



Hap

This village is located off the good roads and at the base of Haptooth Hill, the best landmark for travelers cutting across country from Essembra and points north to Scardale, lower Featherdale, or Harrowdale. Scarcely more than a dozen major buildings stand amid the trees here, although more than a score of cottages belonging to woodcutters and herbgrowers are scattered along winding lanes that spread out in all directions from Hap's well and muddy open market.

Haptooth Hill rises like a gray-white tooth out of the oak, beech, and maple trees, towering above the village. Its southern face, above Hap, is almost a sheer cliff. Its summit is crowned by the ruins of a tower where a Red Wizard of Thay once dwelt surrounded by dragons! Many caverns and tunnels lie within the Hill, too. They are the abode of drow, who emerged to seize control of the village not so long ago!

Today, travelers find now drow-free Hap a peaceful place where acorn butter, carved carrying boxes and other woodwork, and pots of preserved herbs can be bought for resale elsewhere. The adventuresome still scale the northern and western flanks of Haptooth Hill in search of rumored treasure—and still go missing.

The law in Hap is War Watcher Elphron Pharlyn, a veteran officer in the Lord's Men of Essembra appointed to this post of judge and chief watch officer by Lord and War Chancellor Ilmeth of Essembra. Elphron has a staff of two men-at-arms and a messenger boy. He is a slow, even-tempered man whose

tolerance of small transgressions but firm upholding of the general peace has won him the grudging respect of locals; they come to his aid if he is challenged. Elphron reports all suspicious visitors and activities to Ilmeth via patrols from the Abbey of the Sword and through the Lord's Men, who swing through Hap every two or three days.

Adventurers inclined to laugh at the small staff of War Watcher Pharlyn, its provincial ways, or the apparent inability of Elphron to put teeth into his judgments are warned that he can issue a ban on entry or passage through Battledale that is enforced by the Lord's Men and by Abbey of the Sword patrols—a crippling prohibition to a traveling merchant who must use Rauthauvyr's Road. Halfaxe Trail is littered with the bones of merchants who were under such a Ban and tried to go around Battledale with cargo.

Places or Interest in Hap Unique Sites

The Tower of Dracandros



Haptooth Hill is the stump of an old volcano. Its rock is iron hard, and its splendid natural location as a lookout has made it the site of a score or more keeps over the years, as each successive human lordling sought to make it his or her home. The last of these towers was the home of Dracandros, a Red Wizard of Thay who was involved in some way with a dracolich, Crimdrac (known for his belligerent aggressiveness, which was extreme even for a red dragon), several living dragons, and drow who



inhabited the echoing network of caverns inside the Hill.

Those evil beings are all dead now, slain by intrepid adventurers, and the tower lies broken open into rubble and ruin with dragon bones strewn around it. These bones have not yet been taken away for sale to alchemists or to be sold as trophies to Sembians who want others to think they are great dragon-slaying heroes. This state of affairs is so because even after the wizard's death, an item he crafted continues to emit defensive magics¹⁸ that have slain more than one band of adventurers who came looking for the treasure everyone says is here.

The top of the Hill is a wasteland of rubble inhabited by snakes and at least one leucrotta. Who knows what riches may lie buried on it in the remains of so many keeps? Of the caverns below, all I could find out when consulting adventurers who have explored the Hill and survived¹⁹ is that the caverns do seem to descend into the Underdark, and along the way one passes through several caves full of fungi and one place where the drow found something that slew them by the dozens. Their bones still lie in the darkness, but no sign of what brought them their doom remains.

The closest that citizens of Hap come to the summit of the Hill is to a cavern on the north flank used by local farmer Hober Deljack to grow the strong-tasting²⁰ black wrinkle Dale mushrooms. Hober will demand payment if you pick

or despoil his crops, as several adventuring bands have done—and War Watcher Pharlynn will support his demands. In so poor a community, the loss of a few coins' worth of produce is a serious affair.

Shrine **Lathander's Open Hand**

Despite the tiny size of Hap this plain stone building is a bustling center of activity. It is both the center of schooling for local children and a popular meeting place.

All can see a sign of the Morninglord's favor inside the shrine: Aside from an altar, a few cots, and pews, the only furnishing in the high-windowed converted barn is the *Blood of Lathander*, a glowing piece of amber said to contain a few drops of the blood of the god locked away forever to aid the folk of Hap.²¹ The *Blood* floats about 30 feet off the ground near the ceiling of the chamber and emits a faint rosy glow that can blaze up fiercely when Lathander approves or is roused to notice or act upon something.

Lathander is served by a new priestess, Dawnmaster Cathalandra Dovaer (who replaced the previous one, Mumfrey Mimly), and her obvious sincerity and energetic help with mending fences, clearing land, and even digging cesspits has won her the hearts of the village folk. I was nearly smitten myself. Pay her a visit if you want to be inspired by someone who is simple, earnest, and good.

¹⁸The *Crown of Dracandros* is detailed in Appendix II.

¹⁹*Volo*: I found them in the Fall of Stars adventurers' club in Harrowdale. It is a good place to learn about dangerous sites all over the Dragon Reach if you can learn to sort out the truth from all the wild tales of derring-do.

²⁰*Volo*: I can only describe them as tasting like smoked corn—that is, roast corn kernels that have acquired a strong smoky taste.

²¹Consult Appendix II for what Elminster could reveal of the powers of this item.



Shops

Delmuth's Barrel

General Store



This large, well-stocked general store is one of those fascinating structures that rambles up and down a few hillocks throwing out ramshackle wings in all directions and presenting the patron with a wild variety of roofing materials, building styles, and prospects—from about-to-fall-down to like-new-and-proud-of-it.

Inside, Delmuth, the retired dwarven warrior, defends an incredible jumble of wares with deftly hurled axes and a gruff, almost bristling manner.

When I visited him, he was in the process of stacking all of the things that he had not sold in the last seven seasons into a new storeroom with the aid of two assistants. Like any dwarf, he was taking care to build the pile like a wall, fitting and wedging items just so. Those items may sit unsold for another seven summers, but they are now a very stable pile.

Delmuth sells wine, beer, *zzar*, and other beverages picked up at bargain prices in Sembia, but some of the hand-kegs looked suspiciously dusty to me. His wife Maerl also bakes fresh garlic buns every morn, which causes a line to form at his shop when the noses of everyone in the village tell them the buns have been set out to cool. Delmuth himself makes *saveloy* for which he is justly famous from the output of his hog farm. It tastes like a gift from the gods—even when used as iron rations a winter or so after it was made!

Delmuth will never surrender his secret and highly prized recipe—but I did not even ask him for it: *Saveloy* is dried,

highly spiced pigs' brains sausage! Just eat it, enjoy, and do not think about what is inside it.

True to its name, Delmuth's shop does sell barrels, mostly old but well-sealed ones of various sizes. Some of the barrels have interesting legends branded into them: "Maidens' Breath Beer/Too Light to Be Good for You!" or "Old Bladderwort Beer/It's Sure to Grow on You." All-in-all, Delmuth's is an establishment that is fun as well as useful to the wayfarer.

Glarth's Anvil

Blacksmith



Glarth endures endless ribbing from Delmuth because he is not a dwarf and therefore cannot be any good as a smith in the dwarf's oft-voiced opinion. I found this slow, baby-faced giant of a man to be an adequate blacksmith, however, with a talent for doing rough but sturdy work surprising in so small a community. He is capable of constructing whole wagon wheels from scrap metal, for instance, or turning 16 shields into a watertight, if crude, boat.

One of the local men-at-arms working with War Watcher Pharlyn sports a suit of armor made by Glarth. Although it resembles a clanking kitchen tree of pots and pans with various overlapping plates only loosely laced together, it seems to do the job: The man proudly showed me dented parts of the metal that he claimed were the marks left by an owl-bear's beak just before he beheaded it. This smith is nothing to travel here for—but could be useful indeed to a traveler needing repairs, even for surprisingly ambitious jobs.



Haestar's Woodworks

Woodcutter



Haestar is the local sawyer. He turns rough-felled trees brought in by less skilled woodcutters into boards, posts, shingles, barrel staves, and kindling. His place is a wild litter of sawdust, shavings, and warped pieces of wood, hanging or leaning everywhere. Haestar and four strapping assistants wield two-man back-and-forth saws so fast you can hear the wood scream as it is cut. During my visit a woodcutter brought in a cart of duskwood trunks—and before nightfall Haestar had turned it into a cart full of dressed boards.

The only finished furniture Haestar makes is tables. He is very proud of those out back that his men use for their highsun meals. Haestar does age wood, smoke it for extra strength, and soak it to bend it, too—but he charges steeply for such work, preferring straightforward cutting to all else. The traveler may find the twin barrels of whittled wooden pegs and split kindling that stand on either side of the door to alone be worth the trouble of a visit.

INN & TAVERN

The Millery Inn



The Millery Inn is run by Silas Genk, who serves as its bartender and the village's meister, a sort of ombudsman for the local people. Hap's only inn survives by doubling as a rooming house for local citizens too poor to own land. They dwell on the upper floor while the cooler, more spacious rooms on the



ground floor are left for paying guests. A stay here costs 8 sp per night, but this includes stabling, a bath (if desired), the washing and repair of your clothing by the staff (they will ask if you want this service and your preferences), the cleaning and polishing or waxing of footwear, and all meals. (The roasts are a trifle too salty, and everything else is bland, bland, bland.) Drinks are extra; it costs 4 cp for a tankard of anything—and I mean anything: Wine and zzar are brought to you in tankards, too! A large common room on the ground floor doubles as dining room and taproom—and is rarely without a visiting minstrel. Overall, the Millery Inn is a simple, adequate wayhouse that serves filling but unexciting food—a stolid but uninspiring, workaday place to stay.