And Then the Dragons Came: Purewater

The Players' Guide

A scenario for Classic Fantasy Imperative

Fourth Wall Gaming

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Welcome

Welcome to Purewater

You are about to spend a week in a city built on water, three days before its holiest festival, in a season when everybody has quietly agreed not to notice something.

This is the Players' Guide to *And Then the Dragons Came*, a scenario for *Classic Fantasy Imperative*. Everything in it is safe to read. It tells you what anybody in Purewater would know: what the city looks like, how you get about it, who its gods and powers are, what the Tourney is, and what kind of week this has been so far. It introduces the four characters you can play, with their sheets. It explains how to build your own character instead, and, if you have never played *Mythras*, how the game works. What it does not tell you is what is really going on. Finding that out is the game.

What Kind of Game This Is

Purewater is a city where everybody wants something this week, and the city keeps moving whether you are watching or not. If you spend an evening drinking in the wrong quarter, things still happen in the right one, and you hear about them in the morning. Your choices of where to go, whom to trust and what to say out loud matter, because you cannot be everywhere.

It is not a dungeon, and it is not mostly a fight. You will meet people who could help you, if you can work out what they want, and powerful people who cannot be touched, unless you can find somebody who is allowed to touch them. Expect to talk your way into rooms, read a city's mood, follow money, and sometimes climb up the side of something in the dark. When there is a fight, *Mythras* fights are fast, frightening and decided in a few blows, so choose them well.

Above all, the people of Purewater remember what you do, and so do the dice. Your character has **Passions**, the things they love, hate and fear, and those Passions will be tested. That is where the best moments come from.

Before You Begin

Read *The City on the Water* and *This Week* before the first session, or have your Games Master tell you the short version: five minutes, and stop when you start asking questions. Then read *Choosing Your Character*, all four, before you pick. If you are new to *Mythras*, read *Playing Mythras* last. It is short, and the Games Master will teach the rest at the table.

Then stop reading. The rest of this story is yours to find.

PART

The City

The City on the Water

Purewater is built across the Mouth, the narrow strait where a great sacred lake to the north drains into the open sea to the south. It is rich, strategic and rotten, and its own people call it Pisswater, for the smell of the canals and for the smell of its politics.

The City Has No Ground

Purewater is built on water and does not apologise for it. Houses come straight up out of the channels with no bank and no shore, and their doors open onto steps that go down under the surface and keep going. Between the buildings there are ledges a body or two wide with no rail, and bridges, and water.

Everything that matters goes by boat, poled, rowed and shouted about. The rest goes over a bridge or along a ledge, and every single journey costs a fare. Two things follow, and both will come up constantly:

- **Anybody raised here can handle a boat.** It is like walking; nobody is praised for it. The half of that nobody ever says out loud is that **outsiders cannot**, which means a stranger in Purewater cannot move a sack of flour across the city without hiring somebody born here.
- **There are no horses.** The land stops at Caravan Square on the western shore and does not resume. A column coming down the road reaches the gate and has to be taken to pieces and put into boats, in public, slowly, one crate at a time.

And one thing everybody knows: every local can swim. Not every visitor can.



Figure 1: Purewater Map

Getting About

Three facts shape every journey in the city.

No bridge crosses the Grand Canal. The city's two halves, the North Quarter and the Merchant's Quarter, meet only by ferry: the Palazzo Ferry and the Guild Ferry.

No bridge reaches the Lullwater or Temple Isle. The Lullwater is reached by boat from Shilling Stairs, at a shilling a crossing, and somebody always sees who paid. Temple Isle is reached only by the temple's own ferries, on purpose, so that the profane city cannot simply walk onto holy ground.

The Triumph Bridge is the only way in by land, from Caravan Square through the Land Gate.

The maps below show each part of the city with a numbered key. Crosses mark places, discs mark taverns, shops and amenities, and squares mark posts of the city watch.

High Isle

The heart of the city is High Isle, which is not one island but four, cut apart by the Grand Canal and its branches.

The North Quarter faces the open lake. Its western half is houses, rich toward the Pearl and middling eastward, and its eastern half is the official quarter: the Governor's Palazzo, where Prince Emeric governs in the King's name, the Hall of Justice and the Barracks around Palace Square. A wide avenue, the Processional, sweeps down through it. At its eastern end stands the walled Tournament Ground.

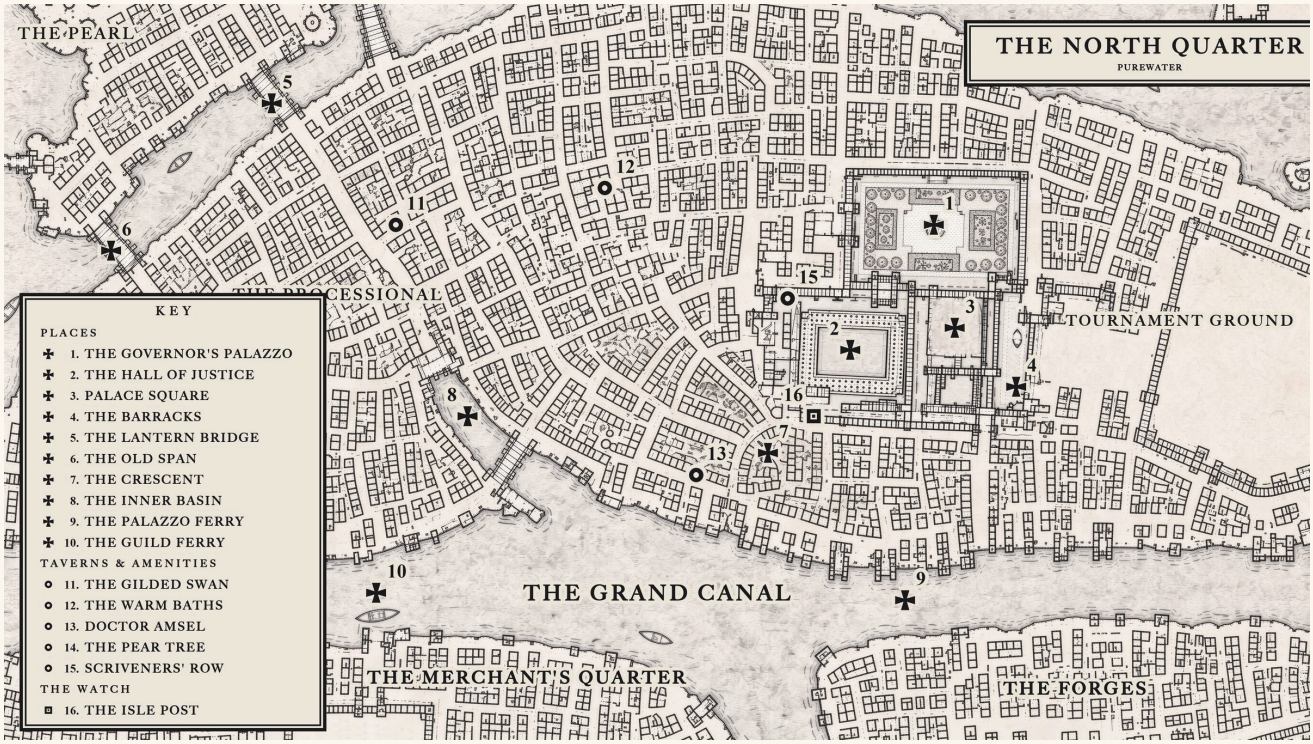


Figure 2: The North Quarter

Table 1: The North Quarter, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Governor's Palazzo	Place	-
2	The Hall of Justice	Place	-
3	Palace Square	Place	-
4	The Barracks	Place	-
5	The Lantern Bridge	Place	-
6	The Old Span	Place	-
7	The Crescent	Place	-
8	The Inner Basin	Place	-
9	The Palazzo Ferry	Place	-
10	The Guild Ferry	Place	-
11	The Gilded Swan	Tavern or amenity	the respectable inn on the Processional, where competitors' families stay
12	The Warm Baths	Tavern or amenity	a public bathhouse, the warmest place on the island, and the most indiscreet
13	Doctor Amsel	Tavern or amenity	physician by the Crescent, sent for by minor lords for embarrassing things
14	The Pear Tree	Tavern or amenity	a wine house at the rich west end, where the off-duty watch drink where the dragonshits do not go
15	Scriveners' Row	Tavern or amenity	clerks, notaries and copyists under the Hall of Justice's walls

No.	Name	Kind	Note
16	The Isle Post	Watch post	the watch-house of High Isle, where Captain Sarn commands and Sergeant Abel Weir keeps the four-inch referral book

The Merchant's Quarter lies south across the Grand Canal, where the Triumph Bridge brings the caravan trade ashore and the city's money is made. Its walled Market Square is ringed by the guildhalls of the Merchants, Coopers and Dyers, and the palazzi of the merchant princes who sit on the city council line the canal.

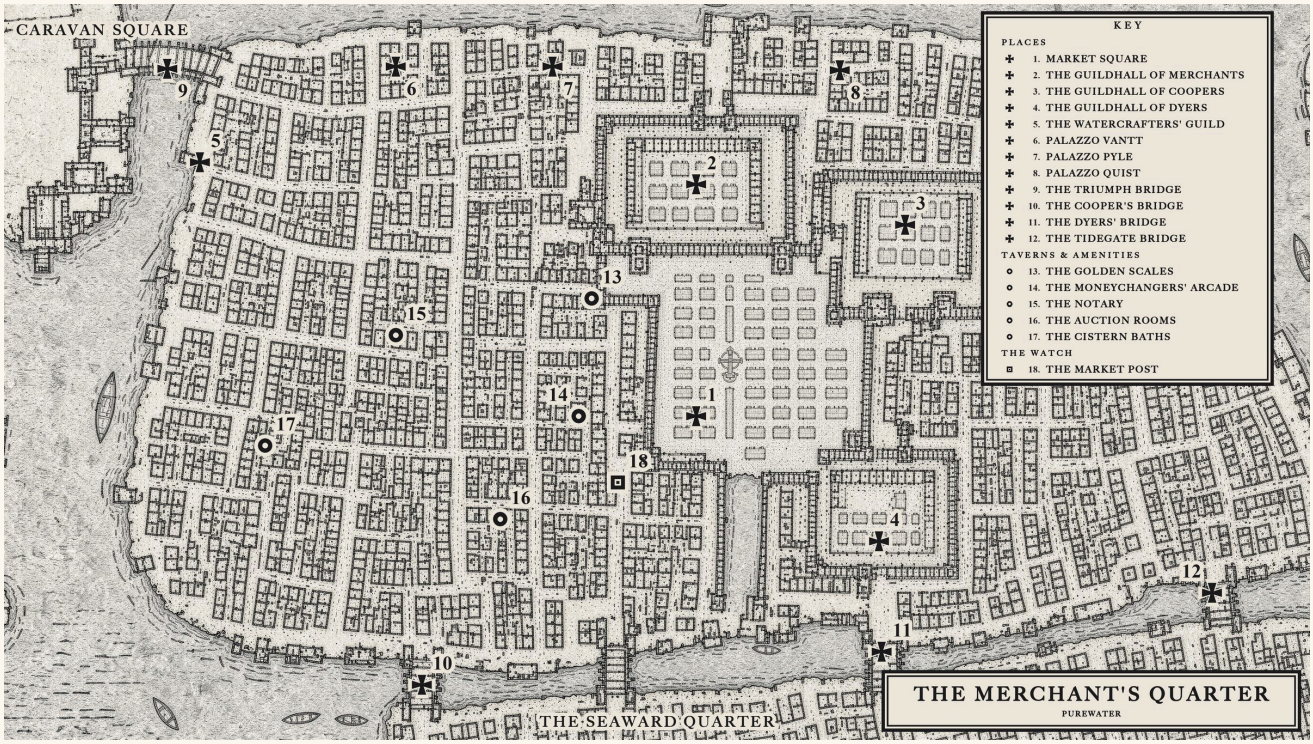


Figure 3: The Merchant's Quarter

Table 2: The Merchant's Quarter, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	Market Square	Place	-
2	The Guildhall of Merchants	Place	-
3	The Guildhall of Coopers	Place	-
4	The Guildhall of Dyers	Place	-
5	The Watercrafters' Guild	Place	-
6	Palazzo Vantt	Place	-
7	Palazzo Pyle	Place	-
8	Palazzo Quist	Place	-
9	The Triumph Bridge	Place	-
10	The Cooper's Bridge	Place	-
11	The Dyers' Bridge	Place	-
12	The Tidegate Bridge	Place	-
13	The Golden Scales	Tavern or amenity	the factors' wine house; more business is done at its tables than in the Guildhall

No.	Name	Kind	Note
14	The Moneychangers' Arcade	Tavern or amenity	under the arcade on the square's west side; refusing di Teufel credit notes, loudly
15	The Notary	Tavern or amenity	contracts, deeds and public notices; the notice board outside draws a crowd
16	The Auction Rooms	Tavern or amenity	a dead man's stock sold every week, sometimes with his widow present
17	The Cistern Baths	Tavern or amenity	bathhouse for the clerks and apprentices
18	The Market Post	Watch post	the watch post on the square, whose patrols now route round the quarter rather than be seen not acting

The Forges are the industrial island: foundries, boatyards and tanneries, many of them dwarf-run, with the Forge Tower over the south shore and smoke over the water day and night. **The Seaward Quarter** runs along the south shore behind them, a comb of piers and slips with the round Harbour Master's Tower at the tip of the longest mole.

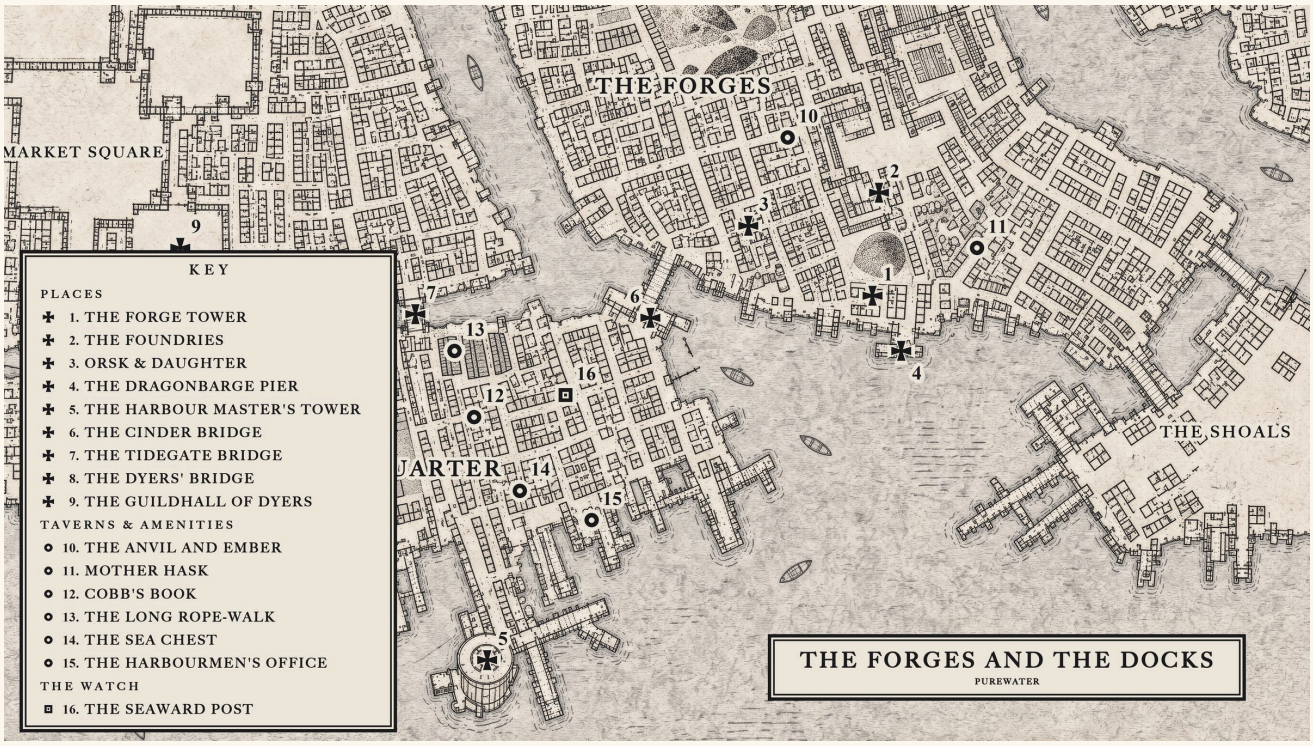


Figure 4: The Forges and the Docks

Table 3: The Forges and the Docks, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Forge Tower	Place	-
2	The Foundries	Place	-
3	Orsk & Daughter	Place	-
4	The DragonBarge Pier	Place	-
5	The Harbour Master's Tower	Place	-
6	The Cinder Bridge	Place	-

No.	Name	Kind	Note
7	The Tidegate Bridge	Place	-
8	The Dyers' Bridge	Place	-
9	The Guildhall of Dyers	Place	-
10	The Anvil and Ember	Tavern or amenity	the smiths' tavern, where the Forge Quarter decides which work it will refuse
11	Mother Hask	Tavern or amenity	burns-healer to the yards, the nearest help for a burned apprentice
12	Cobb's Book	Tavern or amenity	bookmaker taking odds on the Tourney, very short on the Baron's champion, and unhappy about it
13	The Long Rope-Walk	Tavern or amenity	the ropemakers' sheds, a quarter-mile of walking backwards
14	The Sea Chest	Tavern or amenity	sailors' lodging-house; the cheapest bed in the city with a lock on the door
15	The Harbourmen's Office	Tavern or amenity	the Harbor Masters' dockside office, where a berth registration is a public record
16	The Seaward Post	Watch post	the busiest post in the city, which has quietly stopped sending patrols anywhere near the barge pier

The Pearl

North of High Isle, among the scattered Northern Isles, lies the Pearl, the pleasure island: lamplit and lovely over dark water, its houses stringing their lamps like pearls along Pearl Quay. The Siren's Call, the Sylph's Embrace, the Mother of Pearl, the Lily Garden and the Promise of Heaven are all here, and all of them answer to one woman, the madame Marisette.

Every child on the Pearl can tell you the story of **the Widow**. Two hundred years ago a merchant prince bought a fifteen-year-old girl outright, with a bill of sale witnessed by two councillors, and kept her behind a wall on a little islet. Every dusk for eleven years she lit a lamp in her window and talked to the water, and one calm night the water took him. With his money she bought the biggest house on the quay, opened its doors to women who had been sold as she had been, and made the rule every house on the island still keeps: **a night is for sale; a person is not.** No bill of sale for a woman is honoured on the Pearl, and no man who brings one is let in anywhere on the island again.

Every dusk, a doorman carries a flame from the Widow's lamp down the quay, and every house lights its lamps from it, and then the posts of the Lantern Bridge. The Pearl's women will tell you that nobody standing under that flame can be owned. Whether that is true is a matter of opinion.

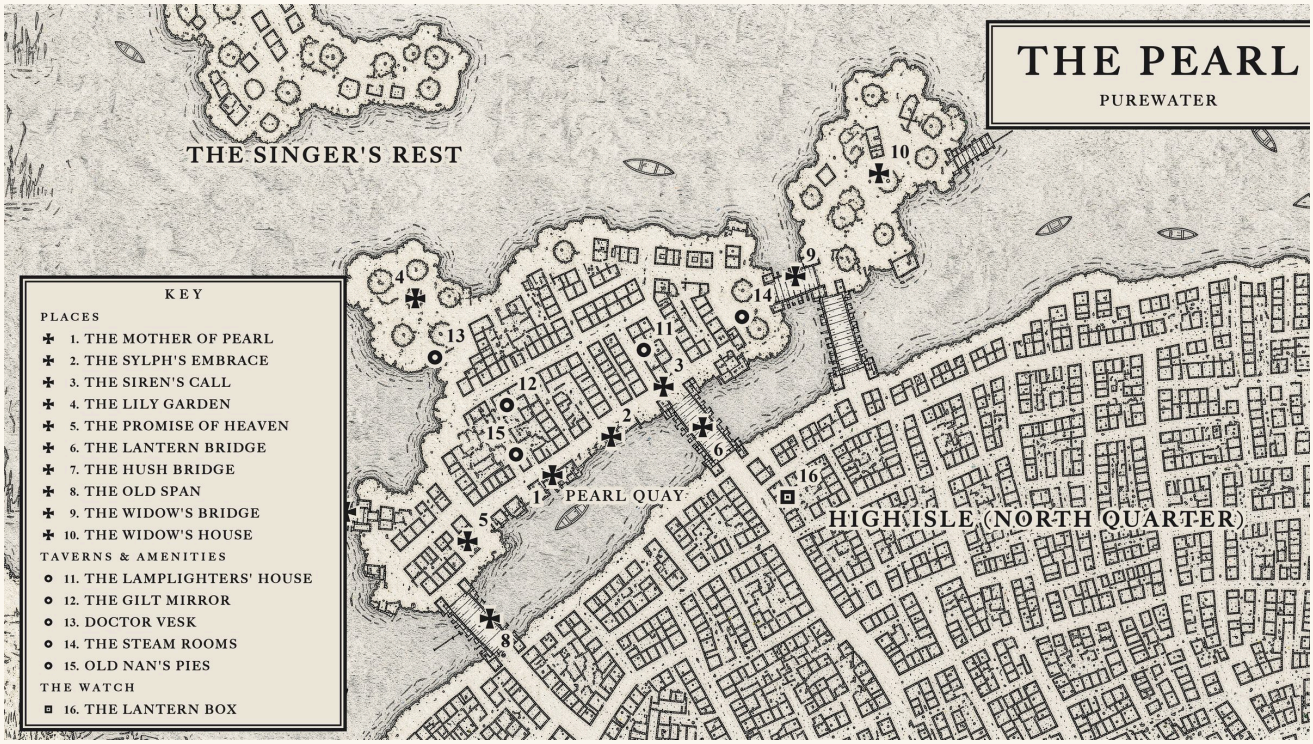


Figure 5: The Pearl

Table 4: The Pearl, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Mother of Pearl	Place	-
2	The Sylph's Embrace	Place	-
3	The Siren's Call	Place	-
4	The Lily Garden	Place	-
5	The Promise of Heaven	Place	-
6	The Lantern Bridge	Place	-
7	The Hush Bridge	Place	-
8	The Old Span	Place	-
9	The Widow's Bridge	Place	-
10	The Widow's House	Place	-
11	The Lamplighters' House	Tavern or amenity	the men who carry the Widow's flame along the Quay and over the Lantern Bridge every dusk
12	The Gilt Mirror	Tavern or amenity	perfumer and wig-maker to the houses; the best gossip on the island, all of it second-hand
13	Doctor Vesk	Tavern or amenity	a discreet physician who treats the houses' women for free and their clients for a great deal
14	The Steam Rooms	Tavern or amenity	a bathhouse, mixed, where nobody uses their real name
15	Old Nan's Pies	Tavern or amenity	an eel-pie stall on the Quay; Nan knows the name of every person who passes and says all of them
16	The Lantern Box	Watch post	a watch box at the North Quarter end of the Lantern

No.	Name	Kind	Note
			Bridge, unmanned after dark; the Pearl keeps its own order

The Lullwater

Across open water to the north-east, reached by no bridge, lies the city's poor-and-criminal quarter: the narrowest, most crooked canals in Purewater, and tenements leaning over them until they almost touch. Its name sounds gentle, a lull, a still water, and that is the joke of it. Thieves, dredgers, smugglers and dockhands all live crammed into the same drowned maze. One straight canal, the Gutter, runs down its spine, and at its heart lies the Still, a round pool of dead water with the Moist Oyster tavern on its edge. The watch post here has its door nailed shut.

It is easy to get lost in the Lullwater, and dangerous to look lost.

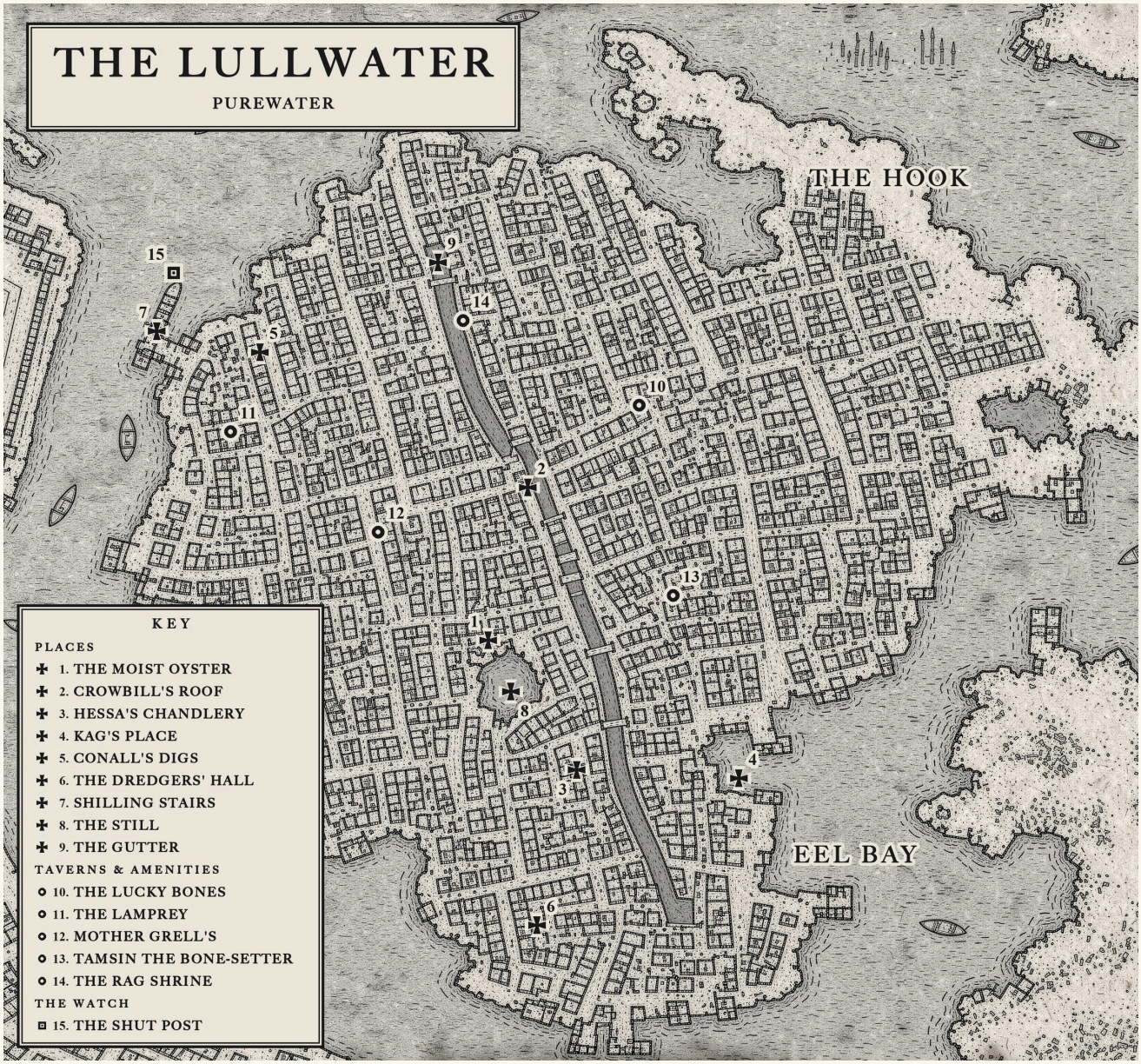


Figure 6: The Lullwater

Table 5: The Lullwater, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Moist Oyster	Place	-
2	Crowbill's Roof	Place	-
3	Hessa's Chandlery	Place	-
4	Kag's Place	Place	-
5	Conall's Digs	Place	-
6	The Dredgers' Hall	Place	-
7	Shilling Stairs	Place	-
8	The Still	Place	-
9	The Gutter	Place	-
10	The Lucky Bones	Tavern or amenity	Crowbill's dice den, up a back stair; the house never cheats, because it never needs to
11	The Lamprey	Tavern or amenity	boatmen's alehouse at the head of Shilling Stairs; whoever rowed you over is drinking here by the time you leave
12	Mother Grell's	Tavern or amenity	pawnbroker; buys anything, asks nothing, remembers everything
13	Tamsin the Bone-Setter	Tavern or amenity	the only physician who will come to the Lullwater, and she lives in it
14	The Rag Shrine	Tavern or amenity	a Dredgers' shrine under the Gutter's north bridge, hung with strips of cloth for the drowned
15	The Shut Post	Watch post	a watch post with its door nailed shut; the watch comes over only to fish out the dead

The Shoals

The seaward jaw of the Mouth: a low, ragged island of fish-markets, wharves, net-lofts, ice-houses and smugglers' jetties at the city's south-east corner. The Fishmarket Stair at the foot of the Fishmarket Bridge is the busiest water-stair in the city, and the Low Canals beyond it, four thousand people on plank walkways and stilt-houses, are the poorest. The dock labourers' guild, the Dredgers, are strongest here.



Figure 7: The Shoals

Table 6: The Shoals, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Fishmarket Bridge	Place	-
2	The Fishmarket Stair	Place	-
3	Marn's Ice-House	Place	-
4	Deller's Net-Loft	Place	-
5	The Middle Jetty	Place	-
6	The Smugglers' Jetties	Place	-
7	The DragonBarge Pier	Place	-
8	The Causeway Bridge	Place	-
9	The Tideflats Bridge	Place	-
10	The Salt Herring	Tavern or amenity	dockside alehouse for the fish-porters and the dredge crews; the Fishmarket sergeant drinks here and writes nothing down
11	The Pie Stall	Tavern or amenity	eel pies off the market's first catch, hot from four in the morning
12	The Wave Shrine	Tavern or amenity	a Dredgers' shrine under the Fishmarket Bridge, chalked with the white wave
13	Tolliver Brothers	Tavern or amenity	rope and tar, and the same joke since spring; on Kag's round
14	The Stilt Chapel	Tavern or amenity	a chapel of the Lady on stilts in the Low Canals, reached by rope bridge
15	The Fishmarket Post	Watch post	the watch post on the market; it records, refers, and keeps its

No.	Name	Kind	Note
			shutters half-closed toward the bridge

The Tournament Ground and Temple Isle

At the east end of the North Quarter stands the walled Tournament Ground: a six-sided list of raked sand ringed by timber stands for four thousand people, with the Governor's box built into the western stand. The Long Butts, where the archery is shot, run along its north side.

Just north, across a narrow water and in plain sight of the stands, lies **Temple Isle**: the temple of the Lake Lady and the great round pool of the Sacred Confluence, where the purest lake-water wells up. Its broad water-steps face the Tournament Ground.

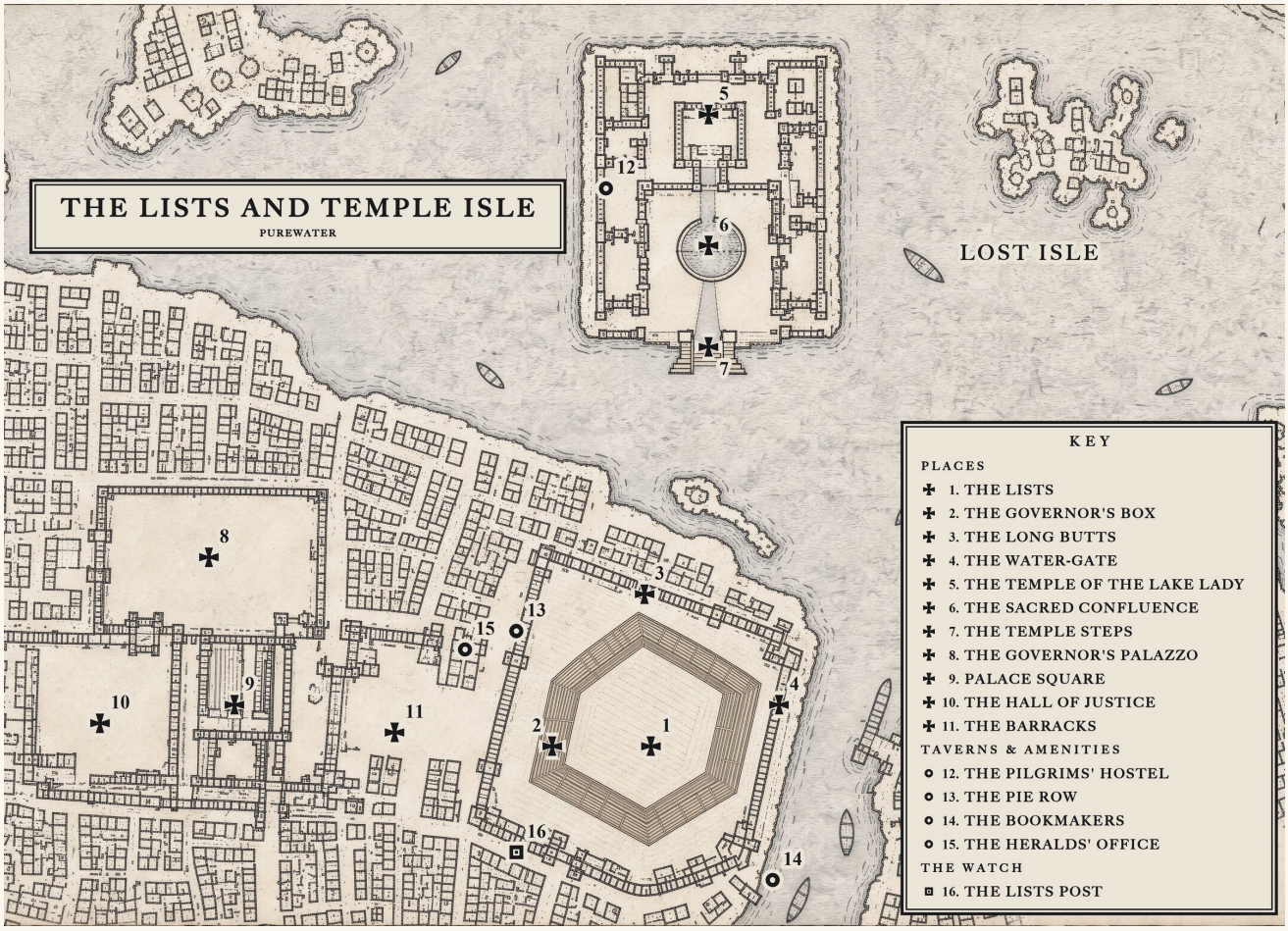


Figure 8: The Lists and Temple Isle

Table 7: The Lists and Temple Isle, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Lists	Place	-
2	The Governor's Box	Place	-
3	The Long Butts	Place	-
4	The Water-Gate	Place	-
5	The Temple of the Lake Lady	Place	-
6	The Sacred Confluence	Place	-
7	The Temple Steps	Place	-

No.	Name	Kind	Note
8	The Governor's Palazzo	Place	-
9	Palace Square	Place	-
10	The Hall of Justice	Place	-
11	The Barracks	Place	-
12	The Pilgrims' Hostel	Tavern or amenity	cells in the temple's west cloister for pilgrims who have walked a long way
13	The Pie Row	Tavern or amenity	pie and ale stalls along the stands, packed on Tourney days
14	The Bookmakers	Tavern or amenity	odds chalked on boards outside the east wall; the champion is odds-on and nobody likes it
15	The Heralds' Office	Tavern or amenity	the entries, the colours and the order of precedence, argued over in whispers
16	The Lists Post	Watch post	the Tourney watch post, whose yard the Knights have taken for horse-lines; the watch now works from a hired room

Caravan Square

The city's only land approach, on the western shore: staging-yards, warehouses, a beast yard and a wagon park, ending at the Land Gate and the Triumph Bridge. Everybody who comes to Purewater by road comes through here, and most of them stand in it for an hour.

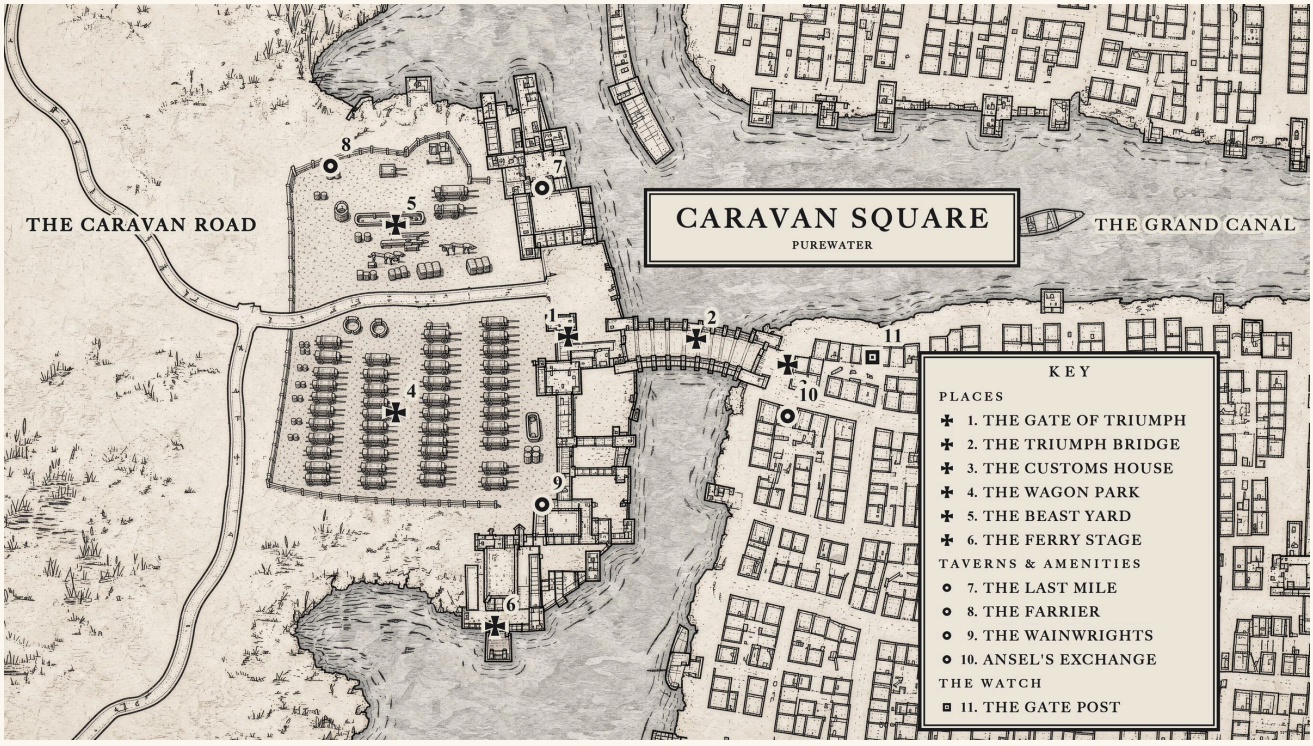


Figure 9: Caravan Square

Table 8: Caravan Square, Key

No.	Name	Kind	Note
1	The Gate of Triumph	Place	-
2	The Triumph Bridge	Place	-
3	The Customs House	Place	-
4	The Wagon Park	Place	-
5	The Beast Yard	Place	-
6	The Ferry Stage	Place	-
7	The Last Mile	Tavern or amenity	carters' inn on the waterfront, the first and last drink of every caravan
8	The Farrier	Tavern or amenity	shoes the caravan teams in the beast yard, and the Baron's horses too
9	The Wainwrights	Tavern or amenity	wagon repair, and a buyer for any wagon that will not be going home
10	Ansel's Exchange	Tavern or amenity	moneychanger by the customs house; every coin of the borderland at a rate that changes when he sees you
11	The Gate Post	Watch post	the watch post at the customs end of the Triumph Bridge, whose watchman does nothing about the three Knights in the middle of it

The Goddess and the Law

The Water Is the Goddess

The channel comes down out of the lake and through the temple on Temple Isle, and the priestesses of the **Lake Lady** say the water *is* the goddess, and mean it plainly. By ancient writ, the Order owns the water: every channel and pool is hers. The isles belong to the city council.

That matters more than it sounds. It means the most sacred ground in Purewater is also its traffic system, and it gives the Order a standing that no council can overrule and no lord can buy.

Two houses serve the goddess, and **neither can give the other an order**:

- **The Order of the Lake Lady** is the priesthood: temples, sacred pools, rites, tithes, the calendar, and the Tourney. It is a civic power with property and politics, and it is bound by **temple law**, which forbids its clergy to intervene directly in the affairs of the city unless the sacred sites themselves are threatened. Its priestesses wear blue-green worked with silver waves. Its High Priestess on Temple Isle is **Nerissa**.
- **The Swords of the Lake** are a knightly order sworn to the goddess herself, not to her clergy. They are austere, realm-wide, own nothing by rule, and hold the oldest battle honours of the uprising against the Dragon Kings. They take no tithes, keep no temples, and do not answer to the Governor's council.

The two houses are not enemies. They are more like two branches of one family who love each other and cannot spend a week under the same roof. They keep old courtesies: any Sword may claim bread, water and a bed at any of the Lady's temples, and it is never refused; any priestess travelling may claim a Sword's protection, and a Sword may not decline. But in four hundred years neither house has developed a polite way to ask the other a favour.

People say the water has been wrong since Candlemas: warm in the eastern yards, a colour in the channels near the Forges that it should not be. The Order raised an alarm about it, and the alarm was officially found to be a false reading.

Once There Were Dragon Kings

They are gone, and every child knows it. A thousand years ago the Dragon Kings ruled Thornmere with fire and dominion, served by dragon-knights, and they were thrown down in a great uprising in which the Swords of the Lake won their oldest honours. The older powers of the water (the merfolk, the spirits of lake and sea, and the goddess the city calls the Lake Lady) stood against them then. What is left of the Dragon Kings now is old armour on border lords, a dragon on a baron's banner, and a small number of people who would like the old power back badly enough to pay for it.

The King's Justice

Justice in Thornmere flows from **King Ostmar** at Caldreth, and nowhere else. In a city it flows through the King's representative, who in Purewater is **Prince Emeric**, the King's nephew and Governor, who may act in the King's name, here and now, on his own word. Everything else is administration: the watch, the guilds, the port, the Assay. Administration can record, refuse, impound, close a workshop and turn a man away from a berth. It cannot touch a lord.

Not everybody may accuse a lord. A dockhand's word against a baron is not a small case, it is no case. To call a lord to answer, a person needs **standing**: another lord, a knight of a recognised order, a Crown officer under warrant within their charter, a priest within her faith, or a guild master within his guild. And to accuse a great lord and fail is to answer for it yourself. A lord who is accused may also refuse the matter and offer trial by arms, his own or his champion's.

The city watch is about ninety men and women in blue-grey, competent at drunks, thieves and canal disputes. They answer to the Governor's council.

The King's Assay

The **Assay of Thornmere**, universally *the Assay*, is the Crown's chartered body for licensing, inspecting and recording the practice of magic. It was founded after the uprising for the plainest of reasons: the realm had just finished a war against men who ruled by magic, and it never intended to be surprised by that again. Its assayers carry a warrant, a silver thumb-ring and a small steel punch bearing their own mark, which they strike into what they inspect. Every licensed practitioner and every made thing is written down in **the Register**. Working magic outside it is an offence, and some kinds of magic are hanging matters.

The Assay's doctrine is *establish, record, refer*: an assayer investigates and writes it down, and the Table at Caldreth decides what to do. Its warrant opens a great many doors. It is worth much more with a watch sergeant or a harbourmaster than with any criminal in Purewater.

The Lake Lady's Tourney

The Tourney comes round once a year, and it is the year's holy business: three days of contests in the goddess's honour, older than the Governor's office, drawing competitors from across the realm. For the week of it the city fills, everybody makes a year's money in six days, and the law goes quiet.

It is three days away.

Before the Tourney

Arrival. Competitors, their households and their hangers-on pour in through Caravan Square for days beforehand, and every bed in the city is let.

The presentation of the entrants. On the eve of the Tourney, by long form, every entrant in every event is presented to the Prince on the Tournament Ground: names read, colours shown, and each competitor bare-headed for the space of a bow. It is ceremony, it is tedious, and the whole city half-watches it from the stands. Nobody can skip it without forfeiting their entry.

The blessing. Before they fight, combatants and the heads of their houses go down to the Lady's water on the Temple Isle steps for her blessing.

The Three Days

The Archery comes first: two hundred paces of marked grass on the Long Butts, with a crosswind off the lake that everybody complains about and nobody shoots well against, the Governor's box at the near end, and half the city lying on the slope behind. It is **the one open event.** Anybody may shoot, with no colours and no fee, which makes it the only place all week where a person of no standing can stand in front of the Governor, be handed something in public, and be owed a hearing for as long as the crowd is watching.

The Single Combat comes on the second day, and it is the only martial event: one-on-one bouts on the raked sand of the Lists, in front of four thousand people. Placed fighters win guild contracts. The champion wins the old honours of the Tourney, and is honoured by the Prince at the closing.

The Run comes on the third day, and it is the only event that leaves the Tournament Ground. Competitors go out through the water-gate and race the whole city, on foot and by boat: along the North Quarter, over the Triumph Bridge to Caravan Square and back, through the Merchant's Quarter and the docks, over the Fishmarket Bridge into the Shoals, across to the bridgeless Lullwater by any means they can find, and back over open water to the temple steps. No route is laid down and no help is forbidden. Half the city is a course and the other half is a crowd, and for two hours nobody can keep order anywhere. Cash and local fame go to the winner, and it is said that the city's criminals and captains watch the Run very carefully for talent.

The closing follows at dusk on the last day, on the temple steps and in the Governor's box: the prizes, the speeches and the champion's honours.

The Odds

The bookmakers outside the Tournament Ground's east wall will tell anybody who asks that the favourite for the Single Combat is a champion entered by a visiting baron, whom nobody outside his household has ever seen fight, or seen at all. The odds are short, and nobody likes them.

This Week

Baron Hanzo di Teufel has come down the road for the Tourney with his Dragon Knights at his back, and he has entered a champion in the Single Combat whom nobody outside his household has been allowed to see. His advance men have been in the city for a week. The rest of his column arrives today, the same day you do.

The Dragon Knights

The Baron's company is twenty-odd borderland soldiers in dragon-blazoned harness, many of them with fire-touched blades, camped on a councillor's water-meadow two miles east of the walls. The city calls them *the dragonshits*, quietly.

This is what the last week has been like. They walk the Merchant's Quarter and the Forges in threes and fours. They take the middle of a bridge and let the city go round them in single file. They eat and drink on the promise that *the Baron will settle*, and he settles late and short, so the stallholders have started pricing it in and everybody's bread has gone up. They take boats off the water-stairs with the boatmen still in them, rowed wherever they like and left wherever they finish, and two boatmen have not come back. Six days ago a dockhand named **Emmit Rill** was slow moving a barrow and had his jaw broken by a mailed fist in front of forty people. He still cannot work.

Nobody is dead yet. Everybody expects somebody to be.

The Standing Order

And the watch has been told to leave them alone. A week ago the watch received a written instruction from the Governor's council: the Baron's people are guests of the Crown's representative, and complaints against them are to be recorded and referred, and not acted upon, until the Tourney is over. It went out over the Prince's own signature. Every sergeant in the city has a book of complaints and nothing to do with it.

So there is no office to complain to, and everybody in Purewater has worked that out privately, and nobody has said it out loud. Nobody calls it an occupation. Everybody goes round.

Who Matters in Purewater

These are the people everybody in the city knows of, and what everybody says about them.

- **Prince Emeric,** the King's nephew and Governor: two-and-twenty, clever, idealistic and decent, and run rings around by his own council. People like him and do not expect anything of him.
- **The city council,** the merchant princes who run the city's daily business from their palazzi on the Grand Canal. Three of them carried the standing order. Everybody has an opinion about which three, and why.
- **Marisette,** who rules the Pearl, every house on it. She receives; she does not travel.
- **Crowbill,** who runs the city's other business, the business nobody writes down. He is said to keep a code: no killing locals, no harming children, no touching the Lady's sites. Some people find that comforting.
- **Marda Blackwater,** who speaks for the Dredgers, three hundred dock labourers who work the water-stairs, and who are angrier this week than she is.
- **The Order of the Lake Lady** and its High Priestess, **Nerissa**, who owns the water and is forbidden to meddle in the city.
- **The Harbor Masters,** who write down every hull on the water, including the Baron's ship, which lies at a private pier in the Forges, steaming where it meets the water.

What People Are Saying

Ask around in any tavern in the city this week and you will hear some of these. Some of them are true.

- The Baron's champion travels in a litter laced shut, and the outriders face inward as much as out.

- The water by the Forges has been warm for weeks, and the Dredgers will not put a grab in it.
- The Order raised an alarm about the water and the council made them take it back.
- Two boatmen were rowed out through the Mouth by the Knights and left there.
- A councillor's daughter has been sent away for the week, and she is furious about it.
- Crowbill's collections are coming up short on every bridge the Knights stand on.
- An elf knight of the Swords of the Lake has entered the Archery, and nobody has ever seen one shoot.
- The Dredgers are talking about stopping the stairs if nobody pays Emmit Rill.
- The Baron is the most charming man anybody has ever met, and he remembers everybody's name.

That is the city you are walking into. Something is going to give this week, and the interesting question is not whether. It is who is standing nearest when it does.

PART

Your Character

Choosing Your Character

Four people are converging on Purewater in the three days before the Tourney, and none of them knows about the others. Read all four before you choose: you cannot choose well from a list you have not heard. Each comes with a line saying what they are *for*, the kind of game they give you, and each comes with a full character sheet.

The three you do not choose are not gone. They stay in the world, played by the Games Master, and you will meet them.

Gardwen, the Woman from the Woods

A feral-raised elf of the deep woods, a long way from anything she recognises, in a city with no earth in it. Ten years ago Dragon Knights came through her family's steading at night, and she has been following that colour ever since: patiently, alone, across a great deal of country, on the strength of one thing she believes that nobody else does. Her little brother's body was never among the dead.

She is a divine caster of nature and pure water: healing, green things, the old quiet powers. A she-wolf called **Ruhi** walks beside her, who is not a pet and is not tame and simply goes where she goes. She is direct and physically unbothered by cold, dirt or long waits. She has no small talk and no social armour whatsoever, and she helps without being asked or announcing it. At this moment she is the single most motivated person in Purewater, and the thing driving her is ten years old and has never once been believed by anybody.

Play her if you want the emotional centre of the story, and a reason to care before anybody has explained anything.

> **Your opening.** Three weeks ago you picked up a column of Dragon Knights on the north road, twenty or thirty riding under di Teufel colours toward a tournament in a canal city, and you have followed at a distance ever since. Now the column has crossed the ford ahead of you and you are stuck in the tourney crowd behind it, watching the last of the dragon-scale disappear toward the city gate. There is a covered litter in the middle of them that the outriders will not let anyone near. And an old woman leaning on a staff three places back in the queue has been staring at you for some time.

Characteristics	Attributes	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR: 10	**Action Points:** 3	1–3	Right Leg	0/5
CON: 14	**Damage Modifier:** +0	4–6	Left Leg	0/5
SIZ: 11	**Magic Points:** 18	7–9	Abdomen	0/6
DEX: 14	**Movement:** 20' (6 metres)	10–12	Chest	0/7
INT: 16	**Initiative Bonus:** +15	13–15	Right Arm	0/4
POW: 18	**Armour:** None	16–18	Left Arm	0/4
CHA: 14	**Abilities:** The Wild Line (Sanctuary (2 PP), Unseat (4 PP)); Woodwise	19–20	Head	0/5
	Magic: Divine (memorised): Command, Cure Disease, Cure Minor Wounds, Cure Serious Wounds, Detect Evil, Hold Person, Know Alignment, Protection, Remove Fear, Slow Poison, Spiritshield			

Skills: Animal Training 52%, Athletics 59%, Boating 24%, Brawn 21%, Channel 85%, Conceal 42%, Courtesy 40%, Customs 32%, Dance 28%, Deceit 32%, Devotion 87%, Drive 32%, Druid's Cant 70%, Endurance 48%, Evade 53%, First Aid 60%, Influence 38%, Insight 44%, Language (Common) 40%, Locale 72%, Lore (Species) 52%, Lore (Woodland Animal 1) 70%, Lore (Woodland Animal 2) 70%, Native Tongue 70%, Perception 79%, Ride 32%, Sing 32%, Stealth 50%, Survival 62%, Swim 24%, Track 60%, Unarmed 24%, Willpower 81%
Passions: Love (Brother + Family) 80%
Hatred (The Dragons) 70%
Love (Nature + Wilderness) 65%
Love (Elves) 45%

Combat Style: Druid (club, dagger, dart, hammer, sickle, scimitar, shield, sling, spear, staff, staff sling, whip) 59%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	M	L	1d8	4/8
Dagger	S	S	1d4+1	6/8

Ruhi

Characteristics	Attributes	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR: 10	**Action Points:** 2	17–20	Head	1/5
CON: 12	**Damage Modifier:** +0	1–2	Right Hind Leg	1/5
SIZ: 11	**Magic Points:** 6	3–4	Left Hind Leg	1/5
DEX: 9	**Movement:** 25' (8 metres)	5–7	Hindquarters	1/6
INT: 15	**Initiative Bonus:** +12	8–10	Forequarters	1/7
POW: 6	**Armour:** Pelt (natural armor, all locations)	11–13	Right Front Leg	1/5
CHA: 0	**Abilities:** None	14–16	Left Front Leg	1/5
	Magic: None			

Skills: Athletics 82%, Boating 22%, Brawn 62%, Conceal 15%, Customs 30%, Dance 9%, Deceit 15%, Drive 15%, Endurance 78%, Evade 64%, First Aid 24%, Influence 0%, Insight 21%, Locale 30%, Native Tongue 55%, Perception 74%, Ride 15%, Sing 6%, Stealth 24%, Swim 22%, Track 84%, Unarmed 19%, Willpower 61%
Passions: Bonded to Gardwen 85%
Distrust of enclosed places and cities 55%

Combat Style: Pack Savage (Bite) 85%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Bite	S	T	1d4	-

Magda, the Old Woman Who Has Buried Everybody

Sixty-odd, built like a gatepost, grey hair cut short and badly with her own knife, ringmail under a travelling cloak. A barbarian of the woodland faith and a sworn servant of **Hel**, the death-goddess, who does not let her age, and who sends her dreams she would rather not have.

She has outlived every single person she started with. She is blunt and unsentimental, rude to people she likes and unfailingly polite to people she is considering hitting, and a great deal funnier than she lets on. She has an enormous

appetite for food, for sleep and for sitting down, and a real, uncomplicated pleasure in doing a physical job properly. In a fight she is terrifying out of all proportion to her age. Outside one, she is the most reliable adult in the story.

Play her if you want to be the one who is not frightened, and to find out what that costs.

> **Your opening.** For eleven nights the death-goddess has put the same dream behind your eyes: a young woman with a wolf, a burning house, and a knight in dragon-scale who is already dead and does not know it. Hel does not explain. Hel points. The dream said *lay the dragon warrior to rest*, which is not the same as kill, and you have been turning that over for three weeks of walking. This morning you are at the ford outside Purewater in a slow queue of tourney traffic, and there, three places ahead of you, is the woman from the dream, wolf and all. You know Purewater a little, from years ago: enough to know which madame on the Pearl rents rooms to women travelling alone.

Characteristics	Attributes	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR: 13	**Action Points:** 3	1–3	Right Leg	3/5
CON: 14	**Damage Modifier:** +0	4–6	Left Leg	3/5
SIZ: 8	**Magic Points:** 14	7–9	Abdomen	3/6
DEX: 12	**Movement:** 20' (6 metres)	10–12	Chest	3/7
INT: 16	**Initiative Bonus:** +11	13–15	Right Arm	3/4
POW: 14	**Armour:** Ringmail (all locations)	16–18	Left Arm	3/4
CHA: 9	**Abilities:** Artful Dodger (CFI) — unburdened and in light armor or less, Evade a melee attack without going prone; prone against a ranged attack only on a failure; Berserk (Stay over (2 PP), Take it with her (2 PP)); Hel's Mark	19–20	Head	3/5
	Magic: None			

Skills: Acrobatics 60%, Arcane Casting 0%, Athletics 50%, Boating 37%, Brawn 71%, Conceal 26%, Customs 32%, Dance 21%, Deceit 25%, Drive 26%, Endurance 78%, Evade 79%, First Aid 38%, Influence 18%, Insight 30%, Language (Common) 65%, Locale 32%, Lore (Hel) 52%, Native Tongue 65%, Navigation 55%, Perception 70%, Ride 56%, Sing 23%, Sleight 46%, Stealth 68%, Survival 63%, Swim 27%, Track 65%, Unarmed 85%, Willpower 63%
Passions: Love (Sister) 70%
Neutral (Curmudgeon) 54%
Fear (Arcane Magic) 54%

Combat Style: Berserker (all weapons + shields; uses anything she can get her hands on, including others' weapons) 85%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Quarterstaff	M	L	1d8	4/8
Staff Sling	E	15/75/150	2d6	1/2

Randall, the Pearl Thief

Purewater-born, and raised in one of the pleasure houses of the Pearl by women who are still, collectively, his family. He knows every roof, ledge, water-stair and back door on that island and most of the rest of the city besides, and he has never in his life been more than four minutes from somebody who would hide him.

He is a thief of the practical sort: locks, pockets, other people's routes, and a very good read of a room. He is quick and charming, and considerably softer-hearted than the trade rewards. He pays the Pearl back because the Pearl raised him, and he does not discuss his mother. A young pickpocket called Nus will do anything he asks, which he should probably think about more than he does.

He is the only one of the four who is **home**, which means he has more to lose here than anybody, and can call in favours nobody else can reach.

Play him if you want the city itself to be your character sheet.

Your opening. Tourney week is the best earning of the year: the city fills with strangers who carry their purses where you can reach them. It is mid-morning in Caravan Square, the crowd is thick enough to work, and you have had a decent hour. Then the crowd turns, the way a crowd does, and the Dragon Knights come through the gate: twenty-odd riders in scale, a covered litter in the middle of them, and at their head a lord who does not look at anybody. Every eye in the square goes to the litter. Every purse in the square stops being watched.

Characteristics	Attributes	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR: 13	**Action Points:** 3	1–3	Right Leg	3/5
CON: 13	**Damage Modifier:** +0	4–6	Left Leg	3/5
SIZ: 11	**Magic Points:** 12	7–9	Abdomen	3/6
DEX: 17	**Movement:** 20' (6 metres)	10–12	Chest	3/7
INT: 15	**Initiative Bonus:** +13	13–15	Right Arm	3/4
POW: 12	**Armour:** Studded Leather (all locations)	16–18	Left Arm	3/4
CHA: 14	**Abilities:** Artful Dodger — 1 extra Action Point (parry/evade); may use Evade to dodge a melee attack without falling prone (only fall prone on a failure); Backstab — may use 'Kill Silently' with surprise; Climb Walls — ignore 1 grade of difficulty on Athletics to climb; Hide in Shadows — Perception rolls to spot him are one grade harder; Read Languages	19–20	Head	3/5
	Magic: None			

Skills: Acrobatics 60%, Acting 48%, Athletics 70%, Boating 72%, Brawn 24%, Commerce 49%, Conceal 39%, Courtesy 39%, Customs 30%, Dance 31%, Deceit 75%, Drive 39%, Endurance 55%, Evade 70%, First Aid 32%, Influence 63%, Insight 62%, Locale 40%, Lockpicking 69%, Native Tongue 69%, Perception 62%, Ride 29%, Sing 26%, Sleight 71%, Stealth 72%, Streetwise 66%, Swim 65%, Thieves' Cant 69%, Unarmed 40%, Willpower 49%
Passions: Caring for Loved Ones 70%
The Pearl raised me and I pay it back 60%
Never ask who my mother was 55%

Combat Style: Thief (broadsword, club, dagger, dart, falchion, garrotte, hand crossbow, knife, longsword, shortbow, shortsword, sling) 75%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	S	S	1d4+1	6/8
Knife	S	S	1d3	5/4
Sling	L	10/150/300	1d8	1/2
Crossbow	L	20/100/200	1d8+1	4/5

Conall Bjornlasch, the Warranted Investigator

A militiaman's son out of Ashwick, who should have died in a ditch at nineteen and was instead pulled out of it by a knight of the Swords of the Lake, taught to read, and then taught a good deal more. The **King's Assay** finished the job, and gave him a warrant, a thumb-ring and a steel punch with his own mark on it. He investigates things other people would rather write off as bad luck.

He is an arcane practitioner of the investigative sort (find-magic, illusion, a borrowed face when the work needs one) and a serious fighter, which surprises people who have decided he is a clerk. He rides in beside his patron, the elf knight **Temerach Nebulo**, on an errand she has declined to explain, and she has been unusually quiet for two days.

He is the only one of the four who arrives with **standing**. A warrant opens doors that would stay shut for anybody else. It also means he is the one with something to lose by using it wrongly.

Play him if you want to investigate, and to have the authority to make people answer.

Your opening. You are an hour out of Purewater on the Ashwick road, riding beside Temerach, who has described this trip as "an errand" in a tone that did not invite questions. Then the Dragon Knights overtake you: twenty-odd riders in scale under di Teufel colours, moving at a pace that says they own the road, with a covered litter in the middle of the column and its curtains laced shut. The outriders wave you into the verge. Temerach watches them pass without a word, and you notice her hand does not leave her reins. Your patron is keeping something from you. You can look at the litter, look at her, or ask the question she has been avoiding.

Characteristics	Attributes	1d20	Hit Location	AP/HP
STR: 13	**Action Points:** 3	1–3	Right Leg	2/5
CON: 14	**Damage Modifier:** +0	4–6	Left Leg	2/5
SIZ: 11	**Magic Points:** 17	7–9	Abdomen	2/6
DEX: 14	**Movement:** 20' (6 metres)	10–12	Chest	2/7
INT: 16	**Initiative Bonus:** +13	13–15	Right Arm	2/4
POW: 17	**Armour:** Gambeson (all locations)	16–18	Left Arm	2/4
CHA: 10	**Abilities:** None	19–20	Head	2/5
	Magic: Arcane: Befuddle, Change Appearance, Coordination, Dancing Lights, Darkness, Detect Magic, Glamour, Illusion, Invisibility, Invisibility, 10 ft. Radius, Knock, Light, Locate Object, Magic Missile, Magic Mouth, Mirror Image, Protection, Read Magic, Witchsight			

Skills: Arcane Casting 73%, Arcane Knowledge 72%, Athletics 49%, Boating 27%, Brawn 24%, Conceal 40%, Courtesy 41%, Customs 32%, Dance 24%, Deceit 51%, Drive 31%, Endurance 78%, Evade 81%, First Aid 30%, Influence 20%, Insight 88%, Locale 32%, Lore (Military History) 50%, Lore (Strategy + Tactics) 50%, Native Tongue 66%, Perception 73%, Ride 50%, Sing 27%, Sleight 50%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 67%, Survival 50%, Swim 27%, Unarmed 50%, Willpower 74%
Passions: Find the man who wears my face 60%
Love (Temerach Nebulo), unspoken 65%
Know a thing before acting on it 55%

Combat Style: Fighter (all weapons, all shields) 82%

Weapon	Size/Force	Reach/Range	Damage	AP/HP
Rapier	M	L	1d8	5/8
Buckler	L	S	1d4	6/9
Short bow	L	15/100/200	1d6	4/4

Making Your Own Character

You do not have to play one of the four. A character of your own, built well, can be the best thing in a game like this, and the four will still be in the world for you to meet. This is how to build somebody who belongs in Purewater this week, without it taking an hour.

Roll First, Decide Second

Roll your characteristics the way *Classic Fantasy Imperative* tells you to, and read the numbers out before you decide what kind of person this is. A CHA of 5 or a SIZ of 20 is a character concept arriving unbidden, and it is nearly always better than the one you walked in with. Then choose a species, a culture and a class (cleric, fighter, magic-user or rogue) that fit what the dice gave you.

Answer One Question

Not "what is your backstory". Answer this:

> ***Why are you in Purewater this week, and who would notice if you left?***

A character with an answer to that is in the story. A character without one is a tourist. The Tourney gives you a dozen reasons: competing, guarding somebody who is competing, selling to the crowds, picking their pockets, praying, collecting a debt, delivering a message, running from something on the mainland. The city gives you a dozen more.

Owe Somebody

Choose one person or group in the city, and put your character in their debt, or them in yours. Purewater is full of people who already want things this week: a guild boss short of answers, a madame short of law, a harbourmaster, the temple, a company of soldiers who have not been paid, the dockers' guild. Pick one with the Games Master and write the tie down. It is the single most useful thing on this page.

Passions, with a Collision in Them

Choose three Passions, and build a collision into them on purpose: a loyalty that will one day disagree with an ambition, or a love that will one day disagree with an oath. Five points of difference between them is plenty; it does not need to be a tragedy. Passions are where your character's voice comes from, so spend real time here, and say them out loud.

Four Questions

Then answer these, and let the Games Master write the answers down:

1. **Where did you learn the thing you are good at, and from whom?** Name that person. They may still be alive.
2. **What did you lose?** Not a tragedy competition, but something specific and ordinary: a trade, a hand, a name, a city you cannot go back to.
3. **What do you carry?** One object with a history. It will come up.
4. **What would make you walk away from all this?** This is the one players have not thought about, and it is the one that makes a character a person.

Ask your Games Master to read it back to you as two short paragraphs, in the voice of the game, and fix anything that is wrong. Then the sheet: skills, kit and the rest, quickly. Nobody has ever enjoyed the shopping.

PART

Playing the Game

Playing Mythras

Classic Fantasy Imperative is built on *Mythras*, and *Mythras* is simple at heart. This is the short version, enough to play your first session. The Games Master will teach the rest as it comes up, and the full rules are free.

Skills Are Percentages

Everything your character can do is a skill with a percentage, and to do something you roll percentile dice (two ten-sided dice, 1d100) and try to roll **equal to or under** the skill. An Athletics of 65% succeeds on a roll of 01 to 65.

- **A critical success** is a roll of one-tenth of the skill or less, rounded up. With Athletics 65%, that is 01 to 07. Something spectacular happens.
- **A fumble** is a roll of 99 or 00. Something goes badly wrong.

When a task is harder or easier than usual, the Games Master sets a **Difficulty Grade**. Easy adds half your skill again. Hard takes off a third of it. Formidable halves it, and Herculean leaves you a fifth. Very Easy doubles it.

When you are up against somebody, whether you are sneaking past a guard or arguing with a councillor, you make an **opposed roll**. Both of you roll, and the better level of success wins: a critical beats a success, which beats a failure. If both of you succeed, the higher roll that still succeeded wins.

Passions

Your character has **Passions**: the people, causes and things they love, hate, fear or are loyal to, each with a percentage like a skill. They are the best part of *Mythras*, and they work in four ways:

- **They make you better.** When a Passion is truly at stake in what you are doing, it adds a fifth of its value to the skill you are using. A Love (Brother) of 80% adds 16% to anything you do for him.
- **They make you act.** When it matters, the Games Master may ask you to roll a Passion to see whether your character can hold back, or walk away.
- **They fight each other.** When two of your Passions pull in different directions, roll them against each other, and the winner decides what you do.
- **They protect you.** When somebody tries to bend your will by magic or manipulation into acting against a Passion, you may roll the Passion instead of your Willpower to resist.

Passions change in play. Expect yours to.

Luck

Your character has a few **Luck Points**, which return at the start of each session. Spend one to re-roll any roll of your own, or to swap the two dice (a 75 becomes a 57), or to make an opponent re-roll a blow against you. You can also spend one to get an extra Action Point in a fight when you have run out, or to turn a Major Wound into a Serious one. Only one Luck Point may be spent on any one action. Use them. They are there to keep heroes alive.

Fighting

Mythras fights are fast, brutal and decided in a few blows, so choose them carefully.

- **Initiative.** At the start of a fight everybody rolls 1d10 and adds their Initiative Bonus, and acts in order from highest to lowest.
- **Action Points.** Everybody gets a few Action Points each Combat Round of five seconds, two or three for beginning characters. An attack costs one. So does a reaction, such as a **Parry** with your weapon or shield, or an **Evade** to get out of the way. Spend them wisely: if you attack twice, you have nothing left to defend with.
- **Combat Style.** You fight with your Combat Style skill, which covers the weapons your character has trained in.

- **Special Effects.** When an attacker and a defender both roll, and one of them does better than the other, the winner gets one or more **Special Effects**: choosing the hit location, disarming, tripping, bleeding, impaling, and many more. This is where *Mythras* combat comes alive. A good parry can disarm the man who swung at you.
- **Hit Locations and Armour.** A blow strikes one of seven locations (the legs, abdomen, chest, arms or head), each with its own Hit Points and armour. Damage is reduced by a parry, and then by armour. A location taken to zero is a Serious Wound, and one taken below zero by its full Hit Points is a Major Wound, which can maim or kill.

Magic

In *Classic Fantasy Imperative*, magic belongs to your class. **Magic-users** cast arcane spells with the Arcane Casting skill and need a spell book. **Clerics** cast divine spells with the Channel skill, by prayer and their holy symbol, and **druids** draw on the old powers of the wild in the same way. Casting spends **Magic Points**, which return with rest. Magic-users cannot cast effectively in armour.

Getting Better

At the end of a session, or at the end of the scenario, the Games Master gives out **Experience Rolls**. For each one, pick a skill and roll 1d100. If you roll **over** your current skill, it improves, so the things you are worst at get better fastest. Passions change through play rather than through rolls.

The Most Important Rule

Say what your character is trying to do, and why. The Games Master will tell you what to roll. In Purewater, the best tools are rarely swords: a well-placed question, the right person told the right thing, a boat at the right stair, and knowing when to swim.