

### **Fiveleague House**

Fiveleague House is more properly known as the Fiveleague Inn. It's a strongly built inn house surrounded by a wooden palisade. Fiveleague House caters to travelers and merchants coming or going from Hammerfast, a day's journey (five leagues) farther east. The proprietor is a big, bearlike human named **Barton**. Barton makes a good show of joviality, but he's secretly allied with the bandits of Raven Roost and sends them word of travelers worth robbing who will be continuing west toward Fallcrest.

### **Gardmore Abbey**

The Gardbury Downs take their name from this striking ruin, a large monastery that has lain in ruins for almost one hundred fifty years. The abbey was dedicated to Bahamut and served as the base of a militant order of paladins who won great fame fighting in Nerath's distant crusades. As the story goes, the paladins brought a dark artifact back from a far crusade for safekeeping, and evil forces gathered to assault the abbey and take it back. Extensive dungeons lie beneath the ruins, which might still conceal the hoarded wealth of the old crusading paladins.

### **Hammerfast**

A dwarven hold cut from the rock of a deep vale in the Dawnforge Mountains, Hammerfast is the largest and wealthiest town in the region. The Trade Road runs through the citadel gates and continues eastward beyond the Dawnforge Mountains. Hammerfast is governed by a council of masters, each the leaders of one of the town's powerful guilds. The current High Master is the leader of the merchant guild, a dwarf named **Marsinda Goldspinner**. The dwarves of Hammerfast look to their own first and don't give away anything for free, but they are honest and industrious.

### **The Sword Barrow**

This large burial mound stands near the middle of the Gray Downs, a desolate region. The old human hill-clans who lived in the Vale raised the barrow centuries before civilized folk settled in Fallcrest. The hill-folk are long gone, but their grim barrows remain. The Sword Barrow gained its name because scores of rusted blades of ancient design are buried around its edges, blades pointing inward; a visitor can turn up several in a few minutes of looking around. The blades seem completely ordinary, not hinting at the old warding magic that surrounds the place. Explorers who approach the place might be accosted by the **Barrowhaunts**, a band of former adventurers who delved into the Sword Barrow and didn't come back alive.

### **Harkenwold**

Half a dozen small villages lie along the upper vales of the White River. Together, they make up the Barony of Harkenwold, a tiny realm whose total population is not much greater than Fallcrest's. The people of Harkenwold are farmers, woodcutters, and woodworkers; little trade comes up or down the old King's Road. The ruler of Harkenwold is **Baron Stockmer**, an elderly man who was known for his strong sword arm in his youth. He is a just and compassionate ruler. The barony has drawn the attention of the **Iron Circle**, an army of mercenaries from a city far to the south. The band's leader, **Lord Vhennyk**, sees Harkenwold as a vulnerable spot where he and his soldiers can gain a foothold for an eventual invasion of the entire vale.

### **Kalton Manor**

Back in the days when Nerath was settling the Nentir Vale, minor lords in search of land to call their own established manors and holds throughout the area. Kalton Manor was one of these, a small keep raised by Lord **Arrol Kalton** about two hundred years ago. Lord Arrol intended to settle the lower vale of the White River, but it was not to be. Monsters from the Witchlight Fens drove off the tenants Arrol had brought with him. At the end, Arrol and a handful of his servants and family lived alone in a half-finished keep slowly falling into ruin until they disappeared as well. Stories tell of hidden treasure, the old Kalton fortune, hidden in secret chambers beneath the ruined keep.

### **Keep on the Shadowfell**

Long ago, soldiers from Nerath built a strong fortress over the Shadowfell rift to protect it. The old keep lies in ruins now, and a new generation of cultists has secretly taken up residence here. They seek to undo the magical wards sealing the Shadowfell rift and open the way for undead horrors.

### **Kobold Hall**

Like Kalton Manor, the wreck now known locally as Kobold Hall was the estate of a minor lord who came to Nentir Vale to establish his own demesnes. Ruined during the Bloodspear War, the old castle has been abandoned for almost a century. Kobold tribes from the Cloak Wood now lurk in its depths.

### **Nenlast**

This tiny human village lies at the east end of Lake Nen. The folk here make a meager living by trading smoked fish to the dwarves of Hammerfast. They also deal with the **Tigerclaw barbarians** of the Winterbole Forest. When the wild folk choose to trade, they come to Nenlast to barter their pelts and amber for good dwarven metalwork.

### **Raven Roost**

An old estate house known as Raven Roost Manor sits on a piece of prime land just north of the Harken Forest. The place is almost impossible for someone to approach without being seen-and that's just how the Raven Roost bandits like it. The leaders of the bandits are a trio named **Samminel**, **Erzoun**, and **Geriesh**. They secretly deal with Barton, the proprietor of Fiveleague House, giving him a cut of the take when he tips them off about wealthy travelers on the Trade Road.

### **Ruins of Fastormel**

Once a prosperous town on the shores of Lake Nen, Fastormel was destroyed by the Bloodspear orcs and has never been resettled. The town was ruled by a Lord Mage (the most powerful wizard in town claimed the ruler's scepter), and the Mistborn Tower of the last Lord Mage still stands amid the ruins of the town. The tower is shrouded in a strange silver mist that never dissipates, no matter what the weather would otherwise dictate.

### **The Stonemarch**

A rugged land of stony hills and deep gorges cut by white-rushing rivers, the Stonemarch is home to tribes of dangerous humanoids and giants. Orcs, ogres, giants, and trolls haunt the farther reaches of these barren lands. Fortunately for the residents of the vale, the monsters rarely come east over the Cairngorm Peaks. A great orc-warren known as the **Fanged Jaws of Kulkoszar** lies in the northern part of the wasteland; here the chief of the Bloodspear tribe rules over hundreds of the fierce warriors.

### **Temple of Yellow Skulls**

The ruins of an evil shrine stand in the middle of these desolate hills. Legend tells that a rakshasa prince summoned demons to this place and bound them to his service by imprisoning their vital essences in gold-plated human skulls. None of these have yet been recovered from the ruins, but the story persists. Deep caverns beneath the ruins lead all the way down to the Underdark, and from time to time dangerous monsters of the deep places emerge here and prowl the nearby lands.

### **Thunderspire**

The tallest natural spire in the vale, Thunderspire Mountain lies on the southern fringe of the Old Hills. Its top forever encased in a raging storm, Thunderspire is a majestic sight, even without considering what lies within its depths. **The Mages of Saruun** control the caverns beneath Thunderspire Mountain that, centuries ago, made up the minotaur city of Saruun Khel. The mages continue to seek out more of the artifacts and treasure left behind by the minotaurs. Beyond the relative safety of the mage's Seven-Pillared Hall, however, curious explorers can run into bandit gangs, gnoll tribes and undead.

## **Winterhaven**

Hard under the Cairngorms at the west end of the Nentir Vale lies the remote town of Winterhaven. Like Fallcrest, Winterhaven is a small town surrounded by a few miles of farmland and pastures.

## **Cairngorm Peaks**

Acting as a buffer between the vale and the savage creatures of the Stonemarch to the north and west, this mountain range provides a modicum of shelter while also serving as a hotbed of monstrous activity. Perhaps most significantly, the green dragon **Vestapalk** makes his lair in these crags, and the kobolds of the **Greenscale tribe** hunt the foothills and the neighboring terrain under the dragon's aegis. The kobolds know enough to stay out of the high mountains, which are the domain of the fearsome perytons and the bizarre aberrations known as mooncalves. The denizens of the Cairngorm Peaks will be the first to know if-most would say when-the orcs of Clan Bloodspear decide to emerge from the Stonemarch and again brutalize the Nentir Vale.

## **Dawnforge Mountains**

Orcs are not likely to come pouring out of the mountain range at the eastern end of the vale. That said, the Dawnforge Mountains are no less dangerous than the Cairngorm Peaks, with many of the same races of monsters lurking in both places. These mountains also hide dragons-foremost among them the three-headed monstrosity that calls herself **Calastryx**. The dragon is slumbering, still affected by a curse placed on her centuries ago, but fears are growing stronger that her reemergence is near. Like **Vestapalk** far to the west, she too has a tribe of kobolds that are fanatically subservient to her. The **Emberdark kobolds** can hardly wait till Calastryx wakes up, and they actively work to make that happen.

## **Fallcrest**

A hub for travel throughout the Nentir Vale, Fallcrest stands at the intersection of the Nentir River and the vale's two major trade routes. The town guard does a capable job of protecting the populace from raiders that emerge from the surrounding wilderness, but the biggest threats to Fallcrest's welfare might come from within the town itself. One such threat is the **Fell Court**, that has gained a foothold in Fallcrest thanks to the subterfuge of their leader, **Melech Ambrose**. Melech's dream is to take control of the town and use that success as a springboard to spread their influence throughout the vale. At the same time, a gang of miscreants known as the **River Rats** are carving out their own realm in Fallcrest's lower-class districts, and their leader also has designs on expanding the organization to other communities.

## **Gray Downs**

This area of fog-shrouded low hills serves as the principal headquarters of the **Gray Company**, loyalists of old Nerath that dedicate themselves to finding magic items and other treasures lost when the empire fell. The leaders of the Gray Company, including at least one self-proclaimed heir to Nerath's fallen throne, seek the most-powerful relics of the lost empire-the enchanted **Sword of Nerath** and the fabled **Threefold Crown** that signifies the pact that the ancient emperors made with the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and the natural world. Treasure hunters and explorers find the Gray Downs covered with burial mounds dating back to ancient times when primitive humans lived and hunted here. The hill clans are gone, but their spirits live on, guarded and shepherded by the undead creatures known-for good reason-as hounds of ill omen.

## **Harken Forest**

This large woodland stretches from the Nentir River to the mountains and extends for miles to the south. It separates the Nentir Vale from the more populous coastal towns of the south. In this expansive wooded area along the vale's southern edge, any tree might conceal a threat-or danger could come from the tree itself, if it happens to be one of the treants that watch over the deep forest. **The Harken treants** are bitter enemies of their counterparts in the Winterbole Forest. Allied with the Harken treants is a group of elf druids who call themselves **Harken's Heart**. Laboring under an ancient curse, the druids are effectively trapped within the forest, and they spare no effort in their attempt to protect it. The western part of the forest, near the Witchlight Fens, is the stomping grounds of the **Daggerburg goblins**. Raiding parties emerge from the woods to ambush and assault travelers and settlements as far away as Harkenwold. An elf tribe known as the **Woodsinger Clan** roams the eastern portions of the forest. They occasionally trade with the humans of Harkenwold and keep an eye on travelers along the old King's Road. They have a long-standing feud with the Daggerburg goblins, and the goblins keep to the western parts of the forest to avoid swift and deadly elven arrows. However, the goblins are growing more numerous and have become bolder in recent months.

## **Lake Nen**

The largest body of water in the Nentir Vale, Lake Nen stretches for nearly fifty miles across the southern edge of the Winterbole Forest. The eastern end supports the nearby village of Nenlast, whose residents ply the waters for fish that they trade with the dwarves of Hammerfast and other groups. The shoreline of the northwestern end of the lake is part of the dominion of the **Frost Witches**, an eclectic group of magic-users who pay homage to the evil elemental prince **Cryonax**. The witches wield the power of cold to brutal effect, whether recruiting new members into their fold or kidnapping innocents. Although small groups of Frost Witches might be encountered anywhere within the Winterbole Forest, the largest concentration resides in the headquarters along the lake's edge that the group calls **Cold Camp**.

### **Lake Wintermist**

The fog that blankets Lake Wintermist is a year-round phenomenon, belying its name. The lake is inhospitable for most creatures, but those that thrive in frigid climes, such as white dragons, can be found here in abundance. From time to time, someone passing through this area might come across an angry troll or perhaps even a pair of them. The twin troll brothers **Hurly and Burly** both lair in caves not far from the lake-despite the fact that they can't stand each other. When they get into one of their family feuds, anyone who crosses their path could become a target of their rage.

### **Moon Hills**

This cluster of rugged terrain between the Nentir River and the King's Road is not rife with monsters and other villainous types, thanks mainly to the proximity of Fallcrest and the vigilance of its town guard. But there are threats in this area. The people of Fallcrest tell stories about the **Dark Drake** of the Moon Hills, a sinister reptile that leads a pack of other evil drakes. These tales get more and more dramatic in the retelling-even though few claim to actually have seen one of the creatures. The hills also occasionally play host to terrors that wander out of either the Witchlight Fens or the Harken Forest, including goblins, lizardfolk, giant spiders, and other random monsters in search of new prey.

### **Old Hills**

In days long gone, the first human settlers in the Nentir Vale made their homes in this region of rolling hills. Today, the area is firmly in the grasp of the vicious **Blackfang gnolls**. Slavishly devoted to the demon god Yeenoghu, the gnolls emerge from their burrows in the hills to kill or waylay travelers. Many of their captives are taken underground and sacrificed in the **Well of Demons** at the center of the gnolls' many-chambered lair. Other rumors concerning an evil older series of ruins spring up from time to time concerning the Old Hills. These tales, always told in whispers, speak of the ancient necropolis of **Andok Sur**. The place, if it exists at all, is said to be holy to the followers of Orcus. The ruins of the city of the dead, according to the rumors, are buried beneath the oldest section of the Old Hills.

### **Trade Road**

This dwarf-built highway is the most heavily traveled thoroughfare in the vale-which means it carries enough bounty to support more than one gang of thieves. Merchants and pilgrims who manage to avoid the notice of the Raven Roost bandits still have to contend with the **Wolf Runners**, a widely feared band of humans and wolves that work together in an uncanny fashion along the length of the Trade Road.

## Winterbole Forest

This vast woodland defines the northern boundary of the Nentir Vale. It is home to a multitude of monsters and villains, among which a few stand out as the would-be masters of their domain. The white dragon **Bitterstrike** holds sway over a large part of the forest. Several of the Winterbole's denizens, most notably the **Tigerclaw barbarians** and the **Frost Witches**, pay fealty to the dragon. They keep her pacified and help her when she demands it, but none of them are truly and honestly on her side. Even a dragon with an army of vassals could not hope to control the entire forest—and in fact the Tigerclaw barbarians consider themselves the real power to be reckoned with in the Winterbole. The Frost Witches are not nearly as numerous as the Tigerclaws, but their desire for domination is no less strong. **Clenderi**, the witches' leader, would like nothing better than to convince **Bitterstrike** to join their cause in service to **Cryonax**. The coniferous treants of the Winterbole Forest contribute some of their ranks to the cadre of Bitterstrike's vassals, and they typically stand with the dragon when it becomes necessary to put down an incursion into the forest by humanoids. But their true enemies are the treants of the Harken Forest. These two groups harbor an enmity that dates back to the time when the two forests were a single expanse of green that covered nearly the entire vale.

## Witchlight Fens

The marsh that spreads out from both banks of the Nentir River is territory coveted by few intelligent creatures, for one principal reason: **Shadowmire**. As elusive as he is deadly, this black dragon considers the Witchlight Fens his realm, and most of those who enter the swamp are not interested in contesting that claim. (They might, however, be looking for the secret location of his lair.) The lizardfolk of the fens manage to live in harmony with the dragon, and some of the Witchlight lizardfolk tribes have come to worship him. Near the eastern edge of the fens, where the wetland merges with Harken Forest, the lizardfolk of the **Mistkiller** tribe frequently skirmish with bands of **Daggerburg goblins** that make forays out of the forest. A number of ruins related to the ancient empire of Bael Turath can be stumbled upon by those who explore the depths of the swamp. Some of these have been occupied by newer groups, including lizardfolk and goblin tribes, but others are so mysterious and have such an air of malignance as to drive all but the most desperate or depraved from their presence.