmoke, spices, sweat, and underlying it all, the smell of urine from the alleyway where transients relieve themselves.

The Food Vendors area is the marketplace's true heart in terms of social dynamics. This is where soldiers mingle with beggars, where gossip travels fastest, where deals happen in plain sight because everyone's attention is on their meal. Money changers, information brokers, and criminals all operate here -- not from stalls of their own, but as customers and through quick conversations between purchases.

A merchant might buy a meal and in the time it takes to eat, exchange information with two other merchants and a Red Guard captain. It's the most crowded part of the marketplace in the middle of the day and the most

dangerous at night, when the legitimate vendors have left and only the desperate remain.

BELLA'S SAUSAGE CART is the most famous establishment in the Food Vendors area -- a permanent cart with a brick oven, run by a woman in her forties who has been here for twenty years. Bella's sausages are legendary. She makes them herself using a family recipe, the meat sourced from specific herds, the spices freshly ground every morning. A sausage from Bella's costs more than other vendors charge but it's worth it; soldiers returning from campaigns buy extra to prove they've been to Kormor Kirak. Bella knows everyone. She extends credit to people she likes. She's also the single most plugged-in merchant in the marketplace -- if you want to know what's happening in Kormor Kirak, buy a sausage from Bella and ask.

GM Notes

THE FOOD VENDORS AREA IS WHERE THE MARKETPLACE BECOMES PERSONAL AND UNPREDICTABLE. FOOD IS A BASIC NEED, SO PEOPLE ARE VULNERABLE HERE -- HUNGRY, TIRED, WILLING TO TAKE RISKS FOR A MEAL. THIS IS IDEAL FOR:

- Casual conversations and information gathering
- Encountering common people and learning what they're worried about
- Watching the city's lower classes interact with authority
- Spotting criminals conducting low-key business
- Becoming visible to Red Guards (who patrol here regularly)
- Meeting contacts in a crowded, inconspicuous setting

The area connects to the Terrassian Quarter to the north and the Auction Block to the east.

CAPITULUM

THE MONEY CHANGERS' ROW

Where the Grand Square narrows toward the northern edge of the marketplace, a formal row of small stalls operates in the open: the money changers. These are the licensed brokers who convert Albion crowns to Terrassian marks and handle other currencies. On any given day, eight to twelve stalls operate here, each staffed by a merchant and one or two guards (usually hired muscle, sometimes Red Guards on contract). Large scales sit on counters, coins are weighed and counted with deliberate slowness, exchange rates are posted on signs, and disputes about the value of coins are settled through reference to a master scale kept at the Merchant Guild Hall.

The atmosphere here is tense and focused. Money is the actual blood of the marketplace, and these stalls are where the conversion happens.

Prices aren't negotiable -- or rather, they are, but the negotiations are precise mathematical exercises rather than personal arguments. A merchant might spend twenty minutes debating whether a coin is actually valid Albion currency or too worn to accept, but they're not going to reduce the price because you're charming.

The money changers themselves are skilled at their work and at assessing people. They can tell a traveler from a resident by how they hold their coin purse. They spot counterfeit currency on sight. They remember customers who have cheated them. They also know which banks and merchants are reliable and which are failing. If you want to know about someone's financial health or credit status, a money changer will tell you -- for a price.

VENN'S EXCHANGE is the largest and most official of the money changing operations, run by a woman in her fifties who dresses in merchant clothes of fine quality. Venn is half-Albion, half-Terrassian, and it's this neutrality that made her perfect for the job. She doesn't favor one side over the other. She's also connected to the legitimate banking system of both nations, meaning she can arrange larger transfers and provide letters of credit. Her guards are professional and genuinely dangerous, and violence at her stall is punished swiftly and permanently.

GM Notes

THE MONEY CHANGERS' ROW IS WHERE THE MARKETPLACE'S ECONOMIC REALITY BECOMES VISIBLE. THIS IS WHERE WEALTH IS MOST CONCENTRATED AND WHERE ARMED CONFLICT IS MOST LIKELY IF SOMEONE TRIES TO CHEAT. USE THIS AREA FOR:

- Currency exchange (unavoidable if you're working with multiple nations' coin)
- Determining character wealth and supplies
- Learning about larger economic patterns in the city
- Meeting merchants discussing credit and debt
- Spotting assassins or thieves who target wealthy people
- Encountering mercenaries and soldiers spending or depositing wages

The Money Changers' Row is the most formal, most official area of the marketplace. Red Guards walk these streets regularly. Crime happens here rarely and is punished publicly.

CAPITULUM

THE BLACK MARKET ALLEY

Beyond the Money Changers' Row, the marketplace transitions into a narrow alley -- technically still part of the market but separate enough to be its own world. This is where the goods that can't be sold in daylight move instead. Smuggled items from both nations, stolen merchandise, substances that blur the line between medicine and poison, documents forged or stolen, and information that would be dangerous if known openly. The stalls here are temporary -- cloth hung over rope, boxes arranged to look like sitting areas, dark corners where transactions happen out of sight.

The smell here is different: incense hiding other smells, rot from hidden corners, the metallic smell of blood from fresh meat, and underneath everything, the smell of desperation and fear. The light is poor -- the alley is narrow and the buildings block sun. Even in midday, it's dim. At night, only oil lamps in windows provide light, and lanterns aren't lit for safety reasons; people here don't want to be seen clearly.

The Black Market Alley is watched carefully. Red Guards rarely patrol here -- not because Queen Kiraline has given it up, but because she's decided the official response is to know it exists, to monitor it from a distance, and to only intervene if the crimes within threaten the city's stability. This makes it both safer (from official law) and more dangerous (from the merchants themselves, who handle their own disputes with knives and poisons instead of law). A cutpurse in the Black Market

Alley doesn't get reported to guards; they get caught and dealt with by the person they stole from.

Entering the Black Market Alley requires awareness. Characters shouldn't stumble into real danger by accident -- GMs should make it clear when they're moving from the legitimate marketplace into the black market section. Once in, characters will be watched. Merchants will assess whether they're cops, potential victims, criminals, or something else. Prices are doubled or tripled. Goods are not guaranteed.

Betrayal is possible and even expected.

GM Notes

THE BLACK MARKET ALLEY IS WHERE THE CAMPAIGN'S DARKER ELEMENTS MANIFEST. THIS IS WHERE:

- Stolen goods can be fenced
- Illegal substances can be purchased
- Forged documents can be obtained
- Hits can be arranged
- Secrets can be traded
- Red Guard attention is minimal but not absent

The Black Market Alley is also where the criminal underworld organizes.

This is likely where ruffians, gangster lieutenants, and other street-level criminals spend their time. It's where Rozito Vallikozo might be encountered, if his legitimate cover is failing. The alley is dangerous to law-abiding characters and characters without local connections. Use it sparingly and make the consequences clear.

CAPITULUM

THE INFORMATION BROKER'S STALL

Somewhere in the marketplace -- and its exact location changes weekly to avoid patterns -- sits a stall operated by someone in the business of buying and selling information. This isn't necessarily a single person; it might be a rotating operation run by different people or a stationary stall staffed by a person whose job is to collect secrets.

The stall presents itself as something innocuous: a fortune teller with a crystal ball, a scribe offering to record documents, a scholar selling books and maps, a messenger service offering to deliver letters. The real business happens in the gaps between those legitimate services.

The information broker sells rumors, facts, secrets, and intelligence.

Information about troop movements, merchant bankruptcies, secret relationships, smuggling routes, the names of Red Guard informants, safe houses for refugees, and anything else that someone in the city knows and someone else is willing to pay for. The broker doesn't judge the morality of the information or what the buyer intends to do with it.

They just know the price and make the exchange.

The identity of the information broker is deliberately unclear. Some people in the marketplace will swear it's a scholar from the northern universities. Others claim it's a retired Red Guard captain. A few believe it's actually run collectively by the Merchant Guild as a way to keep control over information flow. The truth doesn't matter as much as the fact that the broker is accessible, reliable, and hasn't been killed despite the dangerous work -- which suggests

significant protection, whether from the Red Guard, the Guild, or the criminal underworld.

GM Notes

THE INFORMATION BROKER'S STALL IS A PLOT DEVICE AND INFORMATION HUB FOR GMS. USE IT FOR:

- Delivering information to characters who need it but haven't discovered it through play
- Creating jobs and quests (sell information to someone for payment, gather information for payment)
- Connecting different plot threads (the broker knows what happened in Area X because they heard it from someone in Area Y)
- Creating complications (the character discovers the broker is working for someone they're opposed to)
- Establishing the marketplace's connected, gossipy nature

The stall can be encountered randomly or can be sought out by player characters. Pricing should vary based on the value of the information. A rumor costs a few silver. Specific knowledge of troop movements or merchant secrets costs gold. Information that could cause deaths or overturn power structures costs more than most adventurers possess.

CAPITULUM

THE RED GUARD WATCH POST

The Red Guard presence in the marketplace is unavoidable, centralized, and obvious. A raised wooden platform stands near the Money Changers’

Row, with a small stone building attached -- the Watch Post. At any given time during business hours, three to five Red Guards stand on the platform, watching the marketplace. They wear the crimson cloaks and black armor of Queen Kiraline’s personal force. They carry both swords and formal symbols of authority (staves, insignia, documents).

The Watch Post is open to complaints from merchants or customers. People can approach and report crimes, disputes, or disturbances. The Red

Guards take statements, investigate if the crime is serious enough, and enforce their decisions with absolute authority. They don’t negotiate, don’t show bias between Albion and Terrassian interests, and don’t tolerate violence in their presence.

The Red Guard captain stationed at the marketplace changes monthly; they’re rotated to prevent personal relationships from developing that might compromise their judgment. This month’s captain is CAPTAIN

HARROW, a severe woman in her late thirties with scars on one side of her face and a formal manner that permits no casual conversation. Harrow is respected by the merchants because she’s fair and hated by criminals because she’s competent. She’s not cruel, but she is absolutely committed to Queen Kiraline’s law.

Below Harrow are four veteran guards and a rotating roster of younger soldiers. The younger ones are learning their trade and are generally politer than Harrow. The veterans are quiet, watching, and deadly if needed. All of them are loyal to the Queen above all other considerations.

GM Notes

THE RED GUARD WATCH POST IS THE MECHANISM BY WHICH THE MARKETPLACE REMAINS FUNCTIONAL DESPITE ITS LAWLESSNESS. THE GUARDS ARE:

- Not corruptible in any conventional way (though might be swayed by appeals to the Queen's interests)
- Efficient and professional
- Absolutely willing to kill if necessary
- A resource that law-abiding characters can use
- An obstacle that criminals need to work around

The Watch Post can be where characters report crimes or seek official help. It can also be where they're questioned if they're suspected of crimes. Use it to reinforce the marketplace's atmosphere: lawless but not anarchic, dangerous but not random, profit-driven but with a strict hierarchy and ultimate authority.

CAPITULUM

THE AUCTION BLOCK

A raised wooden platform with a lectern and bell occupies one edge of the marketplace. This is where the Merchant Guild conducts public auctions of goods that need to move quickly, property that's seized from delinquent debtors, permits and licenses, and the occasional more exotic sale. An auctioneer -- currently a thin man named DERRIN who has a remarkable voice and a gift for spinning narratives about products -- runs the auctions with theatrical flair.

Auctions happen twice weekly, on fixed days, and they're open to anyone with coin to bid. The goods being sold are public knowledge, posted days in advance. However, the auction is also where more private sales can happen quietly -- a successful bid on a worthless item might be cover for a larger transaction, or the real business might happen in the private room behind the platform where successful bidders complete their payments.

The Auction Block is a place of opportunity and risk. Adventurers can fence stolen goods (if they're willing to take what the market will pay), purchase equipment, bid on seized property, or contract for services (mercenary work, repairs, temporary labor). It's also a place where fortunes are sometimes lost by bidders who overestimate their wealth or the value of what they're buying.

*GM Notes***THE AUCTION BLOCK IS A USEFUL MECHANIC FOR:**

-
- Dispensing magical items or unique equipment in a way that puts them in competition with other bidders

- Creating spontaneous adventure hooks (purchase a sealed crate and discover something unexpected)
- Establishing the passage of time and the marketplace's rhythm
- Involving characters in commodity trading or economic gameplay
- Creating tense moments through competitive bidding

Auctions can be deterministic or randomized. A GM can plan specific items for auction or use random tables to generate goods that surprise both characters and the GM.

CAPITULUM

THE MERCHANT GUILD HALL

The largest permanent building in the marketplace is the Merchant Guild

Hall -- a two-story stone and timber structure with multiple rooms, an official seal above the door, and guards posted outside. This is where the Merchant Guild operates: handling disputes between merchants, issuing licenses and permits, maintaining the official price guides and weight standards, and settling arguments about market rules.

The Guild Hall is neutral territory. Disputes between merchants from opposing nations are settled here according to the Guild's rules, not according to national law. The penalties are economic rather than physical: fines, loss of market stalls, public bans from trading in

Kormor Kirak, or (for serious offenses) selling the merchant's bond to collectors who will hunt them across the world.

The Guild is run by MASTER THORNE, a merchant of sixty years who came up from the streets and worked his way to prominence through cunning and reliability. Thorne is respected by both Albion and Terrassian merchants because he's made money for people on both sides and shows no preference. He's also closely connected to Queen Kiraline's administration -- the Queen trusts the Guild to keep the marketplace functional, and Thorne keeps it functional. In return, he has access to the Queen's authority when he needs it.

GM Notes

THE MERCHANT GUILD HALL IS:

-
- Where disputes are settled officially
 - Where characters can gain licenses or permits to operate in the marketplace
 - Where the Guild's rules can be learned and (in some cases) negotiated
 - A place of formal power and serious dealings
 - Where larger crimes can result in economic exile

Characters who operate in the marketplace for extended periods should interact with the Guild. They might need a merchant's license to set up a stall, might become involved in Guild disputes, might earn the

Guild's favor or enmity. The Guild can also be a source of information about the marketplace and larger economic patterns in the city.

CAPITULUM

THE ROZITO'S STALL

Somewhere in the marketplace -- and the exact location depends on the campaign moment and Rozito's current operational security -- sits a stall that belongs to ROZITO VALLIKOZO or his agents. From the outside, it appears to be a legitimate merchant operation selling exotic imports: spices, unusual textiles, rare preserved goods, and similar high-margin items. The goods are real, they're well-made, and they can be purchased with normal currency.

The real business at Rozito's Stall is different. The stall serves as a neutral meeting ground for Rozito's underground operations. Smuggling networks, black market dealings, and the movement of goods that should never be sold openly all coordinate through or near this location.

Rozito's agents operate here: people who receive payments, make arrangements, and gather intelligence. If someone wants to contact

Rozito or his organization, this is often the first place they're directed to by those in the know.

The stall is carefully managed. Rozito himself is rarely here -- his appearance would draw too much attention from Red Guards. His agents are local merchants hired for legitimate work and who do the underground business as a side arrangement. They're discreet, professional, and have contingencies if they're arrested (they'll disappear into the

Black Market Alley or the underworld entirely rather than betray their employer).

The stall is also a trap. If the Red Guard suspects Rozito's activities are becoming too obvious, they might stage a raid. If Rozito's enemies want to strike at him, they might target the stall. If someone wants to threaten Rozito, exposing his operation is a clear message. The stall exists in a state of precarious balance between usefulness and danger.

GM Notes

ROZITO'S STALL EXISTS AS WHATEVER THE CAMPAIGN NEEDS IT TO BE:

- A source of illegal goods
- A place where Rozito can be contacted
- A front organization that characters might need to investigate or infiltrate
- A point of conflict between Rozito and legitimate merchants or the Red Guard
- A neutral ground where deals between criminals can be made
- A false lead or red herring if Rozito's actual operations are elsewhere

The stall's exact location, merchandise, and staffing should change between sessions if characters are actively investigating Rozito. This reinforces the idea that he's intelligent and careful, not static or stupid.

CAPITULUM

KEY NOTES

CAPITULUM

BELLA

ROLE: Food Vendor, Information Hub

DESCRIPTION: A woman in her mid-forties with weathered skin, strong hands, and warm eyes that miss nothing. She wears an apron perpetually stained with meat and spices, and she's always slightly flushed from standing near the fire. She speaks in a melodic Terrassian accent.

Secret

BELLA IS THE MOTHER OF A RED GUARD CAPTAIN WHO'S STATIONED IN A BORDER TOWN. THIS CONNECTION GIVES HER BOTH PROTECTION AND OBLIGATION TO THE CROWN. SHE GATHERS INFORMATION NOT OUT OF GREED BUT TO PROTECT HER SON FROM SITUATIONS WHERE HE MIGHT BE IN DANGER.

GM Notes

BELLA IS THE MOST APPROACHABLE INFORMATION SOURCE IN THE MARKETPLACE. SHE DOESN'T CHARGE GOLD; SHE EXPECTS FAVORS IN RETURN. SHE CAN BE A QUEST-GIVER, A SOURCE OF RUMORS, OR A CONTACT FOR CHARACTERS WHO NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE MARKETPLACE REALLY WORKS. SHE'S FRIENDLY BUT NOT NAIVE; SHE CAN RECOGNIZE WHEN SOMEONE IS USING HER AND WILL PUNISH DISLOYALTY.

CAPITULUM

VENN

ROLE: Master Money Changer, Financial Authority

DESCRIPTION: A woman in her fifties with sharp features, gray-streaked dark hair pulled back in a practical style, and fingers stained with the smell of metal. She dresses in expensive but practical clothing -- silks that move well, boots with good soles. She has the bearing of someone who manages large sums and small people.

Secret

VENN HAS BEEN OFFERED THE POSITION OF MINISTER OF TRADE IN THE ALBION EMPIRE, BUT SHE'S DECLINED. SHE PREFERS THE INDEPENDENCE AND ACTUAL POWER OF HER CURRENT POSITION. BOTH THE EMPIRE AND THE KINGDOM KNOW SHE'S DECLINING, AND BOTH RESPECT HER FOR IT; SHE'S PROVEN SHE CAN'T BE BOUGHT.

GM Notes

VENN IS A POWERFUL NPC WHO CAN'T BE SEDUCED, INTIMIDATED, OR CORRUPTED IN CONVENTIONAL WAYS. SHE'S USEFUL AS AN OBSTACLE, A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION, OR A CONTACT WHO CAN ARRANGE LARGE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS. SHE RESPECTS COMPETENCE AND HONESTY; SHE DESPISES BOTH INCOMPETENCE AND LIES.

CAPITULUM

CAPTAIN HARROW

ROLE: Red Guard Authority, Law Enforcement

DESCRIPTION: A woman in her late thirties with a scar running from her temple to her jaw, severe features, and the physical presence of someone trained in violence. She wears the crimson cloak and black armor of the Red Guard with perfect precision. She moves economically, speaks formally, and never smiles.

Secret

HARROW LOST FAMILY IN THE CENTURY WAR AND HAS MADE IT HER MISSION TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN HER JURISDICTION. SHE ENFORCES THE LAW NOT OUT OF CRUELTY BUT OUT OF DETERMINATION TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM THE CHAOS THAT KILLED HER FAMILY.

GM Notes

HARROW IS LAWFUL, COMPETENT, AND NON-CORRUPTIBLE. SHE CAN'T BE KILLED EASILY AND SHOULDN'T BE MADE AN ENEMY UNLESS THE CAMPAIGN IS READY FOR SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. SHE'S ALSO POTENTIAL ALLY MATERIAL IF CHARACTERS PROVE THEMSELVES LOYAL AND NON-DISRUPTIVE.

CAPITULUM

KORMUND

ROLE: Mineralsmith, Banker, Neutral Merchant

DESCRIPTION: A dwarf in his fifties or sixties (age unclear) with intricate braids in his dark beard, calloused hands, and one clouded eye. He dresses simply in work clothes and stands with the weight and solidity of mountain stone. He speaks rarely and carries himself with absolute calm.

Secret

KORMUND WAS A WAR PROFITEER DECADES AGO, BUYING UP ORE AND GEMSTONES IN BULK AND SELLING THEM TO BOTH SIDES OF THE CENTURY WAR. HE MADE ENORMOUS WEALTH THIS WAY AND LATER RETIRED FROM DIRECT PARTICIPATION BUT STILL PROFITS FROM THE WAR THROUGH HIS CURRENT BUSINESS. HE'S NEVER SPOKEN OF THIS AND WOULD KILL TO KEEP IT QUIET.

GM Notes

KORMUND IS A RESOURCE FOR CHARACTERS WHO NEED STORAGE, BANKING, OR MINERAL-RELATED EXPERTISE. HE'S NOT INTERESTED IN VIOLENCE AND WON'T BE DRAWN INTO CONFLICTS, BUT HE ALSO WON'T PROTECT ANYONE WHO BETRAYS HIS TRUST. HE CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT MINING, GEMSTONES, AND THE UNDERGROUND ECONOMY OF THE MOUNTAINS.

CAPITULUM

DERRIN

ROLE: Auctioneer, Master of Ceremony

DESCRIPTION: A thin man in his fifties with an extraordinary speaking voice, enthusiastic gestures, and the energy of someone performing constantly. He dresses in bright but tasteful clothing with scarves and ornaments that make him visible from across the marketplace.

His smile is genuine but calculated.

Secret

DERRIN IS SECRETLY RUNNING AN INSURANCE SCHEME FOR MERCHANTS -- HE ACCEPTS PAYMENTS FROM MERCHANTS AND THEN ENSURES THAT GOODS SEIZED BY THE RED GUARD OR DESTROYED BY ACCIDENTS ARE AUCTIONED AT PRICES THAT RETURN THE INVESTED VALUE PLUS A PERCENTAGE. THIS IS TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL BUT NO ONE HAS PROVEN IT YET.

GM Notes

DERRIN IS USEFUL FOR GENERATING SPONTANEOUS ADVENTURE HOOKS THROUGH AUCTIONS, FOR MANAGING TIME PASSAGE IN THE MARKETPLACE, AND FOR CREATING MOMENTS OF HUMOR. HE'S THE MARKETPLACE'S FACE AND RHYTHM. HE'S ALSO A USEFUL NPC FOR MYSTERIES INVOLVING ECONOMIC CRIME.

RANDOM MARKETPLACE EVENTS (d10)

Roll when characters are in the marketplace to generate spontaneous encounters and occurrences. Reroll if the result is inappropriate to the current location or storyline.

1. PICKPOCKET CAUGHT

A Red Guard catches a child attempting to steal from a merchant's stall. The merchant demands harsh punishment. The child's mother is begging for mercy. The Red Guard is unmoved. This creates a moral dilemma for characters who witness it: interfere and anger the Guard, or watch and feel complicit.

2. MERCHANT DISPUTE

Two merchants are arguing loudly over a deal gone wrong. One claims the goods were misrepresented, the other claims the buyer knew what they were getting. Voices are raised, and a crowd is forming. Red Guards are watching to see if violence will break out. Characters can get involved as witnesses, arbitrators, or innocent bystanders caught in escalation.

3. STRANGER SEEKING DIRECTION

A traveler (from far away or obviously new to the city) is lost and asking for directions. They're carrying valuable items openly and are clearly not familiar with the marketplace's danger. If characters don't help, a criminal will. If they do help, they might gain a contact or a debt-obligation.

4. BEGGARS BEING ROUTED

Red Guards are clearing beggars and homeless people from a particular area of the marketplace. They're not being gentle, but they're not being brutal either. The displacement is happening because a merchant has complained or because the Guard wants the area clear for some official reason. The beggars are moving to crowd other areas and creating chaos.

5. GOODS DELIVERED

A large caravan has just arrived with new merchandise. Merchants are scrambling to unload and inspect goods. The marketplace is more crowded than usual, with people trying to get good positions to see new inventory or to negotiate for the best prices before goods are arranged in stalls. The chaos provides cover for crimes.

6. SOMEONE RECOGNIZES A CHARACTER

A character is recognized by someone from their past. This person might be friendly (old companion), neutral (acquaintance), or hostile (enemy).

Their presence and reaction creates complications and forces the character to deal with their history.

7. RED GUARD RECRUITMENT

Soldiers are positioned around the marketplace, recruiting for the militia or army. They're taking volunteers and offering wages. If the character might be

of military interest, they're approached. If they're running from military service, this creates danger.

8. FIRE AT A STALL

A merchant's stall catches fire (accident or arson -- unclear). Red

Guards and nearby merchants are trying to put it out and prevent spread.

Goods are being damaged or saved. The merchant is distraught. This creates opportunity for characters to help, investigate the cause, or loot in the chaos.

9. AUCTION COMPLETED

An auction has just ended with a surprising result. Something valuable sold for far more or far less than it should have. The successful bidder is either celebrating or looking regretful. Merchants are already gossiping about why the price was so strange. Characters might learn about unusual trading patterns or opportunity for profit.

10. CRIMINAL CONFRONTATION

Two criminals (pickpockets, gang members, or more serious offenders) are having a confrontation in the marketplace. It's clearly hostile but not yet violent. If it escalates, everyone nearby will scatter and Red

Guards will respond. Characters can observe gang dynamics, get drawn in, or find out what's being disputed.

CAPITULUM

CAMPAIGN USE

CAPITULUM

THE
POISONING

FOUNTAIN

A merchant is found dead at the Grand Square fountain, and the Red Guard suspects poisoning administered through the fountain water. However, the fountain hasn't been used in fifteen years. The truth is more complex: the death is unrelated to the fountain, but someone is spreading rumors that the fountain is dangerous to suppress water-related meetings that are about to happen there. Characters can investigate the murder, uncover the conspiracy, and determine whether the fountain should be used as a public water source again (which would change the marketplace's geography and dynamics).

CAPITULUM

THE MERCHANT'S DEBT

One of the marketplace's merchants owes a large debt to a criminal organization. They're trying to hide the debt by skimming profits from their stall and redirecting goods to pay the criminals in installments.

However, they've been caught by another merchant, and there's a quiet threat: pay the debt immediately or be reported to the Red Guard (which would end their market license). Characters can become involved as arbitrators, as debt-collectors for the criminals, as investigators for the merchant, or as avengers if the debt-merchant is actually innocent and being framed.

CAPITULUM

THE BUZZED CORRUPTION

Someone inside the Merchant Guild is embezzling funds, altering records to hide thefts, and possibly accepting bribes to give preferential treatment to certain merchants. Master Thorne is unaware. Characters can discover evidence, investigate the crime, and either handle it quietly (protecting the Guild's reputation) or publicly (exposing the corruption and causing marketplace upheaval). The criminal might be

Thorne's deputy, a longtime Guild employee, or even a Red Guard working with a merchant.

CAPITULUM

THE BLACK MARKET TRANSITION

A major criminal organization is attempting to take control of the Black

Market Alley, consolidating the loose collection of smugglers and thieves into a single operation. Violence is happening quietly but is escalating. Characters can become involved by being in the wrong place, by being recruited by one side, or by trying to prevent the consolidation (which might actually destabilize the marketplace because the current loose structure is safer than a single powerful organization).

CAPITULUM

THE RED GUARD INVESTIGATION

Captain Harrow has become suspicious that someone important in the marketplace is connected to serious crimes -- possibly treason (selling military intelligence to the enemy nation). She begins quietly investigating, which means characters might be questioned, their stalls searched, or their associates examined. Characters can help with the investigation, try to protect someone they care about, or discover that

Harrow's suspicions are correct but her target is innocent and her investigation is targeting the wrong person.

CAPITULUM

Eppy's Pub And Inn



CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

Eppy's sits on a quiet corner of the Merchant's Quarter in Kormor

Kirak, where the bustle of the neutral city mellows into something almost peaceful. The pub is a squat stone building with a slate roof, three stories tall, its grey exterior softened by hanging planters of herbs and flowers that shouldn't survive the mountain winters but somehow do under Eppy's care. A weathered sign hanging above the entrance reads simply "EPPY'S" in faded gold letters, swinging slightly in the mountain wind. A thin plume of smoke rises from the chimney almost constantly -- the fireplace in the common room never truly goes cold.

Inside, Eppy's feels less like a typical tavern and more like the warm heart of someone's home, just scaled up and opened to strangers. The walls are honest stone, but softened with woven blankets and shelves holding everything from drinking glasses to bottles of dried herbs. The air tastes of woodsmoke, bread, cooking herbs, and ale. Music drifts through on some nights -- a local musician or a traveling bard finding a grateful audience. What makes Eppy's different from the other drinking establishments scattered through Kormor Kirak isn't just the quality of the food or the steadiness of the ale. It's that Eppy

Flinder, the owner and namesake, has somehow made a place where soldiers from opposite sides of the war sit at different tables and drink without the tension boiling over into blood. Albion Empire officers and

Terrasian Kingdom merchants exist in the same room, separated by a few yards and the weight of careful neutrality, but they exist there nonetheless. Eppy has a gift for making people feel like guests in her home rather than combatants in a war, and that gift is the real product being served here.

CAPITULUM

THE COMMON ROOM

When you push through the heavy oak doors into the common room, warmth hits you like a physical thing. A fireplace dominates the northern wall, large enough to stand in if you had to, its opening arched in fitted stone. The fire crackles constantly, fed by wood delivered regularly from outside the city. Along the eastern wall runs a long bar of dark wood, worn smooth by decades of elbows and coins. Behind it, shelves reach almost to the ceiling, lined with bottles, glasses, and mysterious jars. The walls themselves are the original grey stone of the building, but covered in worn wooden paneling up to about waist height, making the space feel enclosed and safe rather than cavernous.

The common room is furnished with a mixture of sturdy wooden tables and chairs in various states of honest wear. Nothing matches, but everything is solid and clean. Some tables are scarred from boots propped on them over the years, others stained slightly from spilled drinks that never quite washed out. To the left of the fireplace sits a raised area maybe six inches higher than the main floor, three steps leading up to it -- this is where musicians set up on nights when there's live music, giving them a natural platform without forcing them to stand in the crowd.

Scattered throughout are small details that speak to Eppy's particular nature. Bowls of fresh herbs sit on several tables, fragrant sprigs of rosemary and mint that guests can smell or nibble on. A shelf near the bar holds books -- actual books, read and reread by patrons: histories of the Videk Mountains, an old herbal guide, some love stories and adventure tales. Windows on the western wall overlook the street outside, their panes thick and old, tinted slightly blue-green with age, diffusing the light into something soft and underwater-like

even on clear days. The floor is dark wood, swept daily, patterned with the worn paths of regular customers moving between favorite tables.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Constant, low ambient noise: conversation, the crackle of the fire, the clink of glasses
- Smell of woodsmoke, bread baking, cooking herbs (rosemary, thyme, sage), ale, and something faintly green and living
- Temperature: warm, almost hot near the fireplace, cooler toward the windows
- The light is golden and fire-cast, changing with the flames, creating moving shadows on the stone walls
- A low hum of activity: the pub is rarely truly quiet, even during slow hours

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Fireplace: A masterwork of fitted mountain stone, with a chimney system that draws smoke without filling the room. The hearthstone is slightly sunken from centuries of ash and fire. Eppy's emblem, a single leaf carved into the stone above the lintel, marks her claim on the space.

- The Bar: Twenty feet long, with brass rail-work worn shiny from use.

Behind it, Eppy has arranged her bottles with obvious care: common ales in front, rarer spirits and wines deeper in the rack. Some bottles are very old. Some have no labels. Some glow faintly in candlelight, suggesting alchemical content.

- The Musician's Platform: A performance space that lends legitimacy to the music that happens here. Eppy clearly invests in musicians and sees their role as important to the pub's mood.

- The Shelf of Books: A small lending library of sorts, with most books borrowed regularly by regulars. The margins of some are filled with notes and reader comments. Others are Eppy's personal collection, and these she's less likely to let leave the pub.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The common room is where most pub scenes will happen. This is where player characters can hear rumors, gather information, make contacts, and recover from the cold and violence of the world outside. The mix of factions creates natural tension and opportunities: overhear a conversation between an Albion officer and a Terrasian merchant, each careful with their words. Notice a hooded figure asking quiet questions about a caravan that just passed through. See a known criminal sitting openly at a table, clearly confident in Eppy's protection (as no violence is allowed here).

The fireplace should be described as almost a character itself -- the warmth of it, the coziness of sitting nearby, the way it drives the cold out of bones. Players will want to claim a spot near it. The first time the party visits, let them pick "their" table. It should remain their table throughout the campaign -- it's one of the small comforts that makes a home base feel like home.

Random events here are common: a bard might start playing (see RANDOM PUB EVENTS), a group of merchants might initiate a loud game of dice, a subtle argument might break out between drunk patrons that Eppy smooths over with a word and a fresh drink. The common room is alive in a way that many taverns aren't.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- The bar is accessible from the north end of the common room
- The private dining room opens off the eastern wall
- The kitchen can be seen through a doorway in the southern wall, though direct access is discouraged by Eppy
- The stairs to the guest rooms and Eppy's quarters are in the southwestern corner
- The main entrance is on the western side

CAPITULUM

THE BAR

The bar itself is a work of craftsmanship, a long counter of dark wood that seems to have grown darker with age and staining. The surface is covered in rings from countless glasses and stains of spilled drinks that no amount of cleaning has fully removed -- each mark a small history of the pub. Behind the bar, Eppy has created a space of surprising organization. The bottles are arranged not by type but by her own system that reveals her priorities: the most frequently used ales and wines are at arm's reach, rarer spirits are on the higher shelves, and at the very top, partially hidden in shadow, sit a dozen bottles of clearly very expensive or very unusual drinks.

The back wall of the bar is fitted with mirrors set into the wooden paneling, reflecting the fire from the common room and making the space behind the bar feel larger than it is. Dozens of glasses hang from racks above: thick, stout drinking glasses with a practiced-worn rim that comes from being held by many mouths; tall glasses for wine; proper tulip-shaped glasses for spirits that Eppy clearly respects; and a few ornate glasses that don't match anything else, the kind that suggest a long history and careful curation.

A brass footrail runs the length of the bar, polished by the boots of regulars leaning against it while they drink and talk. Eppy usually stands behind the bar during busy hours, often flanked by one or two staff members depending on the crowd. She moves with ease through the space, her hands almost never still -- pouring, mixing, wiping, talking.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Sound of glass clinking against wood and against each other as drinks are set down
- Smell of spilled ale that's been cleaned but never fully removed, sharp spirits, and wine
- The mirror reflecting candlelight and firelight, making the space glow
- The weight of the bar counter under your elbows, solid and real

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Mirror Wall: Multiple mirrors of different ages and qualities, creating a fractured reflection that somehow feels intentional rather than haphazard. You can watch Eppy work while facing the fire.

- The Glass Collection: Eppy's glasses speak to her character. She uses the right glass for the right drink. A casual comment about

"proper glassware" has made more than one warrior reconsider their prejudices.

- The Bottle Collection: Regular patrons recognize certain bottles and know that those nights, one of Eppy's special drinks is available.

The highest shelves hold treasures: a bottle of spirit from the

Albion Empire's royal distillery, a honey wine from Terrassia's southern valleys, something amber and ancient with no label that

Eppy will only serve to people she trusts.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The bar is where transactions happen. Money is exchanged, deals are made quietly, information is bartered. A careful patron can often pick up on

Eppy's mood or the general mood of the city by watching what she's choosing to serve. During times of tension between the factions, she might emphasize her neutral drinks -- local brews that neither side can claim. During times of relative peace, she might proudly serve wines from both empires.

Eppy doesn't eavesdrop, exactly, but she hears everything that happens at her bar. If player characters want information, she's the best source in the pub, but she won't simply give it away. Information from

Eppy comes with the unspoken requirement that it not damage her careful neutrality.

The bar is also where Eppy dispenses minor healing and aid. A character with a wound gets a strong drink and Eppy's attention. A character with a sickness might be sent to sit by the fire while Eppy prepares something special from her stores.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- The common room stretches south from the bar
- The kitchen is immediately behind the bar, accessible through a door
- A small back corridor behind the bar leads to storage and the cellar stairs

CAPITULUM

THE KITCHEN

Eppy's kitchen is organized chaos in the best way. It's hot from constant use, with two large stoves and a massive hearth for roasting meat and bread. Every surface is in use: a counter holds fresh vegetables in various states of preparation, another is dedicated to her remedies (bottles and jars carefully labeled in her precise hand), a large cutting board is always ready, and shelves line the walls from floor to ceiling holding pots, pans, and jars of dried goods.

The centerpiece is Eppy herself, moving through the space with practiced efficiency. Even when she's busy, she acknowledges people who enter, though she doesn't necessarily stop working. The kitchen smells like heaven and home: bread baking, herbs fresh and dried, stock simmering in a large pot, and underneath it all, something green and alive that might be from her garden.

A large wooden table in the corner of the kitchen serves as the staff's station -- this is where food is plated for service. Beyond this, the kitchen extends back further than you'd expect from outside, suggesting the building is deeper than it appears. At the very back, there's a heavy door that leads down to the cellar.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Heat, sometimes intense near the stoves
- Sound of chopping, sizzling, the pop and crackle of fire in the hearths
- Smell of cooking food, herbs (both fresh and dried), bread, and something faintly medicinal
- The floor is slightly worn stone, regularly swept but marked with the accumulation of flour, herbs, and food scraps that no amount of cleaning fully removes
- Steam rising from pots, catching the light from the hearths

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Remedy Shelf: A specific shelf, clearly separated from the cooking stores, holds bottles and jars that are absolutely Eppy's magical work -- infusions, tinctures, salves. Each is labeled precisely. A few have warning symbols scratched into the glass.
- The Main Hearth: A large fireplace with a rotisserie and hooks for hanging pots. The flames are carefully maintained, and Eppy knows exactly how hot each section is for different cooking needs.
- The Herb Drying Racks: Bundles of herbs hang from wooden racks suspended from the ceiling: rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, and others that might be harder to identify at a glance.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The kitchen is Eppy's private domain, and while she's not hostile to visitors, she makes it clear through her behavior that she prefers to work without too many interruptions. However, a character who shows genuine interest in her work or offers to help can gain access and, more importantly, trust. Eppy has been known to prepare special remedies for her patrons, but these are never given away lightly -- they represent her effort and her knowledge.

If a player character is particularly injured or ill, Eppy might invite them back to her kitchen, keep them seated at the staff table, give them something warm to eat, and explain what she's preparing as she works.

This is a high honor and a sign of genuine care on her part.

The kitchen is where her druid nature shows most openly, though never in an explicitly magical way. The plants on the shelves shouldn't be thriving in the winter cold of Kormor Kirak, but they are. Her knowledge of herbs goes beyond what a normal herbalist should know. Food prepared in her kitchen has subtle effects beyond normal nourishment -- a stew doesn't just fill your belly, it settles your nerves. A bread she's made soothes a cough.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- The common room lies through the doorway to the north
- The bar is immediately accessible north and west
- The cellar stairs are at the very back
- A back door leads to the stable yard

CAPITULUM

THE HERB GARDEN

Behind Eppy's pub, sheltered by the building itself and a high stone wall that must be three hundred years old, sits a garden that shouldn't exist. The garden is roughly forty feet square, its walls covered in climbing vines and creeping plants. Sunlight hits it for only part of the day, yet the plants seem lush and healthy even in the depth of winter.

Raised beds of dark soil run in neat rows, each carefully labeled in

Eppy's hand. The plants growing here include common herbs -- rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano -- but also things that have no business growing at this altitude and in this climate. There's a section dedicated to medicinal plants: something with silver-backed leaves that no one in the city can identify, small delicate flowers that smell faintly sweet and metallic, and patches of moss and fungi that grow nowhere else in Kormor

Kirak.

A stone bench sits in the corner nearest the sun, worn smooth from use.

A small fountain trickles gently in the center, water running from a small carved stone head and collecting in a pool beneath. The entire space is enclosed and private -- you can't see into it from outside, and no one can see you from the pub windows. It's as though Eppy has carved out a pocket of the natural world and kept it to herself.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Smell of living green, earth, and growing things, stronger than should be possible in a mountain city
- The sound of the fountain, soft and constant
- Cool air, even when the rest of the city is cold, and somehow more humid than the surroundings suggest
- Soft light, diffused by clouds and building shade
- The stone walls holding warmth from the day

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Greenhouse Corner: A small wooden and glass structure, barely large enough for one person to stand in, tucked against the eastern wall. It extends the growing season. Inside, more exotic plants grow in potted arrangements.
- The Planted Beds: Each bed is labeled and clearly under Eppy's specific care. The organization suggests advanced horticultural knowledge. Some beds have a faint shimmer to the air above them, something barely perceptible.
- The Stone Head Fountain: A carved stone face of indeterminate age, water trickling from its mouth. The craftsmanship is excellent but the style doesn't match any known culture. Eppy refuses to explain where it came from.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

This is Eppy's true sanctuary, and she doesn't bring many people here.

A character who gains her trust and respect might be invited here to help with gardening, to learn about the plants, or to recover from wounds or sickness in its peaceful setting. The presence of plants that shouldn't exist and the subtle magical properties of the garden should hint at Eppy's deeper connection to the natural world without ever being explicitly stated.

If a character is severely wounded or magically afflicted, Eppy might take them here and leave them to rest, the garden slowly working to restore them. It takes longer than explicit magic might, but it's more stable and more permanent.

The garden might also hold secrets. There might be hidden things here

-- a locked box containing correspondence, a loose stone in the wall concealing something precious, a section of plants that are clearly being grown for purposes other than cooking or casual healing. These are things Eppy keeps private, and discovering them should be difficult and should come with consequences if Eppy finds out.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- The garden connects to the pub via a heavy wooden door from the kitchen
- A narrow gate in the western wall opens to an alley that leads to the street
- The back door of the pub opens near the garden entrance

CAPITULUM

THE PRIVATE DINING ROOM

Off the eastern wall of the common room, accessed through a heavy wooden door, sits a room much smaller and more intimate than the main space.

This is Eppy's private dining room, used for meetings, quiet conversations, and the kind of business that requires privacy. The room is perhaps twenty feet by fifteen, with a single window overlooking the street, shuttered most of the time for privacy.

A long table dominates the space, capable of seating perhaps ten people comfortably, made of the same dark wood as the bar. The walls here are wood paneled almost entirely, and there's a smaller fireplace along one wall, currently cold but ready to be lit for guests. Candles in iron sconces provide light, their flames carefully placed to avoid casting shadows into corners. A few paintings hang on the walls, pastoral scenes that don't seem to belong to any known region -- they might be Eppy's personal work or treasures from before she came to Kormor Kirak.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Hushed quiet, insulated from the common room's noise
- Cooler than the main room, with a faint smell of old wood and candle wax
- Shadows in the corners despite the candles
- Dust motes visible in the light from the small window

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Table: The centerpiece, scarred in places but clearly valuable and old. The wood has a deep patina that suggests it's been used for important conversations for a long time.
- The Shuttered Window: Can be opened or closed, giving the room privacy or a view of the street depending on need.
- The Small Fireplace: Not often used, but available. Eppy will light it for guests who might need the warmth or the psychological comfort of fire.

CAPITULUM

BM NOTES

This is where serious business happens. Eppy rents the room out to people who need privacy, though she's choosy about her clients. She won't rent it to people she knows are planning violence or betrayal, and she has a frustrating ability to know what people are up to based on barely any information.

The party can rent this room if they need somewhere to plan or meet allies. Eppy charges a modest fee (5-10 gold coins depending on the length of use) and includes a spread of food. More importantly, this room is neutral ground in the same way the whole pub is. No violence occurs here, and Eppy's protection extends fully to anyone inside it.

Player characters might overhear conversations from people using this room if they listen carefully at the common room door. This is often how rumors spread through the pub -- not from the general crowd but from the private meetings that other patrons catch fragments of.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- Opens directly into the common room
- The door is solid and soundproof enough for privacy but not so much that a person pressed against it couldn't hear raised voices
- Food service comes from the bar

CAPITULUM

THE GUEST ROOMS (UPSTAIRS)

The second floor of Eppy's is dedicated to guest accommodation. A narrow hallway runs the length of the building, with five guest rooms opening off it: three on the western side overlooking the street, two on the eastern side overlooking the garden and the mountains beyond. Each room is small but genuinely comfortable, furnished with a bed, a simple wooden chair, a small table with a pitcher and washbasin, and a window with shutters.

The beds are made with clean linen sheets and proper pillows, a small luxury that many travelers don't expect. There's no elaborate decoration, but the rooms don't feel austere either. A single candle sconce hangs beside each bed, and a small mirror hangs above the washstand. The walls are whitewashed stone, and the floors are dark wood like the common room below. In winter, heat rises from the common room fireplace through the floorboards, making the guest rooms warm and comfortable.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Quiet, with only muffled sounds from below
- Cool air until the fire below reaches full strength
- Faint smell of fresh linen, wood polish, and the ever-present herb scent that permeates the whole building
- Small, personal spaces that feel managed and cared for

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Beds: Well-made, comfortable, and genuinely clean. Many guests sleep better here than they have in months.
- The Windows: Glass of the same age and tint as the common room, giving a soft, dreamlike quality to the light. The views are good
 - street view or mountain view depending on which side.
- Simple but Functional: Everything in the rooms serves a purpose.

Nothing is wasted or ostentatious.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The guest rooms are where the party will likely sleep during their time in the city. Each room should feel like a safe haven, a place where they can recover and rest. Eppy keeps these rooms clean and well-maintained, and she expects guests to do the same. Rowdy behavior in the rooms results in Eppy's quiet but firm disapproval, which is somehow worse than any shouting would be.

Nightly cost is modest: 2-3 gold per room, breakfast included. This is well below market rate for Kormor Kirak, and Eppy clearly doesn't run the rooms to make money. She runs them to extend her hospitality and to ensure that her pub is truly a safe haven.

A character who needs to hide or recover in relative safety might be given a room for free or at reduced rate, Eppy's way of helping without making it obvious. A character who's been seriously wounded might wake to find Eppy has left remedies on their table while they slept.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- The hallway connects to the stairs down to the common room
- The stairs also lead up to the third floor where Eppy's quarters are
- The rooms are arranged along a central hallway

CAPITULUM

EPPTY'S QUARTERS

The third floor of Eppy's is her personal space, and very few people ever see it. The stairs from the second floor lead up to a small landing that opens into her private quarters -- a bedroom and a sitting room with a small kitchen of its own. The space is warm and lived-in, filled with the accumulation of her life in Kormor Kirak and before.

The sitting room is lined with shelves holding books on herbalism, natural philosophy, the history of the Videk Mountains, and other subjects that suggest a life of learning and curiosity. A comfortable chair sits beside a window that overlooks the garden below, and this is clearly where Eppy spends her quiet hours. The walls are the same stone as the rest of the building, but draped with woven blankets in earth tones. The light here is soft, managed by thick curtains and skylights.

The bedroom is small and simply furnished with a quality bed, a locked chest at its foot, and a window box overflowing with winter herbs and flowers that defy the season. A mirror hangs on one wall, and a few small personal items are visible -- a brush, a comb, a small jewelry box -- the little things that mark a space as truly lived in.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Warmth, both from her personal heating source and from the care taken in the space
- Smell of herbs, books, and something faintly magical
- The sense of privacy and sanctity
- Quiet that feels deep rather than empty

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Book Collection: A serious library, with many books showing signs of repeated reading. Notes in margins, bookmarks, careful indexing.
- The Locked Chest: At the foot of the bed, clearly important and clearly secure. Contents unknown, but clearly valuable to her.
- The Window Box: Plants that should not exist thrive here through winter. The skill required to maintain this is not normal herbalism.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The player characters should never voluntarily visit Eppy's quarters.

This is her private space, and violating it would be a serious breach of trust that would have lasting consequences. However, a character who is invited here -- perhaps to recover from something serious, or because

Eppy believes they need to know something important about her -- should understand that this is a profound act of trust on her part.

If a character is discovered snooping in Eppy's quarters, the consequences are severe. She will ask them to leave the pub entirely, and she will not welcome them back without a sincere apology and some kind of recompense. For most campaigns, losing access to Eppy's pub should feel like a serious setback.

The locked chest contains items related to Eppy's past and her druid abilities. These are hers alone and are not to be discovered by players without specific narrative justification.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- Stairs lead down to the guest room hallway and the second floor
- A small back staircase leads to the kitchen

CAPITULUM

THE CELLAR

The cellar beneath Eppy's is cool and dark, lit by small barred windows near the ceiling that look out onto the stable yard. The space is divided into two sections: the first holds the supplies that keep the pub running -- barrels of ale and casks of wine, large stores of vegetables and preserved goods, sacks of flour and salt, and the accumulation of foodstuffs necessary to feed regular customers and house guests.

The second section, deeper and darker, contains Eppy's more private stores. This is where she keeps her rarer herbs, her more powerful remedies, and the ingredients for things that go beyond simple cooking.

The temperature here is cool and constant, perfect for preservation. The walls sweat slightly with moisture, and there's a faint smell of earth, herbs, and something older, something that hints at the mountain stone beneath the city.

Storage racks line the walls, everything organized with Eppy's characteristic precision. Labels in her careful hand mark contents and dates. Some jars contain things with recognizable contents: dried herbs, preserved fruits, salted meats. Others contain things less identifiable, materials that hint at alchemical or herbalist practices beyond the merely practical.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Cool, damp air, dropping noticeably from the floors above
- Sound of silence, the kind that feels deeper in enclosed spaces
- Smell of stored food, preservatives, and earth
- Darkness held back only by a few lanterns and the filtered light from the high windows
- The floor is stone, worn smooth in the center from foot traffic

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Storage Racks: Organized with military precision, every item has a place and a label.
- The Barrel Wall: Massive wooden casks, some of them old enough to have patina, arranged carefully along the western wall.
- The Private Section: A visibly different part of the cellar, reached by a narrow passageway. The contents here are clearly important to Eppy.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The cellar is not off-limits to customers, but it's not really a place they go either. A character who goes down to the cellar -- perhaps sent by Eppy to fetch something -- is moving into her working space and should feel the weight of trespassing slightly, even if they're explicitly invited.

If a party needs to hide from danger or talk privately away from the common room, Eppy might allow them to use the cellar. This is another sign of her trust. The cellar feels safe, separated from the street and the chaos above, though the darkness and the sense of depth beneath the city can feel oppressive to some.

Hidden in the cellar is at least one secret that Eppy keeps from most people. This might be a stash of money, correspondence from people she knew before the war, magical items she's created, or something else entirely. This is the GM's decision and should tie to whatever role

Eppy plays in the campaign.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- Stairs lead up to the kitchen
- A small door at the back leads out to the stable yard and a drainage system

CAPITULUM

THE STABLE YARD

Behind the pub, accessed through a heavy wooden gate from the garden or through the back door of the kitchen, lies a small courtyard dedicated to animal housing and deliveries. The space is roughly thirty feet square, flagstones worn smooth from years of cart traffic. A small stable along the eastern wall can hold four horses or six mules comfortably. A lean-to shed along the northern wall stores equipment and firewood. A large covered area in the center provides shelter for wagons and deliveries.

The yard itself is clean but functional, without pretension. A water trough sits near the stable entrance, fed by a small spring that comes down from the mountains -- water here tastes better than anywhere else in Kormor Kirak. Hooks and rings set into the walls allow for tethering animals or hanging equipment. A heavy gate in the southern wall opens to an alley that connects to the main street market.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Sound of water running, the occasional horse movement
- Smell of hay, animals, and earth
- Open air after the enclosed spaces of the pub
- Cool, with wind able to move freely through the space
- The flagstones are patterned with wear and discolored in places from years of use

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Spring: Cold, clear water that seems fresher than any other water source in the city. Local merchants will sometimes bring empty containers to fill here.
- The Stable: Well-maintained, spacious, with good hay and grain available. Eppy pays for caretaking here from a local stablehand.
- The Back Gate: A way in and out of the pub that doesn't go through the common room or the street entrance.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The stable yard is functional space, not particularly atmospheric, but it serves important purposes. It's where the party can keep horses while staying at the pub. It's where deliveries arrive, providing opportunities for the GM to bring new NPCs, supplies, or information into the story. It's a way out of the pub that bypasses the common room, useful if the party needs to slip away quietly.

The back gate is important for plot purposes. It connects the pub to the rest of the city without forcing characters to move through the main entrance. This matters for stealth, for meeting allies, for escaping danger.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- Opens to the garden through a gate
- Opens to the kitchen through a back door
- Connects to an alley that leads to the main street market

CAPITULUM

THE FIREPLACE CORNER

Not a separate room but a specific location within the common room, the fireplace corner is where the best seats are -- a few tables positioned to catch the full warmth of the massive fire, private enough to have conversations but open enough to feel part of the pub's community. This is where regulars claim their tables, and this is where the party should naturally gravitate on their first visit.

Three or four wooden chairs cluster near the fire itself, arranged in a semi-circle facing outward toward the rest of the pub. A low table sits among them, scarred from years of use but solid and well-made. It's the kind of space where someone can nurse a drink for hours without feeling like they should leave. The warmth here is intense, the kind of warmth that drives winter from your bones and makes you forget what cold feels like.

CAPITULUM

PHYSICAL DETAILS

- Heat that rises in waves, intense near the fire, comfortable a few feet back
- Sound of crackling flames, constantly changing
- Smell of woodsmoke and burning wood
- The light is warm and gold, shifting constantly with the fire
- The stone around the fire is warm to the touch

CAPITULUM

NOTABLE FEATURES

- The Prime Seating: The chairs here are the most comfortable in the pub, worn into shape by decades of users.

- The Low Table: Scratched and scarred, but perfectly functional.

Drinks and food sit here, conversations happen over it, deals are struck.

- The Heat: The defining feature, the thing that makes this spot special.

CAPITULUM

GM NOTES

The fireplace corner is where the party will want to sit, and Eppy will subtly help them claim it if the table is available. This becomes their table over the course of a campaign -- the place they return to between adventures, where they know the exact temperature of the fire, where they're most comfortable.

Events in the pub often revolve around this area. A musician might play for an audience clustered nearby. Someone might approach the party here with news. Conflicts that happen in the pub might begin or end at this table.

Describe the fireplace corner frequently and vividly. Make the party want to be there. Make them feel the warmth and the comfort.

CAPITULUM

CONNECTIONS

- Completely within the common room
- Close enough to the bar to call for drinks without standing
- Close enough to the kitchen door to smell food being prepared

KEY NPCs

CAPITULUM

EPPY FLINDER



ROLE: Proprietor, Healer, Neutral Party

APPEARANCE: A woman in her late forties with grey-streaked auburn hair usually tied back in a practical braid. She has the lean, practical frame of

someone who works for a living, with hands that show calluses from cooking and gardening. Her eyes are green and sharp, missing very little. She dresses in simple, quality clothes -- dark trousers, a shirt of good linen, an apron worn while working. When she leaves the pub, she adds a heavy cloak of forest green.

MANNER: Warm but not effusive. Professional. Direct. She says what she means and expects others to do the same. She has a dry sense of humor that surfaces occasionally. She listens more than she talks.

Secret

EPPI IS MORE THAN A SIMPLE DRUID. HER CONNECTION TO THE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR MAGIC RUNS DEEP. SHE CAME TO KORMOR KIRAK SPECIFICALLY TO ESTABLISH A PLACE OF TRUE NEUTRALITY IN THE WAR, AND SHE'S INVESTED YEARS OF MAGICAL EFFORT INTO MAINTAINING THE PUB'S PEACEFUL NATURE. THE BUILDING ITSELF MIGHT BE LIGHTLY WARDED WITH MAGIC THAT DISCOURAGES VIOLENCE AND ENCOURAGES CALM.

GM Notes

EPPI IS NOT A QUEST-GIVER IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE. SHE DOESN'T SEND THE PARTY OUT ON ADVENTURES. BUT SHE IS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION, COMFORT, AND OCCASIONAL HELP FOR THOSE WHO'VE EARNED HER TRUST. SHE CAN SERVE AS A MORAL COMPASS FOR THE PARTY, HER QUIET DISAPPROVAL OR CAUTIOUS APPROVAL REFLECTING ON THEIR CHOICES. NEVER ALLOW HER TO BECOME A CRUTCH OR A SOLUTION MACHINE -- SHE HELPS BUT EXPECTS HER PATRONS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

CAPITULUM

MARCUS "STEADY HANDS" VOSS

ROLE: Head Bartender and General Manager

APPEARANCE: A stocky man in his mid-fifties with a weathered face and calloused hands. He has thick, grey-shot dark hair and a scar across his left cheekbone from an old fight. He moves behind the bar with economical grace, never wasting a motion.

MANNER: Gruff but genuinely good-natured. He has a memory for faces and drinks -- if you ordered a particular drink once, Marcus remembers.

He gives the impression of someone who's seen a lot and isn't easily shocked. He has a kind word for regulars and a cold eye for troublemakers.

Secret

MARCUS IS A FORMER SOLDIER FROM THE ALBION EMPIRE, DISCHARGED HONORABLY BUT CARRYING SCARS -- PHYSICAL AND OTHERWISE -- FROM HIS SERVICE. HE CAME TO THE PUB LOOKING FOR WORK AND FOUND SOMETHING BETTER: A PLACE WHERE HIS PAST DIDN'T DEFINE HIM. HE'S DEEPLY PROTECTIVE OF EPPY AND THE PUB'S PEACE, AND HE'S CAPABLE OF HANDLING TROUBLE IN WAYS THAT DON'T INVOLVE WORDS.

GM Notes

MARCUS IS THE SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT NPC IN THE PUB. HE HANDLES THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS, MANAGES STAFF, AND MEDIATES MINOR DISPUTES. HE'S ALSO A GOOD CONTACT FOR THE PARTY FOR PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY AND ITS UNDERWORLD. HE KNOWS PEOPLE AND KNOWS WHAT'S HAPPENING. BUT HE WON'T BETRAY EPPY'S CONFIDENCE FOR ANYTHING.

CAPITULUM

FENNELLY CROSS

ROLE: Cook and Kitchen Manager

APPEARANCE: A sharp-featured woman in her early forties with bright red hair worn loose. She's lean and tall, with burn scars on her forearms from years of kitchen work. She moves like she's constantly in a hurry, all quick motions and efficient steps.

MANNER: Nervous energy contained in a professional shell. She speaks quickly and directly, often trailing off mid-sentence when she gets focused on her work. She's proud of her cooking and the food that comes from her kitchen. She has patience for people who respect the food and very little patience for those who don't.

Secret

FENNELLY IS A REFUGEE FROM THE BORDERS OF THE KINGDOM OF TERRASSIA, WHERE HER VILLAGE WAS DESTROYED DURING ONE OF THE WAR'S EARLY CAMPAIGNS. SHE WAS THE VILLAGE'S BAKER AND HEALER BEFORE THAT, AND EPPY RECOGNIZED SOMETHING IN HER WHEN SHE ARRIVED IN KORMOR KIRAK BROKEN AND LOST. EPPY GAVE HER A HOME AND A PURPOSE.

GM Notes

FENNELLY IS APPROACHABLE BUT NOT WARM. SHE'LL TALK ABOUT FOOD AND COOKING GLADLY BUT DOESN'T HAVE MUCH PATIENCE FOR SOCIAL NICETIES. A CHARACTER WHO SHOWS GENUINE INTEREST IN HER WORK CAN EARN HER RESPECT AND TRUST. A CHARACTER WHO'S RUDE ABOUT THE FOOD WILL GET A SHARP RESPONSE.

CAPITULUM

DAME ELGA KROSS

ROLE: Regular Patron, Retired Soldier, Information Broker

APPEARANCE: A tall, broad-shouldered woman in her mid-sixties with silver-white hair cut short and practical. She has the posture and bearing of someone who spent decades in command. She has a scarred face and only one eye, the other covered with a patch of dark leather. She usually wears quality clothes of neutral colors, but you can see the outline of weapons beneath them.

MANNER: Formal, precise, and dangerously intelligent. She speaks little but when she speaks, people listen. She has a quiet authority that commands respect. She's not unkind, but she's not warm either.

Secret

DAME KROSS WAS A HIGH-RANKING OFFICER IN THE ALBION EMPIRE'S MILITARY. SHE RETIRED UNDER UNCLEAR CIRCUMSTANCES AND CAME TO KORMOR KIRAK, WHERE SHE NOW GATHERS INFORMATION AND SOMETIMES OFFERS IT -- FOR A PRICE -- TO THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD IT. SHE HAS CONTACTS THROUGHOUT BOTH THE EMPIRE AND THE KINGDOM. SHE'S NOT EVIL, BUT SHE'S PRAGMATIC TO THE POINT OF AMORALITY.

GM Notes

DAME KROSS IS A DANGER IN THE PUB -- NOT BECAUSE SHE'LL CAUSE VIOLENCE (SHE RESPECTS EPPY'S RULES), BUT BECAUSE SHE'S A SOURCE OF DARK INFORMATION AND CONNECTIONS TO THE CITY'S UNDERBELLY. SHE'S USEFUL FOR PLOT PURPOSES BUT SHOULD BE TREATED AS GENUINELY POWERFUL AND GENUINELY DANGEROUS. A PARTY THAT GETS ON HER WRONG SIDE HAS MADE A SERIOUS ENEMY.

CAPITULUM

MENU AND SPECIALTIES

The food at Eppy's is simple but exceptionally good, made with high-quality ingredients and herbs from Eppy's garden. Everything tastes better here than it has any right to, as though the cooking itself is infused with care and something else, something just slightly magical.

CAPITULUM

COMMON OFFERINGS

- Bread: Heavy, hearty loaves made daily, served warm with butter and herbs. The bread here is almost a meal in itself.

- Stew: The standard is a mountain stew of root vegetables and whatever meat is available, seasoned with herbs from the garden.

It's warming and nourishing in a way that goes beyond simple food.

- Meat: Usually served roasted, seasoned simply but perfectly, with roasted potatoes and vegetables.

- Fish: When available, fresh mountain trout, prepared simply or in a broth.

- Cheese: Local cheeses from herding communities outside the city, served with bread and fruit.

CAPITULUM

SPECIALTIES

CAPITULUM

HEARTHFIRE STEW

Eppy's signature dish: a thick stew of root vegetables, meat, and beans, heavily seasoned with rosemary, thyme, and other herbs from her garden. It comes in a bread bowl, edible when broken up and mixed into the stew. Those who eat it report feeling warmth spreading through them, muscle soreness easing, minor wounds beginning to close. It's expensive (8 silver coins) but genuinely restorative. A character who's been beaten or frozen can recover more quickly after eating this stew.

CAPITULUM

DEEP MOUNTAIN BREAD

A dark, dense bread made with barley and rye, studded with seeds and dried fruit. It's served warm and tastes somehow both ancient and alive. People come back for this bread alone. It pairs perfectly with any meal. It keeps for days without going stale.

CAPITULUM

STARJOBH WINE

A pale, faintly glowing wine that comes from Eppy's personal stores.

It's rarely available and serves only a few times a year for guests

Eppy considers special. The taste is light and sweet with an undertone of herbs. Those who drink it report feeling more clear-headed and perceptive for hours afterward. It's extraordinarily expensive (20 gold coins for a single glass) and Eppy will only serve it to those she trusts or wishes to honor.

CAPITULUM

HEALER'S TEA

A hot tea of herbs from Eppy's garden, served in a simple clay cup. It tastes faintly of honey and herbs, warming and slightly sweet. Eppy serves this free to anyone who comes in looking unwell or hurt. Regular customers swear it settles upset stomachs, clears mental fog, and helps sleep come naturally.

CAPITULUM

EVENING
SPIRITS

ALES

AND

The bar stocks local ales that vary seasonally, mountain wine that ranges from rough to surprisingly refined, and several spirits of varying origins and quality. Eppy has connections throughout the Videk region and occasionally obtains bottles of rarer spirits. Nothing here is cheap, but nothing is poor quality either.

RANDOM PUB EVENTS (d8)

Roll on this table when you need something to happen in the pub during a session, or consult it for inspiration.

1. MUSJECAN'S NIGHT

A traveling bard or local musician arrives at the pub and, if welcomed, sets up on the platform. The music is genuinely good, and the mood of the pub lifts. Someone inevitably requests a song, and there might be dancing near the fire. This is a night for social encounters and for establishing atmosphere. A particular song might remind someone in the party of something important, or they might meet an interesting patron who approaches them during the music.

2. HEATED ARGUMENT

Two regular patrons who normally get along find themselves in a heated argument. The argument is about something trivial (whose turn it is to buy the next round, a dispute over a game of dice) but is escalating toward real anger. Eppy will intervene before violence erupts, defusing the situation with a word and fresh drinks, but for a moment the peace of the pub feels fragile. This reminds the party that Eppy's neutrality is something she actively maintains, not something that happens naturally.

3. MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

A hooded figure enters the pub, orders a drink, and sits quietly in a corner, clearly waiting for someone. They don't draw attention deliberately, but they're interesting enough that people notice them.

If approached, they're polite but vague. They might be waiting for the party, or for someone else, or for no one at all. This is a mystery hook

-- investigate further or leave it alone.

4. DELIVERY ARRIVAL

A merchant or tradesperson arrives with a delivery for the pub. The delivery is normal (flour, vegetables, ale barrels) but it provides an excuse to move characters out to the stable yard or into the kitchen.

The delivery person might have news from outside the city, or they might become a recurrent NPC if the party pays attention to them.

5. OLD FRIENDS

A regular patron who hasn't been in the pub for a while arrives, and there's genuine warmth from Eppy and the other regulars. They've been away (traveling, ill, or handling some personal matter) and they're clearly happy to be back. Eppy fuses over them, providing special food and a good seat. If the party has been in the pub long enough to be considered semi-regulars, they might be briefly acknowledged by both the returning regular and the existing regulars with the familiarity of community.

6. TENSION BETWEEN FACTIONS

An Albion officer and a Terrasian merchant both present, and tension rises between them. Words are sharp, postures stiffen, and for a moment it seems like violence might erupt. Eppy steps in firmly and quietly, reminding everyone of the pub's rules. The moment passes, but it's a stark reminder that the war is still outside the door, held at bay only by Eppy's strength and rules. The party might be called on to help mediate, or they might simply observe.

7. QUIET NIGHT

The pub is unusually quiet. The fire is the primary sound. The few patrons present are quiet and introspective, or wrapped in private conversations. This is an opportunity for intimate roleplay, for the party to have conversations with each other or with Eppy, for the establishment to become truly restful. These nights are valuable for character development and emotional beats.

8. TABERN BRAWL

A group of rowdy off-duty soldiers or dock workers enters the pub, drink heavily, and start to become destructive. A game of dice turns into accusations of cheating, and fists are about to fly. Eppy appears, quiet and direct, and bars the door. "Not here," she says simply. If they try to ignore her, Marcus appears from behind the bar, and it becomes clear that both of them are more than capable of stopping the trouble.

The soldiers back down, knowing they're outmatched and also knowing that any violence in Eppy's will result in permanent banishment. This shows the party why the pub is truly safe -- Eppy and her staff enforce the rules absolutely.

CAPITULUM

CAMPAIGN USE

CAPITULUM

EPHY'S AS HOME BASE

The pub functions best when it becomes the party's true home base within the larger city. This means establishing certain baseline behaviors and expectations:

- **Ownership of Space:** Let the party claim a table or a corner as their own. On repeat visits, describe the regulars acknowledging their presence, the fire reaching just the right temperature when they arrive, their favorite drinks being partially poured before they order. This creates attachment.
- **Ephy's Character:** Consistency is key. Ephy should always be warm but not intrusive, helpful but not controlling, and absolutely committed to the pub's neutrality and safety. Her consistency becomes a comfort.
- **Recovery and Downtime:** Make the pub the obvious place to spend downtime between adventures. Describe sleeping in the warm guest rooms, eating Ephy's food, recovering from wounds. Let the party enjoy these moments rather than rushing past them.
- **Personal Attention:** Ephy should occasionally show knowledge of the party's activities and whereabouts that comes from listening and caring, not from spying. "Heard you were dealing with something dangerous up in the passes. I made extra stew. Eat." This kind of attention deepens investment.

CAPITULUM

INFORMATION AND RUMORS

The pub is an ideal place for information to flow, but information should not come free. The mechanics should work like this:

- Casual Gossip: Anyone in the common room overhears basic information: news of trade routes, general understanding of city politics, obviously public knowledge. This flows naturally during the pub experience.
- Bard's Tale: The musician or a talkative regular might provide more interesting rumors -- things heard in passing, speculation, stories of strange sightings. This costs nothing but the price of a drink and creates atmosphere.
- Marcus's Practical Information: Marcus knows what's happening in the city in practical terms. Where to find certain goods, which areas are safe, which NPCs are trustworthy. He charges modestly (1-2 gold for significant information) or provides it free to the party if they've earned his trust.
- Eppy's Knowledge: Eppy knows more than she lets on, and her information is genuinely valuable. But she won't simply give it out. She trades information for information, or she provides it to people she cares about, or she hints at things trusting the party to draw conclusions. Getting direct information from Eppy means the party has impressed her.
- Dame Kross's Intelligence: Serious information with serious implications, of the type that shapes campaigns. She charges substantially and always wants something in return, whether coin or future favors. She knows people and connections throughout both the

Empire and Kingdom. She's dangerous but useful.

CAPITULUM

SAFETY AND EJECTION

The pub is safe, but this safety is not unconditional:

- Eppy's Rules: Violence is not permitted under any circumstances.

Violation of this rule results in immediate ejection and potential permanent banishment. This gives the party a true safe haven.

- Complications at the Door: While no violence happens inside, complications can arise when the party leaves. An enemy might wait outside. An ambush might come at the back gate. The pub itself is safe, but it's not isolated from the world's dangers.

- Trust and Service: The longer the party stays in the pub, the more

Eppy might ask of them. A party that the pub-keeper cares about might be asked to help someone, to retrieve something, to serve as witnesses. This complicates their status from customer to something like friend.

- Underworld Attention: As the party becomes known and successful, underworld elements might use the pub as a place to approach them, knowing violence won't happen. This brings complications into the safe space but doesn't violate it.

CAPITULUM

BUJEDJING RELATIONSHIPS

The pub succeeds when the party cares about the people there:

- Regular Interactions: Use NPCs consistently. Have them notice the party, ask about their activities, develop opinions and relationships. Over time, these become actual friendships.
- Vulnerability: Allow Eppy and her staff to show vulnerability occasionally. A moment when Eppy seems worried, when Marcus mentions an old wound bothering him, when Fennelly vents about a difficult supplier. This deepens the relationship from transactional to genuine.
- Small Kindnesses: Have Eppy do small things for the party: prepare their favorite meal when they arrive, leave remedies in their room, provide information that saves them heartache. These aren't required but are given out of genuine care.
- Moral Compass: Let Eppy's quiet approval or disapproval matter to the party. A character who makes a dark choice might feel Eppy's distant courtesy the next visit. A character who makes a good choice might receive a genuine smile and a comment: "That was the right thing. I'm glad it was you who did it."

By investing in Eppy's pub and its inhabitants, you create a true home base that the party will want to return to, a place that becomes emotionally important, and a safe harbor in a world of complications and danger.

CAPITULUM

TERRA SOTTO

CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

Beneath the orderly streets and legitimate markets of Kormor Kirak lies a second city -- a place of shadow and transaction where goods forbidden by law change hands, where the desperate and the powerful meet without witnesses, and where the Zoldakeen criminal element conducts business beyond the reach of the Red Guard. Terra Sotto is the underworld black market, a network of chambers and passages that runs beneath the official city. Its entrances are scattered and deliberately obscure -- a hidden door in a basement wine cellar, a grate that opens onto passages beneath the older quarters, a tunnel entrance concealed in the foundations of abandoned buildings. Those who know how to find them move between the world above and the lawless world below. Those who don't are not meant to know.

The black market that operates here deals in contraband that would bring execution in the light: poisons and forbidden alchemical substances, weapons beyond those licensed by the Queen, creatures both mundane and supernatural captured and held for sale to those with money enough and morals flexible enough to own them. Here, too, are the artifacts of the old gods -- cursed objects, tainted relics, things that should not be disturbed from their rest. The market operates under its own rules, far harsher than those of the Kereskedo Market above. There is no Merchant Guild here to settle disputes, no Red Guard to enforce order. Only the strong survive, and only those with backing survive in comfort.

The atmosphere of Terra Sotto is one of danger held in careful balance. The various traders and crime lords maintain a precarious peace because the alternative -- open war in the tunnels -- would destroy everyone's interests. But this peace is thin. Betrayal is always possible. Theft is always punished. The

air smells of damp stone, torch smoke, alchemical residue, and fear. The darkness here is not the peaceful darkness of night but the suffocating darkness of underground places where sunlight has never reached.

Navigating Terra Sotto requires both knowledge and protection. Those who come here alone are marked as prey. Those who come with the backing of a criminal faction or with sufficient gold to interest a protector might move more freely. The market has its own prices and its own logic. Here, money buys more than goods -- it buys the possibility of continued existence.

CAPITULUM

THE DESCENT

Not one location but many -- the hidden entrances that lead from the city proper into the black market below. Each entrance is different, each connected to different networks of tunnels and passages, each guarded or monitored by those who control it. Some are protected by crude locks and bars. Others are guarded by humans -- enforcers of the crime lords who control the territory. Still others are marked only by knowledge: hidden doors that appear to be simple structural elements or deliberately built false walls.

The passages themselves are claustrophobic and poorly lit. Torches burn at intervals, set in iron sconces, but many passages between the major chambers exist in near-total darkness. The stone underfoot is ancient and worn slick by water in places. The air is cold and carries the smell of moisture and slow rot. Rats skitter in the darkness. Something larger moves in some of the deeper passages -- whether cave-dwelling creatures or things less natural remains uncertain.

Descending into Terra Sotto is a deliberate crossing of a threshold. The moment one steps through a hidden entrance and into the passages beyond, one has made a choice to leave the Queen's law behind. The Red Guard does not follow into these depths. No backup comes from above. In the darkness, a person is alone with whoever they've come to meet and with whatever else shares the tunnels.

GM Notes

THE DESCENT IS THE GATEWAY TO ALL THAT FOLLOWS. A PC'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THESE HIDDEN ENTRANCES SHOULD ESTABLISH THE DANGER AND ILLEGALITY OF WHAT COMES NEXT. FINDING A SPECIFIC ENTRANCE REQUIRES EITHER KNOWLEDGE FROM CONTACTS OR SUCCESSFUL INVESTIGATION. USING AN ENTRANCE WITHOUT THE PROPER ARRANGEMENT MIGHT RESULT IN BEING TRAPPED IN PASSAGES OR FACING GUARDS. THE TUNNELS THEMSELVES CAN BE USED FOR AMBUSHES, FOR GETTING LOST, OR FOR DRAMATIC SCENES OF DESCENT INTO DANGER.

Connections

EACH ENTRANCE CONNECTS TO DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE BLACK MARKET BELOW. THE DESCENT'S VARIOUS PASSAGES LEAD TO THE NIGHT MARKET OR TO OTHER SPECIALIZED SECTIONS DEPENDING ON WHICH ENTRY POINT IS USED.

CAPITULUM

THE NIGHT MARKET

The primary trading floor of Terra Sotto, a vast natural cavern that has been expanded and opened up by deliberate labor over many years. Torches burn from tall iron stands arranged around the space, casting uneven light and deep shadows. The walls are unfinished stone, rough and damp. The floor is packed earth, worn hard by the passage of feet over decades or centuries. There is no ceiling -- merely the vast darkness above, where bats and other flying things move in the heights.

Merchants operate here from permanent or semi-permanent stalls -- crude wooden structures built against the walls or freestanding in the center of the space. Some merchants are stationary, selling the same goods in the same locations session after session. Others rotate, moving their operations to different locations as need or danger demands. The goods on display are whatever Terra Sotto demands: alchemical components, certain poisons (wolfbane, mandrake, monkshood), weapons that would be illegal in the regulated markets above, bundles of documents, forged papers, stolen property ready to be resold. Prices are negotiated fiercely. No coin is refused if the amount is sufficient. No goods are guaranteed -- a buyer takes what they get, and complaints are addressed through violence or the intercession of crime lord intermediaries.

The crowd here is diverse and dangerous. Thieves and cutthroats rub shoulders with desperate people seeking forbidden medicines for sick relatives. Merchants from the criminal organizations operate alongside independent traders seeking survival in the only place that will have them. Customers range from the city's underworld to visiting adventurers seeking equipment that cannot be purchased in light. The protocols of the black market are simple: no

questions asked, no judgments made, no trust extended. A merchant will sell poison to someone planning assassination. The merchant will not warn the victim. The victim is not the merchant's concern.

GM Notes

THE NIGHT MARKET IS WHERE PLAYERS ENCOUNTER THE BLACK MARKET'S FULL RANGE OF OFFERINGS. IT'S A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT, POISONS, OR INFORMATION THAT THEY CANNOT FIND ELSEWHERE. ENCOUNTERS HERE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE MORAL COMPLEXITY OF PARTICIPATING IN BLACK MARKET TRANSACTIONS. THE MARKET IS ALSO A GATHERING PLACE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CRIME IN THE CITY AND ABOUT THE LARGER UNDERWORLD. OVERHEARD CONVERSATIONS CAN REVEAL PLOTS, HINT AT LARGER CONSPIRACIES, OR SUGGEST ADVENTURE OPPORTUNITIES. THE PHYSICAL SPACE -- TORCHES AND SHADOWS AND UNEVEN TERRAIN -- MAKES IT SUITABLE FOR AMBUSHES, FOR SURVEILLANCE, OR FOR DRAMATIC ENCOUNTERS.

Connections

THE NIGHT MARKET IS THE HEART OF TERRA SOTTO. MOST OTHER SECTIONS CONNECT THROUGH IT OR THROUGH PASSAGES THAT LEAD FROM IT. IT IS ALSO THE PRIMARY LOCATION WHERE NEWCOMERS ARRIVE.

CAPITULUM

THE PITS

A lower level of Terra Sotto, a section of carved stone where fighting rings have been established for both entertainment and profit. Blood has stained the stone so thoroughly that no amount of cleaning will remove it completely. The smell of that blood lingers in the air. Multiple fighting arenas exist here -- rings carved into the stone floor or bordered by crude walls of stacked rock and timber. Spectators watch from elevated positions, betting on the outcome of fights between gladiators, mercenaries, and creatures captured and held for entertainment.

The creatures themselves are held in pens carved into the stone or built from iron cages. Some are mundane: war dogs, vicious mountain predators, animals trained for combat. Others are stranger -- creatures that seem to have come from places other than the natural world, or animals that display behavior and intelligence beyond what is normal. A few show clear signs of magical enhancement or alteration. All are maintained in conditions of careful deprivation -- fed enough to keep them alive and fierce but not comfortable. A creature that has been caged and mistreated for months or years develops a fury that makes for good entertainment.

The Pits are run by a crime lord known only as The Master, who maintains absolute authority over this section of Terra Sotto. He arranges fights, collects bets, and ensures that disputes over wagering are settled quickly and permanently. The Master is rarely seen, but his judgment is swift. Those who cheat at betting in the Pits are not arrested -- they are taken to the fighting rings and given to one of the creatures as entertainment themselves.

GM Notes

THE PITS SERVE MULTIPLE PURPOSES IN A CAMPAIGN. THEY ARE A PLACE WHERE CHARACTERS CAN GATHER INFORMATION THROUGH OVERHEARD CONVERSATIONS AMONG SPECTATORS. THEY ARE A SOURCE OF CREATURES THAT MIGHT BE ESCAPED OR STOLEN. THEY ARE ALSO A LOCATION OF MORAL DANGER -- CHARACTERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE BETTING OR WHO WATCH THE FIGHTS ARE PARTICIPATING IN SOMETHING CRUEL. A CHARACTER MIGHT BE FORCED INTO THE RINGS THEMSELVES IF THEY FALL AFOUL OF THE PITS' AUTHORITIES. THE PITS ARE ALSO A PLACE WHERE THE UNDERWORLD'S POWER STRUCTURE BECOMES VISIBLE. THE STRONGEST FIGHTERS, THE MOST FEARED CREATURES, THE HIGHEST-PROFILE EVENTS -- THESE DRAW THE CITY'S CRIMINAL LEADERSHIP.

Connections

THE PITS CONNECT TO THE NIGHT MARKET THROUGH A SERIES OF PASSAGES. THE CREATURE PENS ALSO CONNECT TO HOLDING AREAS WHERE NEW ANIMALS ARE BROUGHT IN AND PROCESSED BEFORE BEING INTRODUCED TO THE RINGS.

CAPITULUM

THE APOTHECARY

A chamber in Terra Sotto dedicated entirely to the creation and sale of alchemical substances -- poisons, drugs, and medicines that exist outside the legal framework. A single alchemist, known only as MOSS (so named for the green growth that stains her skin and clothes), operates this space. She is ancient and sharp, her hands stained with chemical burns, her eyes clouded by exposure to fumes. She speaks little but understands everything.

The Apothecary smells of ingredients both pleasant and foul: exotic herbs, chemical compounds, the sharp tang of acids and bases. Bottles and vials line the walls, each labeled in a system known only to Moss. Copper pots and glass tubes cover wooden tables. A small furnace burns constantly, warming the space and distilling substances. Moss works continuously, creating new batches, experimenting with new compounds, refusing requests that don't interest her.

The products sold here range from poison to medicine with nothing differentiating them except intent. Wolfsbane, properly applied, can kill or heal depending on dosage and use. Certain mushroom extracts can induce sleep, madness, or death. Rare herbs imported at great cost can extend life, restore youth, or destroy the mind. Moss does not judge the purchaser's intentions. She sells to assassins and to healers. She doesn't differentiate. The money spends the same either way.

Prices are high. Moss has no interest in being approached by the poor. Gold -- real coin or equivalent value in gems or trade goods -- is the language she speaks. Those without sufficient wealth are turned away. Those with wealth but insufficient courtesy are also turned away. Moss respects competence, honesty, and the willingness to accept that her prices are final.

GM Notes

THE APOTHECARY IS A LOCATION WHERE CHARACTERS CAN OBTAIN POISONS, DRUGS, OR RARE ALCHEMICAL COMPONENTS NECESSARY FOR THEIR PLANS OR FOR CRAFTING MAGICAL ITEMS. VISITING MOSS IS AN EXERCISE IN NAVIGATING THE BLACK MARKET WITHOUT ANTAGONIZING SOMEONE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BE GENUINELY DANGEROUS. MOSS HERSELF CAN BE AN INFORMATION SOURCE IF APPROACHED CORRECTLY -- SHE HEARS EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN TERRA SOTTO, FROM THE MOUTHS OF THOSE WHO COME TO PURCHASE HER WARES. SHE IS ALSO COMPLETELY AMORAL. A PLAYER CHARACTER MIGHT FACE MORAL WEIGHT IN DEALING WITH SOMEONE WHO WILL HAPPILY SELL LETHAL POISONS TO KNOWN MURDERERS.

Connections

THE APOTHECARY IS A SEPARATE CHAMBER ACCESSED FROM THE NIGHT MARKET THROUGH A NARROW PASSAGE. FEW PATHS LEAD TO IT FROM OTHER SECTIONS OF TERRA SOTTO -- IT IS SOMEWHAT ISOLATED BY DESIGN, MAKING IT EASIER FOR MOSS TO CONTROL ACCESS.

CAPITULUM

THE VAULT OF CURSIVIES

A chamber hewn from stone and lined with shelves that contain objects of power and danger -- cursed artifacts, relics of the old gods, magical items of uncertain provenance and unstable properties, and other objects that should not exist in the hands of mortals. The air here feels heavier than elsewhere in Terra Sotto, and characters with any sensitivity to the supernatural should feel a wrongness, a pressure, a sense that they are in a place where normal rules do not apply.

The Vault is guarded not by human sentries but by wards and protections set into the stone itself. Those who touch certain objects without the proper precautions find themselves burned, paralyzed, or marked by curses. The proprietor -- a woman named KETH who is older than she should be, whose eyes are sometimes focused on things in the world and sometimes on things no one else can see -- maintains absolute control over access. She requires payment before showing patrons what is available, and she requires additional payment before items are removed from the Vault. She also requires a promise: anything purchased here, if it becomes a threat to the stability of Kormor Kirak, she will hunt down and reclaim. She enforces this promise with magic and with relentless purpose.

The Vault's inventory is not static. Items appear and disappear. Some are sold. Some are reclaimed by Keth. Some seem to move themselves, as though the objects within have their own motivations and the Vault is merely temporary shelter. The objects themselves are often labeled with warning inscriptions, in

languages both modern and ancient. Many are clearly dangerous. A few are merely strange, their purpose unknown and their safety uncertain.

GM Notes

THE VAULT IS WHERE CHARACTERS CAN FIND POWERFUL MAGICAL ITEMS, BUT AT A COST. THE ITEMS THEMSELVES ARE LIKELY TO BE DANGEROUS, UNSTABLE, OR CURSED. KETH IS NOT A CONVENTIONAL MERCHANT -- SHE IS A GUARDIAN OF DANGEROUS THINGS, AND SHE TAKES HER ROLE SERIOUSLY. THE VAULT SERVES THE CAMPAIGN AS A SOURCE OF POWERFUL MAGICAL ITEMS THAT COME WITH COMPLICATIONS AND DRAWBACKS. A CHARACTER MIGHT ACQUIRE THE VERY THING THEY NEED, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT POSSESSING IT HAS CONSEQUENCES THEY DIDN'T ANTICIPATE. KETH HERSELF IS A POTENTIAL LONG-TERM NPC -- AN AGENT OF SOME UNKNOWN FORCE THAT PRESERVES BALANCE OR PREVENTS THE SPREAD OF UNCONTROLLED MAGICAL CORRUPTION. SHE MIGHT BECOME AN ALLY, AN ANTAGONIST, OR SIMPLY A CONSTANT COMPLICATION.

Connections

THE VAULT IS ACCESSED THROUGH A SINGLE HEAVY DOOR CARVED FROM BLACK STONE, LOCATED IN A QUIET SECTION OF THE NIGHT MARKET. NO OTHER PASSAGES LEAD TO OR FROM IT -- KETH DELIBERATELY MAINTAINS ITS ISOLATION.

CAPITULUM

BJELJKOJ WOODS

CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

Beyond the city walls, past the Kereskedo Market's outer stalls and the neighborhoods of common workers, the land begins to rise toward mountains. In the valleys and on the slopes surrounding Kormor Kirak, forests grow -- ancient stands of pine and fir, twisted oaks, and stranger trees whose names have been forgotten. Gillikoi Woods is the most substantial of these forests, a place of significant size where the mountain valley's floor is covered in dense growth, where ancient trees form a canopy that dims the light even at midday, and where the oldest trees predate human settlement by centuries or millennia.

The woods are known to be dangerous. Things live in them that shouldn't be: creatures drawn by the necromantic activity that seems to have infected Kormor Kirak, things native to the deep forest that actively hunt humans, and stranger presences that have no name or clear nature. People disappear in Gillikoi Woods with regularity. The Red Guard maintains a presence on the main trail but does not patrol the deeper sections. Merchants know the routes and avoid leaving them. Locals speak of the woods with respect and fear in equal measure.

Yet the woods are also used, deliberately and regularly, by those who wish to meet without being observed by the city's various factions. A conversation between Terrassians and Albions cannot happen in the city without triggering conflict or at least suspicion. But in Gillikoi Woods, far from witnesses and Red Guard surveillance, such meetings can occur. The woods are more neutral than the city. The danger they pose is impersonal -- the woods kill indiscriminately and do not care about Albion or Terrassian politics. This strange impartiality makes them more trustworthy than any treaty or agreement made by humans.

The woods have a quality of age and awareness. The oldest trees seem to observe those who walk among them. The spacing of the growth, while appearing random, has a quality of deliberation to it. Those who spend significant time in the woods report a sense that the forest itself is aware of them, is judging them, is perhaps deciding whether they are permitted to leave. This sensation may be imagination or psychological response to genuine danger. It may also be something more. The woods predate the city. They predate the current kingdoms. They may have their own consciousness, their own purposes, their own awareness of the humans who move through them.

CAPITULUM

THE WARDEN PATH

The only maintained trail through Gillikoi Woods, a path that is cleared and marked, making passage relatively safe compared to traveling off-trail. The path is perhaps ten to fifteen feet wide in most places, with vegetation cleared back on both sides. Stone markers at regular intervals indicate the way. The footing is stable, though muddy in seasons of rain and scattered with roots and rocks that can trip the unwary.

The Warden Path appears to be maintained by someone or something, though no one has determined who. Trees that fall across the path are eventually moved. Significant growth is cleared back. The markers are replaced when they become too weathered to be useful. Some believe the path is maintained by an old pact between the city's founders and whatever inhabits the woods. Others believe the woods themselves maintain the path, for reasons of their own.

Traveling the Warden Path is safer than leaving it, but safety is relative. Creatures that hunt the woods still approach the path, though they seem reluctant to cross the cleared boundary into the open. On the path, travelers can move with reasonable speed. Eyes watch from the darkness of the forest on both sides, but direct attack is uncommon. The real danger comes from stopping, from lingering, from sleeping on the path at night. The woods seem more aggressive after dark, as though the night gives license to things that are constrained during daylight.

The path takes several hours to walk, depending on direction and pace. It enters the woods near the eastern gate of Kormor Kirak and emerges in the foothills on the western side, in the direction of the Hallaset Fields. The elevation gain is gradual but consistent. About midway along the path, the

descent begins. Travelers moving west gain the high ground as they progress, giving them vantage points of the city and the surrounding valley.

GM Notes

THE WARDEN PATH IS THE SAFE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS, AND PARTIES MIGHT USE IT FOR RELATIVELY ROUTINE TRAVEL. HOWEVER, THE SENSE OF BEING WATCHED, THE MARKERS' MYSTERIOUS MAINTENANCE, AND THE RULES ABOUT TRAVEL AT NIGHT ALL ESTABLISH THAT THE WOODS ARE NOT TRULY SAFE, MERELY SAFER. THE PATH CAN BE USED FOR STRAIGHT ENCOUNTERS OR FOR ATMOSPHERIC SCENES. A PARTY TRAVELING THE PATH MIGHT PASS OTHER TRAVELERS, MIGHT SEE SIGNS OF THINGS MOVING IN THE WOODS, MIGHT HEAR SOUNDS THAT THEY CAN'T IDENTIFY. THEY SHOULD REACH THE DESTINATION WITHOUT INCIDENT BUT WITH A PERSISTENT SENSE OF UNEASE.

Connections

THE WARDEN PATH CONNECTS THE EASTERN GATE OF KORMOR KIRAK TO THE WESTERN FOOTHILLS AND THE HALLASET FIELDS BEYOND. SECONDARY PATHS AND SHORTCUTS LEAVE THE MAIN TRAIL AT VARIOUS POINTS, LEADING TO THE DEEPER WOODS.

CAPITULUM

THE HOLLOW

A natural clearing in the forest, perhaps five hundred feet across, where the dense growth opens suddenly to reveal a roughly circular space. Tall trees ring the clearing, and the ground within is relatively clear -- grass and moss with scattered rocks, but few of the bushes and undergrowth that characterize much of the forest. A spring rises in the clearing's center, creating a small pool of clear water surrounded by smooth stones. The clearing seems to be deliberately maintained in its open state, though again, no one admits to doing the maintaining.

The Hollow is used regularly for clandestine meetings. Factions that cannot be seen together in the city meet here. Negotiations occur in the clearing under the watching eyes of the old trees. Deals are made, agreements reached, and sometimes violence occurs when agreements fall apart. The clearing has acquired a reputation as neutral ground -- a place where agreements are more likely to be honored because all parties know the Hollow itself will punish those who break their word. This belief may be superstition. It may also be earned through long experience.

The water in the spring is clean and cold, safe to drink. Those who drink from the Hollow's spring report a clarity of thought afterward, a sense of sharpness. Whether this is genuine effect or placebo remains uncertain. Many who come to the Hollow for meetings drink from the spring before conducting business.

The clearing is vulnerable at night. The ring of trees provides cover for observers and for threats. Those who meet here at night do so at increased risk. During daylight, the clearing feels relatively safe because sight lines are clear and escape routes exist in multiple directions. Visibility and light seem to

matter to the creatures of the woods -- they are more aggressive in darkness than in light.

GM Notes

THE HOLLOW IS WHERE SIGNIFICANT MEETINGS OCCUR AND WHERE THE POLITICAL TENSIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN CAN BE MADE VISIBLE. A PARTY MIGHT WITNESS A MEETING HERE, MIGHT BE HIRED TO CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE, MIGHT MEET CONTACTS IN THE CLEARING, OR MIGHT HAVE THE CLEARING BECOME THE SITE OF VIOLENCE WHEN NEGOTIATIONS FAIL. THE SPRING CAN SERVE AS A FOCUS FOR SCENES OF REVELATION AND CLARITY -- A CHARACTER MIGHT RECEIVE INSIGHT, HAVE A VISION, OR SIMPLY FEEL THAT THEY ARE THINKING CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE CAMPAIGN. THE SENSE OF THE TREES WATCHING, JUDGING, ADDS AN EXTRA DIMENSION OF PRESSURE TO NEGOTIATIONS.

Connections

THE HOLLOW IS ACCESSIBLE FROM THE WARDEN PATH THROUGH A MARKED BUT LESS-MAINTAINED SIDE PATH. IT IS ALSO CONNECTED TO THE DEEP WOOD THROUGH NARROW TRAILS THAT ARE HARDER TO FOLLOW.

CAPITULUM

THE DEEP WOOD

The forest beyond the Warden Path and the safer edges of Gillikoi Woods, where the growth becomes denser, where light barely penetrates the canopy, where the ground is covered in a thick layer of rotting leaves and fungus, and where the temperature seems perpetually cold and damp. The Deep Wood is where the dangerous things live. The creatures here are old and predatory. Some are natural forest predators: mountain cats, bears, wolves. Others are stranger -- things that seem to exist partly in the physical world and partly elsewhere, things that hunt with intelligence and purpose, things that leave no tracks and kill without warning.

Traveling in the Deep Wood requires strength and experience. The ground is treacherous. Roots reach out to catch feet. Sudden drops conceal themselves beneath leaf litter. Streams running unseen beneath the forest floor can become sudden sinkholes. The darkness is disorienting. Sounds are muffled by the density of growth and the thickness of the organic matter underfoot. A party that ventures into the Deep Wood should feel acutely aware that they are far from help and that the forest is not passive terrain but an active force working against their progress.

The Deep Wood also harbors things that are not strictly alive or dead. The necromantic corruption that has infected Kormor Kirak seems to have spread to this forest. Spirits of the dead wander here. The line between living creatures and undead seems blurred. Some things encountered in the Deep Wood are clearly monsters. Others are almost but not quite human, as though whatever animates them is caught between death and life.

Yet the Deep Wood is also where the old things live -- creatures of genuine power, entities of the wildness that existed before humans came to this valley. These things are dangerous and strange, but they are not inherently hostile. A party that approaches them with respect and understanding might negotiate rather than fight. These encounters are the most valuable and the most dangerous, because the Deep Wood's oldest inhabitants can offer knowledge, power, or wards of protection at costs that are not measured in gold.

GM Notes

THE DEEP WOOD IS WHERE ENCOUNTERS BECOME GENUINELY DANGEROUS AND WHERE THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CAMPAIGN SHIFTS INTO SOMETHING MORE ALIEN AND THREATENING. PARTIES SHOULD NOT VENTURE HERE LIGHTLY. ENCOUNTERS IN THE DEEP WOOD SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE FOREST'S HOSTILITY AND THE SENSE THAT THE PARTY IS VERY SMALL AND VERY FRAGILE IN COMPARISON TO THE ANCIENT AND POWERFUL THINGS THAT LIVE HERE. THE DEEP WOOD CAN SERVE AS A LOCATION FOR SIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTERS WITH POWERFUL CREATURES, SPIRITS, OR ENTITIES THAT CAN RESHAPE THE CAMPAIGN. IT IS ALSO A PLACE WHERE CHARACTERS CAN ENCOUNTER GENUINE DIFFICULTY AND GENUINE FAILURE -- NOT ALL PARTIES SHOULD SURVIVE AN EXTENDED STAY IN THE DEEP WOOD.

Connections

THE DEEP WOOD HAS NO CLEAR PATHS OR MARKED WAYS. NAVIGATION REQUIRES SKILL OR MAGICAL GUIDANCE. IT CONNECTS TO THE REST OF GILLIKOI WOODS THROUGH DIFFICULT TERRAIN AND PAST ACTIVE DANGERS.

CAPITULUM

THE CHARCOAL CIRCLE

In a section of the Deep Wood, in a place where several old trees form a natural ring, the ground is scorched black. The earth here is barren -- no grass grows, no moss covers the stone, no plants of any kind take root. The scorching appears ancient, predating current human habitation. The trees at the circle's edge are blackened as well, but they continue to live and grow, their trunks scarred but unbroken.

The Charcoal Circle is the site of old magic, of a ritual or ceremony performed so long ago that its original purpose has been lost to time. The current understanding is incomplete. Some believe the circle is a place of sacrifice. Others believe it is a place of binding, where something powerful was chained or contained. Still others believe it is a place of warding, where protective magic was set to guard the forest or the city beyond.

The ground within the circle is warm to the touch even in winter. The warmth is not extreme but constant and steady. Plants brought within the circle wilt and die, though this process is slow -- a plant left in the circle will take hours or days to perish. Animals clearly dislike the circle and refuse to enter voluntarily. The human response is more complex. Some people feel calm and safe within the circle. Others feel a creeping dread and a pressure in the air that makes breathing difficult. Still others report no particular sensation.

At night, the circle glows faintly with light that seems to come from the charred earth itself. The glow is not bright enough to cast shadows or to allow detailed sight but is sufficient to mark the circle's presence from a distance. Those who study the light report patterns to it, as though something beneath the surface is trying to communicate or trying to be seen.

GM Notes

THE CHARCOAL CIRCLE IS A LOCATION OF POWER AND MYSTERY. IT CAN SERVE AS A FOCAL POINT FOR RITUAL SCENES, FOR REVELATION, OR FOR ENCOUNTERS WITH POWERFUL SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES. THE CIRCLE'S PROPERTIES ARE NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD, AND A PARTY INVESTIGATING IT CAN UNCOVER PIECES OF THE CITY'S HISTORY OR THE FOREST'S NATURE. THE CIRCLE IS ALSO A POTENTIAL DESTINATION FOR DEEPER CONSPIRACIES -- SOMEONE MAY BE WORKING TO UNDERSTAND THE CIRCLE'S PURPOSE, TO ACTIVATE IT, OR TO BREAK WHATEVER PROTECTIONS IT PROVIDES. THE PHYSICAL WARMTH AND THE IMPACT ON PLANT LIFE MAKE IT A LOCATION WHERE PLAYERS SHOULD FEEL THAT THEY ARE SOMEWHERE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE NORMAL WORLD.

Connections

THE CHARCOAL CIRCLE IS DEEP WITHIN THE DEEP WOOD AND IS DIFFICULT TO REACH WITHOUT GUIDANCE OR EXTENSIVE EXPLORATION. IT IS ISOLATED FROM THE MORE TRAVELED SECTIONS OF GILLIKOI WOODS AND IS KNOWN TO ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE SPENT SIGNIFICANT TIME IN THE FOREST OR WHO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED THERE DELIBERATELY.

CAPITULUM

ENDO POOLS

CAPITULUM

OVERVIEW

In the Hegy Mountains that rise above Kormor Kirak, where the elevation brings snow even in the warmer months and the air grows thin, natural hot springs emerge from the earth. Water heated by geothermal forces deep below rises through channels in the stone and emerges at multiple points along a narrow valley, creating pools and streams of warm water that flow downslope until cooling and joining the normal water cycle. The Erdo Pools are a sanctuary in the harsh mountain environment, a place where the cold and the elevation's hardship can be temporarily escaped. For the city below, they are a destination of ritual importance and economic necessity.

The pools have been known and used for longer than the city has existed. Evidence of ancient use -- carved stones, faint inscriptions, the remains of old structures -- suggests that the pools held significance for whoever inhabited the valley before Kormor Kirak was built. The current use is more practical and commercial. The waters have genuine healing properties. Wounds heal faster when treated in the warm waters. Illnesses fade more quickly for those who bathe here. The effect is subtle but consistent. A person might heal naturally over weeks in the city; those same wounds heal in days in the Erdo Pools.

The pools have also become a place of political importance. In a city where factions maintain uneasy peace and where open cooperation is impossible, the Erdo Pools serve as a place of informal encounter. The tradition is simple: weapons are left at the entrance. Inside the pool areas, the rules of the city do not apply. Business can be discussed without immediate threat of violence. Private conversations can occur without fear of assassination. It is not perfect safety -- poison is still possible, as is subterfuge -- but it is better than the city

proper. Over time, agreements made at the Erdo Pools have held more often than agreements made anywhere else in Kormor Kirak.

The waters themselves vary in temperature. Some pools are so hot that a person can bathe in them only briefly. Others are merely warm, comfortable for extended soaking. Still others are cooled by springs of mountain water and are suitable for swimming. The steam rises from the hottest pools and creates a strange landscape of mist and vapor, where sight is limited and the world feels dreamlike. Some swear they have received visions in this steam, though whether these are genuine supernatural revelations or hallucinations from heat exposure remains debated.

CAPITULUM

THE LOWER POOLS

The pools closest to the city, accessible via a trail that climbs from Kormor Kirak but remains relatively easy for those of reasonable fitness. Multiple pools of varying temperatures fill a broad basin, with natural stone borders and clear water that shows the pool floors. The Lower Pools are the most visited, hosting merchants, nobles, merchants, military officers, and common folk who seek healing or relaxation.

The pools are maintained in a semi-natural state. Small stone structures have been built around some of them to direct water flow or to create seating areas, but the development is minimal. Attendants -- local workers hired for the season or sometimes on a permanent basis -- keep the main areas clean, check the water quality for signs of contamination, and help with basic services: massage, assistance for those bathing, provision of towels and simple food. The attendants are neutral and discreet. They do not report on conversations they overhear, and they do not discuss the visitors with others. This discretion is part of what makes the pools valuable for conducting private business.

The Lower Pools are public in theory, and anyone with coin can use them. In practice, the pools are observed informally by rough social strata. Certain pools are preferred by nobles, certain pools by common workers, certain pools by merchants conducting business. This separation occurs naturally, reinforced by tradition rather than by any official rule. A person of low status can bathe in a noble's pool if they wish, but the social pressure to maintain separation is generally effective.

The water in the Lower Pools is warm and clear. Bathing in it is genuinely pleasant. For those suffering from injuries, illnesses, or the simple exhaustion

of living in a city, the Lower Pools provide relief. A character spending a night or a day in the Lower Pools can recover from wounds as though receiving a week of normal rest. Characters with illnesses find symptoms reduced. The effect is not magical healing, but it is genuine recovery accelerated by the waters' properties.

GM Notes

THE LOWER POOLS ARE THE MOST ACCESSIBLE AND LEAST DANGEROUS PARTS OF ERDO POOLS. A PARTY VISITING HERE CAN REST, RECOVER FROM WOUNDS, AND POTENTIALLY CONDUCT BUSINESS OR GATHER INFORMATION IN A SAFE SETTING. NPCs OF IMPORTANCE OFTEN USE THE LOWER POOLS. ENCOUNTERS HERE SHOULD HAVE A DIFFERENT TONE FROM ENCOUNTERS IN THE CITY -- LESS TENSION, MORE POSSIBILITY OF GENUINE CONVERSATION, A SENSE THAT THE NORMAL RULES OF KORMOR KIRAK DO NOT APPLY IN THE SAME WAY. THE WATER'S HEALING PROPERTIES CAN BE USED TO ADVANCE HEALING WITHOUT BREAKING THE CAMPAIGN'S TIMELINE, ALLOWING PARTIES TO RECOVER FROM DIFFICULT ENCOUNTERS WHILE STILL ADVANCING THE STORY.

Connections

THE LOWER POOLS ARE THE PRIMARY ACCESS POINT TO ERDO POOLS FROM THE CITY. TRAILS LEAD UPSLOPE TO THE UPPER POOLS AND FOLLOW THE WATER'S FLOW DOWNSLOPE TOWARD THE CITY. THE ATTENDANTS' STATION IS LOCATED NEAR THE LARGEST POOL, PROVIDING BASIC SERVICES AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE POOLS' USE.

CAPITULUM

THE UPPER POOLS

Higher on the mountain, accessible only to those willing to climb beyond the Lower Pools, the Upper Pools are more secluded and more exclusive. Fewer people use these pools, and those who do tend to be those seeking genuine privacy or those with sufficient wealth to prefer isolation to the social navigation of the Lower Pools.

The Upper Pools are hotter than those below, with some pools approaching temperatures that require slow and careful entry. The water's color changes with temperature and mineral content -- some pools are crystalline clear, others show faint coloring from minerals dissolved in the water. The scenery here is more dramatic. The pools are set in a narrower valley with steep slopes on either side. In winter, snow accumulates in drifts around the pools while steam rises from the water itself, creating a landscape of contrasts.

A few simple structures exist in the Upper Pools area: shelter buildings where visitors can rest and warm themselves, storage facilities for the belongings of those bathing, and a small attendants' station. These structures are more basic than those at the Lower Pools. The Upper Pools maintain more of a wild, untamed character. Use by major political figures and crime lords is more discreet here. The absence of crowds makes the Upper Pools ideal for meetings that need to remain private. A faction representative and a rival can meet here, discuss terms, and part ways without any but a handful of attendants aware that the meeting occurred.

The healing properties of the Upper Pools are equivalent to those of the Lower Pools, but the greater heat sometimes creates complications for those with certain injuries or illnesses. The waters are more likely to produce visions

or unusual states of consciousness -- whether from heat exposure or from genuine supernatural properties is unclear.

GM Notes

THE UPPER POOLS ARE WHERE SIGNIFICANT CONVERSATIONS OCCUR. IMPORTANT NPCs WILL MEET HERE. A PARTY SEEKING PRIVACY FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS OR HAVING IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS MIGHT COME HERE THEMSELVES. THE INCREASED DANGER OF THE CLIMB AND THE GREATER ISOLATION MAKE THE UPPER POOLS FEEL MORE CONSEQUENTIAL THAN THE LOWER POOLS. ENCOUNTERS HERE SHOULD BE MORE SIGNIFICANT. THE POTENTIAL FOR AMBUSH IS HIGHER -- THE POOLS ARE LESS TRAVELED, AND THOSE WHO COMMIT VIOLENCE HERE ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE OBSERVED. THE VISIONS REPORTED BY THOSE WHO BATHE HERE EXTENSIVELY CAN BE USED AS PLOT DEVICES, REVEALING SECRETS OR HINTING AT LARGER CONSPIRACIES.

Connections

THE UPPER POOLS ARE ACCESSED VIA A STEEP TRAIL FROM THE LOWER POOLS. THE STEAM CAVES LIE FURTHER UPSLOPE, ACCESSIBLE FROM THE UPPER POOLS AREA.

CAPITULUM

THE STEAM CAVES

The highest of the accessible pool areas, where the geothermal activity is most intense and the water temperature highest. Natural caverns have been carved by the hot water flowing through them over centuries. Inside these caverns, the air is thick with steam so dense that visibility extends only a few feet. The temperature approaches dangerous levels -- those inside the caves must move carefully to avoid scalding. The noise is constant: the roar of heated water, the hiss of steam, the echoes of sound in the cavern spaces.

The Steam Caves are used rarely and always with significant preparation. Those entering must acclimate to the heat gradually. Those who spend time here report disorientation, hallucinations, and altered states of consciousness. Some emerge claiming to have received visions of profound spiritual significance. Others simply emerge confused, uncertain of how much time they spent in the caves, uncertain of what they experienced.

The caves are dangerous because visibility is nearly zero and the heat is extreme. A person who loses their footing or becomes disoriented could fall into deeper pools, suffer severe burns, or simply become lost in the cavern passages. Death in the Steam Caves is not difficult to achieve accidentally. Suicide in the caves would be relatively simple to execute if someone had intent to end their life.

Yet the Steam Caves are also believed to be places of power. Those who need answers to significant questions sometimes venture into the caves seeking revelation. Those who need to undergo transformation sometimes come here. The caves' reputation for spiritual significance comes not from any demonstrated supernatural effect but from the simple fact that the experience of the

caves is so extreme that it changes people. Whether the change comes from the caves themselves or from the act of willingly entering such danger and discomfort remains unclear.

GM Notes

THE STEAM CAVES ARE A LOCATION FOR SIGNIFICANT PERSONAL JOURNEYS, NOT FOR CASUAL VISITS OR ROUTINE ENCOUNTERS. A CHARACTER MIGHT ENTER THE CAVES SEEKING ANSWERS OR UNDERTAKING A RITUAL OF PASSAGE. THE GAME MASTER CAN USE THE CAVES' SENSORY DISORIENTATION AS A WAY TO CREATE SCENES OF REVELATION, MYSTICISM, OR PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION. THE CAVES CAN ALSO BE A LOCATION OF GENUINE DANGER -- A PARTY MEMBER BECOMING LOST IN THE CAVES, OR BECOMING EXPOSED TO THE EXTREME HEAT, IS A REAL THREAT. THE CAVES SHOULD BE DESCRIBED IN TERMS THAT EMPHASIZE THE OVERWHELMING SENSORY EXPERIENCE: THE HEAT, THE SOUND, THE BLINDING STEAM, THE DISORIENTATION. A SCENE IN THE STEAM CAVES SHOULD FEEL GENUINELY ALIEN COMPARED TO NORMAL ENCOUNTERS.

Connections

THE STEAM CAVES ARE THE HIGHEST POINT ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE USING THE ERDO POOLS. THEY CONNECT TO THE UPPER POOLS VIA A STEEP TRAIL THAT BECOMES PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT. BEYOND THE CAVES LIES ONLY HIGHER MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS, BEYOND THE NORMAL REACH OF THOSE VISITING THE POOLS.

CAPITULUM

VISITING ERDO POOLS

CAPITULUM

THE TRADITION OF WEAPONS AT THE ENTRANCE

A long-standing custom holds that weapons are left at the entrance to Erdo Pools when a visitor enters. The custom is not absolute -- no authority forcibly disarms anyone -- but violating it is considered a serious breach of trust and decorum. Those who ignore the tradition are remembered and are often asked to leave by other patrons or by the attendants.

The tradition originated from practical concerns: weapons are slippery when wet and corrosion from the mineral-rich water damages metal over time. Leaving weapons at the entrance also prevents spontaneous violence. But the tradition has taken on symbolic significance. Arriving at the pools weaponless creates a vulnerability and a state of trust. Those who leave their weapons behind are making a statement: "I trust the place and the people here not to do me harm in the direct, physical sense."

This does not make Erdo Pools absolutely safe. Poison remains possible. Magical attack is possible. Kidnapping could occur. But the tradition does prevent the kind of open violence that characterizes the city below. Factions can encounter each other without immediate escalation to bloodshed.

GM Notes

THE WEAPONS-AT-THE-ENTRANCE TRADITION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT MAKES ERDO POOLS DIFFERENT FROM THE CITY BELOW. IT SHOULD AFFECT HOW SCENES IN THE POOLS PLAY OUT. CHARACTERS WHO HAVE ENTERED THE POOLS WITHOUT THEIR WEAPONS ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO CERTAIN KINDS OF THREAT AND MORE DEPENDENT ON NEGOTIATION OR MAGICAL MEANS OF DEFENSE. A VIOLATION OF THE TRADITION -- SOMEONE BRINGING WEAPONS INTO THE POOL AREAS -- SIGNALS THAT THEY INTEND TO BREAK THE POOLS' PEACE AND IS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT. ATTACKERS WHO VIOLATE THE TRADITION TO STRIKE AT SOMEONE BATHING ARE PARTICULARLY DESPISED AND ARE LIKELY TO FACE CONSEQUENCES FROM OTHER POOL USERS.

CAPITULUM

THE PROPERTIES

HEALING

The waters of Erdo Pools contain minerals and heat that accelerate natural healing. The effect is consistent but subtle. Characters spending a night or more in the pools heal faster than they would in normal circumstances. For game purposes:

- A character with wounds receives the benefit of a week of rest for each day spent in the Lower or Upper Pools.
- A character suffering from an illness has advantage on saving throws against disease and reduces the duration of the illness by half.
- A character recovering from a poison or toxin that deals damage over time finds that damage reduced by half.
- Permanent conditions and serious magical injuries are not healed by the pools alone, but they may be somewhat ameliorated.

The healing works only if the character actually spends time bathing in the pools. A character who visits the pools and conducts business without bathing receives no benefit. The waters must touch the injury, and the person must remain in the water for significant time. Extended soaking (multiple hours at a time, across multiple days) produces the greatest effect.

The Upper Pools provide marginally better healing than the Lower Pools. The Steam Caves do not provide healing benefits comparable to those of the pools themselves, though those who enter the caves and survive the experience often report feeling spiritually and sometimes physically renewed.

GM Notes

THE HEALING PROPERTIES SHOULD BE USED TO MANAGE THE CAMPAIGN'S PACING AND TO ALLOW FOR RECOVERY WITHOUT TRIVIALIZING COMBAT ENCOUNTERS. CHARACTERS WHO RETREAT TO ERDO POOLS FOR RECOVERY ARE SAFE FROM MOST THREATS BUT ALSO OUT OF PLAY FOR SEVERAL DAYS. THIS CAN ADVANCE THE CAMPAIGN TIMELINE WHILE GIVING THE GAME MASTER TIME TO PREPARE NEW ENCOUNTERS. THE POOLS CAN ALSO BE USED AS A PERIODIC REST LOCATION FOR THE PARTY, A PLACE WHERE THEY RETURN BETWEEN ADVENTURES TO RECOVER AND PREPARE.

CAPITULUM

ERDO POOLS RUMORS AND ENCOUNTERS

The pools are places where information flows. Neutral meeting ground allows conversations to happen that would be impossible in the city. Characters lingering in the pools can overhear:

- Whispers about a spy within one of the embassies.
- Rumors of a creature in the Deep Wood that feeds on the city's dead.
- Talk of a secret negotiation between Albion and Terrassia, mediated by Queen Kiraline.
- Discussion among merchants of a trade route change that might affect prices.
- Concern from Red Guard officers about something happening in the underground areas of the city.

Additionally:

- A character with the right skills and contacts can arrange a discreet meeting with an NPC at Erdo Pools.
- A character might stumble upon a meeting happening in the Upper Pools, overhearing important information.
- Someone poisoned or magically infected might be found in the pools, either as a victim to be rescued or as a mystery to be solved.

CAPITULUM

APPENDIX A: THE QUICK REFERENCE BY LOCATION

CAPITULUM

THE ALBION EMBASSY



Ambassador Barron Whitehallow -- The secret leader of the Lich Cult's current conspiracy, ostensibly working for peace while secretly planning his ascension to lichdom. Found in the Ambassador's Office during morning hours or in the Diplomatic Salon for formal meetings.

Lord Wooster -- The apparently bumbling but actually astute diplomat, stationed in his cluttered quarters on the second floor. A source of gossip and casual information.

Missus Crane -- The efficient Embassy secretary controlling access to White-hallow's calendar. Located at the desk in the Reception Hall during business hours.

Jack Winbow -- Barron's operative, publicly posing as a stable hand while quietly protecting Olivia and tracking the city's dangers. Based near the stables and service quarters.

Monsieur Pierre -- The proud Albion chef managing the kitchens. A gossip who speaks more freely with those who show interest in cuisine.

CAPITULUM

KERESKEDO MARKET



Rozito Vallikozo -- The market master appointed by Queen Kiraline. Found moving through the market or conducting business in his private office. Manages both legitimate commerce and the shadow economy.

Market Ruffians -- Petty criminals and hired muscle operating in pairs or small groups. Found throughout the market, particularly in alleys and less-visited sections.

CAPITULUM

THE BASTION INN

Eppy Flinder -- The proprietor of the inn, a woman who has lived through the Century War and remembers much. Located behind the bar or in her private room overseeing the inn's operations.

CAPITULUM

TORONY PIROS (THE CASTLE)

Queen Kiraline Veresz Eroszakos -- The vampire ruler of Kormor Kirak and supreme authority within the castle. Found in her private chambers, the throne room, or on the castle balcony overlooking the city.

Princess Szeret -- The Queen's daughter, a shapeshifter who wears borrowed faces. Maintains a bedroom in the upper castle, often observing the city through her telescope.

Red Guard Captain -- Commands the gate and main approaches. A different captain stationed at each major entrance.

Red Guard Soldiers -- Patrol throughout the castle in squads, enforce the Queen's law, and maintain order.

Castle Servants -- Numerous attendants maintaining the castle's operations, located throughout but particularly in the servants' quarters, kitchens, and administrative areas.

CAPITULUM

TERRA SOTTO (UNDERGROUND CITY)

The inhabitants of Terra Sotto are less clearly defined but include outcasts, those hiding from the Queen's law, and creatures that prefer darkness. Encounters here are unpredictable and potentially dangerous.

CAPITULUM

BJELKØJ WOODS

Forest dwellers, creatures that prefer isolation from the city proper, and those conducting business that must remain secret from authority. Specific NPCs depend on the campaign's needs.

CAPITULUM

ERDO POOLS

Attendants -- Pool workers maintaining facilities and ensuring the weapons-at-the-entrance tradition is observed. Discreet and professional, they observe all but report nothing.

CAPITULUM

MARKETPLACE AND MERCHANT QUARTER

Merchants and traders from both Albion and Terrassia, conducting business under the watchful eyes of Rozito's agents and the Red Guard. Specific NPCs emerge based on party interaction and campaign needs.

CAPITULUM

APPENDIX B: RANDOM CITY ENCOUNTERS

CAPITULUM

DAYTIME MARKET ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A Kereskedo Market Ruffian attempts to pickpocket a party member in the press of the crowd, only to be intercepted before the theft succeeds. This could lead to confrontation, negotiation, or pursuit depending on the party's choices.
2. A merchant selling suspicious "remedies" approaches the party, claiming to have cure-alls and protective charms. The remedies are either useless or actively harmful, but they're being sold with a smooth pitch that requires actual investigation to expose.
3. A Red Guard patrol passes through the market conducting what they claim is a routine inspection but is actually searching for specific contraband or fugitives. The guards question merchants and may question the party if they seem suspicious.
4. A fight erupts between two merchant houses over a trade dispute or debt. Chaos ensues, goods are knocked over, and the party must navigate the mess or become embroiled in the conflict.
5. A traveling performer -- acrobat, musician, or storyteller -- draws a crowd in a central market location. The performance is genuinely entertaining, but a cutpurse works the crowd, and the party may notice something amiss.
6. A city official appears to conduct a surprise inspection of market stalls, asking pointed questions about inventory, taxes, and licensing. Some merchants seem nervous, suggesting corruption or illegal activity is occurring.

7. A half-starved street child attempts to beg from the party, and in doing so, mentions that "the shadow-people are buying bodies in Terra Sotto." This is a plot hook disguised as an encounter.

8. A cloaked figure approaches the party with a proposition: intelligence about another faction or access to a location, provided they're willing to perform a small service. The offer is too good to be true, and there are hidden costs.

CAPITULUM

NIGHTTIME STREET ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. A group of 2d4 Kereskedo Market Ruffians conducting a protection racket on a local business owner. They attempt to extort payment and may pursue the party if they intervene.
2. Two Red Guard soldiers on patrol challenge the party and demand to know their business. The guards are professional but suspicious of anyone moving through the streets after dark.
3. A figure in the shadows calls out to the party, offering to guide them to an illegal establishment or procure forbidden goods. The figure is either a con artist or a genuine criminal attempting to recruit them.
4. Screaming from a nearby building draws attention. A person is being attacked by an unknown assailant, possibly vampire spawn or a hired killer. Rescue is possible but dangerous.
5. An Automatic Assassin stalks across rooftops in the distance, its mechanical joints creaking audibly in the silence of night. The party may pursue, investigate, or hide depending on their inclinations.
6. A drunk is being robbed by a gang of ruffians in an alley. Intervention leads to combat or negotiation; ignoring the situation allows the robbery to proceed.
7. A mysterious figure drops a package near the party and vanishes into the darkness. Inside the package is something of value or importance -- a weapon, documents, or evidence of criminal activity. It's unclear if the package was meant for the party or if they've just picked up something dangerous.

8. The bells of Torony Piros ring in an unusual pattern at an unusual hour, causing the citizens of Kormor Kirak to pause and look toward the castle. The bells signal something significant has occurred, and citizens begin gathering in the streets to discuss what it might be.

CAPITULUM

TERRA ENCOUNTERS (D8)

SOOTTO

1. A Vampire Spawn guards a passage, perhaps wearing the face of someone the party knew. Combat or negotiation is necessary to pass, and the emotional weight of facing a former acquaintance adds depth.
2. Underground merchants operate a black market. Goods include illegal weapons, poisons, and forbidden knowledge. The merchants themselves are well-organized and protected by hired muscle.
3. A Lich Cult ritual is occurring in a hidden chamber. The party stumbles upon it accidentally or deliberately pursues it. Magical power is visible, bodies are arranged in patterns, and the purpose is clearly necromantic in nature.
4. A lost soul -- someone who fled underground to escape the law or supernatural predators -- approaches the party for help. The person has information but is also traumatized and may be unreliable.
5. Natural hazards become apparent: unstable tunnels, flooding from underground streams, or areas where the air itself seems toxic. Surviving these hazards requires skill checks and careful navigation.
6. Strange creatures native to Terra Sotto -- bioluminescent fungi, blind cave fish adapted to somehow live in air, or creatures that seem to have evolved in underground darkness -- become visible. These are not necessarily hostile but are eerie.

7. A faction hideout or base of operations is discovered. It may belong to the Lich Cult, to criminal organizations, or to other powers operating beneath the city. The discovery could be accidental or the result of careful investigation.
8. The party finds evidence of Barron's operations: ritual remains, sacrifice sites, or necromantic working stones. This discovery provides plot information but also suggests that his influence extends deep into the city's hidden places.

CAPITULUM

APPENDIX E: TRADE GOODS AND PRICES

Prices are listed in silver and gold coins, representing generic currency that works with any TTRPG system. 1 gold coin = 10 silver coins. Prices are approximate and subject to haggling, market conditions, and the merchant's assessment of the customer.

CAPITULUM

FOOD AND DRINK

- Bread (loaf): 2 silver
- Meat (cut of flesh for a meal): 5 -- 10 silver
- Ale or beer (mug): 1 silver
- Wine (cup, common): 3 silver
- Wine (cup, fine Albion vintage): 1 gold
- Meal at an inn (simple): 3 silver
- Meal at an inn (well-prepared): 1 gold
- Exotic spices (per measure): 1 -- 3 gold

CAPITULUM

LODGING

- Dormitory bed (shared room, per night): 5 silver
- Private room at common inn (per night): 2 gold
- Private room at fine establishment (per night): 5 gold
- Luxury suite (per night): 15 gold or more

CAPITULUM

TRANSPORTATION

- Hire a cart for short distance: 5 silver
- Hire a cart for full day's travel: 2 gold
- Hire a carriage with driver (per hour): 5 silver
- Hire a carriage with driver (full day): 3 gold
- Stable horse (per night): 2 silver
- Purchase of riding horse: 30 -- 50 gold

CAPITULUM

INFORMATION

- Basic rumor from tavern gossip: free to 2 silver
- Specific information about a location: 5 -- 10 silver
- Intelligence about an NPC: 1 -- 3 gold
- Access to restricted information: 5 -- 10 gold
- Maps or documentation: 2 -- 5 gold

CAPITULUM

CONTRABAND AND ILLEGAL GOODS

- Stolen goods (per item, variable): 25 -- 75% market price
- Poisons (per vial): 5 -- 20 gold
- Forged documents: 10 -- 30 gold
- Forbidden texts or grimoires: 20 -- 100 gold
- Black market weapons: 1.5 -- 2 times normal price

CAPITULUM

BRJBE

- Guard (minor): 5 -- 10 gold
- Guard (sergeant or officer): 20 -- 50 gold
- Official (low rank): 10 -- 30 gold
- Official (high rank): 50 -- 200 gold
- Red Guard (especially difficult): 100 gold or higher
- Information from paid informant (per piece): 5 -- 20 gold

CAPITULUM

CREDITS AND LEGAL

CREATED BY Jesse Alexander

BASED ON The screenplay *The Eternal Court* by Jesse Alexander

This City Locations Guide is designed for use with tabletop roleplaying games and can be adapted to a wide range of systems, including Dungeons & Dragons 5E and Daggerheart.

This work is presented in accordance with the Open Game License. The mechanical elements and references to game systems are provided under the terms of the OGL and may be used in accordance with that license's provisions.

EC · CITY LOCATIONS · EDITION 01 · MDCCXCIII
FILED · EC · CITYLO · FORMAT · A7 · STATUS · ACTIVE