

COOLRPG VOLUME I

Backstories

The lands, the cities and the people of the Western Lands



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The Western Lands are a frontier: a ragged coast of free cities, an Elvish kingdom that keeps its own counsel, and the wreck of an empire that once claimed it all. What follows is what the people of these lands will tell you, if you buy them a drink and listen. Some of it is true.

The Western Lands

The Empire of Urd once ruled this coast from across the sea. Its colonists built ports, fortresses and roads, and enslaved those who would not bend. Then the Empire broke. What remains of Urd clings to the island of **Corvis** and the great walled city of **Novatia**, ruled by **Emperor Thalus Dane**, whose line began on Corvis itself.

In the Empire's wake the old colonies became **free cities**, each going its own way: Slateholm forbids slavery outright, while Ravenstone grew rich selling slaves to whatever is left of Urd. Between them lie forests, fens and hills full of old ruins, older dungeons, and the things that live in both.

The Church of Tah is the common faith of the Western Lands, honoured in every city. Its heart is the Grand Cathedral at **Beth**. In Slateholm a **Reformed** church has grown apart from Beth's old rites. Officially the two disagree only over doctrine; the pilgrims will tell you the schism runs deeper, and that some grudges are older than either church.

The Elves of the west hold the **Islands of Sunset**, their ancestral home, and the kingdom of **Avenrho**, where the Elf Queen rules from her castle. Avenrho is allied to Urd by treaty, not by love, and few outsiders are ever allowed within its walls.



Morgansfort

Morgansfort is the walled border town where every adventure begins: a gatehouse, two wards of shops and homes, a garrison of soldiers and knights, and a keep. It belongs to **Baron Morgan Rathwynn**, who prefers the comforts of Slateholm; in his absence his son, **Baronet Halden Rathwynn**, rules as baron in all but name, advised by the bailiff **Tomandy**, the estate's manager, weapons master and chief counsellor.

People of Morgansfort

Who	Where	Story
Garnoth	The Toothless Dragon Tavern	The taverner, a retired soldier, keeper of every rumour in town. His wife Lianna and daughters Irene and Louise keep the tavern running.
Lorynn	The Iron Helm Inn	The innkeeper, Lianna's older brother. Adventurers between jobs wait at his tables.
Father Thelbain	The Chapel of St. Queril	A cleric of the Church of Tah, Reformed, with the young clerics Baris , Jerard and Melean .
Captain Argos	Garrison Barracks	Senior officer of the watch. He worries about the goblin war parties on the Old Road.
Sir Kellin	Cavalry quarters	Senior knight of the garrison, with Sir Galadin as his second.
Jeroh Lotherra	The Trader	Morgansfort's dry-goods merchant.
Rugarr	The Smithy	The blacksmith, with his strapping apprentice Tob .
Maien Brai	Herbalist's residence	A friendly widow and herbalist; her daughter Jyni helps her.
Hardel	The Common Stable	The stableman, and his three sons.
The Mystic	A quiet residence	A semi-retired Magic-User who studies scrolls and tomes, and teaches those with the gift.

Those who come asking for help

- **Dusty Rennick** is a grizzled prospector who has watched the Black Fang goblins flash gold nuggets around town. A party of prospectors went into the old dwarven mine north of Morgansfort a week ago and never came out. He wants to know why, and whether the fresh vein is real.
- **Bart** is a one-eyed farmer who lost his eye working the river fields. He swears by the old stories of the **Olde Island Fortress** off the southern coast: built by folk nobody remembers, fought over by goblins and kobolds, and the resting place of a barbarian chieftain buried with a magic sword.

- **Kardon Karien** is a merchant whose caravan was struck by orcs north of town. They took his daughter **Gwelayn** and her serving girl into the forest. He has offered everything he owns, eight hundred gold, to see her home.

🍷 The Black Fangs of Gold in the Hills

The **Black Fangs** are a goblin tribe that took over an abandoned dwarven mine in the hills north of Morgansfort. The dwarves dug deep and left traps behind them. When the goblins broke into a fresh vein of gold, their chief, **Xikek "the Loud"**, could not keep quiet about it, and neither could his warriors, flashing nuggets in every market. Xikek holds court atop a heap of stolen ore with his lieutenants **Snerk** and **Yuliak**.

🍷 The Olde Island Fortress

No one remembers who built the fortress on the little island off the coast, or why they dug two levels of halls, cells and pits beneath it. Generations of creatures have used it since. Today a band of **goblins** and a **kobold clan** fight over its upper halls, outcast orcs hide in its corners, and below them **gnolls**, **hobgoblin explorers** and things wrapped in old burial cloth wander the dark.

At its deepest point, behind great bronze doors, lies the **tomb of a barbarian chieftain**. The murals outside show his people bowing toward those doors. He was buried with eleven of his warriors and a golden longsword that has never tarnished. The warriors are not entirely at rest.

The stories also mention **an adventurer in magic armour** who went into the fortress and never came back. What he left behind is still down there.

🍷 The Cave of the Unknown

Under a wooded hill a few miles north of Morgansfort lies a cave system with an evil past. An orc tribe lives in its upper caves now, led by the clever orc

Badushna, with **Onyg the ogre** as its muscle. They raid caravans on the north road.

The deeper halls belong to something worse. **Starisel Zelinth** was a necromancer who went looking for an undead complex and was never seen again; the rumour in the taverns is that he found it, and became part of it. A self-willed undead now, Zelinth keeps a laboratory of horrors, an arena, a prison, and an **Altar of Darkness** where he means to use Kardon's daughter. The orcs bring him captives. A scratch on a prison wall says "*G. taken to the master.*"

👉 The Nameless Dungeon

A day's march north on the Old Road, beneath the road itself, lies a dungeon so old that nobody has a name for it. Goblin war parties use its upper level as a refuge. Below them is a maze of three levels: an ant warren, a queen bee's hive, a chapel where sixteen dead still kneel before a ruined altar, and a temple to a dark god deeper still.

Somewhere on the second level sits **an Elvish princess**, beautiful and motionless as though asleep, guarded by ghouls. When she opens her eyes, they are empty.

At the very bottom, a great tapestry shows a winding path through the dungeon's halls, ending at a small library stitched in gold. Those who read the Elvish verses woven along its border find that the library is real: a scholar's refuge of ancient treatises and a pair of **Elvish Spectacles**, now overgrown with yellow mold.

🍷 The Free Cities

Slateholm



Slateholm

A free city built on islands in a coastal swamp, joined to the land by a single causeway that floods at spring tide. Nearly everyone arrives by sea, and its seaport keeps it alive. Slateholm is ruled by **Duke Helsung II**, descended from the old colonial governor. It is home to the largest cathedral of the **Church of Tah, Reformed**, built from fen-wood that will not burn. **Slavery is forbidden here**, and Slateholm is a refuge for those who escape Ravenstone's chains. There are rumours of a **Thieves Guild**, the only real one in the Western Lands. Just rumours, of course.

Taverns: The Drowned Lantern. Inn: The Causeway Rest.

Ravenstone



Ravenstone

Once an Urdish colony, and dark and dirty ever since. Ravenstone ships more slaves to what remains of the Empire than any other city on the coast, and **Countess Olga** takes her cut of every chain that crosses the docks. People whisper that she did away with her own father, **Count Olaf**, when he grew too frail to rule. People do not whisper it twice. Some say Urdish spies still walk its streets.

Tavern: The Broken Chain. Inn: The Iron Gate Lodging House.

Avenrho



Avenrho

The capital of the Elvish kingdom of the west, and the last true Elvish kingdom on the coast. The Elf Queen rules from her castle near a living grove where Tah is honoured beneath the oldest trees in the Western Lands. Avenrho is allied to Urd by treaty alone, and its people owe the Emperor little love. Few outsiders are ever let in. Its wardens, led by **Warden Sylthir**, test those who would enter; some say the Queen herself set the test, others that it is older than her reign.

Tavern: the common room of The Silver Bough. Inn: The Silverleaf Waystead.

Novatia



Novatia

The capital of the Empire of Urd and the largest city in the Western Lands: an outer wall, an inner walled noble quarter, and squatter camps grown up outside both. Its wealth comes from farming and the **emerald mines**, and the **emerald barons** are said to be richer than the Emperor himself, though never where he can hear it. Novatia is the primary market for slaves and luxury goods in the Western Lands, and half the "traders" at its docks are pirates with a paid-off harbourmaster.

Tavern: The Squatters' Fire. Inn: The Emerald Barrel.

Beth



Beth

The capital of the Church of Tah, and the destination of pilgrims from every free city. Its **Grand Cathedral** trains, in some part, every priest in the Western Lands, and its High Pontiff answers to no duke or countess. Pilgrims on the road to Beth hear everything: rumours of Ravenstone's slavers, of Novatia's barons, of the old quarrel with Slateholm's Reformers that nobody in the cathedral will discuss.

Tavern: The Weary Pilgrim. Inn: The Pilgrim's Rest.

Corvis



Corvis

An island, and what remains of the Empire of Urd's first conquest. The native **Covari** worked bronze and honoured nature's spirits long before Urdish iron touched their shore; they were a kingdom until their last Overking died without an heir, a decade before the first Urdish ships arrived. The colonists' grandchildren say treaties came first and fighting after. Neither quarter of the city forgets. The Covari once burned or drowned anyone caught working arcane magic, and the old fear lingers: spellcasters walk quietly in the Covari quarter.

Tavern: The Subjugated Crown. Inn: The Bronze Kettle.

The Islands of Sunset

The ancestral lands of the Elves of the west, beyond Avenrho. Few Elves leave them, and fewer outsiders ever see them.

🏴‍☠️ Pirate Island and the Pirate King

For months now, a fleet flying no flag has raided every ship out of Slateholm. Worse, it takes the **refugee boats** fleeing Ravenstone's slavers, and the people aboard them are never seen again. **Harbor Captain Wrenlow** of Slateholm knows where the raiders come from: an island to the south, off the coast, with a camp on the shore, sea caves beneath the cliffs, and a hidden cove where the **Pirate King's flagship** lies at anchor where no navy would think to look.

The Pirate King himself keeps charts of every shipping lane in the Western Lands on his cabin walls. He sells what he takes, cargo and captives alike, through the "traders" of Novatia's docks. He keeps the key to his ship's escape hatch on his own belt, and he does not intend to need it.

🏴‍☠️ The Companions

Eight adventurers can be found in Morgansfort, the same eight heroes the Morgansfort module offers to players who need a ready-made character. Each can join your party.

Name	Who they are	Where you meet them
Darion	A Human Fighter	The Southeast Tower
Morningstar	An Elf Fighter	The Southwest Tower
Apoqulis	A Human Cleric	General Goods
Barthal	A Halfling Thief	The Toothless Dragon Tavern
Lucas	A Human Magic-User	The Inner Tower
Bork	A Human Fighter	The Northwest Tower
Thorus	A Dwarf Fighter	The Northeast Tower
Aura	A Human Cleric	The Iron Helm Inn

Credits

The Western Lands, Morgansfort and its people, the Olde Island Fortress, the Cave of the Unknown and the Nameless Dungeon come from **BF1 Morgansfort: The Western Lands Campaign** by Chris Gonnerman and Contributors; the Black Fangs of Gold in the Hills come from **AA1 Adventure Anthology One**. Both are released under CC BY-SA 4.0 (basicfantasy.org). Basic Fantasy RPG is a trademark of Chris Gonnerman. The city taverns, NPCs and the Pirate Island story are original to CoolRPG Volume I by **James Barrett / Xinle, LLC**. Screenshots show art by WinLu, PVGames, Celianna, Rasak, bluecarrot16, Sevarihk and the RPG Maker MZ standard resources; the full list is in the game under **Credits**.

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