

Mapping in Westbound

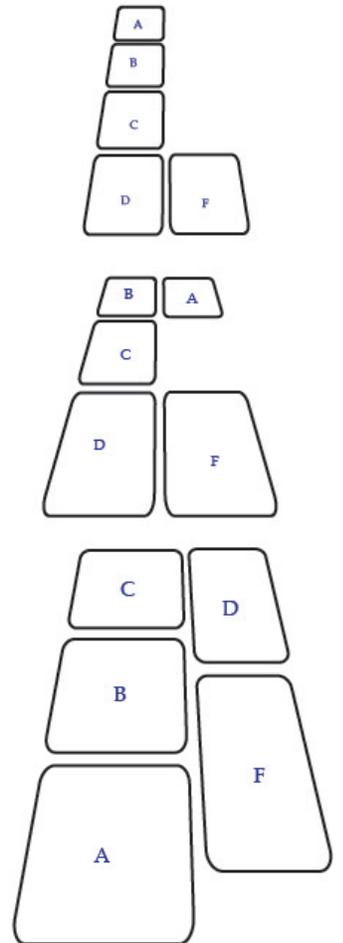
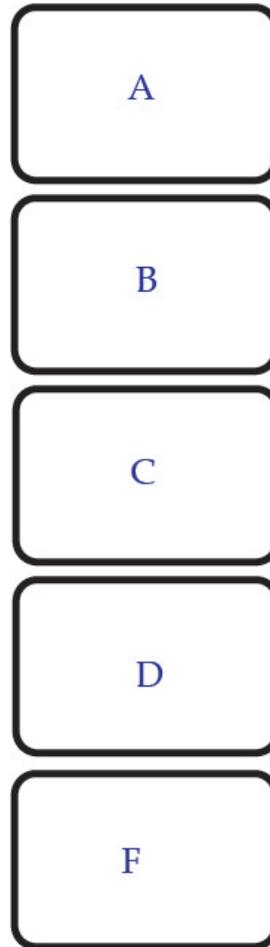
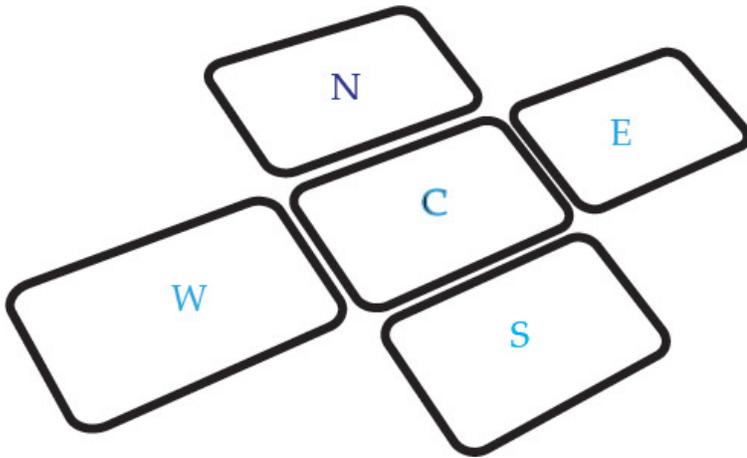
ABCDF and NESW maps:

We're testing out a system of play that allows for an streamlined theater of the mind, especially during combat. The maps are typically linear (ABCDF) or are limited to the domain of a compass (NESW).

In linear maps, ABCDF relate to: (A) Adjacent to player, (B) Beside the player's current location, (C) Center of the map, (D) Distant from the player's starting point, and (F) Furthest away from the player's starting point.

Non-linear maps will typically use a compass directions to relay direction: (N) North, (E) East, (S) South, and (W) West.

Some maps will have other locations, such as the Spruce Caboose which has the (H) engine or "Head" of the train, and Harthholme which has the (H) Hotel.



The Butcher of Snakes Bend

Synopsis:

The Westbounders are tasked by the Niaron, the Centaur Ranger to enter into a few ghost towns to investigate them. He would go, but he's superstitious of entering ghost towns and will never enter a town he thinks is a graveyard. He will instead cover them with his rifle. Through each town the Westbounders will piece together the mystery surrounding the town's sudden disappearance of several town's populations in the Snakes Bend area.

The Real Story:

A halfling has gotten his hands on a Troll arm, and is using its magical regeneration as an infinite slab of meat, cutting off slices and selling them off in several towns. However, the meat regenerates in the stomachs of the people who ate them, which kills the host as the trolls emerge. The mystery of what is killing these towns is slowly unveiled until they arrive at the Butcher in Harthholme.

Niaron: The Centaur Ranger

Niaron is a gun-slinging centaur, particularly useful with a Sniper Rifle. He left his travelling herd after a disagreement, and now wanders the Snakes Bend wilds, take notes on new towns, reporting ghost towns, and helping travelers as best he can.

During the adventure, Niaron will act as a cohort, attacking enemies from afar with his rifle. Although he may not be visible, he is always within the Prime Range of his enemies with his rifle. During the Westbounder's turn, they can play an attack for Niaron from their hand.

Niaron is of the Warrior Archetype, he cares deeply for all travelers of the west he deems goodly or innocent. He is religious, and very suspicious of omens and curses, and thereby refuses to enter towns filled with the dead. Niaron often conscripts Westbounders from Snakes Bend to help investigate ghost towns.

Niaron is named after a fallen star, an angel of Forjah who fell from the sky and disgraced the heavens. When Niaron left his herd, he took up the name of the fallen star as a symbol of his own disgrace.

Hook:

The sheriff of Snakes Bend has assigned the Westbounders to Niaron, the Centaur Ranger, to investigate Butterhaven, a small town which Niaron believes to be "Ghosed."

The city's manpower is currently occupied, and he is willing to pay them 5 silver dollars each, for each day of work. If the Westbounders are indebted to the sheriff, on parole for a crime, or are bleeding hearts, the sheriff will use that to extort them to work.

Butterhaven

What Happened:

The trolls gestated in the townsfolk, eventually killing and eating them. These trolls then died in the sunlight, destroying houses as they tried to get in, and leaving only stone and blood stains behind. Only one troll remains now, who gestated in a house and regrew to refill it, and is waiting for dusk to escape.

Town Description:

The town of Butterhaven is a short row of buildings that stretch from West to East. The town appears to be in ruins, as they seem to have been recently attacked.

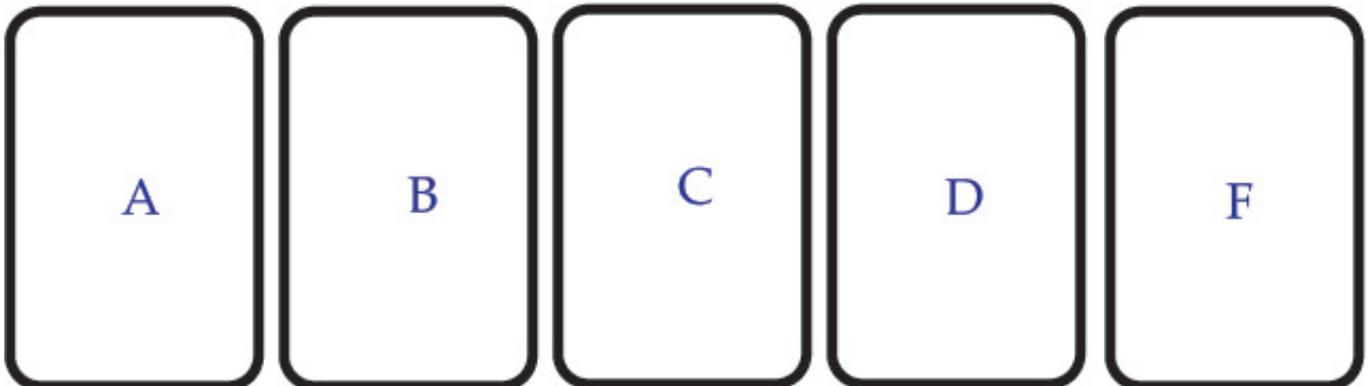
As you enter into the town, (A) Adjacent to the painted wooden signs that greet you are collapsed stone buildings. Based on the destruction, it appears as though a stone boulder fell upon the house, as the house is a mix of broken stone debris, some of which remains in one piece.

(B) Beside stone buildings is a large wooden structure that may have once been a trading post or tower. It appears as though it was once quite tall, but now lays crumpled on the ground, leaving wooden boards and splinters all along the road that obstruct your path. The structure has collapsed on the weak thatched roof of the home on it's south side.

At the (C) Center of town is one of the few standing buildings, a wooden house without any foundation. It sits slightly slanted across another 15ft wooden hovel that has been completely burnt out.

On the (D) Distant side of the town is a stable with tall wooden walls that have been burned, with the roof inside.

On the (F) Far side of town is a wooden bridge that connects the two sides of a rocky face across a gently flowing stream.



Exploring the Town.

(A) The dirt is pink with long dried blood.

(B) The debris from the tower creates a rough terrain of broken wood and broken equipment. If explored further, the Westbounders may find a poster with the torn the incomplete words Magifice- M-.

(C) The house is dark with doors and shutters closed tightly. When the house is entered or shutters opened, the light turns the creature inside partially to stone.

(D) Several large piles of stones side broken among the rubble of the collapsed roof. Parts of the stone looks like muscle upon close inspection.

(F) Underneath the bridge is a troll that has been turned to stone. The bridge was too thin to hide his whole body from the sun.

Combat:

The troll inside the small house will be roused if any part of it is exposed to sunlight. It will rise up, bringing the house with it, and will use the house to protect itself from the sun. From certain angles, it may look like the players are fighting the house itself.

The trolls regeneration will make players hard pressed to defeat the monster, but will learn that destroying the house to reveal its skin to the sunlight is a better option. If the troll becomes exhausted, he will rally once, reshuffling the cards back into his deck. If the troll becomes exhausted again, he will attempt to sit down, breaking the house around him and exposing him to the dawn's light.

Niaron will fire upon the House Troll after the first round, once he understands whats happening.

Once defeated, the house should fall apart, leaving the troll exposed to sunlight and transforming into stone, generally falling apart into stones.

Aftermath:

The centaur discovers wagon tracks heading north from town, and figures that its their best lead to figure out how these trolls ended up here.

The Westbounders are able to take a breather while traveling to the next town.

New Tarrendale:

This dwarf town is impossible to find without the Centaur Ranger. Within the flat badlands sits a large stone door that lies flat like a cellar entrance, and leads to a small dwarvish mining community through stone stairways. When the Westbounders arrive, they find several bodies which have no apparent wound or injury, but are baking in the desert sun.

What Happened: Everyone in town ate the meat sold by the Butcher. After several hours, the creatures grew to a size too large for the stomachs, which ended the lives of the townsfolk. Some fled the town, believing it was toxic gas, which they were more used to as miners, so many died out in the badlands.

Town Description:

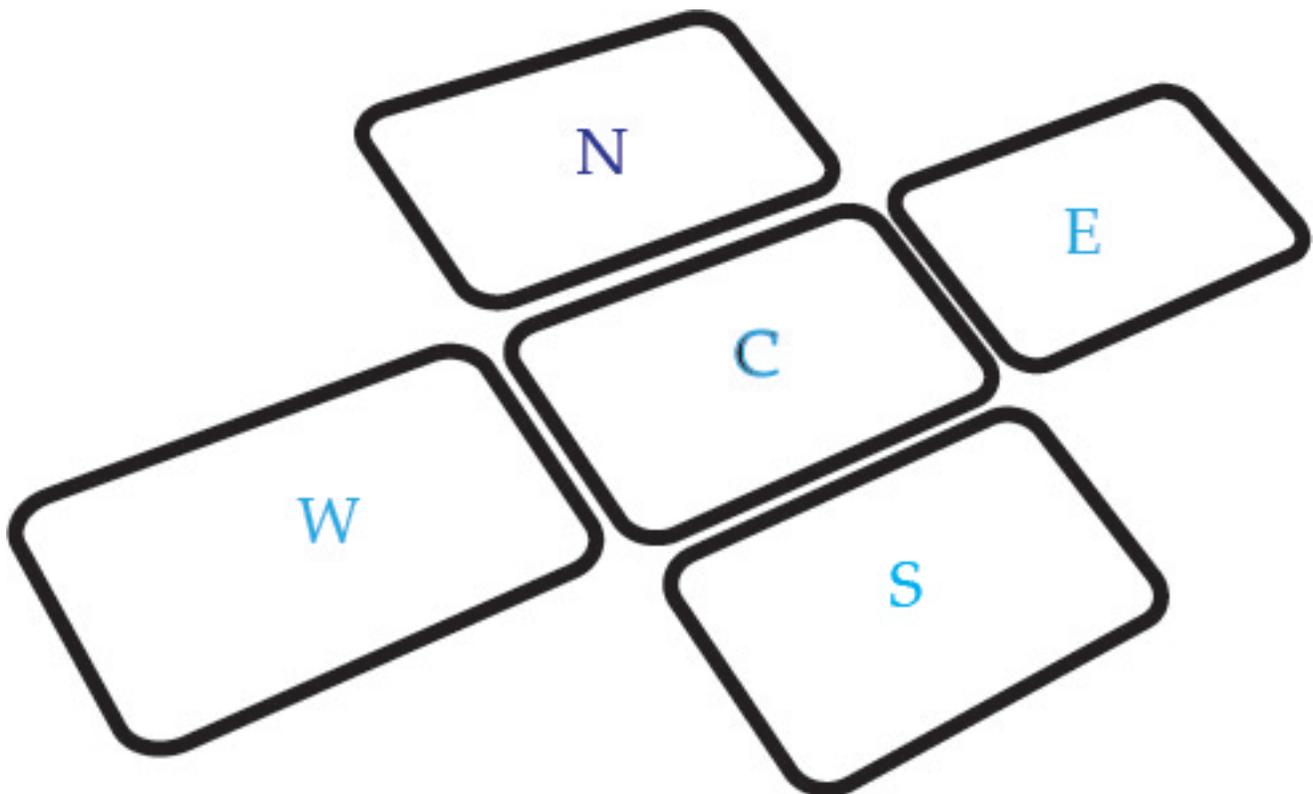
The (N) Northern entrance is a short hallway that is flanked on one side by a trading post and a saloon on the other.

At the center (C) of this small community is a small market set around a statue of a dwarf that is still being carved. The vendor's mats and wooden stalls create a small maze of weak materials.

Glittering stones all along the (S) south-most wall reflect sparkling blue lights from of the dusking sun. A small deposit of sapphires dot the southern wall, with two small stores built into the natural stone on each side.

All along the (W) west side are homes and stairs built into the natural stone walls.

The (E) east side is laden with pitted stone walls, broken stones, and pick axes.



Exploring the Town

(N): Dead bodies line the streets and inside the saloon and trading post. The Trading post on the western wall is filled with mining and exploring equipment which could be pilfered from the dead. Likewise, the saloon, named the Baron's Burrow, has a long bar of empty glasses, with bottles of whiskey lining the walls. Entering the Trading Post will sound a loud bell from atop the door. On the door of the saloon is a torn poster that looks like it was glued on in a hurry, as its slanted. The poster reads and incomplete sentence: Magnificent Me- and has the image of a hand holding onto a wand.

(C): The marketplace that sits at the center of town is a small open market that obstructs the direct path through it. A one or two bodies lay dead on the ground. Westbounders willing to use an attack to clear through the market can move through without being obstructed.

(S): The sapphire encrusted south wall is strewn with mining equipment, and a handful of small sapphires still within the chunks of the broken walls. Westbounders can attempt to pick Sapphires out of the walls or rubble, acquiring one for every hour they spend mining.

(W): A few of the homes made into the walls have open doors and windows, and the stairs rise up 10ft with no guard rails. The homes of the dead have some small amount of trinkets and steel currency.

(E): The east side is empty, with low walls, rubble, and some mining equipment.

Combat:

If the Westbounders attempt to steal, either by entering the Trading Post or by mining sapphires from the southern wall, the Troll Chest-Bursters will erupt from the bodies of the dead. Unless a Westbounder has already ante'd, this will cause a surprise round. The Chest-Bursters will not have the time to make an attack, only to escape from the bodies and position themselves for the next round, as well as laying down an ante and Foundation. Seven Chest-Bursters appear from all around.

At the start of the second round, the Westbounders will begin to hear gunfire from outside, and see some of the outside bodies appear to be crawling their way in, so another five Chest-Bursters arrive, each dragging the body of the person they infest above them for cover from the sunlight.

If the Chest-Bursters become exhausted, they skitter into the rubble and various rooms, and the Westbounders can take an extra hour to find and kill them in their various hiding places.

Niaron is able to fire on the Chest-Bursters if they come back outside, but otherwise is no help.

The Aftermath

The Centaur Ranger will insist you bring the remains of the troll parts into the sunlight before the sun sets and they regenerate overnight. He also points out that the cart seems to be the connection to the troll appearances, suspecting it may be a witch or some sort of strange disease being passed on. He notes the cart as heading north, and notes the three day travel to the next town "Hartholme," and that they might beat the cart there if they hitch a ride on the daily train heading the same direction around the mountain.

The Westbounders are not able to take a breather while traveling to the train, as they are too rushed to catch the train to catch a breath.

The Spruce Caboose

The Caboose is a roomy, romantic train that is designed for instant expedient travel around the mountain, with little thought made for extended visits. The train is roomy, with an on-board saloon and comfortable lounges.

Occupied largely by bald, beardless dwarves who staff and operate the train, the Spruce Caboose has a heavier than usual load tonight as it chugs through the cold mountain air. The interior is lit with oil lamps, and each car is 15 ft wide, with a 5ft gap between each which requires going outside.

Mounting the Train:

The Centaur Range suggests arriving on the back of the train in one of the larger storage cars, the players can arrive in the main area if they would like. The darkness of the night makes it difficult for the guards to spot the Westbounders, and it is a Tough Vigor Complication to mount the train. If a Westbounder fails the check, they still mount the train but must discard 10 cards as they exhaust themselves from the effort.

If they choose to enter a storage car, they find large marble slabs packing the cars tightly, and have an uneventful trip where they can take a short rest.

If they choose to enter the train, they will find a calm and sleepy crowd. The dwarf guards are drinking in the saloon and have forgotten who is supposed to be on the train, and if accused for being stowaways the barman is quick to cover the Westbounders, and offer a few drinks at full price.

Train Description:

At the (H) Head of the train is the engine room, with a boiler and large piles of coal that is being shoveled into the furnace by a pair of surly dwarves. Vents lead into a large whistle that is secured with steel beams into the train.

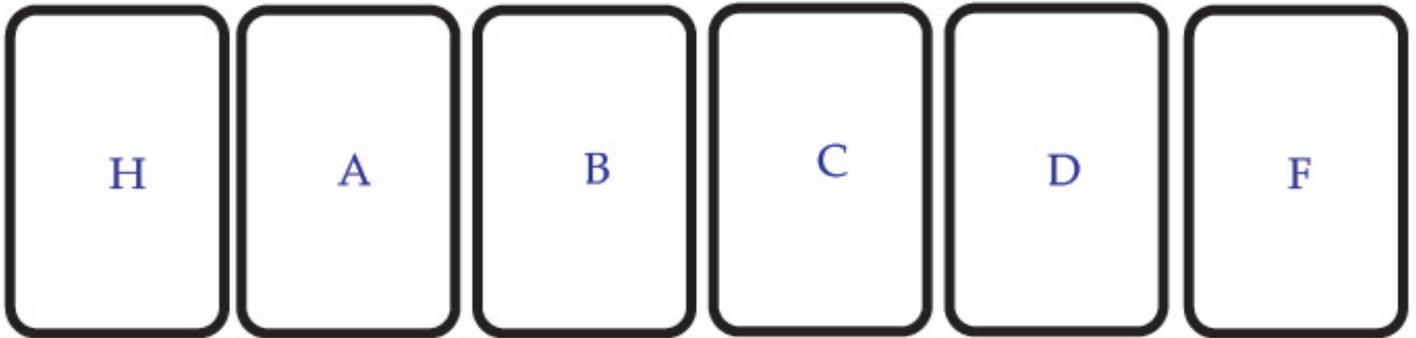
(A) Adjacent to the engine room is a storage car for both the engine and the personal effects of the train's staff. A large pile of coal is piled high, and steel lockers tightly shut by padlocks.

(B) Beside the Storage car is a large empty room that is piled with empty cots surrounded by a warm central fire.

The (C) central car is a lively saloon, with large tables and a bar that's fully stocked with bottles that clink as the train shakes. A game of "Liar's Deck" is being played by an orc hustler and his gnome assistant. The bartender is a young dwarf with long red muttonchops.

The (D) den and lounge has warm, cushioned seats that face each other in groups of four. Candelas on stone bases assist the lamps that light the room, and fill the car with the smell of brandy. The room is empty, save for one aging bard that sleeps in the corner, whose snores occasionally coincide with the compression of the accordion he grasps.

The (F) family seating area is tightly packed with uncomfortable wooden benches and is barely lit. Although designed for at least 20 people, the car is empty. From the window of the door to the rear of the train, it is clear that the next car cannot be accessed from this car.



While investigating the Train:

(H) A pair of dwarves handle the engine room alone, and are replaced every few minutes so that they can rest. All areas past the Saloon are off limits to non-staff, and Westbounders will be forced back to the saloon car if they made it here. A secret switch will sound a whistling alarm to the other dwarf staff, in case an attack.

(A) The 10 lockers in the storage room can be busted or picked opened, but there are very few valuables found inside.

(B) This room is clearly designed for the staff to sleep, and nothing else. It is empty with no belongings.

(C) The gnome will offer a game with the Westbounders after taking the Orcs money. If they accept the gnome's offer, he will play a few games with them, but he will not tell them how to play and withdraw if he begins to lose. If they do not, the orc will instead invite them to play, offering that the loser should buy a round of drinks. He will teach the Westbounders how to play, chat about the area, and will play for steel coins, and will often lose. He will also take an enchanted axe from his belt and dig it into the table, threatening to use it against cheaters. He is willing to play for the enchanted axe, but will demand at least 10 silver dollars per player. If accepted, he will stop losing and try his hardest to win. The axe has only a minor enchantment, allowing it to deal Magic damage and to glow a very dim purple.

(D) The sleeping bard is legitimately sleeping, but can be woken by excessive talking or if forced awake. He is heading towards the city above the redwoods, and can offer a song or some information about the area of coaxed.

(F) The car for extra seating is legitimately empty, left on by mistake and not worth the extra effort to detach it.

Aftermath:

There isn't a fight here, unless the Westbounders start one. They are able to dismount the train at the next stop, and can reach Harthholme before dawn.

The Westbounders are able to take a Short Rest while traveling to the next town.

Harthholme

A larger town, Harthholme has tall buildings with lanterns still lit well into the night. The town is tightly packed, and the road curves around the large hotel in the center of town.

Town Description:

Adjacent to the entrance is a large crate that is being used as a platform for a old, tired human preacher, who shouts at the westbounder as they pass by with premonitions of doom an destruction, not only upon them but upon the town itself. Small houses and shops line the street, each with their doors firmly shut and locked.

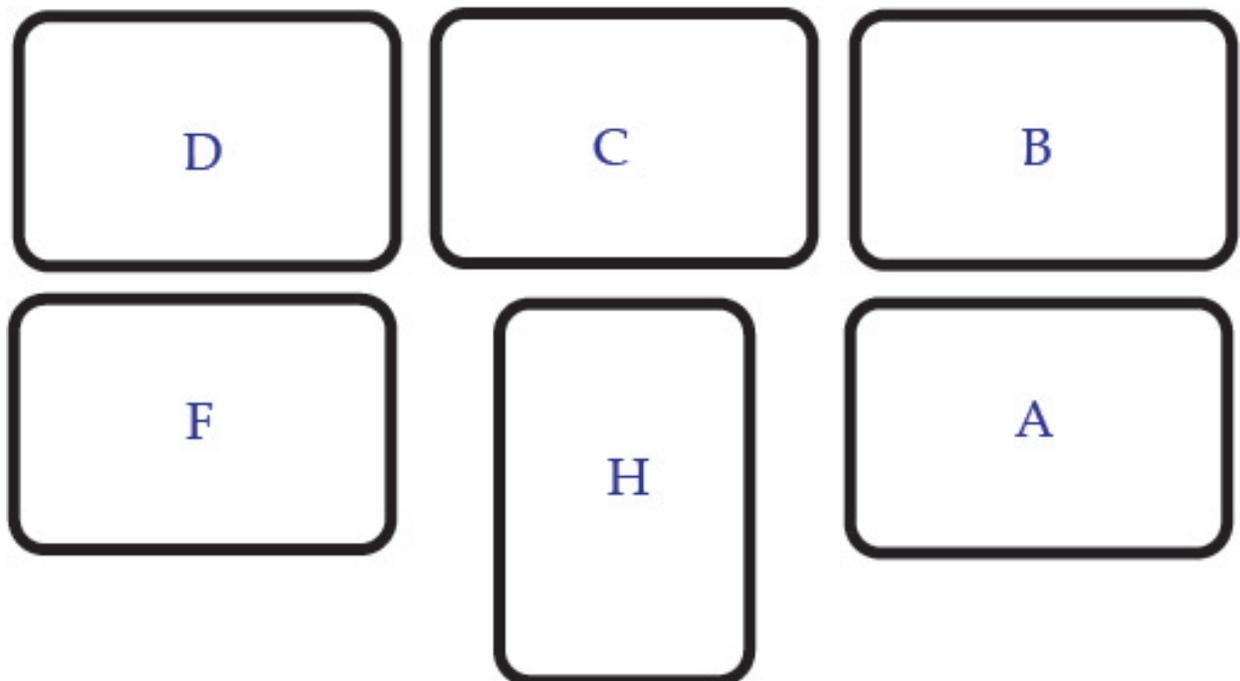
Beside the preacher is a large building that plumes with smoke. Two large windows show the glowing insides of a forge, and the walls are lined with all manner of savage weapons and firearms. The shadow of a man can be seen in the smoke filled room making a rhythmic noise with a hammer against an anvil.

At the center of town, directly in front of the hotel, is a single covered carriage. The side of the carriage reads in fresh paint, "Magnificent Meats," and illustrates a halfling wizard conjuring a nugget of steak.

Directly across from the center of town, the hotel door is open, and the clinking of glasses and low conversations are heard from within its doors. Inside, a small halfling is quietly speaking to a elven painted lady under low candlelight, and an orc tends bar. On the south side of the hotel is a rising staircase that leads to the various accomidations.

On the distant side of town is a large church with a high belltower that signifies the worship of Deelug. A garden surrounds the front of the church, and seems to be used as a burial ground, with high tombstones dotting the garden.

On the far end of town, a seedy saloon sits by an unguarded gate that exits the town. Large empty barrels litter the area outside the front door.



Exploring the Town:

(A) If interacted with, the preacher says nothing relevant, and only antagonizes the Westbounders.

(B) The smith's shop is locked and isn't accessible from the outside. Nothing relevant is found by investigating further.

(C) The cart is covered by wood, with a large door that leads into the back, which is unlocked. Inside is a small furnace, a bed, some halfling necessities, and a large chest. The chest is locked, but can be broken into to reveal a large troll arm that is strapped down. The arm will lunge for a Westbounder, but is unable to break the restraints. The halfling will run out and confront anyone who breaks in or attempts to untie the horse.

(H) The halfling and elf are speaking sweetly, and the occasional mention of "steak" is overheard to those pay attention. The barman eyes the halfling, as well as anyone who enters the hotel. The barman knows that the halfling owns the cart outside. The Westbounders can choose to confront the halfling here.

(D) The church is closed at this time of night, and nothing is found by investigating further.

(F) Though the windows are boarded up and the door is locked, whispers and dim candlelight is weakly oozed from the cracks in the walls. A small group of bandits are inside, and will attack if anyone who attempts to break in.

The Halfling:

The halfling is named Dudo Cactustail, is tall for a halfling, with a black bowler hat and suit, with a purple undershirt. He has a black mustache and curly hair that leaps out from under his hat. He carries two pouches, each filled with 50 steel cents each, and is wears black gloves which hide rings on his fingers. These rings are cheap steel that have been colored and polished to look like gold and silver. He has a small satchel that contains various cloaks. These cloaks are his investment, and he has spent all of his silver earnings to purchase them. Each has a minor enchantment that allows the owner to add 1c from their deck to their Ante at the beginning of each battle.

The Confrontation:

The halfling is entirely unaware of the situation he has caused, and was only trying to make money in a way he thought was clever. He tells the Westbounders that he found the arm of the slain beast crawling two nights ago and captured it to sell to an orc, but quickly realized he could make a profit from selling slabs of meat. He had no idea that the troll meat would kill its host. He apologizes, and is willing to make amends.

During the confrontation, people begin to gather outside the hotel, and soon the church bell begins to ring. One patron of the seedy saloon at the edge of town recently vomited a troll finger and made the connection to the troll meat he was sold. They quickly formed a mob and now seek revenge on the halfling, starting by overturning his cart.

The halfling, afraid for his life, will beg for mercy from the Westbounders. He offers them magic items if they protect him or help him escape the town. If the Westbounders accept his offer, there will be a fight, if not, he will be taken by the crowd and hanged, and his belongings taken by the crowd.

Combat:

The crowd is largely unarmed, and simply firing a gun into the air will make most of them disperse. Armed individuals will take cover: (A) Two behind the large crate, (B) Three inside the forge, (C) Two behind the Meat Cart, (D) Three behind the gravestones, and (F) Two behind the empty barrels. Enemies do not join the fight until they are visible, adding their Base Foundation once they are seen. Each are using an Ol' Faithful pistol, and the enemies at (A) and (F) each have a Molotov cocktail made from a whiskey bottle.

Niaron is able to attack any enemy that is not blocked by the hotel. If the enemies become exhausted, they retreat into their homes.

Aftermath:

The Westbounders spend the rest of the day on the Spruce Caboose as it makes its way around the mountain and returns them to Snakes Bend. The Sheriff pays them 10 Silver Dollars each for the two day excursion.

If the players save the halfling, he offers them each a Cloak of Action, which adds 1c to the that character's Ante at the start of combat. If taken back to Snakes Bend, he is imprisoned, and if let loose, he travels around the mountain trying to make the world better.

Bestiary

House Troll: Huge: 50ft: Hand Size 3

Foundation 5: Monster

Damage Type: Physical - Traits: Vigor, Mettle

Lumbering Smash: As an action, the Troll smashes at a single creature, ignoring armor complications. If it is medium or smaller in size, and Lumbering Smash deals damage, the attacked creature is grabbed and grappled by the troll.

Swinging Strike: The Troll swings wildly at those smaller things below. As an action, the Troll deals 5c to creatures within a 10ft square adjacent to the Troll. Any grabbed creature is included in the attack.

Throw: The Troll throws stones or people at farther targets. As an action, the Troll makes a ranged attack up to 50ft away, or 100ft with Scatter. If a Character is thrown, the attack deals equal damage to the target as it does the thrown character.

Thick Hide: The Troll has a thick and greasy hide. It has an Severe armor complication and a sensory complication.

Regeneration: The Troll naturally regenerates. At the start of each turn, as long as the Troll has not taken any elemental damage this round, the Troll regains 1 base foundation up to it's max.

Sunlight Sensitivity: Each round the Troll is in the under direct sunlight, they take 5c damage, and are turned to stone if this causes them to become wounded.

House Armor: The house around the troll provides armor against the sunlight. If targeted specifically, damage to the house will act as damage to the House Troll, as the sunlight exposes the skin. Unlike the troll, the house has no defensive complications.

Troll Chest-Burster: Small: 20ft: Hand Size 2

Foundation 1: Monster

Damage Type: Physical - Traits: Vigor, Mettle

Claw Catch: As a reaction, when a creature attempts to move past the Chest-Burster, they can attempt a Grapple check on the creature.

Withstand: These characters can discard Diamond cards from their hand as a reaction to reduce oncoming damage.

Armed Civilian: Medium: 30ft: Hand Size 5

Foundation 1: Humanoid

Damage Type: Physical - Traits: Vigor, Furtive, Coercion

Order: This cohort requires verbal instructions to perform a task. Once set, the cohort will continue the task until complete or it becomes too dangerous.

O'I Faithful Pistol: The Gunslinger has a fistfull o' bullets and a pistol, with a range of: 5ft - 30ft - 90ft - 20ft.*

Cheat Death: These characters can discard Club cards from their hand as a reaction to reduce oncoming damage.

Aces Wild: The aces of the Armed Civilians are Wild, and can substitute for any other value or suit.