

DRINKING AT THE SHEEP KNUCKLES

The Duchy of Ashlar is small and constrained. Always, the forces of evil and shadow press inwards upon its borders. If it were not for a stout few, death and darkness would have long ago overwhelmed the land. Dunstone was once Ashlar's northern bulwark. Now, it is a dangerously sleepy and insular place. Wicked humanoids yet lurk in the dark forests and deep valleys of the surrounding hills. Abandoned mines and crumbled ruins stud the surrounds, calling with their siren song to bold adventurers. To the west, lies the time-worn, oft-cursed ruin of the ancient Nameless Monastery. Not all dangers lurk without, though. Folk—both fair and foul—have plans for Dunstone. Change is coming, to the Town on the Borderlands.

Designed specifically for you, the busy GM, this supplement enables you to effortlessly bring your characters' next urban adventure to life. Designed for use with the town of Dunstone, this mini-eventure can easily be used with almost any town or city.

CREDITS

Design: John Bennett and Creighton Broadhurst

Development: Creighton Broadhurst

Art: William McAusland. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission.

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USING THIS MINI-EVENTURE?

A mini-eventure is akin to a normal adventure but does not (normally) feature violence or physical challenges. Instead, a mini-eventure focuses on the use of social skills and role-play to resolve the challenges or events therein. Most mini-eventures take place in an urban locale. Mini-eventures are an excellent change of pace and can be used as filler between adventures or as situations in which characters who have invested in social skills can shine. They are also perfect for players who enjoy role-playing.

Use the lists herein to add depth, flavour and interest to the characters' doings in Dunstone. You can use the various entries as nothing more than local colour or as springboards to encounters, side quests or even full adventures. You can also use this mini-eventure repeatedly as long as you keep track of which entries you have previously used. Of course, some of the listed NPCs and locales could become staples of your campaign.

You can either plan events before the game or just "wing" the mini-eventure using the lists herein to facilitate play.



THE SHEEP KNUCKLES

The Sheep Knuckles is location 4 on the Dunstone map.

This strange, two-storey wooden building features walls painted in different garish colours as well as rings of brightly coloured mushrooms growing on the thatched roof. The gnomish proprietor, Roosa Lajunen, exudes infectious energy, which seems to fill Dunstone's favourite watering hole and inn with enthusiasm and merriment. Many have pointed out that the inn's name, the Sheep Knuckles, makes no sense. To this, Roosa just shrugs and laughs.

The inn's offering is cheap and basic:

- **Drink:** Mug of ale (4 cp), pitcher of wine (2 sp), glass of whiskey (1 gp), bottle of good wine (10 gp).
- **Food (Cheap):** Lamb stew with parsnips or fish stew with mashed potatoes (1 sp).
- **Food (Good):** Roast chicken or lamb with a platter of vegetables (3 sp).
- **Lifestyle:** Characters staying in one of the inn's eight bedrooms can enjoy a poor (3 gp/month) or average (10 gp/month) lifestyle.

THE SHEEP KNUCKLES BY DAY

The Sheep Knuckles is quiet during the day. During daylight hours, only a few diehard regulars and the inn's staying guests can be found in the taproom. Sometimes, a local performer practises on the inn's stage, and the few drinkers in attendance get a free show.

THE SHEEP KNUCKLES BY NIGHT

The Sheep Knuckles comes alive at night. Rarely are evenings here boring and mundane. Roosa performs magic shows nightly but is always willing to let others perform if she gets a cut of their tips.

NOTABLE FOLK

Some folk are often encountered at the Sheep Knuckles.

- **Roosa Lajunen** (CG female gnome illusionist 3) exudes infectious energy and enthusiasm. Roosa is a bit of an enigma—a gnome raised by humans after being found abandoned as a baby on a hilltop. She is always friendly and cheerful. Sometimes, she appears tired—normally after she has suffered one of her prophetic dreams (see "Opportunities & Compilations #1). She performs a nightly magic show for her patrons.
- **Reko Ehtaro** (CG middle-aged male human) can't hear as well as he used to and is almost completely bald. Still, this portly and gregarious chap loves the hubbub and unpredictability of a good night. He helps run the inn and is Roosa's righthand man. He plays a mean violin and loves cooking.

FOLK OUT & ABOUT

While the characters are at the Sheep Knuckles, they may encounter one or more folk of interest.

1. **Reijo Kainu** (LN middle-aged male human) merchant has a problem. A pair of ogres have been attacking travellers travelling between Dunstone and White Moon Cove. Reijo would like the attacks stopped and is willing to pay handsomely. He is well-dressed, liberal with his gold and a smidge drunk. (See the adventure *Sepulchre of the Wolf King* for more details.)
2. **Samu Airikka** (NG male human fighter 2) loves showy, bright and colourful magic. Although he is a seasoned warrior and has gained some fame as a handy companion in a tight spot, there is still something of the child about this burly, black-haired man.
3. **Tilda Laulaja** (LG female human cleric [Darlen] 1) stays at the Sheep Knuckles in preparation for presenting herself at the Tower of the Sword (location 2 on the Dunstone map) to its high priest, Father Jones Mattila. She is earnest, good-natured and new to the frontier. She has heard the rumours of orc raiders to the north and wants to help keep the town safe.
4. **Reetta Miekka** (N middle-aged female human) works at the Sheep Knuckles. When she isn't working here, she is invariably drinking here. Reetta is secretly in love with Reko Ehtaro (see "Notable Folk") and spends her nights watching him from the corner of her eye. She is popular with the locals and knows much of what is going on around town. Reetta has an incredible capacity for alcohol—as the dwarven warrior Dordin Ovlag found out to his cost during a now-legendary drinking competition several years ago.
5. **Niilo Vesi** (NE male human thief 3) preys on lone, drunk townfolk and drunker adventurers staggering home after a night at the Sheep Knuckles. A master of disguise, Niilo appears to be a labourer—his clothes are dirty and much-repaired—relaxing after a hard day's work. He feigns a bad limp to explain the stout "walking stick" he carries. This cudgel of heavy wood is his weapon of choice, and he uses it to strike his unsuspecting mark on the back of their head. He doesn't deliberately try to kill anyone, but several of his victims have died from their injuries; he couldn't care less.
6. **Inkeri Tornio** (NG female human ranger 1) takes her ease here after a harrowing week in the northern hills. She has been investigating reports of emboldened orc raiding parties coming dangerously close to the Selka. She tells any obvious adventurers of her worries and observations. Inkeri is a stout woman with mid-length brown hair who possesses great wilderness skills. She is brave and not scared of a fight. If the characters decide to head into the hills, and she likes them, she offers to accompany them as she knows the area well.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the characters are at the Sheep Knuckles, one or more things from the list below may occur.

1. **Busy:** During the day, the taproom is uncommonly busy; a performer is practising, and word has got around. By night, the same performer packs out the taproom, which is standing-room only.
2. **Delivery:** Verna Brandybottle (from the Brandybottle Distillery, location 8) has come to the inn to deliver a dozen bottles of her finest whiskey personally. Roosa enthusiastically welcomes her halfling friend, and soon, the two are busy sampling one of the bottles.
3. **Argument:** A drunk and truculent half-elf has started an argument with a group of locals. The half-elf doesn't believe that Vilimzair Aralivar is the world's greatest-ever bard (or even a legendary pirate captain). The locals are loudly putting the stranger right.
4. **Rolling Out the Barrel:** A barrel of ale has just been emptied, and Reko Ehtaró (see "Notable Folk") is rolling the empty one out through the taproom; customers squeeze to get out of his way.
5. **Thatchers:** Two thatchers are repairing a small part of the inn's roof. Roosa is watching them carefully—she doesn't want them to damage the mushrooms growing across the thatch.
6. **Tired Roosa:** Roosa has had another night of unsettling, prophetic dreams. She sits on a high stool, her head on the bar, snoozing. Reko Entaró is behind the bar.

OPPORTUNITIES & COMPLICATIONS

Lucky adventurers find opportunities almost anywhere. Unlucky adventurers find complications almost anywhere.

1. **Prophetic Dreams:** Roosa Lajunen regularly has almost prophetic dreams, usually of boring, everyday events. Lately, she's dreamt of a terrifying dark shape looming over Dunstone and laughing in a strange tongue. Troubled by this, she shares her dream with friendly adventuring types.
2. **Roosa Sick:** Felled by fever for the past four days, Roosa's delirious ravings mention a terrible "Yellow Man" who will soon come from "the dark between the stars". Her illness is sudden and mysterious, and it is the talk of the town. Perhaps fell forces are at work.
3. **Truculent Half-Elf:** A half-elf argues with a group of regulars (see "What's Going On" #3). Realising the characters are fellow adventurers, the half-elf—who refuses to give his name—tries to enlist them to his side. If the argument escalates and a brawl seems imminent, the half-elf is suddenly nowhere to be found.
4. **Standing Room Only:** The taproom is so busy that it is standing room only. If the characters visit during the day, the Brewery Guild is holding a meeting here, and the inn

is closed to all but those renting one of its rooms; if it is nighttime, the inn is merely exceptionally busy.

5. **Uncomfortable Wealthy Merchant:** A wealthy merchant, Reijo Kainu (see #1 "Folk Out and About") is visiting the inn. He is quite well-to-do and thought he might "slum it" for a bit. He is looking for adventurers and spots the characters.
6. **Roosa's Show:** Roosa is either performing her nightly magic show or practising something a "little bit different" (if the characters are here during the day). Roosa needs a volunteer—preferably a female with long hair—and calls a character up to the stage.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

The characters may overhear or learn some of the rumours (which may or may not be true) below.

1. **The House of Yspher:** This dilapidated house stands on a lonely hilltop south of Dunstone. A dreaded wizard once dwelled in the manor. Not all who enter the ramshackle building emerge, and horrible things are said to lurk in the ruin. (See *Dungeon Backdrop: The House of Yspher* for more details).
2. **'Ware the Dragon:** A dragon's lair—complete with a red dragon—has been discovered buried in the hills to the west. Apparently, the beast lairs in caverns below a ruined monastery. Most of the adventurers who made the discovery are dead; only one survivor—a fleet of foot half-elf—escaped the beast. Some folk name the half-elf a hero for bringing news of the danger back to the town, while others mutter he abandoned his friends to save his own skin.
3. **Northward Expansion:** Ashlar's rulers are again planning northward expansion and opportunities for reward and advancement await those brave enough to venture over the border. The ruin of many previous attempts to settle the wild northern hills dot the Mottled Spire. One such place is the so-called "Ruins of Bleak Hill". (See *Dungeon Backdrop: Ruins of Bleak Hill* for more details on this locale).
4. **The Plague:** The nearby village of Ashford remains beset with plague. How anyone yet survives in the village is a mystery. The town watch keeps an eye out for anyone coming from the south who looks ill. Such folk are barred entry to the town or ejected if they have already entered.
5. **Devil Worshippers:** The Rekolos worship a demon or devil. Their house caught fire decades ago as a punishment from Darlen. Most of the family are now nothing but crazed, near-penniless magicians.
6. **Restless Orcs:** The orcs of the Mottled Spire are growing restless and bold. Their raiding parties have been getting closer to the Selka's north bank, and several bands of adventurers have reported savage skirmishes with these ferocious warriors.

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