



The Broken Expanse

THE JAGGED SPINE

A TTRPG MINI-SETTING BY



THE BROKEN EXPANSE
THE JAGGED SPINE

CREATED THROUGH COLLABORATION BETWEEN



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This release presents a single location within *The Broken Expanse*, a fractured land shaped by failed containment, a lingering faith, and the slow spread of an unresolved blight. Each installment is designed to stand on its own while contributing to a wider, loosely connected region that can be explored in any order.

Faith still walks through these lands, yet fewer return from them.

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A COLLABORATIVE CONTENT LINE

SCOPE AND INTENT

This is a location-focused mini-setting built around exploration, uncertainty, and places that no longer function as they once did. Each release presents a single location within The Broken Expanse, supported by maps, tables, and narrative tools meant to be used directly at the table.

The intent of this project is to:

- Focus on places rather than plots, emphasizing location, atmosphere, and consequence.
- Present locations in their current state, shaped by past decisions and ongoing pressures.
- Allow the setting to be discovered through play, observation, and player choice rather than exposition.
- Support short arcs, recurring visits, or single-session use without requiring long-term commitment.

Rather than advancing a single overarching storyline, each release contributes a fragment of a larger land. Connections between locations emerge naturally through shared themes, rumors, and outcomes.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

The Broken Expanse is not a full campaign and it is not a complete setting guide. It does not attempt to define the world in its entirety or provide definitive answers to every question it raises. Large-scale history, cosmic truths, and final outcomes are intentionally left undefined.

This material does not require players to follow a prescribed path, nor does it assume long-term commitment to a single storyline. Each location is written to be useful on its own, whether introduced briefly or returned to over time.



THE BLIGHT

The blight that shapes this region is treated as a persistent condition rather than a singular enemy. It manifests unevenly across the land, affecting places, people, and structures in different ways. It resists simple categorization and cannot be resolved through a single action, ritual, or revelation.

Key principles of the blight:

- It does not behave consistently from one location to another.
- It alters environments as often as it creates direct threats.
- It can recede, stagnate, or intensify without clear warning.
- It is influenced by human response as much as by neglect or failure.
- It is not inherently evil, divine, or sentient unless the GM wants it to be.

The blight is not presented as a mystery with a specific, correct solution. Instead, it functions as an ongoing pressure that shapes decisions, creates risk, and forces trade-offs. The focus remains on how individuals and communities endure, adapt, exploit, or collapse in its presence.

HOW TO USE THESE RELEASES

Each release is designed to stand on its own and can be used in a variety of ways. Locations may be explored in any order, revisited later, or ignored entirely without breaking the setting. The shared regional map provides continuity, while scale, distance, and timing are intentionally flexible.

Examples of use include:

- Dropping a single location into an existing campaign as a detour or point of interest.
- Using multiple releases to build a loose regional arc without committing to a full campaign structure.
- Treating each location as an isolated expedition, pilgrimage, or contract.
- Revisiting the same location at different stages of a campaign to show change, decay, or escalation.
- Allowing players to choose their own route across the regional map based on rumors and priorities.

SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY

This material is written for use with any system but it also has 5E and remains compatible with it, but avoids heavy mechanical dependence wherever possible. Encounters, hazards, and inhabitants are primarily conveyed through guidance and examples rather than strict stat blocks.

Where mechanics are suggested, they are designed to be easy to reskin or replace. Game Masters are encouraged to use existing stat blocks, adjust difficulty freely, and interpret outcomes based on the needs of their table.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

This mini-setting prioritizes clarity, restraint, and usability. Each section is written to earn its place, providing concrete tools rather than excess explanation. The intent is to reduce preparation time while still offering locations that feel distinct and thoughtfully designed.

The Broken Expanse is built through close collaboration between three creators, each contributing their own perspective, skills, and creative priorities. Writing, regional cartography, and battlemap design are developed in conversation with one another, allowing locations to take shape organically rather than being designed in isolation.

The goal of this collaborative approach is to create something singular in tone and structure, where narrative, space, and play reinforce each other. The setting is intended to inspire Game Masters and storytellers of all kinds, providing strong foundations while leaving room for personal interpretation and expansion.

The setting is meant to be expanded gradually, interpreted personally, and left open where certainty would limit play.

ADAPTING TO THE STARLIGHT CHRONICLES

The Broken Expanse is indeed a standalone mini-setting but it can also easily be integrated directly with the [Starlight Chronicles](#), the original setting by [Kelfecil's Tales](#).

The Broken Expanse is intended to function as a dangerous, neglected frontier within Latakar, adding depth without overriding existing lore.

Suggested placement within Latakar:

- The Broken Expanse can be located within the mountain range separating Central Latakar (the swamps) and the Frozen Tundra.
- The region is difficult to access and poorly mapped, making it easy to justify its absence or compression on existing maps.
- Its true size may exceed what the map of Latakar shows, but that can be explained through incomplete cartography or GM discretion.

The blight present in the region can be interpreted as:

- A localized expression of the **Crimson Rot**, or...
- Corruption spread by **Saints of Ruin** cults.

No single specific explanation is required. GMs can choose what best fits their campaign as they go.

THE REGIONAL MAP

OVERVIEW

The Broken Expanse is presented through a single regional map that appears in every release. This map represents the full known extent of the land as it currently stands, showing major terrain features, roads, landmarks, and areas of interest without attempting to define scale or distance precisely.

The regional map is not intended to be a tactical reference. It exists to provide context, continuity, and a sense of place as players move between locations and as new areas are revealed over time.

REUSE ACROSS RELEASES

The same regional map is included in every release in this content line. Each installment highlights a different focus area, marked clearly to show where the current location sits within the wider region.

Other locations remain visible but unexplained. Their presence is intentional, serving as points of curiosity, future destinations, or background detail that reinforces the sense of a larger, interconnected land.

FOCUS MARKER

Each release includes a clear indicator showing the featured location for that installment.

The focus marker is intended to:

- Clearly point out the current location covered by the release.
- Anchor the adventure content visually within the wider region.
- Reinforce that other visible locations exist but are not yet the focus.

Travel between locations is deliberately left to the Game Master.

- How long travel takes is determined by pacing, tone, and campaign needs.
- The difficulty and danger of travel can vary based on distance, terrain, and blight influence.
- Tables provided in individual releases can be used to introduce complications, dangers, or discoveries between locations.

The regional map supports free movement and player choice rather than a fixed route or intended order of exploration.

INFORMATION DENSITY

The regional map includes major terrain features, roads, landmarks, and named locations relevant to play. It avoids defining outcomes, ownership, or detailed histories for most areas.

Names, symbols, and landmarks may be added gradually as releases progress. Areas not yet covered are left intentionally open so Game Masters can interpret, rename, or expand upon them as needed.

USING THE MAP AT THE TABLE

The regional map primarily serves as a shared point of reference.

- It shows how locations relate to one another within the wider region.
- It supports player-driven exploration by making multiple destinations visible.
- It can be marked or annotated to track visited areas, known dangers, or developing rumors.

Scale, distance, and travel difficulty remain flexible and are always determined by the Game Master.

FULL MAP REFERENCE

Each release includes a reference or link to the full, clean version of the regional map. This version may include additional detail or labeling and is provided for ease of use, printing, or digital play.

The regional map gains context through use at the table rather than through changes to the map itself. Familiarity with the land comes from repeated travel, discovered locations, and accumulated decisions made during play.

THE REGIONAL MAP OF THE BROKEN EXPANSE



More of the map will be revealed as more issues of The Broken Expanse get released.

THE MAP WAS MASTERFULLY CRAFTED BY
D&DEMETRIUS CARTOGRAPHY

FOCUS LOCATION

OVERVIEW

THE PATH NARROWS AS STONE CLOSES IN FROM BOTH SIDES. JAGGED FORMATIONS RISE AT UNEVEN ANGLES, FORCING THE WAY FORWARD INTO A CONFINED CORRIDOR OF ROCK AND DUST. THE GROUND IS WORN FROM USE, THOUGH NO CLEAR ROAD REMAINS. SHADOWS SHIFT ACROSS THE STONE AS LIGHT REFLECTS FROM PALE SURFACES ABOVE, CREATING BRIEF FLASHES THAT MAKE DISTANCE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE. FAR AHEAD, THE PASSAGE CONTINUES BETWEEN THE FORMATIONS, THE ONLY CLEAR ROUTE NORTH THROUGH THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS.

The Jagged Spine

The Jagged Spine marks a central passage through the Broken Expanse, cutting between two dense fields of sharp, rising stone. This corridor serves as one of the few direct routes connecting the southern regions to the northern half of the map. Travelers, scouts, and hostile groups alike are funneled through this space, creating a point of constant movement and conflict.

Unlike earlier routes that developed gradually, the Jagged Spine functions as a forced crossing. The surrounding terrain limits alternatives, and detours require significant time and risk. This has made the central passage a contested and heavily observed stretch of land, where control is temporary and movement is rarely unnoticed.

Why This Area Matters

This region exists because passage is required. It connects multiple parts of the Broken Expanse that would otherwise remain isolated from one another. Movement through this corridor shapes trade, scouting efforts, and territorial control across a wider area.

As other routes became unreliable or overrun, the Jagged Spine gained importance. Its narrow structure allows small groups to hold or disrupt movement effectively. Control of key positions within the Spine can influence who passes through and who does not.

How This Area Differs

The Jagged Spine is defined by confinement and elevation. Movement is restricted to narrow paths bordered by sharp rock formations that limit visibility and positioning. Unlike the open Banner Wastes or the dense Verdant Reach, this region forces direct engagement with terrain and threat.

Vertical space plays a major role. Elevated ledges, hidden perches, and unstable rock faces create constant pressure from above. Travel is rarely quiet or unnoticed, and threats do not always approach from ground level.

The Blight in This Area

The blight appears unevenly across the Jagged Spine, concentrating in places where the rock has fractured or where movement has repeatedly disturbed the ground. Growth forms within cracks and pockets between stone, spreading through confined spaces rather than across open terrain.

Some areas show little to no visible corruption, while others contain dense clusters of growth that resist removal. The blight here does not dominate the landscape. It embeds itself within it, altering specific points rather than reshaping the entire region.

THE LAND AND ITS PAST

THE STONE BENEATH YOUR STEPS IS UNEVEN, WORN SMOOTH IN SOME PLACES AND BROKEN IN OTHERS. SHARP RIDGES PRESS IN FROM BOTH SIDES, FORCING THE PATH INTO NARROW STRETCHES WHERE ONLY ONE OR TWO CAN PASS AT A TIME. LOOSE FRAGMENTS SHIFT UNDERFOOT, SLIDING INTO TIGHT CHANNELS BETWEEN THE ROCK. THE GROUND SHOWS SIGNS OF REPEATED TRAVEL, THOUGH NO CLEAR PATTERN REMAINS, ONLY OVERLAPPING TRACES THAT FADE AS THEY MOVE DEEPER INTO THE SPINE.

The Jagged Spine formed as a natural divide between the southern lowlands and the northern regions of the Broken Expanse. Its rock formations created a corridor that could be crossed, though never turned into a stable road.

Early movement followed the most accessible lines between the formations. Small groups marked paths with stacked stone, cut markers, and occasional wooden posts. These routes shifted as rockslides, weather, and wear altered the terrain.

As activity across the region increased, the Spine became a necessary crossing. Scouts, traders, and armed groups passed through in growing numbers, reinforcing the same narrow routes. Use concentrated into the same passages, deepening wear and making certain stretches more defined.

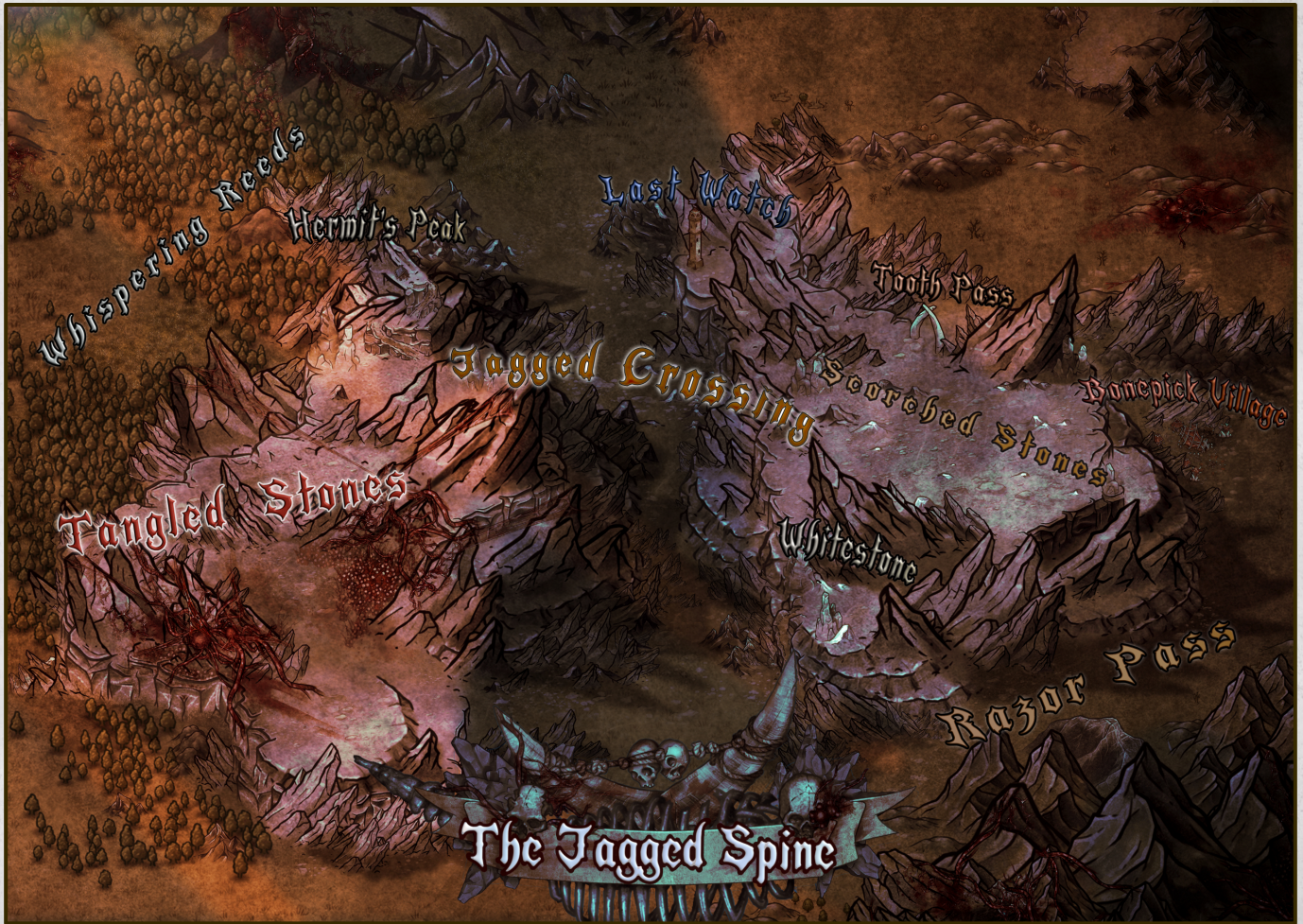
Groups later used the ridges for watch positions and short-lived control points. Partial structures, abandoned posts, and unstable ground still mark the places where those efforts gathered.

The Spine stayed in use as nearby routes became less dependable. Constant traffic weakened the same narrow stretches, leaving the ground uneven and strained.

The blight settled into these points of strain. It spread through fractures in the rock and disturbed patches of ground, forming growth within cracks, pockets, and narrow recesses.

The passage still remains visible through worn ground, natural slope, and aligned breaks in the stone. Travel through the Jagged Spine is still possible, though the route has grown harsher with time.

MAP OF THE FOCUS LOCATION



THE REGION MAP WAS MASTERFULLY
CRAFTED BY D&DEMETRIUS CARTOGRAPHY

POINTS OF INTEREST

JAGGED CROSSING

THE PASSAGE NARROWS BETWEEN PALE STONE WALLS THAT RISE IN BROKEN ANGLES ON EITHER SIDE. LOOSE GRAVEL SLIDES BENEATH YOUR BOOTS AS THE GROUND BENDS THROUGH A TIGHT STRETCH OF ROCK AND SHADOW. ABOVE, THIN LEDGES CUT ACROSS THE FORMATIONS, HALF-HIDDEN BY GLARE AND DISTANCE. THE WAY AHEAD REMAINS OPEN, THOUGH NEVER WIDE ENOUGH TO FEEL SAFE. EVERY STEP CARRIES FORWARD THROUGH A PLACE WHERE MOVEMENT IS EASY TO FOLLOW AND HARD TO HIDE.

GM Description

Jagged Crossing is the main route through the Jagged Spine. Most travelers, scouts, and raiding parties use this stretch because it offers the most direct passage north. The ground is worn from repeated use, and old route markers still appear where the rock briefly opens. High ledges, narrow bends, and long sightlines expose anyone moving through it. Small groups can watch the route easily and control movement without needing to hold the full passage.

Current Condition

The crossing remains passable, though the ground has grown rough with time. Gravel shifts under weight, broken stone narrows the way in several places, and older signs of movement overlap so heavily that fresh tracks are hard to isolate. The ridges above show signs of continued use. Arrow shafts, old watch points, and partial cover positions suggest the route is still monitored.

Ways to Use This Location

- A controlled choke point for ambushes or observation
- A route where pressure comes from above as much as ahead
- A place that introduces the danger of crossing the Spine itself

d10	Situations
1	Fresh tracks cut across older movement and vanish at a bend
2	A loose shower of gravel falls from a ledge above
3	An arrow lands nearby with no visible shooter
4	A broken route marker has been turned to face the wrong way
5	Movement appears briefly along the ridge, then disappears
6	A dead pack animal blocks part of the path
7	A cluster of blight growth is found in a crack near the wall
8	A warning horn sounds once in the distance
9	A narrow section shows signs of a recent struggle
10	A small pile of gear has been left beside the path

TANGLED STONES

THE ROCK CLOSES TIGHTER HERE, BROKEN INTO SHARP RISES AND NARROW CUTS FILLED WITH DARK GROWTH. THICK BLIGHT MASSES CLING BETWEEN THE STONE, PUSHING THROUGH CRACKS AND SPREADING IN HEAVY STRANDS THAT KNOT ACROSS THE GROUND. SOME SECTIONS APPEAR SOLID UNTIL THE GROWTH SHIFTS UNDER ITS OWN WEIGHT. THE PATH THROUGH THE STONES EXISTS IN FRAGMENTS, FORCING EVERY STEP THROUGH A PLACE THAT FEELS CROWDED, SEALED, AND HOSTILE.

GM Description

Tangled Stones occupies the left side of the Jagged Spine, where clustered formations create deep recesses and narrow channels between the rock. The blight has expanded heavily in this part of the region, settling into fractures and spreading through confined spaces where removal is difficult. Growth presses outward from within the stone, forming thick tangles, hardened nodules, and low pockets that conceal movement. Travel through this area is possible, though it is slower, more dangerous, and far less predictable than the main route.

Current Condition

The blight remains active across much of Tangled Stones. Some passages have narrowed to the point of near closure, while others open unexpectedly where growth has split or collapsed. The ground is uneven and partially obstructed, with heavy patches of corruption wedged between rock faces and spread across the lower channels. Signs of animal remains, broken gear, and partial shelter suggest that living things still attempt to move through it, though very little leaves a clear route behind.

Ways to Use This Location

- A dangerous detour away from the main crossing
- A blight-heavy zone with difficult terrain
- A place for creatures to nest within stone pockets and hidden cuts
- A route that forces close-range danger

d10	Situations
1	A blight mass shifts and closes part of a narrow gap
2	Fresh blood is found on stone beside an old trail marker
3	A patch of growth splits open, revealing a hollow inside
4	Loose rock gives way beneath a thick strand of blight
5	Something moves deeper in the stones without showing itself
6	A dead scavenger is found caught between rock and growth
7	The blight pulses faintly through a crack in the wall
8	A half-buried pack lies beneath a hardened cluster
9	A narrow passage opens where none was visible before
10	A section of tangled growth tears loose and slides downhill

WHISPERING REEDS

THE REEDS RISE IN DENSE CLUSTERS BETWEEN THE STONE AND THE TREE LINE, TALL ENOUGH TO BREAK SIGHT AFTER ONLY A FEW STEPS. THEIR PALE STALKS LEAN AND GATHER IN SHIFTING BANDS, BRUSHING AGAINST ONE ANOTHER WITH A DRY, CONSTANT WHISPER. NARROW PATHS RUN THROUGH THE GROWTH IN UNCERTAIN LINES, VANISHING WHERE THE REEDS CLOSE AGAIN BEHIND YOU. THE DEEPER YOU MOVE, THE HARDER IT BECOMES TO TELL WHETHER THE SOUND COMES FROM THE REEDS ALONE.

GM Description

Whispering Reeds occupies the upper left edge of the Jagged Spine, beyond Tangled Stones and close to the greener reaches leading back toward the Verdant Reach. It is one of the few places in this focus region where the rock gives way to dense plant life without visible blight taking hold. The reeds grow thick, tall, and closely packed, creating a maze of partial routes and shifting lines of movement.

Current Condition

The reeds remain undisturbed at first glance, though worn paths and broken stalks show that people and animals still pass through them. Some trails lead cleanly across, while others bend inward and disappear into denser growth. The sound of the reeds rubbing together never fully stops, and it often seems to gather close to anyone moving through them. The place shows no open blight growth, though its behavior makes it no less threatening than the harsher parts of the Spine.

Ways to Use This Location

- A deceptive route that looks safer than the stone passes
- A place where travel becomes disorienting without obvious cause
- A natural maze that conceals people, creatures, or signs
- A link between the Jagged Spine and the Verdant Reach

d10	Situations
1	A narrow trail ends at a patch of flattened reeds
2	The whispering gathers into words no one can fully catch
3	Fresh footprints appear beside the party, then stop
4	A figure moves through the reeds at matching pace
5	A hidden path opens where no break was visible before
6	Something large forces its way deeper into the growth
7	A bundle of scavenged bones hangs from a bent stalk cluster
8	A trail marker is found snapped and pushed low into the mud
9	The reeds suddenly bend in one direction without wind
10	A corpse is found kneeling upright between the stalks

HERMIT'S PEAK

THE STONE RISES SHARPLY HERE, NARROWING INTO A STEEP HEIGHT ABOVE THE SURROUNDING CUTS AND BROKEN RIDGES. A THIN PATH WINDS UPWARD ALONG THE ROCK, MARKED BY LOOSE GRAVEL, OLD STEPS CUT INTO THE SURFACE, AND SHORT LEDGES THAT OFFER LITTLE ROOM TO REST. NEAR THE TOP, THE AIR FEELS COLDER AND THE WIND HARDER. SOMETHING WAITS ABOVE, ALONE BY CHOICE, LOOKING DOWN ACROSS THE SPINE FROM A PLACE FEW TRAVELERS WILLINGLY CLIMB.

GM Description

Hermit's Peak stands at the upper edge of the left side of the Jagged Spine, where the clustered rock rises into a single high point overlooking nearby passages. The place takes its name from the blight-touched creature that lives there in isolation. It was once humanoid, though long exposure to the blight has changed its body into something harder and less easily named. It keeps to the peak on purpose, avoids the lower routes, and speaks only to those who climb to it.

Current Condition

The path to the peak remains climbable, though it is narrow and exposed. Signs of habitation appear near the top in the form of stacked bones, weathered cloth, carved stone, and crude tools left in careful order. The creature that lives here does not descend often, and those who reach the summit may be received, ignored, or turned away depending on how they approach.

Ways to Use This Location

- A dangerous climb that rewards effort with information
- A place to meet a blight-touched figure that still speaks clearly
- A vantage point over several routes in the Jagged Spine
- A location tied to warnings, bargains, or unwanted truths

d10	Situations
1	A line of carved warnings appears beside the upper path
2	Fresh bones have been placed in a deliberate circle near the summit
3	The hermit speaks a traveler's name before being introduced
4	A bundle of supplies is found hanging from a stone hook
5	The path shows signs of something heavy dragged uphill
6	A dead vulture lies neatly skinned beside the shelter
7	The hermit offers guidance in exchange for a difficult task
8	A stack of stones collapses as someone nears the summit
9	The summit shelter contains an object taken from another POI
10	The hermit refuses to speak while looking toward Last Watch

SCORCHED STONES

THE GROUND WIDENS HERE INTO A PALE BASIN RINGED BY JAGGED STONE. LIGHT STRIKES THE SURROUNDING ROCK AND SCATTERS BACK IN HARD FLASHES, TURNING THE WHITE EARTH ALMOST RAW TO LOOK AT. THIN SHADOWS CUT ACROSS THE BASIN, THEN VANISH AS THE SUN SHIFTS ABOVE THE STONE. EVERY MOVEMENT FEELS EXPOSED. OVERHEAD, DARK SHAPES CIRCLE HIGH AND SLOW, WAITING FOR SOMETHING BELOW TO WEAKEN BEFORE THEY DROP.

GM Description

Scorched Stones occupies the right side of the Jagged Spine, where the rock opens into a flatter and more exposed basin surrounded by sharp formations. The ground is pale and dry, marked by old heat, reflected glare, and repeated exposure. This area offers less cover than the surrounding passes and gives high ground to anything nesting along the upper stone. Blight shows in smaller patches here, usually in cracks, hollows, and shaded cuts where growth can hold long enough to spread.

Current Condition

The basin remains traversable, though the light makes it difficult to judge distance, elevation, and safe footing during the day. Sharp glare rolls across the stone at different angles, and narrow strips of shadow provide little cover. Signs of kills, scattered bone, and dropped gear show that the area is hunted from above. Blight-touched vultures and other scavengers are known to circle this ground, descending on injured travelers, separated animals, or anything trapped too long in the open.

Ways to Use This Location

- An exposed route where visibility creates constant pressure
- A hunting ground for blight-touched aerial threats
- A basin that forces movement without giving real cover
- A place where daylight makes travel more dangerous, not safer

d10	Situations
1	A circling vulture drops lower, then pulls away
2	A patch of pale ground gives way to a hidden crack
3	Sun glare briefly blinds anyone looking toward the ridge
4	Fresh bones are found stripped clean beside a stone shelf
5	A dead scavenger hangs caught on a jagged point above
6	A small blight cluster is found in a shaded split of rock
7	Feathers drift down from an unseen struggle overhead
8	A wounded animal stumbles into the basin from the ridge
9	Something large lands out of sight beyond the white ground
10	A dropped pack lies open in full view with no owner nearby

WHITESTONE LANDING

THE STONE RISES INTO A PALE SHELF SET ABOVE THE HARSHER GROUND BELOW. WIND MOVES CLEANLY ACROSS THE LEDGE, CARRYING FEATHERS, DUST, AND THE DRY SMELL OF OLD BLOOD. THE EDGE DROPS SHARPLY INTO BROKEN ROCK, AND THE OPEN SPACE ABOVE FEELS CLAIMED LONG BEFORE ANYTHING APPEARS IN IT. SCATTERED BONES LIE BETWEEN PALE STREAKS OF DROPPINGS AND GOUGED STONE, MARKING A PLACE USED OFTEN AND VIOLENTLY BY SOMETHING THAT COMES AND GOES ON BROAD WINGS.

GM Description

Whitestone Landing is a raised platform on the southwest side of the Scorched Stones. Its position gives a clear view across the basin and enough open space for large winged creatures to descend and take flight again. The ledge has become the nesting and feeding ground of a blight-touched bird of prey, large enough to dominate the surrounding airspace and drive off smaller scavengers. The place shows repeated use through stripped bones, torn remains, and deep claw scoring along the stone.

Current Condition

The landing remains active and dangerous. Fresh signs of feeding can usually be found near the center of the ledge, and the outer edge is marked by feathers, droppings, and disturbed bone piles. Nothing stays here long unless it belongs here. Travelers who climb to the platform risk being seen from above or returning to find the bird already waiting. The ground itself is stable, though the exposed edge and the threat from the air make the ledge difficult to hold.

Ways to Use This Location

- A high vantage point with immediate aerial danger
- A nesting ground claimed by a stronger predator
- A place to recover remains, gear, or signs of earlier kills
- A route that looks useful until something descends on it

d10	Situations
1	Fresh feathers are found still wet with blood
2	A stripped corpse has been pushed near the edge
3	A loud cry echoes overhead before anything is seen
4	A bone pile hides a partially intact pack
5	The shadow of a large bird passes across the ledge
6	Old claw marks cut across a section of pale stone
7	A half-eaten animal has been wedged into a crack
8	Wind lifts loose feathers into a sudden spiral
9	Something heavy lands out of sight just below the ledge
10	A broken route token is found among the nesting remains

RAZOR PASS

THE PATH CUTS THROUGH A NARROW SEAM OF WHITE STONE WHERE THE ROCK RISES IN SHARP POINTS ON BOTH SIDES. LIGHT STRIKES THE WALLS AND SCATTERS BACK IN BROKEN FLASHES, TURNING THE SPACE BRIGHT ENOUGH TO HURT THE EYES. THE GROUND DIPS AND TWISTS WITHOUT WARNING, AND EVERY STEP FEELS SMALLER THAN IT SHOULD. A ROUTE EXISTS HERE, THOUGH ONLY JUST, DRAWN THROUGH A PLACE WHERE ONE SLIP CAN TURN QUICKLY INTO A FALL AMONG THE STONE.

GM Description

Razor Pass is a smaller and far more dangerous route into the Scorched Stones. It offers a quicker entry than circling through safer ground, which makes it tempting to scouts, hunters, and anyone in a hurry. The pass is narrow, steep in places, and lined with jagged projections that leave almost no room for error. Travel through it depends as much on timing as footing, since direct light can make the rock harder to read and the path harder to follow.

Current Condition

The pass remains usable, though only in short stretches and with great care. The stone is dry and hard underfoot, though loose fragments gather in the narrow turns and sharper drops. Daylight makes the route far worse, as glare hides depth, edge, and safe footing in sudden flashes. Signs of old falls, broken gear, and blood-dark marks on the lower stone show what happens when travelers misjudge the path.

Ways to Use This Location

- A dangerous shortcut into the Scorched Stones
- A route where daylight creates as much danger as the terrain
- A place for skill-based travel with immediate physical risk
- A narrow approach where retreat becomes difficult

d10	Situations
1	Sun glare wipes out sight along the next turn
2	A boot print ends at the edge of a sharp drop
3	Loose stone slides away under sudden weight
4	A snapped spear shaft is wedged between two points of rock
5	Blood marks stain a lower ridge beneath the path
6	A bundle of supplies hangs caught on a stone blade
7	A dead bird lies skewered on a narrow outcrop
8	Wind pushes dust through the pass in a bright cloud
9	Something scrapes against stone further ahead
10	A safer foothold is found where no path seemed to exist

TOOTH PASS

THE ENTRANCE OPENS BENEATH TWO ENORMOUS BONES LASHED HIGH ABOVE THE PATH, THEIR PALE LENGTHS CROSSING TO FORM A CRUDE GATE AGAINST THE STONE. BEYOND THEM, THE ROCK TIGHTENS INTO A NARROWER CUT THAT BENDS OUT OF SIGHT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. SPLINTERED STAKES, SCRAPS OF HIDE, AND OLD MARKS CARVED INTO THE WALL SHOW THAT THIS IS NO NATURAL CROSSING LEFT TO CHANCE. SOMETHING USES THIS PASS OFTEN ENOUGH TO KEEP IT WATCHED.

GM Description

Tooth Pass lies on the northeast side of the Scorched Stones and serves as one of the routes used by Bonepick Village. The crossed bones at the entrance mark it clearly as claimed ground. The path itself is narrower than Jagged Crossing and more controlled than Razor Pass, with signs that scouts, hunters, and small raiding groups move through it regularly. Anyone entering here is moving through territory that is already known, watched, and judged before they reach the far end.

Current Condition

The pass remains active and dangerous. Tracks, scrape marks, and old camp traces appear in short intervals along the stone, though very little is left openly behind. Signs of use are clear enough to follow, though they offer little comfort, as hidden watchers are common and retreat can become difficult once the path turns inward. Travelers who enter without permission or warning are likely to be seen long before they spot anyone else.

Ways to Use This Location

- A controlled route tied directly to Bonepick Village
- A pass where scouts can shadow movement from hidden ground
- A place that signals claimed territory before contact is made
- A route that can lead to negotiation, pursuit, or an ambush
- truths

d10	Situations
1	Fresh tracks overlap in both directions beneath the bone gate
2	A carved warning mark appears on the inner wall
3	Something moves above the path and keeps pace in silence
4	A snare line is found stretched low between two stones
5	A hidden watcher reveals themselves only after the party stops
6	A butchered carcass has been hung near a bend as a warning
7	A discarded spear with village markings lies beside the trail
8	Voices carry ahead, then cut off at once
9	A stack of stones marks a place where someone recently waited
10	An arrow lands in the path with no second shot following

LAST WATCH

THE TOWER RISES FROM A NARROW LEDGE ABOVE THE NORTHERN STRETCH OF THE SPINE, THIN AND PALE AGAINST THE BROKEN ROCK BEHIND IT. ITS UPPER OPENINGS FACE THE PASS BELOW, DARK AND STILL UNTIL LIGHT CATCHES SOMETHING NARROW WITHIN THEM. THE CLIMB TOWARD IT IS EXPOSED AND STEEP, OFFERING LITTLE COVER FROM THE GROUND OR THE HEIGHTS ABOVE. EVEN FROM A DISTANCE, THE PLACE FEELS OCCUPIED LONG AFTER LIFE HAS GONE FROM IT.

GM Description

Last Watch stands above the main route near the northern end of the Jagged Spine. It once served as an observation post, giving its watchers a clear view over movement through the pass below. That role never fully ended. Blight-touched archers still remain within the tower and along the ledge around it, undead, disciplined, and fixed on the route they were left to guard. They do not descend into the Spine. They simply watch, draw, and fire on movement below.

Current Condition

The tower remains sound enough to use, though its interior is cold, stripped, and marked by old arrow stores, broken watch gear, and blackened stains where the blight settled into stone and timber. The archers still keep position through the openings and partial cover along the ledge. Anyone moving through Jagged Crossing or climbing toward the tower risks drawing volleys from above. Silence from the tower should not be trusted.

Ways to Use This Location

- A high threat point controlling movement through the Spine
- A tower assault with ranged pressure from defended positions
- A location tied to failed duty and blight-touched vigilance
- A place where the party can shut down a constant threat

d10	Situations
1	An arrow strikes the stone beside the party without warning
2	A dead watcher is found still gripping a warped bow
3	The tower windows remain dark until someone stops moving
4	A broken signal horn hangs near the ledge entrance
5	Fresh shafts are found gathered in an old storage rack
6	A corpse lies pinned to the slope below by repeated shots
7	One watcher turns its head before the others draw
8	A section of the ledge has collapsed into the pass beneath
9	The tower door stands open with no sound from inside
10	A volley lands further down the path as if warning, not killing

BONEPICK VILLAGE

THE STONE BREAKS OPEN AT THE FAR EDGE OF THE SPINE, GIVING WAY TO A LOW CLUSTER OF HUTS BUILT FROM SCAVENGED TIMBER, HIDE, BONE, AND STRIPPED CLOTH. THIN SMOKE DRIFTS ABOVE THE ROOFS, CARRYING THE SMELL OF COOKED MEAT AND OLD ASH. BONES HANG FROM POSTS AND DOORFRAMES IN CAREFUL PATTERNS, CLEANED, CUT, AND REUSED. NOTHING HERE LOOKS TEMPORARY. THE VILLAGE STANDS IN A PLACE HARSH ENOUGH TO KILL MOST TRAVELERS, AND THAT ALONE MAKES ITS WELCOME HARD TO TRUST.

GM Description

Bonepick Village lies beyond the harsher stone routes on the eastern side of the Jagged Spine. Its people survive through strict control of movement, scavenging, hunting, and knowledge of the surrounding passes. They know which routes can still be crossed safely and how to move near Tooth Pass without drawing attention from their own scouts. Outsiders can trade here, though every visit is watched closely.

Current Condition

The village remains active, organized, and unsafe. Butchering frames, guarded stores, and reinforced huts show that the people here plan to stay. A visitor who arrives carefully may be fed, questioned, and offered terms. A visitor who crosses a boundary, lies badly, or shows weakness may be stripped of gear or killed before leaving.

Ways to Use This Location

- A dangerous settlement where information can be bought
- A social encounter shaped by threat and negotiation
- A source of route knowledge tied to the wider region
- A place where one mistake can turn trade into violence

d10	Situations
1	A trader is invited inside and told to leave their weapons outside
2	A villager offers safe passage for a steep price
3	A butchered carcass is found marked with route cuts and symbols
4	A scout returns carrying gear taken from a dead traveler
5	A child points out someone the party has not yet seen
6	Old claw marks cut across a section of pale stone
7	A bone charm is offered as proof of temporary protection
8	A bound prisoner is dragged through the village center
9	A guide offers help and asks too many questions
10	A horn sounds from Tooth Pass, changing the mood at once

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE

The Jagged Spine shapes pacing, movement, and visibility through confined terrain, exposed ridges, and dangerous shifts in footing. Use the following factors to reinforce pressure without turning travel into constant punishment.

Environmental Factors to Consider

- **Narrow Routes:** Most movement is forced through tight paths, broken cuts, and confined stone corridors. Groups cannot spread out easily, and retreat can become difficult once pressure starts.
- **Vertical Threats:** High ledges, ridge lines, and narrow shelves create constant danger from above. Watchers, scavengers, and flying creatures can strike without needing to enter the path itself.
- **Unstable Ground:** Loose gravel, broken stone, and fractured edges can shift under weight. Sharp drops, hidden cracks, and sudden slides make travel and combat more dangerous in the tighter passes.
- **Light and Glare:** Pale rock and exposed stone reflect sunlight in harsh angles, especially around Scorched Stones and Razor Pass. This can make distance, edge, and safe footing harder to judge.
- **Blight Choke Points:** In places like Tangled Stones, the blight crowds the terrain through cracks, hollows, and narrow recesses. Growth can block movement, conceal threats, or force travelers into worse ground.
- **Watched Movement:** Routes such as Jagged Crossing and Tooth Pass are easy to monitor. Travelers may be seen, tracked, or marked long before any direct encounter begins.

SIGNS OF THE BLIGHT

In the Jagged Spine, the blight settles most heavily into fractures, narrow cuts, and places where movement has already strained the ground. It does not cover the region evenly. It gathers where stone has split, where debris has collected, and where confined terrain gives growth space to spread without being seen until it has already taken hold.

Where Blight Is Most Noticeable

- Tangled Stones and the deeper recesses between clustered rock
- Cracks, hollows, and low channels where loose debris gathers
- Narrow cuts where growth can spread across both wall and ground
- Shaded stone pockets within the harsher routes of the Spine

Where Blight Is Often Weaker

- Open, exposed ground such as much of Scorched Stones
- High ledges where wind and light keep surfaces clear
- Narrow paths stripped by constant movement and loose gravel
- Dry stone shelves with little debris or shelter for growth

What You Can Show at the Table

- Purple growth masses forced into stone cracks and narrow seams
- Vein-like roots spreading across pale rock in thin branching lines
- Hardened nodules wedged into tight recesses or under broken ledges
- Blight clusters that split, sag, or pulse in confined spaces
- Dead birds, small animals, or scavengers caught against corrupted growth

How It Influences Movement and Decisions

- Parties may avoid narrow cuts where visible growth crowds the path
- Blight-heavy routes can force slower travel and tighter formations
- Growth in fractures can hide movement, gear, or living threats
- A path that looks clear at first can narrow quickly once the blight thickens deeper inside



GENERAL LOCATION TABLES

These tables apply to the Verdant Reach as a whole. They are meant to support open exploration and ongoing play rather than direct the party toward a single outcome. Results may reference multiple points of interest and can be reused as conditions in the region shift.

d10	Adventure Hooks
1	A trader claims a safe route through the Spine was open three days ago and blocked shut by the next morning
2	A wounded survivor says arrows came from Last Watch before anyone was visible on the ridge
3	A hunter from Bonepick Village offers guidance in exchange for help recovering something lost in Tangled Stones
4	A bundle of old route markers is found near Jagged Crossing with several symbols carved out
5	Fresh feathers and stripped bones suggest something larger than vultures has begun feeding near Whitestone Landing
6	A traveler insists the hermit on Hermit's Peak knows which routes are still safe to cross
7	A body found near Razor Pass carries gear belonging to someone last seen near Tooth Pass
8	A narrow path through Whispering Reeds is said to lead to a place no one can find twice
9	Scouts report that blight growth in Tangled Stones has swallowed a route that was stable last month
10	A bone charm taken from Bonepick Village is recognized as a pass token used deeper in the Spine

d10	Rumors and Misbeliefs
1	The watchers in Last Watch only fire on the guilty
2	No blight can spread across open white stone
3	The hermit at the peak was once the last true keeper of the Spine
4	Bonepick Village spares anyone who arrives carrying fresh meat
5	Razor Pass is safe to cross at dusk when the glare drops off the stone
6	Tooth Pass was built over an older burial route beneath the rock
7	The birds above Scorched Stones circle where the dead are buried below
8	Whispering Reeds repeats the last words of anyone who dies inside it
9	Whitestone Landing was once used by messengers before it became a feeding ground
10	Jagged Crossing still hides a sealed watch cache somewhere above the path

d10	Signs of the Blight
1	A purple seam appears in a rock crack that was clear the day before
2	Vein-like roots spread across pale stone in thin branching lines
3	A hardened blight nodule splits open in a shaded recess
4	Loose debris sticks together as if bound by unseen fibers
5	A dead bird is found fused into a patch of growth
6	A narrow cut smells wet and rotten despite the dry stone around it
7	A cluster of blight sags under its own weight and tears free
8	Thin roots pulse faintly along the wall of a confined passage
9	A patch of stone darkens beneath a spreading web of growth
10	A route that seemed clear is found crowded by fresh corruption deeper inside

d10	Complications
1	A ridge above the party fills with movement that never fully reveals itself
2	Loose stone gives way and blocks part of a narrow route behind them
3	Glare off the rock hides a turn or drop until the last moment
4	A path splits unexpectedly where only one route was visible before
5	Bonepick scouts begin shadowing the party without making contact
6	A feeding cry overhead draws smaller scavengers into the area
7	A blight mass shifts and closes the easiest route forward
8	Supplies are dropped, broken, or lost down a sharp incline
9	Wind carries voices from another route and makes their direction hard to judge
10	A crossing that looked empty proves to be under watch from above

DISCOVERIES AND STORY THREADS

This section provides narrative elements that can surface during exploration of the Jagged Spine. They are not tied to specific encounters and do not resolve on their own. Use them to introduce context, raise questions, or connect this region to the wider Expanse.

Discoveries Linked to the Jagged Spine's Past

- Broken route markers showing repeated attempts to standardize passage through the Spine
- Partial watch records from ledge posts that tracked movement across the crossing below
- Carved warnings suggesting certain paths were abandoned in stages, not all at once
- Signs that elevated positions such as Last Watch remained active after lower routes became harder to hold

Threads Pointing Toward the Verdant Reach

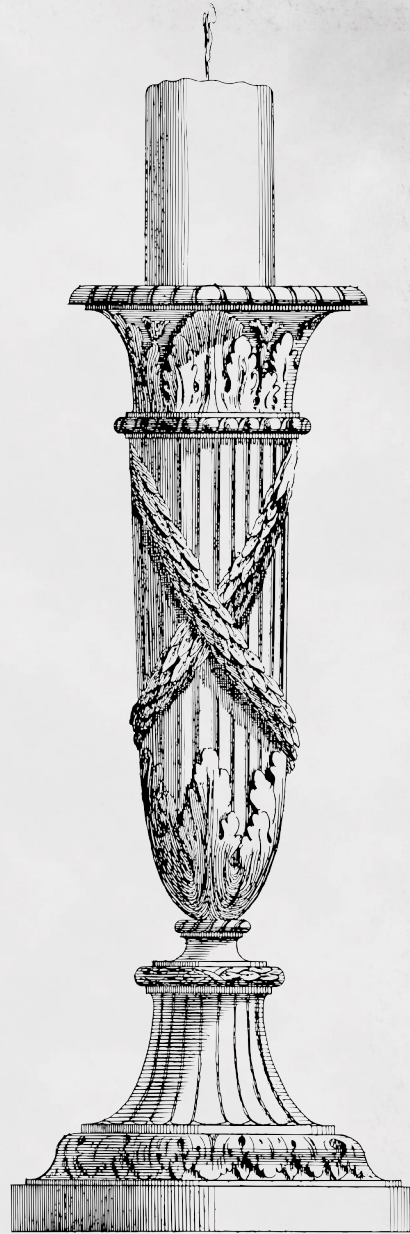
- Notes describing supply movement between the greener western routes and the central pass
- Evidence that travelers once used Whispering Reeds as a way around heavier stone crossings
- Traces of goods, tools, or markings more common in the Verdant Reach than in the Spine itself
- Signs that movement from the west decreased as Tangled Stones became harder to cross

Wider Regional Implications

- Indications that control of major crossings was fragmented across multiple regions, not held by one authority
- Evidence that Bonepick Village is part of a longer pattern of settlement built around surviving broken routes
- Signs that aerial scavengers and predators have adapted to regular movement through the central passes
- Traces of older route systems that may connect to still-unexplored parts of the Expanse

Open Questions for Later Use

- Who first established Last Watch, and how long it remained manned
- What the hermit on Hermit's Peak knows about older crossings now lost or buried
- Why certain exposed areas resist heavier blight spread while nearby fractures do not
- How many safe routes through the Jagged Spine still exist, and who controls them now



FOCUS BATTLEMAP

WHY THIS PLACE MATTERS

This battlemap focuses on one of the narrower stone routes within the Jagged Spine, not the main crossing itself. It shows the region in a more concentrated form, with tight footing, steep rock on both sides, and blight growth forced into the cracks and edges of the pass. The space reflects the same pressures that define the wider location, confined movement, exposure to attack from above, and terrain that becomes more dangerous the longer it is occupied.

The site concentrates several core themes of the Jagged Spine within a single playable area. It combines narrow movement, limited visibility, blight intrusion, and the risk of ambush in a way that is easy to run and immediately readable at the table. The path gives little room to spread out, retreat cleanly, or avoid pressure once an encounter begins.

This location was chosen as the focus battlemap because it can support several types of play without forcing a fixed sequence. It works as a dangerous crossing, an ambush site, a hunt through confined terrain, or a point where travelers are cut off and pressed from multiple directions. It also provides a strong place to feature the Bonepick Hunters, Blightbeaks, or even the Spinetalon as active threats within the Jagged Spine.

DESCRIBING THE LOCATION

THE PATH CUTS THROUGH A TIGHT STRETCH OF STONE WHERE JAGGED ROCK RISES SHARPLY ON BOTH SIDES, PRESSING THE ROUTE INTO A NARROW AND UNEVEN CORRIDOR. LOOSE GRAVEL SHIFTS BENEATH YOUR STEPS, GATHERING IN SHALLOW DIPS AND TIGHT EDGES WHERE FOOTING GIVES LESS THAN IT SHOULD. BLIGHT GROWTH CLINGS TO CRACKS IN THE WALLS AND LOWER STONE, SPREADING IN PURPLE KNOTS AND THIN VEINED LINES THAT CRAWL ACROSS THE PASS IN SCATTERED PATCHES.

THE ROCK ABOVE OFFERS BROKEN LEDGES, HARD ANGLES, AND SUDDEN POINTS OF CONCEALMENT WHERE MOVEMENT CAN VANISH FROM SIGHT ALMOST AS QUICKLY AS IT APPEARS. THE PATH AHEAD REMAINS OPEN, THOUGH ONLY IN THE SIMPLEST SENSE. THERE IS LITTLE ROOM TO SPREAD OUT, LITTLE COVER ONCE SOMETHING STRIKES, AND NO EASY WAY TO TELL WHETHER THE DANGER IS WAITING IN THE STONE, ABOVE IT, OR ALREADY MOVING TOWARD YOU.

EVERY PART OF THE ROUTE FEELS LIKE A PLACE WHERE SOMETHING CHOSE TO WAIT.

KEY AREAS FOR PLAY

These elements are modular and can be introduced in any order. The following assumes the pass is dangerous for multiple reasons at once, including Blightbeaks drawn to exposed movement, Bonepick Hunters using the terrain for ambush, and the possibility of a larger aerial predator entering the area if blood is spilled or prey is left exposed.

THE NARROW PATH

THE ROUTE HOLDS TO ITS TIGHT WIDTH HERE, FORCING MOVEMENT THROUGH A STRAIGHT AND EXPOSED STRETCH OF STONE WITH ALMOST NO ROOM TO BREAK FORMATION. LOOSE GRAVEL GATHERS ALONG THE EDGES, AND SHARP ROCK RISES ON BOTH SIDES IN HARD, UNEVEN LINES. THE PATH ITSELF REMAINS CLEAR ENOUGH TO CROSS, THOUGH EVERY STEP FEELS VISIBLE, AND THERE IS LITTLE SPACE TO REACT ONCE SOMETHING DROPS IN FROM ABOVE OR BLOCKS THE WAY AHEAD.

⦿ **Read the Path. Wisdom (Perception or Survival), DC 14.** You identify signs of recent use along the route. On a success, you spot the best ground to cross and notice where movement above may be watching the approach. On a failure, the party enters the pass without recognizing how exposed they are.

⦿ **Watch the Heights. Wisdom (Perception), DC 15.** You scan the upper stone for movement. On a success, you notice Blightbeaks shifting position before they descend. On a failure, the first attack from above is made with advantage.

➤ **Encounter!** Along the narrow path circle x10 **Blightbeaks**. They stay high until a target slows, separates, or turns attention upward for too long. Once they commit, they descend in repeated bursts, pecking at exposed targets before lifting back toward the stone. They do not fight to the death and will break away once several are killed or the route becomes too dangerous to circle cleanly.

POSSIBLE SITUATIONS:

- A Blightbeak drops low enough to draw pursuit toward worse footing
- The flock focuses on the rear of the group to split movement
- Movement above continues even after the first pass breaks away

THE BLIGHTED LEDGE

ONE SIDE OF THE PASS WIDENS JUST ENOUGH TO FORM A ROUGH LEDGE ABOVE THE PATH, THOUGH THE STONE THERE IS CROWDED BY BLIGHT GROWTH FORCED DEEP INTO THE CRACKS AND EDGES. PURPLE MASSES CLING LOW AGAINST THE ROCK, TIED TOGETHER BY THIN BRANCHING ROOTS THAT CREEP ACROSS THE SURFACE AND DISAPPEAR INTO NARROW SEAMS. THE LEDGE OFFERS A STRONG POSITION OVER THE PATH BELOW, THOUGH STANDING THERE MEANS SHARING SPACE WITH SOMETHING THAT HAS ALREADY CLAIMED THE STONE.

◉ **Study the Blight. Intelligence (Investigation or Nature), DC 15.** You identify which growths are stable and which are ready to tear loose. On a success, you avoid disturbing an unstable patch. On a failure, a section of blight breaks free and turns a 10-foot stretch below into difficult terrain.

◉ **Take the Height. Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics), DC 14.** You reach the ledge without losing pace or footing. On a success, you gain the higher ground cleanly. On a failure, you slip on loose stone or blight residue and lose 10 feet of movement.

➤ **Encounter!** At the blighted ledge wait x5 **Bonepick Hunters**, and x8 **Blightbeaks** may descend if the party stalls, bleeds openly, or disturbs the growth too heavily. The hunters use the height and partial cover to strike at targets stalled below. The Blightbeaks are not under anyone's control, they are drawn in by exposed movement, blood, and confusion. If the flock commits in force, the Bonepick Hunters immediately fall back, break line of sight, and hide rather than staying exposed beneath a feeding rush.

POSSIBLE SITUATIONS:

- A hunter uses the ledge to pull a target into worse ground below
- A falling blight mass cuts off the easiest route through the pass
- One Bonepick Hunter drops back, hides, and waits for the flock to scatter the group below

THE AMBUSH POINT

NEAR THE NORTHERN END OF THE MAP, THE PASS OPENS ONLY SLIGHTLY, JUST ENOUGH TO CREATE A ROUGH POCKET OF WIDER GROUND BEFORE THE STONE TIGHTENS AGAIN BEYOND IT. BONES, FEATHERS, BROKEN SHAFTS, AND OLD DRAG MARKS LIE SCATTERED THROUGH THE GRAVEL, AND SEVERAL LEDGES OVERLOOK THE SPACE FROM ABOVE. THE EXTRA ROOM OFFERS NO COMFORT. IT FEELS USED, CHOSEN, AND RETURNED TO OFTEN.

◉ **Search the Ground. Intelligence (Investigation), DC 15.** You read the remains scattered through the pocket. On a success, you realize the area has been used repeatedly as a feeding or kill site and identify where attackers are most likely to strike from. On a failure, the party misjudges the safer side of the opening.

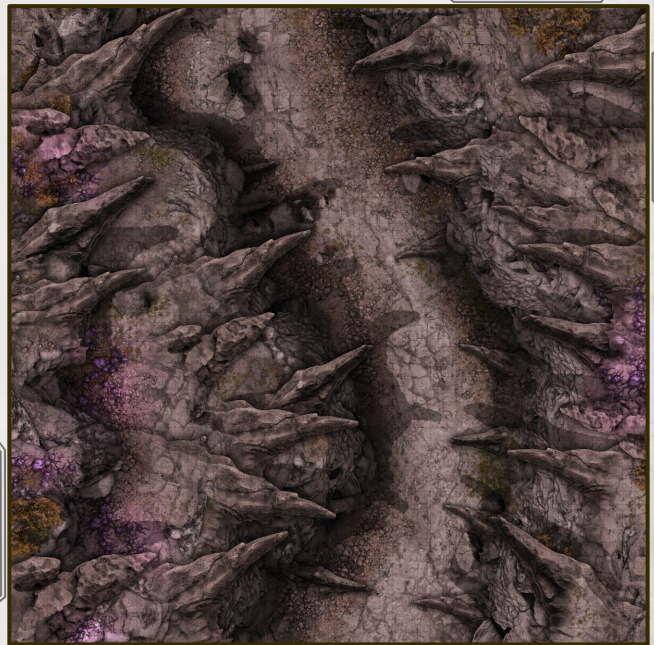
◉ **Listen for the Drop. Wisdom (Perception), DC 15.** You track movement overhead and along the upper stone. On a success, you hear the larger threat before it commits. On a failure, the first pass of Spinetalon or a similar predator comes without warning.

➤ **Encounter!** At the ambush point strike x6 **Bonepick Hunters**, while x12 **Blightbeaks** may gather overhead and x1 **Spinetalon** may descend if the fight becomes loud, bloody, or prolonged. The hunters keep distance at first, using cover and height. The flock and the larger predator are separate dangers, drawn by exposed prey and open violence rather than acting with the hunters. If Spinetalon descends, the Bonepick Hunters break contact at once, scatter into cover, and attempt to survive the same attack zone as everyone else rather than standing their ground beneath it.

POSSIBLE SITUATIONS:

- The larger predator arrives only after the party appears to be winning and forces every side to react
- A wounded Bonepick Hunter is abandoned as bait to hold the party in place while the others disappear
- A Blightbeak flock appears above the pass and forces attention upward just long enough for the hunters to reposition before hiding again

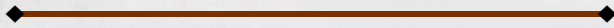
THE FOCUS BATTLEMAP BY EXPERT CARTOGRAPHER HEROIC MAPS



BATTLEMAP TABLES

These tables apply specifically to this pass within the Jagged Spine and can be rolled during exploration or combat to reinforce pressure.

d10	Possible Events
1	Loose gravel shifts and creates a new 5-foot patch of difficult terrain
2	A shadow crosses the path overhead, though nothing is immediately visible
3	A dead bird slides from a ledge and lands in the middle of the route
4	A sharp cry echoes above the pass, then cuts off at once
5	Broken feathers drift down from higher stone and catch in the blight growth
6	A section of loose rock gives way near the edge of the path
7	Fresh blood is found on stone that was clear moments earlier
8	A small blight mass tears loose and drops into the route below
9	Movement appears briefly on the ledge, then vanishes behind stone
10	A dropped spear or bone charm is spotted in a place that is hard to reach safely



d10	The Blight Reacts
1	A purple seam spreads across a nearby crack in thin branching lines
2	Loose debris binds together around a patch of corruption
3	A hardened nodule splits and leaves wet residue on the path
4	A 10-foot stretch of ground softens into unstable footing, then hardens again
5	Thin roots push outward from a wall seam and catch at boots or gear
6	A blight cluster sags from the ledge and breaks apart below
7	Growth thickens in a narrow cut and turns it into difficult terrain
8	A patch of stone darkens beneath a web of fresh corruption
9	Dead feathers or bones become fixed into a spreading blight mass
10	No visible change occurs, though the route feels tighter and less stable

DISCOVERIES AND CONSEQUENCES

Characters can uncover meaningful insights while interacting with this pass in the Jagged Spine. These discoveries do not resolve the danger tied to the site, though they shape how the party understands its current use and the role it now plays within the region.

The route is not dangerous by chance alone. Repeated signs of use, partial cover positions, drag marks, and dropped gear show that this stretch of stone has been used as a kill point more than once.

Bonepick Hunter activity here is deliberate. Their choice of ledges, retreat paths, and strike points shows knowledge of the route rather than opportunistic violence. They know where prey slows, where footing fails, and where a trapped group has the fewest options.

The Blightbeaks are drawn by blood, hesitation, and exposed movement, not by command. Their behavior shows that even a controlled ambush can become unstable once blighted scavengers descend.

Signs of larger feeding pressure suggest that Spinetalon has used this pass or one very much like it before. Bones, drag marks, and older kill remains indicate that the wider opening at the northern end is already part of a known hunting pattern.

CONSEQUENCES OF INTERACTION:

- Clearing the pass reduces immediate danger, though it does not secure the route for long
- Killing enough Blightbeaks can drive the flock off for a time and change how the route is crossed afterward
- Forcing the Bonepick Hunters to retreat may shift their activity deeper into the Spine or toward another route
- If Spinetalon descends and feeds successfully, signs of its return may increase around the same opening later
- Information found here can point toward how the Jagged Spine works as a crossing where different threats exploit the same terrain for very different reasons

THE BLIGHT'S REACH

This section explains how the blight behaves across the Jagged Spine as a whole. It describes where it concentrates, how it shifts, and how it responds to intrusion throughout the region.

BLIGHT BEHAVIOR

Within the Jagged Spine, the blight settles into fractures, recesses, and narrow routes where stone, debris, and movement have already stressed the ground. It does not spread evenly across the region. It gathers where rock has split, where loose material has collected, and where confined terrain allows growth to press outward without being exposed to full wind and light.

Sites such as Tangled Stones show the strongest expression, where corruption has wedged itself deep into the clustered rock and spread through the lower channels. In contrast, exposed ground such as much of Scorched Stones shows weaker signs, where glare, wind, and open stone leave fewer places for growth to hold.

The blight responds to pressure. Crossing narrow cuts, disturbing debris, or forcing movement through tight passages can trigger localized shifts. These changes do not spread outward in a clean pattern. They appear in confined patches, usually where the terrain was already unstable or crowded.

The movement of scavengers, Bonepick hunters, and larger predators also shapes how the blight is encountered. Feeding grounds, hidden routes, and confined ledges show repeated disturbance, which keeps certain pockets active even when nearby stone appears clear.

ACTIVITY TABLE

Roll or choose when the blight responds to activity within the Banner Wastes.

d10	Blight Activity
1	A cluster of growth tightens deeper into a crack and blocks a handhold
2	Thin roots spread across the ground in a fresh branching line
3	A hardened nodule splits and drops wet fragments onto the stone
4	Loose debris binds together around a patch of corruption
5	A narrow seam darkens and begins to pulse faintly
6	A blight mass sags from a wall and tears free into the path
7	Purple growth appears beneath a ledge that was clear earlier
8	A confined section of ground softens, then hardens again
9	Dead feathers or bones become caught and fixed into spreading growth
10	No visible change occurs, though the route feels tighter and less stable

BLIGHT CREATURES

THE NATURE OF BLIGHT CORRUPTION

The following creatures reflect how danger expresses itself within the Jagged Spine. They are built around exposed movement, narrow terrain, and pressure from above. Some attack in groups, some strike from cover, and some dominate the route through speed, elevation, or timing.

BLIGHTBEAK

A Blightbeak is a smaller scavenger shaped by the blight and by the harsh routes of the Spine. Its feathers grow in patchy, uneven layers around exposed flesh and hardened growth. Purple-veined nodules run from the base of its beak into the neck and shoulders, and its talons are sharp enough to cling to ledges, corpses, or broken rock with equal ease. It moves with sudden darts and short bursts of circling motion, never committing for long unless prey is already weakened.

Blightbeaks gather where prey is slow, where bodies fall, or where larger predators leave scraps behind. They descend in groups, pecking at the wounded, the separated, and anything forced to stop in the open. In play, they work as harassment creatures. They chip away at vision, formation, and confidence, making exposed routes feel more dangerous even before a heavier threat arrives.

BLIGHTBEAK

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Flyby. The blightbeak doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Carrion Instinct. The blightbeak has advantage on attack rolls against a creature that is missing any hit points.

Flock Hunter. The blightbeak has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one ally of the blightbeak is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

BONEPICK HUNTER

Medium humanoid (bonepick), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5, Survival +3, Athletics +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Bonepick Cant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spine Skulker. The bonepick hunter has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made in rocky terrain, among bones, or while lightly obscured.

Pack Rush. Once on each of its turns, when the bonepick hunter hits a creature with a weapon attack and one of the hunter's allies is within 5 feet of the target and isn't incapacitated, the attack deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage.

Bone Route Familiarity. The bonepick hunter ignores nonmagical difficult terrain made of loose stone, rubble, bones, or steep rocky paths.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bonepick hunter makes two attacks with its Hookblade or Bone Bow.

Hookblade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is Large or smaller, the hunter can force it to make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is pulled up to 10 feet to an unoccupied space the hunter can see.

Bone Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Mark the Weak. The bonepick hunter chooses one creature it can see within 60 feet of it that is missing any hit points. Until the start of the hunter's next turn, the next weapon attack the hunter makes against that creature has advantage.

REACTIONS

Backstep on Blood. When a creature the bonepick hunter can see within 5 feet of it takes damage, the hunter can move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

BONEPICK HUNTER

A Bonepick Hunter is lean, fast, and built for the routes it knows better than anyone else. Its armor is made from hide, scavenged gear, and worked bone plates tied close to the body to avoid catching on stone. Hooks, short blades, and bows are carried with purpose, and nothing about its kit is decorative. Bonepick hunters do not fight for spectacle. They strike to isolate, cut off, and finish quickly, then drag whatever they can carry back through the paths they control.

They use terrain better than most outsiders ever will. Hunters move across narrow stone, slip through controlled routes, and pressure targets that lose formation or footing. In play, they function as disciplined ambushers. They are most dangerous when the party is already under route pressure, blight interference, or aerial harassment.

SPINETALON

Spinetalon is the name given to a blight-touched bird of prey large enough to claim whole stretches of the Jagged Spine as hunting ground. Its silhouette is broad and unmistakable, with ragged wings, long talons, and a head built for tearing rather than clean killing. Feathers cling in dark strips around stretched flesh and thickened plates where the blight has hardened parts of its body. From below, it appears first as shadow and movement, then as impact.

It hunts by height, patience, and timing. Spinetalon circles open ground, watches ledges, and waits for a target to slow, separate, or expose itself near a drop. When it commits, it does so with force. In play, it serves as the dominant aerial threat of the region, punishing open movement and turning already dangerous terrain into immediate risk.

SPINETALON

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 10 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +8, Wis +5

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages —

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Flyby. The spinetalon doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Dive Hunter. If the spinetalon flies at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a Talons attack on the same turn, the attack deals an extra 10 (3d6) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Keen Sight. The spinetalon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Blight-Claimed Perch. While the spinetalon is in bright light or at a higher elevation than its target, it has advantage on its first attack roll each turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spinetalon makes two attacks: one with its Beak and one with its Talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the spinetalon can't use its Talons on another target.

Shrieking Pass (Recharge 5-6). The spinetalon releases a piercing hunting cry in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the spinetalon's next turn. A frightened creature's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the effect ends.

BONUS ACTIONS

Carry Off. The spinetalon moves up to half its flying speed while carrying a creature grappled by its Talons.

REACTIONS

Wing Turn. When a creature misses the spinetalon with an attack, the spinetalon can move up to half its flying speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

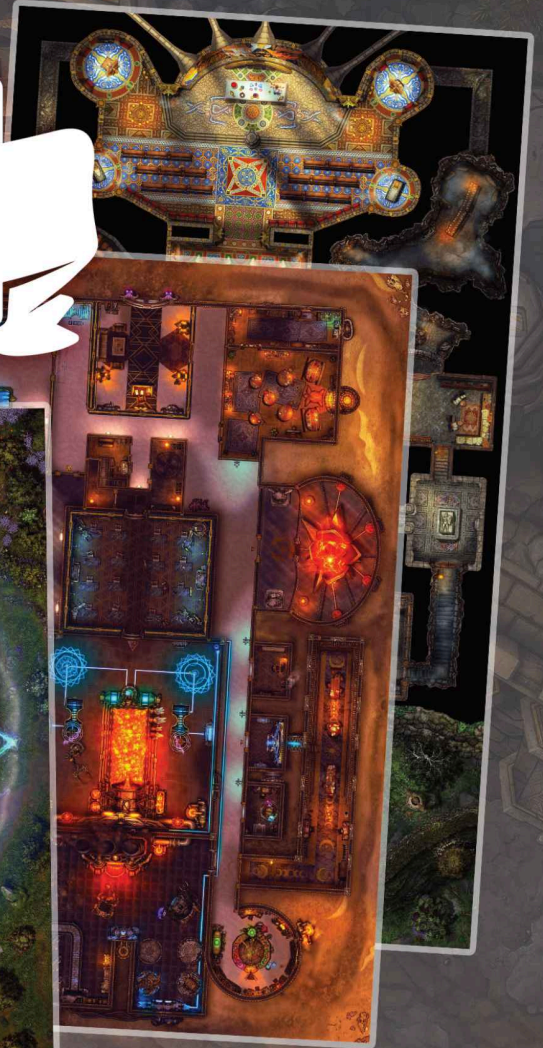
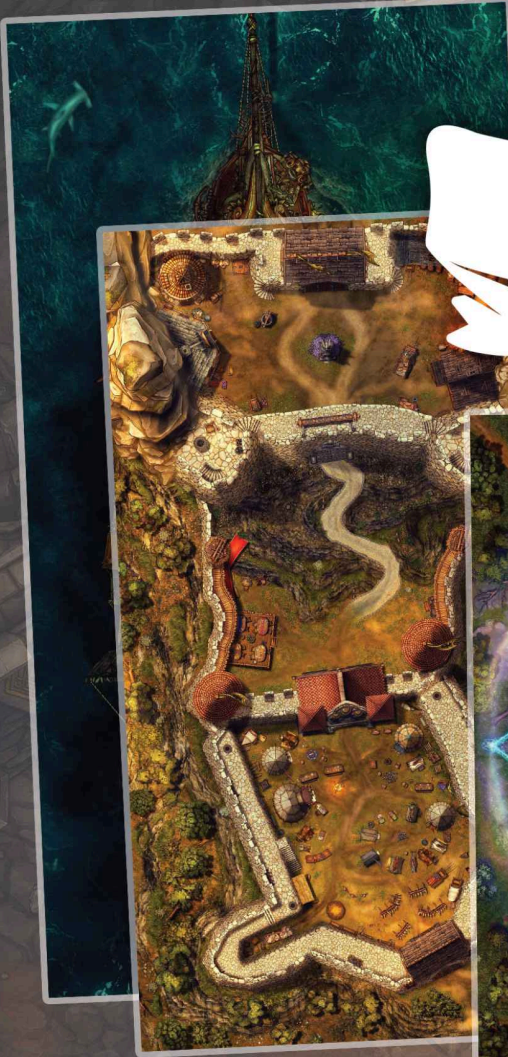
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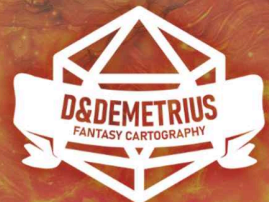
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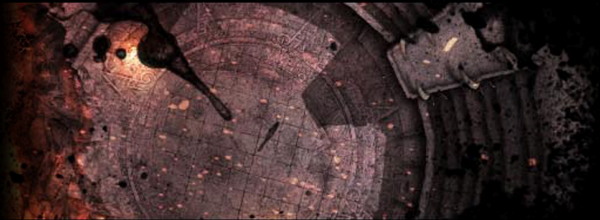
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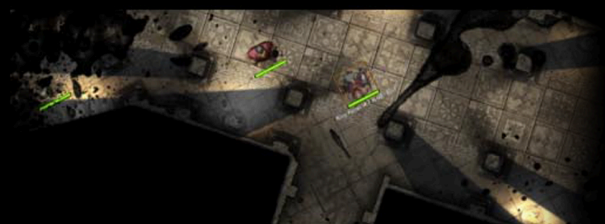
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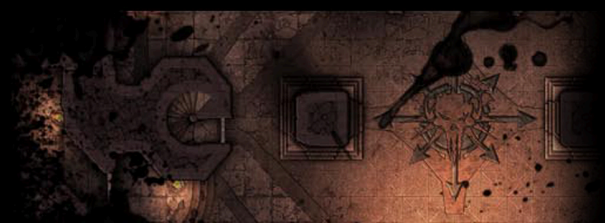
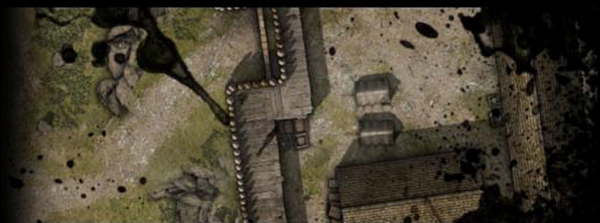
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