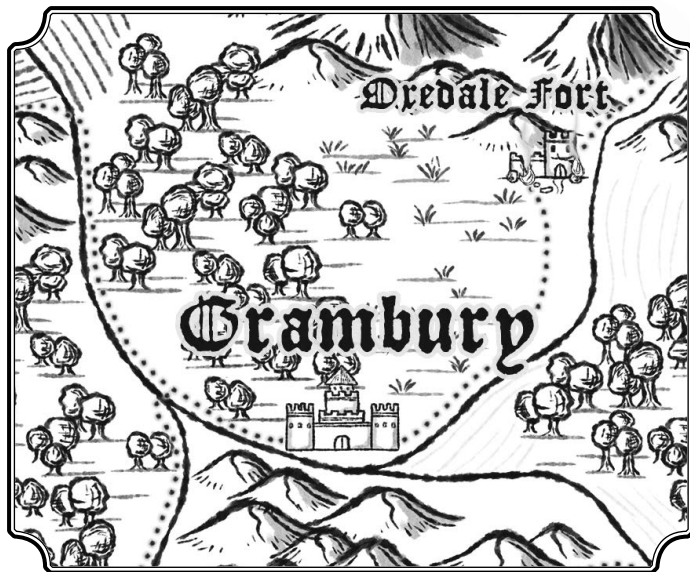


GRAMBURY

"Fear not, my brothers, for Grambury shall not fall! The blood of heroes flows through our veins. The hell-spawn hyenas shall not storm our proud walls."

Duke Alaric Stormrider

The capital of the Amber Expanse, Grambury, is ruled by Duke Alaric Stormrider. He is the descendant of great warriors but has yet to try his blade in a true battle. After decades of relative peace, the gnolls threaten to be more than he can manage. Still, resolute to prove to his kin and subjects his valor, Duke Stormrider is slowly moving the machine of war to prepare an army. He believes that hiding behind their walls is a cowardly approach. The duke wants to march into the Amber Mountain caverns and root out the evil of gnolls once and for all. Growing his numbers is not easy as hundreds of his subjects have died in gnoll raids; their towns torched and left destroyed. The characters' arrival from Brilshire with trade goods, refugees from the destroyed towns, and the northern tithes breathes hope into the duke's plans. He believes that swift expeditions to local dungeons may prove useful too.



Level 2-3 Settlement

► **Special Events.** Check for a **Random Event** in every other area the characters visit (3-in-6 chance).

► **Economy.** Grambury's most profitable endeavors are tanned hides, leather products, and ironwork. Trade cycles through barges and caravans with settlements downstream are taxed well and provide good income.

► **Gnoll Raids.** Since the fall of Oxedale Fort five days ago, gnoll guerrilla packs have attacked the city walls three times. A few guards have been caught by the gnoll skirmishers' arrows but the attackers have been successfully repelled. The tall walls are an impassable deterrent.

1. GUILD OF MERCHANTS

All merchant caravans are thoroughly inspected by the duke's tax-men and the guild of merchants. The guild collects a 2% due for all trade transactions in Grambury.

► **Reward (2 XP).** If the characters arrive in Grambury escorting merchants and the tradesmen speak highly of the characters' deeds. The guild pays a reward of 120 gp for their valuable services protecting the caravan.

2. HOUSE OF WORSHIP

A crudely carved effigy of a tall, slender woman holding a vase is the figure of adoration in this church. The entity is known as Yenna. She is the goddess of the sun and verdant prairies and is revered by most humanoid ancestries in the Amber Expanse. High Priestess Marcille recently decreed that the gnolls are hell-spawn and that their eradication constitutes no crime, nor carries any penance. The priestess, through the use of divination magic, detected that the gnoll chieftain has bolstered his army through a cursed pact with a demonic entity.

RANDOM EVENT

d6

Details

- Four men (**thugs**) from Mudfoot River, traumatized by the horrible ordeal of the gnoll attack that killed everyone they knew, slowly descend into insanity. The four thugs become aggressive and start attacking passers-by and other pariahs from the north.
- Eight **gnolls** and four **gnoll skirmishers** swim covertly and manage to infiltrate the city from the southeast. They move toward Grambury Hall killing innocents and setting buildings on fire. The characters are aided by six **guards** and two **soldiers**.
- Thick mist covers the land one morning. The duke orders all fighting people to man the walls and prepare for an attack.
- A survivor from Letterton arrives in town claiming that many survivors still hide near the ruins of Letterton.
- City guards parade a caged gnoll, caught on a night patrol, through the streets. The bloodthirsty beast is stoned to death.
- A wealthy merchant wants to visit Fallstead but he plans to take the long way through the Ashen Pass, because of the gnolls.

Grambury

Seat of Duke Alaric Stormrider



1. Guild of Merchants
2. House of Worship
3. Sword-Sellers Hall
4. Grambury Docks
5. Sir Laniston Home
6. Ruby Prospectors
7. Red Flag Couriers
8. Dire Pumpkins Farm
9. Nobles' Courtyard
10. Grambury Hall



3. SWORD-SELLERS HALL

The adventurer's guild is a hub for would-be adventurers and mercenaries. It is managed by Aerens, an elf scholar and mage. Aerens is affiliated with Duke Stormrider and has promised to sway the mercenaries' to join the war effort at a discounted price. All for the chance to earn glory and perhaps the option to acquire lands in Grambury.

To be admitted, the characters must sign a contract stipulating their affiliation to the duke. This allows them to board at the hall and access two starter missions:

► **The Green Threat (5 XP).** Ralph, the owner of Dire Pumpkin Farm, revealed that his daughter stole magical fertilizer and moved to Fallstead to start a business. Now there are rumors of flesh-eating pumpkins scourging the area. The guild offers 400 gp to stop her.

► **The Harp (0 XP).** A dungeon to the north known only as the Strings of Peace remains the dream of would-be plunderers. An old legend speaks of a mythical stringed instrument that has the power to calm down even the most unruly beast. It could be useful in the coming war.

4. GRAMBURY DOCKS

Most vessels have been anchored at the piers for a few weeks as sailing toward Brilshire is too dangerous because prowling, feral gnolls have attacked many ships.

► **Sailing (5 XP).** A wealthy merchant of silk and spices wants to reach Brilshire to leave the realm and sell his goods. The opulent man offers the characters 600 gp to safely escort him to Brilshire through the river.

5. SIR LANISTON HOME

A renowned **knight** in Grambury Hall, Sir Laniston, has an oath of allegiance to Duke Alaric. The knight has been ordered to delve into the Forsaken Ossuary to finally unearth the hidden wealth or power that many have sought to retrieve. Alas, the knight might soon find his fate.

► **Dark Secret.** Sir Laniston was cursed by a witch a decade ago. Since then, he must eat raw meat and drink blood to stay alive, something he has kept a secret. The witch's last words to him were: "A *gnoll chieftain* by the name of *Gnashra* shall raid these lands. On his blood you must bathe, and only that shall set you free".

6. RUBY PROSPECTORS

Ten gnomes work here. They run a prospecting and mining company that is currently frozen since access to the mountain range is too dangerous because of the gnolls. Valrug Walketig is in charge of the Ruby Prospectors.

► **Important Data (3 XP).** Valrug explains that his latest prospecting reports are in Oxedale Fort, to the north. His associates, six gnome friends of his are presumed dead after the fort fell to gnoll attacks. But Valrug offers 200 gp for retrieving his team's remains and journal. Valrug says that the journal must be in the fort's vault since the duke allowed Valrug to make use of it for protection.

7. RED FLAG COURIERS

Owned by a halfling businessman named Tarlan, the Red Flag Couriers are a team of halfling messengers, mailmen, and coureurs des bois. Business has slowed down to a crawl because the Amber Expanse on this side of the Amber Mountain has become a truly dangerous place.

► **Diversification.** With the goal of staying on the duke's good side, three halflings (**peasants**) are willing to join the characters as scouts and porters. Tarlan spends his time choosing the best headline for such an effort.

8. DIRE PUMPKIN FARM

This farm features enormous pumpkins, some as large as a stagecoach; and apple trees with fruits as large as dogs, hanging by the floor from the weight. The owner, Ralph, is a botanist and an alchemist who specializes in growing oversized produce. He also sells watered-down variants of his alchemical fertilizers to farmers and gardeners. His daughter, Fiona, stole away a few months ago with the recipe for the high-end fertilizer. Somewhat disappointed in her behavior, Ralph heard that she set up shop in Fallstead to run a similar business as her father. Alas, word on the street is that flesh-eating produce has become a veritable threat.

► **Family Legacy (3 XP).** Ralph inherited a *+1 longsword* from his father, who once was a great soldier. He offers this heirloom to the characters in exchange for helping Fiona deal with the overgrown, aggressive produce so that she can keep doing what she does in peace.

9. NOBLES' COURTYARD

A small citadel behind the tall castle walls enjoys the most protected location in Grambury. Blacksmiths, artisans, nobles, and court followers stay here. Many of these nobles are from Brilshire and meant to only visit. They have been stranded here for over a week.

► **Sailing Home (4 XP).** A pleasure barge has been readied for the eight nobles to return to Brilshire. They offer 350 gp to the characters to escort them home after hearing of their valiant arrival from the north plains.

10. GRAMBURY HALL

The characters' journey through the plains from Brilshire is noted by the nobles and catches the attention of Duke Alaric Stormrider. The duke promptly sends envoys to summon the characters to an audience in Grambury Hall. The characters are given ample accommodations and a chance to eat, bathe, rest, and get ready for the audience. The castle's chamberlain, an elf named Terathiel, is at the characters' disposal to tend to their needs. Fine attire is provided if the characters do not have it.

► **The Audience.** Terathiel brings the characters to a large audience hall. At the far end, a large dais with a throne-like seat rests. Duke Alaric Stormrider sits on the throne; an ornate, sheathed greatsword leans on the seat's armrest. The duke wastes no time to congratulate the party for their valor and resolve as so few people dare use the Regal Road since the gnolls prowl the realm. He inquires about Lady Elara and is concerned about the recent attacks in Brilshire.

► **Expedition Funding (6 XP).** The duke informs the characters of the war preparations and his plan to march to the Amber Mountain. He expects the characters to be there too. But now, the duke is interested in retrieving two powerful artifacts. One is a magical harp that is said to be hidden in a dungeon southwest of Brilshire. The place is known as the Strings of Peace as some runes in the entrance read so. The second artifact is the fabled blade of a long-gone ancestor of his. This blade is said to vanquish evil. Legend says it is in the Forsaken Ossuary. The duke offers 500 gp to retrieve each item for the war.

