

CHAPTER 1

THE STAIN



**Cursed to be Unsanguine
Lords of an Unholy Cemetery
A Stain on the Soil**

There is a town astride a tomb on an earthen mound. This town is sick. Its residents linger in unlife, serving the brutal lords of their unholy barrow. The land is scarred with wicked magicks, and all those who enter carry the Stain. There is no returning from Sootwyn Barrow.

When you enter this town, you are cursed with the Sootwyn Stain. This mark renders you undying and unliving. Once scarred by curse, there is no hope. The only end to the suffering is the unavoidable slow embrace of the void... not a true “death,” but a reduction to constituent parts: fear, bones, and a severed lifeforce in the clutches of a vampire king.

Vasile Albescu and his consort Ingrid Drethi’al have constructed these magicks to serve wicked aims. The Sootwyn Stain is a tap that drains vitality from those foolish enough to enter the nightmarescape. Victims gradually degenerate into skeletons under Ingrid’s control while Vasile—a refined “vampire” who avoids drinking blood directly when he can—feasts on the ambient lifeforce he has stolen. The dark siphon is amplified by terror, and so Vasile has tasked the beastmen Beshik and Haun to further antagonize anyone cursed with the Stain.

The vampire king of the unsanguine, the unlying necromancer, and the sporting beastmen duo. These four vile creatures are Lords of the Barrow, and they have caused untold anguish for naive travelers, captured criminals, and would-be heroes alike. The town is a blight on the realm, but it is one that neighboring nobles and their knights have given up trying to cleanse. None have overcome the Sootwyn Stain, and none could dare face the Barrow Lords. There is no hope. At least the Barrow Lords never leave their domain... or at least, they haven’t yet.

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS SOOTWYN BARROW?

Sootwyn Barrow is a bit different from our other boroughs. For one thing: it's much more *dungeon* than *city*. Yes, there is a town and there are inhabitants, but most everything in Sootwyn Barrow is an immediate threat to the adventurers. This is a spooky, gothic, Halloween-y town filled with classic monster tropes. As such, there will be far more text in these three borough guides concerning how you might actually run sessions here as opposed to purely diegetic lore and NPC descriptions.

Mechanically, adventures in Sootwyn Barrow will tend to follow a particular rhythm. The players wake up in the Twilight Bethel, do their best to make their way into Vasile's Tomb, and then inevitably die, only to reawaken back in the chapel. An ideal quest in Sootwyn Barrow will involve roughly 3 to 5 "loops," with each attempt dramatically different based on both chance and the consequences of the players' actions. In order to make these sessions satisfying, it is strongly encouraged that you balance encounters such that the odds are stacked against the players. They should only be able to succeed by exploiting weaknesses in their foes, mastering their environment, and finding creative solutions to the known threats.

There are a few keys to remember when GMing Sootwyn Barrow:

- ◆ The players cannot die and will always reawaken in the Twilight Bethel at sunset.
- ◆ The Barrow Lords and their servants also cannot die, but they may begin each evening wherever they please.
- ◆ Escaping before seeing the adventure through is possible but comes with a massive drawback for the adventurers (see "The Sootwyn Stain" below).
- ◆ The other creatures remember the adventurers' actions and will change their plans and strategies accordingly. As the players learn, so too do the monsters.

- ◊ There should always be an element of randomness. This isn't Groundhog Day. The monsters aren't locked into a set routine. If you want this to be a truly scary adventure, the players need to be frequently surprised.
- ◊ Keep combat quick. This arc will get tedious if every casual skeleton battle takes hours.
- ◊ Failure is an option. If the players get defeated enough times, you can decide that their PCs devolve into skeletons and then tell them to roll up new characters. There's no fun in running this over and over until it gets boring.
- ◊ Vasile Albescu is not really a vampire. However, you should always refer to him as "the vampire king," and it should be exceedingly difficult for the players to discover the truth of his pathetic existence before they reach his tomb.

WHY GO TO SOOTWYN BARROW?

Most travelers know to avoid the town. Some know to avoid it but choose to enter the accursed deadlands nonetheless. Some are deposited outside the gates as punishment for a crime. None who enter ever leave.

There are many reasons to avoid Sootwyn Barrow, but if you want to motivate an adventure arc in the haunted town, consider consulting the Adventure Motivation table on the following page.

THE SOOTWYN STAIN

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Once a traveler enters the barrow, they receive the curse. It does not matter whether they open the gate or hop over its iron bars. It does not matter if they tunnel below or soar over in an aerostat. Any sentient being that makes their way across that threshold gains the mark.

The Sootwyn Stain appears somewhere on the traveler's flesh (or scales, exoskeleton, etc.) and cannot be removed by any means. If the traveler attempts to carve it off their

D6	ADVENTURE MOTIVATION	EXAMPLES
1	Treasure	Vasile has gathered quite a few luxuries. His tomb was filled with fineries before his death, including the Venerated Pumice. He has also stolen countless valuables from previous victims.
2	Heroism	Sootwyn Barrow has claimed many victims, and the Barrow Lords may be planning to eventually extend their reach. Valiant heroes might seek to vanquish the lords and end the Stain once and for all.
3	Punishment	In nearby villages, residents convicted of particularly heinous crimes are sentenced to enter the Unsanguine Gate into Sootwyn Barrow. To most, this is seen as a punishment worse than death.
4	Roving skeletons	Travelers find many dark ends throughout the realm. When an adventurer is brought to their knees in the vicinity of the barrow, Ingrid's minions will drag their unconscious body into the town for a new round of torture.
5	Seeking the curse	Foolhardy travelers may choose to enter the barrow with the explicit intention of receiving the curse. Perhaps they seek the void, or perhaps they seek its unusual side effects.
6	Saving a loved one	When your younger brother enters Sootwyn Barrow on a dare, will you just let him wither away? Or are you going to jump in and try to save him?

skin—or even amputate the afflicted body part—the Stain will reappear somewhere else in a searing burst of dark magick. There have been tales of travelers who have willingly flayed themselves alive to remove the taint of the mark. Of course, by the next sunset, their torn skin had returned.

The Stain appears like an additional set of veins, rippling and throbbing across the skin of any it afflicts. Some have also compared its appearance to that of a fungus, a lichen, the rings of a tree, or a spider web. The truth is that the Stain is unrelated to any naturally occurring phenomenon. It is an eldritch drain that takes a uniquely profane shape. Once a traveler becomes afflicted, they will likely see the wicked pattern all across Sootwyn Barrow.

EFFECTS OF THE STAIN

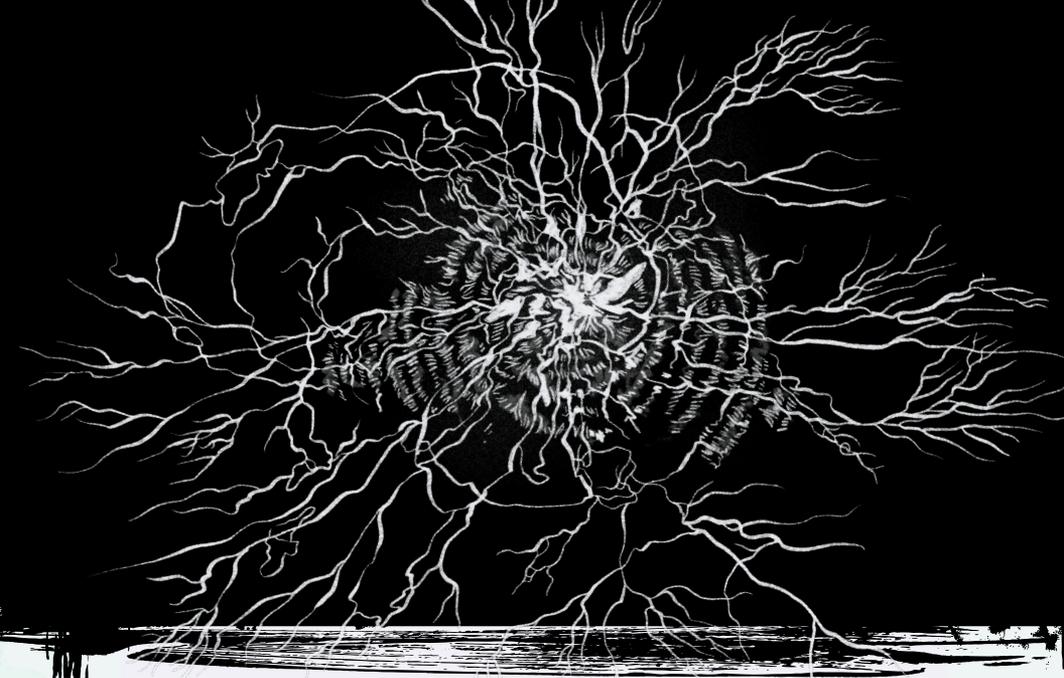
The Sootwyn Stain is a complex curse.

The first effect that victims will likely notice is a profound weakness to the daytime. When the sun rises, anyone who has fallen prey to the Stain

GM NOTE: The Sootwyn Stain is the central mechanic of this borough. It will dramatically impact how you run sessions in Sootwyn Barrow, transforming the standard pace and rhythm of your sessions. It will likely take some getting used to, both for you and your players. It also requires a bit of buy-in. Once the PCs have entered Sootywn Barrow, you are committed to seeing this through.

And if one of your players says, “oh, but I have a spell / item / class feature that prevents me from getting cursed!” tell them that this curse is far more powerful than whatever they were planning to use. Perhaps throw them a bone and allow them to avoid one of the effects... maybe the searing pain caused by the sunrise.

suffers immense pain and then falls unconscious. This effect persists no matter where the victim flees, and it does not matter whether or not they can see the sun. There are tunnels deep under Sootwyn Barrow, carved by desperate travelers hoping to escape the painful



burst of energy that knocks them unconscious each sunrise. There is no breaking free from the curse, no matter how deep one goes or even if one can manage to escape the city. When the sun rises, the victim falls. When the sun sets again, the victim rises.

This is the moment when many victims will discover a curious side effect of the curse: any injuries incurred during the night gradually heal during the daylight hours. Amputated limbs regenerate, parasites wither, and potent toxins are purged. Even death can reverse itself. The Stain will not allow one to find relief in passing. A slain victim returns to life between sunrise and sunset. A destroyed body will materialize out of thin air if it has to.

Were it not for the *rest* of the curse, this would be an unbelievable blessing. The Stain is—in one idiosyncratic way—a form of immortality. Of course, there is a catch.

Over time, a victim of the Stain becomes increasingly *unsanguine*. The Stain saps the victim's lifeforce, replacing hope and vitality with malaise and weakness. Those bearing the mark lose focus, can't think straight, and abandon prior convictions. In time, skin, muscle, and organs slough off, though the victim is fully numbed to the pain by then. In the curse's final stages, all that remains of the marked traveler is an animate skeleton, barely conscious and loyal only to the Lords of the Barrow.

LIVING WITH THE CURSE

It is possible to live indefinitely with the curse. If an adventurer manages to escape from Sootwyn Barrow and run far away, they may escape the range at which Vasile Albescu is able to steal their lifeforce. They can bear the curse but remain sanguine. They will, however, still suffer the remaining consequences of the curse. Injuries incurred during the night will heal. The sunrise will cause them to fall unconscious. Death will not come.

Yes, adventurers can free themselves of death. All they need to do is bear the curse and escape the haunted village.

Yet again, however, there is a catch. Aging still occurs. A human who grows to 200 years old with the Sootwyn Stain will have little ability to control their bodies, to think straight, or to meaningfully interact with the world. This is a form of immortality, but as with all such magicks, that immortality is itself a curse. The few who have escaped with the Stain have all eventually returned to Sootwyn Barrow so that they may at least embrace

the void of their own accord, joining Ingrid and her skeletal army.

For some adventurers, this may be an acceptable outcome. Traveling at night, recovering from grievous wounds, and putting off any concerns of a true death until a much later time can seem like a fair bargain. If that is a trade they are willing to make, there is no final “gotcha.” One can live with the Stain, though they will not be permitted to die with it. The only ending available to those who take the bargain is an eternity of service to the Barrow Lords.

GMING CURSED ADVENTURES

Some players will decide that this tradeoff is totally fine. If you’re okay with GMing a party of adventurers that fall unconscious every day while the sun is up and then heal back to full health: then great! It’s a weird way to resolve this quest, but it works.

If that sounds exceedingly annoying and unbalanced, or if you just want to make sure your players actually engage with the Sootwyn Barrow con-

tent you've prepared, have the Barrow Lords *hunt them down*. You can act like the party has found a fun loophole for a bit, start a new quest, and then sic two beastmen, a necromancer, and a "vampire king" on them all at once. In the likely instance that the party dies in this encounter, the Barrow Lords can drag them back to Sootwyn Barrow so that the initial quest can resume.

One final option: have the curse mutate. Let the party keep their immortality, but give them various randomly determined debuffs each night. Have them act as lures for monsters. Make them sick, or have them spread a zombie plague. Let them mutate into unholy abominations. If you want the party to be punished for their hubris, you can punish them! You're the GM! Just make sure your players don't feel as though *they* are the ones being punished. This should be a compelling game mechanic for the characters, not a middle finger to your friends in real life.



THOSE UNAFFECTED BY THE STAIN

Certain malignant entities are immune to the effects of the Sootwyn Stain. This may be due to the inherent wickedness of their being or perhaps the context of their creation. Skeletons, zombies, and other barely sentient creatures have no lifeforce to give and thus cannot become unsanguine. Demons and vengeful spirits have evil at their very core and, therefore, cannot be further tainted by the magicks of the barrow. Mystics from neighboring villages have theorized about whether dragons, angels, or elementals could also bear the Stain, but there is simply no evidence one way or the other.

Notably, despite how the Stain manifests, flesh itself does not seem to be a prerequisite. Automatons imbued with sufficient lifeforce have fallen victim, as have sentient fluids, sorcerous homunculi, and carapaced crabmen. So long as a creature is conscious and has the capacity for moral reasoning, they will be vulnerable to the Sootwyn Stain.



THE UNSANQUINE GATE

A gnarled, wrought iron fence surrounds Sootwyn Barrow, with its sharp edges pointed inward. The Barrow Lords are not concerned with keeping people out but with keeping them in. It's trivially easy to climb this fence from the outside and jump down into the village beyond, thereby irreversibly cursing oneself.

However, the more ceremonial entrance is through the Unsanguine Gate. Any traveler that makes their way through this gate is seen as honorable in the eyes of the Barrow Lords and is allowed to choose where the Sootwyn Stain appears on their body. It is also said that the beastmen are extra impressed by those who elect to announce their presence with such an audacious arrival. Visitors who travel through the gate often wake up with a few helpful doodads in their pockets—tinderbox, slingshot, and a small mirror—likely gifts from the sporting duo.

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Regardless of how the party enters the city, the fun begins immediately. If the sun is up, the adventurers will collapse and wake up in the Twilight Bethel at sundown. If there is still night remaining, the nightmare commences at once.



TWILIGHT BETHEL

In most instances, new arrivals spend their first evening in Sootwyn Barrow terrified and running. When eventually the sun rises, or they are slain by one of the town's vile inhabitants, they will awaken in the Twilight Bethel, a chapel on an upper floor of one of the malformed towers of the barrow village.

Skeletal servants, now immune to the sun's harmful rays, are tasked with tracking unconscious victims and hauling them back to the Twilight Bethel each day. The Barrow Lords once left their comatose subjects to remain where they fell, but after a few too many complications, they decided it was best to collect each Stained drifter and bring them to a more purposeful location.

Every night, the adventurers will awaken in the Twilight Bethel. They will see stone statues of the Barrow Lords, mocking them for yet another failed attempt at escape. If there are other travelers in Sootwyn Barrow who have yet to become fully unsanguine, they will be in the small moonlit chapel as well.

The Twilight Bethel is, *in some ways*, a safe space. The beastmen do not hunt indoors, and the haunted beings who live in town will not terrorize their prey until the hopeless travelers exit the chapel. No one will attempt to kill the adventurers until they choose to leave. Many terrified victims have withered away without ever leaving the Twilight Bethel, emerging from the tower only when they've become an unthinking skeleton.



GM NOTE: Many NPCs in Sootwyn Barrow are listed as “optional.” The intention here is to give you maximum flexibility for crafting the horror experience you desire. You can totally make Sootwyn Barrow a pure dungeon / combat challenge with minimal socializing and maximally dread-inducing isolation. Alternatively, you can treat this like a real town with lots of inhabitants, only some of whom want to repeatedly murder the party. The latter option is generally better if you want a “horror-lite” experience with plenty of goofy role-playing interspersed throughout.

The only *mandatory* NPCs are the Barrow Lords. You can run the entire dungeon with just those four characters and an army of skeletons.

SER DENITH OF THE RAINSBURY COURT

OPTIONAL NPC

Misguided heroes are the lifeblood of Sootwyn Barrow. Time and time again, virtuous champions have entered the unholy grounds in an attempt to purge the evil within. Ser Denith (he/him) is one such knight, a decorated hero of some far-off king, a king he will tell travelers about in *extensive* detail.

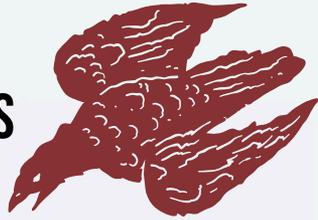
Despite his training and multiple successful tours of duty on behalf of the kingdom, Ser Denith is ill-prepared for the dangers within Sootwyn Barrow. He wields a blessed greatsword (impotent against endlessly regenerating villains) and is well stocked with holy water (useless against the dark magicks of the Stain). Unfortunately, Ser Denith failed to bring adequate *resolve*. Each night, it's a coin flip of whether he will even muster the strength to exit the Twilight Bethel. The beastmen consider him a non-threat and are disappointed by his weak attempts to fight back.

FETCH

OPTIONAL NPC

There isn't much left of “Fetch” (she/her). She has minimal awareness of her surroundings, few memories, and worryingly little flesh. Her name isn't even “Fetch”; that's just what the beastmen call her, as it's the main word she says over and over. Fetch has been in Sootwyn Barrow for a *long* time, but she has been quite slow to deteriorate. She still makes her way into town each night, usually slain quickly by a casual swipe of skeleton's blade. Though she is more-or-less nonverbal, she will make a point each evening to gesture to the statues in the Twilight Bethel, pointing out each of the Barrow Lords and saying their name reverently. Who's to say what she gains from this minor ritual.

HINTS SCATTERED ACROSS THE VILLAGE



It is entirely possible to run Sootyw Barrow adventures without doling out additional hints about how the party can progress. However, it is generally advisable to provide at least a few insights about how the adventurers might escape from Sootwyn Barrow and rid themselves of the Stain. Consider presenting one or more of the hints below to provide some direction.

- ◊ There is an **inscription** beneath each of the statues of the Twilight Bethel. Each explains the identities of the Barrow Lords, extolling their virtues as dark masters in needlessly flowery language. Though these plaques may overstate some qualities of the Barrow Lords, they at least provide useful epithets: “the sporting beastmen,” “the unlying necromancer,” and “the dignified vampire king of the unsanguine.”
- ◊ Adventurers might recall a **nursery rhyme** that they heard in their youth:

SOOTWYN STAIN, EVER WILL IT DRAIN
WASH AWAY THE EVIL OF THE VAMPIRE BANE
DOWN BELOW THE TOMB, IN A MOONLIT ROOM
A ROCK ATOP THE WATER SURELY WIPES AWAY THE DOOM

- ◊ Past victims of the Stain have left behind **hastily scrawled notes** from what they had learned about Ingrid: details about her illusory lodger, her tempestuous relationship with Vasile, and her surprisingly non-magical control over the barrow’s skeletons. The beastmen have not yet learned to read and thus don’t recognize the significance of these notes.
- ◊ Though the Sootwyn Stain drains adventurers of their awareness and mental fortitude, the curse also fundamentally brings its victims closer to Vasile. The party may find that they have **visions** of Vasile’s Tomb and its unholy contents. They may have nightmares of the creation of the Stain or of the fail-safes Vasile created for himself.

- ♦ Malicious denizens of the barrow—serpents, minor devils, lingering spirits, and the like—might betray the Barrow Lords in a seemingly trivial way: spreading **gossip**. They may let slip the name of the Venerated Pumice or perhaps nudge the party to consider the fact that this town *controlled by a vampire* is bisected by flowing water.
- ♦ The crows are not truly genuinely to anyone. They can be bribed, and they know much more than they let on. If the party can decipher their circuitous, riddle-laden **corvine monologues**, they can glean quite a bit about Sootwyn Barrow.



BESHIK AND HAUN

THE HUNTER BEASTMEN

Adventurers are likely to meet their first Barrow Lords sooner than they might expect. Beshik (he/him) and Haun (he/him) are self-described beastmen, creatures of incredible strength, neither human nor animal. They do not remember their childhoods or their parents, only that their earliest memories were of hunting big game in distant forests as a pair. Beshik and Haun call themselves brothers, but who's to say? It is unclear whether they were truly “born,” or the twisted creations of a long-dead sorcerer, or perhaps wicked manifestations of the wilds.

Beshik and Haun are ruthless killers, exceptional trackers, and voracious eaters. Each evening they set out into the barrow to terrify anyone bearing the Stain, killing them only when there is no more fun in the chase. To be clear: Beshik and Haun love to feast on the flesh of their quarry—flesh which, of course, regenerates at sunset—but they get a far more primal pleasure from the hunt.



Though they were once purely bestial, barely able to speak, they have since adopted many of the affectations of their favorite former foes. Skilled knights, clever wizards, and dignified aristocrats alike have provided the beastmen with challenging hunts. Now, Beshik and Haun don personae not dissimilar from those of past victims of the Stain. The beastmen speak articulately and walk through the barrow's alleyways with an air of swagger and total command.

The beastmen have a role to play in Sootwynn Barrow beyond just sating their urge to hunt and kill. Vasile and Ingrid have entrusted the duo with protecting them. Despite the power of the barrow's magicks, there is always the tiniest possibility that clever travelers might escape the western village, charge through the cemetery, descend into Vasile's Tomb, and unmake the dark majesty of the barrow. Beshik and Haun are thus the primary defense against this threat. While many more dangers await adventurers who travel east out of the haunted village, few ever make it that far. The beastmen rarely fail to kill

their marks before the midnight hour.

Beshik and Haun love an especially challenging hunt. On the rare occasion that an adventurer truly impresses with their ability to evade capture or fight back, Beshik and Haun will extend an offer: spend an hour drinking with them every other night. Adventurers will wake up in the Twilight Bethel with a map, a key, and an invitation.

THE CHAMPION'S GROTTO

So long as Beshik and Haun have suitable drinking partners, they will delay their hunt by one hour on odd-numbered days, choosing instead to relax in the musty cellar they call "the Champion's Grotto." Should the adventurers accept the invitation, they'll be welcomed into the dank bar with open arms. Beshik and Haun always hope to honor their most devious prey, not out of the goodness of their hearts, but as encouragement. They want competent adventurers to keep trying, night after night, until, at last, they succumb to the Stain.

D8 BEASTMEN STRATEGIES**DESCRIPTION****1**

Leap from the rooftops

The duo lies in wait atop one of the town's spires. When they spy the party, both beastmen let out menacing howls and descend. They may attack the party or climb back up to the rooftops for a second scare.

2

Methodical patrols

The beastmen divide the town into discrete zones and patrol each alleyway, nook, and cranny with meticulous regularity.

3

The bloodied bait

Beshik covers himself in blood, appearing to have been nearly slain by one of the other victims. When the party approaches to finish him off, he gives up the ruse. Haun sneaks in immediately after, and the fight begins.

4

Among the skeletons

Instead of hunting in the western village, the beastmen wait in the cemetery to the east, plainly visible. As soon as the party exits the village, they attack alongside Ingrid's minions.

5

Separate the party

By whatever means necessary (traps, distractions, silent snatching), the beastmen separate the party before eliminating them one at a time.

6

Study the party

The beastmen stealthily study the party's actions until they approach the edge of the village. Only when they near the cemetery does Haun attack. Beshik will then watch and continue to study unless he needs to join the fight.

7

Ranged strike

The beastmen learned to fire crossbows from a surprisingly deadly foe a few years back. They still prefer to fight up close, but they do occasionally switch to ranged attacks to keep opponents guessing.

8

All-out assault

As soon as the sun sets, the beastmen burst into the streets with their claws bared. They savagely strike at anything that crosses their path, animate or otherwise—a return to their bestial essence.

The beastmen walk a difficult tightrope: they need to *terrify* their victims to amplify the effects of the Stain, but they also want to make sure that victims feel motivated enough to leave the Twilight Bethel. Over the years, they have found that an invitation to the Champion's Grotto is the best way to stoke that fire.

The Champion's Grotto is a bar of sorts. It certainly was some sort of drinking hole in the distant past before the town had been remade with Vasile and Ingrid's magicks. Now, it is little more than a dusty cellar filled with stores of wine that are difficult to replenish. The bar stays locked at all hours and is not protected by any sort of protective hexes. The adventurers could break into the Champion's Grotto, assuming they are never honored with a key.

SENZA THE CUTTHROAT

OPTIONAL NPC

Those whose hearts are already filled with a profound darkness may find that one or another aspect of the Sootwyn Stain does not take hold. Senza the Cutthroat (she/her) made a solemn pledge to a dark God many moons ago, and thus her lifeforce is "spoken for." The Sootwyn Stain has still taken hold of the amoral assassin, but she is not slowly withering away like so many other victims in the barrow. Instead, she regenerates night after night, regardless of where she travels.

Senza still occasionally visits Sootwyn Barrow to check in on her friends Beshik and Haun. They make for good company, and she loves regaling the duo with tales of the outside world. Adventurers will either run into Senza in the Champion's Grotto, sharing a drink with the bestial hunters, or they'll cross paths with the efficient killer in the moonlit streets of the village.

Note that Senza can play two very different roles depending on when you decide to introduce her. She can either be a neutral third party during cocktail hour at the Grotto, or she can add a wrinkle to battles with the beastmen once the players feel like they've learned what to expect.

ROLEPLAYING THE BEASTMEN

As the first Barrow Lords the party is likely to meet, Beshik and Haun will almost certainly be frequently recurring characters in Sootwyn Barrow. It is crucial for the tone of the adventure that they are unpredictable and relentless. They ought never to attempt to defeat the party in the same way twice, and should the party avoid confronting the beastmen on their way to Vasile's Tomb, the beastmen should follow them east into the graveyard.

The beastmen are not *efficient*. Or rather: efficiency is not their aim. Their aim is to scare the party. The beastmen will howl and flash their glowing eyes before disappearing around corners, toying with the party as long as they can. However, they will not allow the party to approach Vasile's Tomb without a fight.

Beshik and Haun can speak, and they will taunt the party eloquently, though in their characteristic gruff voices. If the adventurers impress the beastmen and gain an invitation to the Champion's Grotto, the beastmen will speak openly, asking questions of the party's origins, their travels, and their intentions for their remaining days before becoming unsanguine. More than anything, Beshik and Haun will do their best to encourage the party, reminding them that the best they can hope for while they wither away is temporary glory as exceptional prey. There is no escape, but there is virtue in fighting until the very end.

Beshik is the more talkative of the two and is generally the more curious. Haun is softer-spoken but far more brutal in battle. This does not necessarily mean that Haun is more deadly; simply that he is more aggressive. In most instances, this increased predictability is a liability.



DEFEATING THE BEASTMEN

Beshik and Haun are Barrow Lords. They are akin to demigods in the tiny enclave they've carved out for themselves. They *can* be killed, but only temporarily. When the sun sets again, they will rise anew. As such, permanently destroying Beshik and Haun is impossible unless the party can unmake the magicks of Sootwyn Barrow altogether.

Until the party is able to address the very curse itself, they must confront the beastmen again each evening. Luckily, if the adventurers are smart and powerful, the two hunters need not stand in the party's way. There are various ways to get past the beastmen:

- ◊ The adventurers always have the option to **kill the beastmen**, if only for the night. Battles against the Beshik and Haun are brutal, but the party may find an advantage in numbers, arcane trickery, or clever strategy.
- ◊ If they are quick and stealthy enough, the party might be able to **evade the beastmen**. It is possible to avoid confronting Beshik and Haun altogether until the party is slain, achieves their goal, or falls unconscious with the rising sun.
- ◊ Should the party adequately impress the beastmen, they will receive an invitation to the Champion's Grotto. The beastmen *will wait* at least one hour for the party to arrive. The party can use this to their advantage and **get a head start on the beastmen**. They should be warned, however, that the Beshik and Haun don't respond well to being snubbed. This opportunity will likely only present itself once.
- ◊ The bestial hunters are blessed with the magick of Ingrid and Vasile, but they have no spells of their own. As such, the party may be able to **trap the beastmen**, either with a potent hex or even more traditional methods (a snare, a foothold trap, etc.). It may even be possible to trap the beastmen for more than one day at a time, though Ingrid will eventually send her minions to attempt to free the duo.



GM NOTE: Depending on the sort of campaign you're running, you may allow for other means of permanently defeating the beastmen. Perhaps a particularly eloquent (or devious) party can convince the duo that they will find more pleasure in hunting dangerous foes in the wide world outside the barrow. Alternatively, they may persuade the beastmen to fight back against the other Barrow Lords. A sufficiently potent cleric may even invoke their God to dispel the beastmen's immortality. For a standard horror campaign, though, these options should only be considered as a last resort if the players are beating their heads against the wall.