

Many greetings to you, Poppin, and welcome to Storm Hollow.

Your journey here was simple. As simple as, say, opening a box of treasures or turning the page of a book. That's why so many who come here arrive so confused. Such a fast trip to reach a place so different from the world you know. Don't be afraid. I am here to help you.

My name is Scheherazade, teller of the Poppin tales and voice of the Eddur. You do not know what that means yet, but you will come to understand. I remember what it was like to see this world for the first time. Your world, Earth, is the place I once called my home. Long ago, I was brought here by the Great Guardian, just as you were. But we have no time for my story today. It would take over a thousand nights to tell all my tales. The stories I am about to tell you are about Storm Hollow.

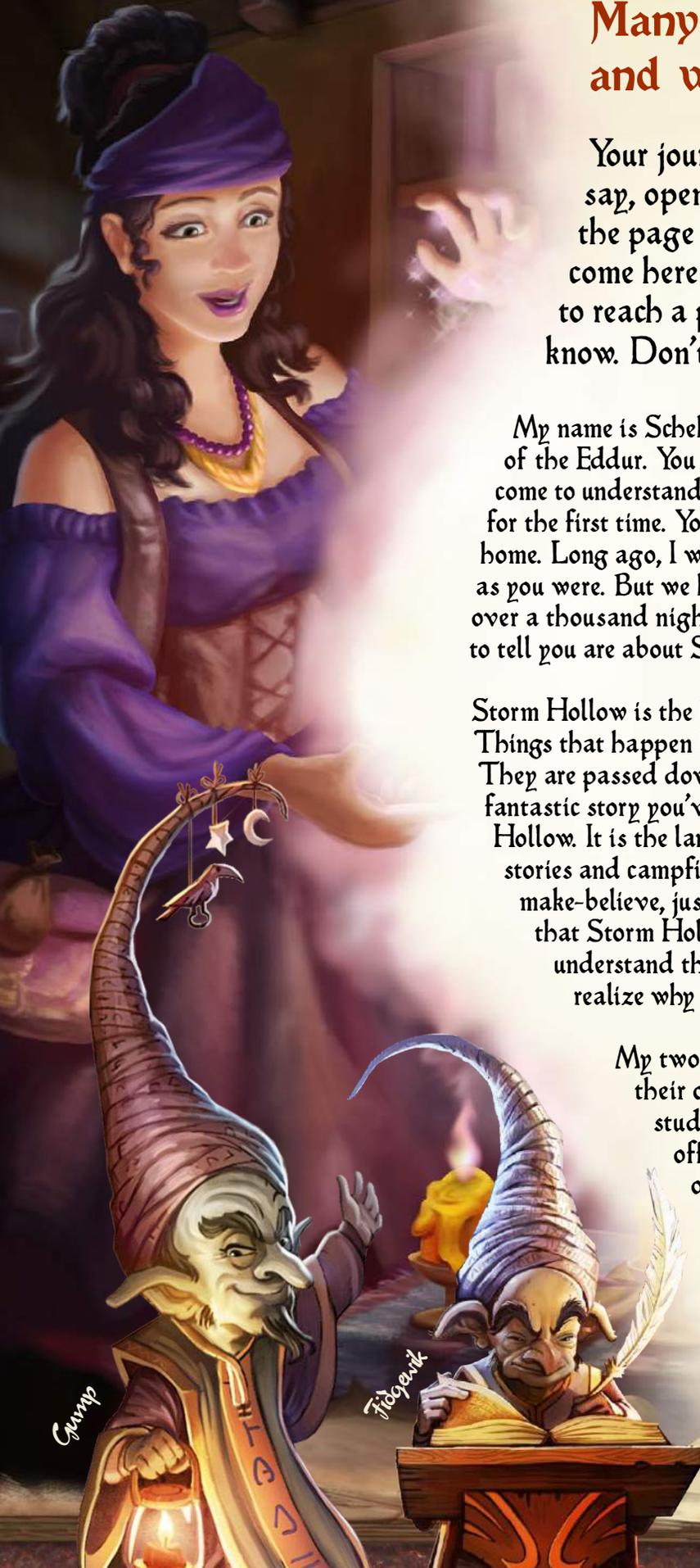
Storm Hollow is the land that lies beyond the world that you know. Things that happen here echo through the ages in your world. They are passed down in stories. Every fairy tale, adventure, or fantastic story you've ever read about occurred right here in Storm Hollow. It is the land of myth and legend, the world of bedtime stories and campfire tales. You may have thought it was all make-believe, just for fun. Dear Poppin, I implore you to accept that Storm Hollow is much more than that. I want you to understand the magic and wonder of this world so you will realize why it is so important that you help save it.

My two closest friends, Fidgewik and Gump, will add their own stories to mine. Fidgewik has spent his life studying every detail of Storm Hollow and Gump offers some very colorful advice. They are some of the most trusted Keepers of the Eddur, the history of Storm Hollow and Poppins like you. Listen well to what they say and you may become true heroes someday.

Now pay close attention, Poppins. I am about to tell you why you are here.

Gump

Fidgewik





Part I: Poppin Heroes

In which you learn who you are and why you are here.

What Is a Poppin?

A fair question with a simple answer. You are a Poppin, as are all of your friends who come with you on your journeys to Storm Hollow. The people of Storm Hollow call you Poppins because when you arrive here you seem to simply “pop in” from somewhere else. When your heroic journey is at an end, you will “pop out” and return safely home to your own world. Your arrival is no mistake. You are more important than you can possibly know. Poppins always show up when Storm Hollow is in great need of heroes. Sometimes the path ahead will seem silly and small. Sometimes it will seem dangerous, daunting, and impossible to overcome. Trust in yourself, my dear Poppin. What you do and whom you help matters a great deal. We all believe in you and know you will find a way.



THE EDDUR AND POPPIN MUSEUM

Greetings, Poppin. I am Fidgewik Roga. It is my prestigious duty to educate you and ensure that you become well-versed on the fascinating details of Storm Hollow's diverse lands and rich history. I am one of the Keepers of the Eddur in the City of Venture. We are a dedicated group of Grumboks that keep an account of the Edda, all the stories of Poppins past going back to the beginning of written history. My dear friend, Miss Scheherazade, is the only Poppin known to have made Storm Hollow her permanent home. She never pops out anymore. She has become the voice of the Eddur and helped us Keepers understand Poppins a whole lot better. We also maintain a Poppin Museum to honor the heroes of the past. Each hero has an alcove that displays their stories and houses some of the amazing artifacts they left behind. There's a place set aside for your travels, too, Poppin. I'm sure it will prove to be an impressive exhibit, indeed.

Fidgewik

The Dawning of a New Age

How important are Poppins to the people of Storm Hollow? You are so important to us that we mark time by your coming and going. Storm Hollow is home to many amazing people and creatures such as you have only dreamed of before. However, all stop and take notice when a Poppin arrives. It is celebrated throughout the land. When a new Poppin first comes to Storm Hollow, it marks the beginning of a new age. Each amazing adventure a Poppin undertakes is called an Edda. There can be many Eddas to an age. When a Poppin's final journey here has come to a close, the age has ended. Every Poppin leaves a lasting mark on Storm Hollow. They bring peace and prosperity. We call this prosperity between the ages "The Calm." The Calm is wonderful, but it cannot endure forever. Storms gather, the darkness grows, and the land calls out for heroes once again. Now, it has called out for you.



LEGENDARY POPPIN HEROES

Hey, kid. Name's Gumparus Fletch, but everyone calls me Gump. Fidge and Schezzy there got loads of useful info for ya, but I got more time in this Hollow than both of them together. I'll prepare you for what's coming. I've known plenty of your kind. Poppins might seem like a new idea to you, but you've heard of many of them before. Alice and her trip through Wonderland? King Arthur and his city of Camelot? Jack and his journey up the beanstalk? Well, Jack and his journey all over the place, really. Thought that boy was never going home! I swear half the trouble that kid solved was trouble he went looking for in the first place. Point is, our two worlds are linked. The Poppins that come here share their tales back in your world. They become the legends that inspire the people for generations. So pay attention, kid. You got a shot at becoming a legend yourself.

Gump

Many Different Poppins

You may not think of yourself as a hero yet, Poppin. Few heroes do at the beginning of their journeys. There are many types of Poppin heroes and all are capable of great deeds. Each has a special talent that ties them to a magical element in this realm and grants them special power. In these pages, we will tell you of the Poppins past, their talents and their triumphs. We will help you discover the power within yourself.



"We are once again in need of heroes, and this time, Storm Hollow turns to you."

The Great Guardian

We say that Poppins come when they are needed, but that is not the whole story. The truth is, we don't really know how or why Poppins arrive in time to save the world. Most believe it has something to do with the Great Guardian. The Great Guardian can appear as a tiny bird or a mighty dragon, but often takes the form of a human when guiding Poppins into our world. Many Poppins claim to have met the Great Guardian, in one form or another, on their travels to our world. Other Poppins seem to cross over without help at all. The true origin and nature of the Great Guardian is one of the biggest mysteries of the land.



The Lightbringer



Sometimes the world needs a hero that will not back down. It needs someone who will shine a light into the darkest places of Storm Hollow and fend off the monsters that live there. The Lightbringer is this hero. Filled with the spirit of strength and bravery, the Lightbringer brings hope to people.

The path that the Lightbringer walks is not an easy one. Stare long enough into the heart of darkness, and it begins to stare back at you. The Lightbringer does not go unnoticed by the eyes of the Dark. The Lightbringer both scares and angers the monsters that live there. They know that no matter how deep the shadows grow, the light will always come when the Lightbringer calls for it.

“As long as this light shines, there is nothing the Dark can hide.”



Shine

The heart of the Lightbringer holds the light of hope deep within it. The Lightbringer can channel this inner light by touching any object, causing it to shine with the bright light of dawn. This light pushes back against the darkness and reveals secrets to the Lightbringer. While shining, the Lightbringer can see what the shadows are hiding. The Lightbringer can see the true heart of monsters and learn some of their secrets.



Guiding Light

The light is a friend to the Lightbringer, and it can do more than simply brighten up a cloudy day. The Lightbringer can call upon the light to scare off monsters of the Dark or reveal a safe path through danger. The Lightbringer does not command the light so much as ask for its help. As long as the Lightbringer remains brave and true, the light will always answer this call.

THE DARK IS ALWAYS WATCHING

Listen up, kid. The thing you have to understand is that here in the Hollow, the Dark is real. The Dark ain't just some bit of black that makes you squint to find your bunny slippers at night. Here, the Dark is always watching you, waiting to catch you off guard. No one knows why monsters lurk in the Dark or why they come after good folk. Best to stop all that useless wondering. Point is, the monsters are there! Keep your eyes on the shadows; trouble is waiting.

Gump



A POPPIN'S GUIDE TO DARK DOORS

Your education about the Dark would be very poor indeed if you did not learn about Dark Doors. Dark Doors are black doors in the ground that are made inside a shadow. The only way to see a Dark Door is to shine a light on it. The shadow around it will disappear, revealing the black door inside. Of course, this is no trouble for a Lightbringer, but any other hero would do well to bring along a torch or a lantern just in case. One fascinating thing about Dark Doors is that they act like normal doors. Even though they are made of shadow, they can be buried, barred, or even locked just like an ordinary door. When you spot a Dark Door, Poppin, be sure to seal it shut immediately. On record, there are exactly 137 different things that could come out of it and you're better off not seeing any of them.

Fidgewik

Rapunzel in the Weeping Marsh

Rapunzel was in the Weeping Marsh on her way to deliver the Key of Six Circles when she heard a familiar creaking noise. In an instant, she grabbed the braids of her long hair and made them shine like a golden star. In the shade of an old willow tree she saw it, a Dark Door.

As it opened, a shadow troll stuck its ugly head out from the ground and gave her a frightening grin. Rapunzel only waved and smiled back at it. With a toss of her head, she whipped her hair around and blasted the troll with light. It screamed and slammed the door shut. Rapunzel grabbed the balancing pole off her pack and stuck it between the willow tree and the door, wedging the door shut tight. That should give me some time, thought Rapunzel, as she began running through the marsh.

Slam! The troll pounded on the door. The pole holding it shut began to splinter. Using her braids like long ropes, Rapunzel swung over a creek and continued running. Slam! Slam! Snap! Rapunzel looked back just in time to see the pole break in half. The troll jumped out of the Dark Door with a roar. Oh, well, she thought, at least the trip back to Luminora wasn't going to be boring.



The Riftwalker



Storm Hollow is strange and beautiful. A fearful rhythm resounds from deep within Thunderdrum Forest. Ancient mysteries whistle in the breeze of the Windsong Refrain. The flowers of the Fairy Bloom fill the heart with joy. Only the Riftwalker can really know the secrets of this extraordinary world.

The land speaks to the Riftwalker. No, it doesn't just speak. It listens. The land obeys the call of the Riftwalker and shifts to suit the Riftwalker's wishes. How can a hero resist the call of the wild when every new rift sings with its own voice? To the Riftwalker, these lands are not just rocks and trees and sand and sky. These lands are trusted friends. They wait to greet the Riftwalker and answer the hero's call.

**"The land speaks, and I listen.
I speak, and the land obeys."**

RIFTS HAVE MANY LANDMARKS

Geography, my Poppin pupil, is the study of the world and its many different locations. There is much in Storm Hollow that has already been mapped. These landmarks are important places. We don't know everything about them, but what we do know has been written down in the back of this book. If you are wise, you will study it. Yes, I'm sure you're eager to go off and find all the places that have not been discovered, but that's no excuse not to learn about the places we have discovered. When you see a waterfall with flames spurting out, I don't want you panicking, Poppin. Just correctly identify it as Firegem Falls and you'll know what to expect.

Fidgewik



Rift Sense

The Riftwalker can read the land and plan ahead. When a task looks easy, the Riftwalker saves energy to spend on the next big challenge. Surviving in the many rifts of Storm Hollow takes knowledge and endurance. The Riftwalker knows when to set a steady pace and when to push hard. The moment the Riftwalker sets foot in a new land, the rift's true nature is revealed. When danger rises up from the world, it will find the Riftwalker ready and prepared to meet it.



Rift Shift

Each rift has its own rules. Each new land holds something dangerous and something amazing. The Riftwalker can sense the strength within the land yearning to come out. With a wave of a hand, the Riftwalker can unleash the land's hidden powers. With every new place the Riftwalker explores, there are new wonders to discover and new ways to shape the world. When every tree is an ally, the forest is an army to command.



Dorothy Rides the Wind

The whirlwind set Dorothy gently down high in the Stormrise Mountains. There was certainly nothing this tall in Kansas. Stormrise was a very old rift.

One of the keepers had told her it was from the world that was before there was a world. Dorothy didn't really know what that meant. With a snap of her fingers, the whirlwind was gone. With practice, she had gotten much better at controlling it.

Now that she had touched the ground, Dorothy could hear the ancient mountains speaking to her. She could feel the great storms gathering so far away. This was Dorothy's first time in the Stormrise Mountains, but already she could tell it was a place of great danger. Powerful magic hung in the air. Dorothy found the path she was looking for. As fast as she could, she ran up towards the Crystal Caverns.

Too late! In the distance she could already see the flock of flying Harbigans getting very close to the cavern entrance. Oh, she wished Scarecrow was here! Dorothy raised her hands to the sky and called to the Stormrise Mountains. The clouds shifted above her, granting her request. In an instant, lightning blasted across the sky, thunder roared, and the winds howled. The flock screamed and scattered to avoid the sudden storm that had just erupted. Hopefully, the lightning would keep them busy. Dorothy had to reach the Crystal Mavens and warn them. There wasn't much time left.

The witch was coming.

WHY WE CALL THEM RIFTS

Pay attention, kid. Some people have trouble getting it through their heads that the world changes. It's a fact. You can't stop it, so get over it. Around here, things change faster than you might expect. You see, there's a reason we call places rifts. They pop in out of nowhere, same as you did. A particularly huge storm rolls in, rips open the world, and something comes through. All of a sudden there's new people, new places, and new stuff from some place that no one's ever heard of before. Of course, two things can't be in the same place, right? There's only so much room, so when a new rift arrives, some part of our world is gone. It might be a lake, a forest, an old ruin, or even an entire city. Think about that when you gawk at this fine world of ours, kid. You see those pretty flowers in the Bloom? Those sparkling gems in the Soaring Stones? When they showed up, something else got lost for good.

Gump



The Sparkcaller



Storm Hollow is infused with magic. Magic grows in its forests, flows in its rivers, and seeps into its stones. Magic rumbles through the sky on thunderous storm clouds, howls through the Hollow on the winds, and burns in the flickering flames of a campfire. If a magical element is nearby, all heroes can try to bend it to their whims.

However, only the Sparkcaller, master of magic, can summon any element on command. A Sparkcaller doesn't simply see trees in the woods or the sand on the beach. The Sparkcaller sees the core, the pure element, and the power waiting to be released. With a wave of the hand, a twitch of the eye, and a call to the wilds, the Sparkcaller can shape this power into anything imaginable.

"I am friend to all the elements, and they are guardians to me."

WITCHES AND WIZARDS

Not everyone who uses magic is called a Sparkcaller. They tend to be called things like witch, wizard, warlock, or sorceress. Some of them are wonderful people. Some of them aren't. Watch yourself when you're out in that great big world there, kid. Not everyone who uses magic is your friend. You've heard the stories, I'm sure. Wicked witches, dark wizards. Where do you think those stories come from? Here, that's where! Magic is just a type of power. Its limits are really just your own imagination. It's how you use it that tends to determine what the storybooks are going to call ya.

Gump



Call Spark

A Sparkcaller's most faithful companion is a spark, a small creature made entirely of one of the magical elements. A spark does not have a physical body, so the form it takes is limited only by the imagination of the Sparkcaller. A spark could take on the shape of a stone dog, a fiery falcon, or a tiny water dragon. Both the element and shape of a spark can be changed on a whim, ensuring the Sparkcaller always has access to any of the magical elements desired.



Charge Spark

A spark is no mere collection of fire or water. It is more than a way to channel magic. Spark and Sparkcaller share a deep connection. The Sparkcaller can lend the spark short bursts of incredible power. The spark grows much larger and rushes forth to act on the Sparkcaller's command. With this powerful surge, the spark is capable of protecting the Sparkcaller's allies with magic or performing incredible deeds for a brief moment.



Merlin and the Grim

Merlin ran for the river as fast as his old legs could carry him. His stony owl spark, Artemis, gave a gravelly hoot of warning. The grim was close behind them. Cold blue eyes glimmered from beneath its flowing, black robes. With a wave of his hand, Merlin channeled the magic of earth from his faithful companion. The owl flew across the river with tiny pebbles dropping from its wings, crashing to the water, and growing into large stepping stones. Merlin leapt from stone to stone.

On his third leap, a skeletal hand grabbed his long white beard and dragged him back toward the river's edge. The grim towered above Merlin, blocking the sun with shadowy malice. Merlin screamed for Artemis! The rocky little owl rose high, looped back and turned. With a surge of power from Merlin, the pebbles in Artemis' wings grew to fist-sized stones. Down the owl came like a boulder with wings, crashing into the grim from behind and sending it headfirst into the river.

Merlin seized the opportunity! Speaking ancient words and drawing his fingers through the air, he froze the water around the grim. A grim icicle popped to the surface and floated down the river. In minutes the ice would become water again, but the grim would be far from its Dark Door by then and desperate to run back to the Dark.

THE LAWS OF MAGIC

Magic is a mysterious force that allows people to manipulate the elements. While not everyone in Storm Hollow can use magic, an interesting fact is that all Poppins have some skill with magic. There are three universal laws that govern its use. It is the way of this world.

1. You can't make something from nothing. You can't create an elemental effect if there is none of that element present. You can make the fire in a torch blaze high, but you can't snap your fingers and make fire appear from thin air.

2. Magic doesn't last. Changes caused by your magic only last a short time. They might last a few minutes, a few hours, or a day at the most. Soon enough, the magic fades and whatever you changed reverts back to the way it was before.

3. You can't move mountains. With magic you can't affect anything larger than a caravan or perhaps a big boulder. You could easily direct wind to blow down a door, but blowing down an entire house would be nearly impossible by yourself.



The Stormchaser



When the sky shakes with thunder and blasts the world with lightning, most people run for cover. When danger comes knocking, most people hide and pretend not to be home. Not the Stormchaser.

The Stormchaser goes looking for danger and brings along the lightning. The Stormchaser knows that great treasure lies in the wake of every storm. Wherever monsters roam, there are people in need of help. At first glance, the Stormchaser might seem like a reckless daredevil, but there is much more to this hero's story. The Stormchaser takes the risks so that no one else has to. The Stormchaser tries to find trouble before it finds someone else.

“Nothing wrong with a little lightning!”

MAGIC FROM THE SKY

Don't be fooled, kid. That lightning crashing down around here is nothing like the stuff ya got back home. That's pure magical energy cracking through the sky. We got bolts coming down in red, green, blue, fuchsia, ocharine, and every other color you can think of. Our land's called Storm Hollow for a reason. The great valley you see out there was formed by the storms that come rolling off the Stormrise Mountains to the north. Blasting the land with magic can cause no end of trouble. Whole areas get ripped into and out of the world. It's not all bad, though. Wherever there's a storm, there's magical treasure to be found!

Gump



Surge Forward

The Stormchaser laughs at the odds and lets nothing get in the way. When things look grim and doom is closing in, if an attack is about to miss or that ledge is just a little too far away, the Stormchaser can give the extra oomph to surge forward and get the task done. This extra effort is amazing, but it can't last forever. Pushing too hard, too fast, can leave the Stormchaser exhausted.



Lightning Rod

This simple, forked stick is the Stormchaser's most prized possession. The Storm Rod allows the Stormchaser to harness the power of storms even when there isn't a single cloud in the sky. Traces of storm energy linger in the air all across Storm Hollow. The Storm Rod collects this energy for the Stormchaser to use. The Stormchaser can release the energy as a chaotic storm bolt that blasts enemies and curses them with magic or as a crackling shield that deflects harmful magical energy.



Tatterhood Unstoppable

Tatterhood sailed off in her ship with only her pet goat, Beauty, for company.

The dark storms on the horizon had scared off all the other sailors, but Tatterhood couldn't wait. Her sister was out there on one of those islands waiting to be rescued. Unfortunately, a few miles out, she hit a small snag. A snag that looked exactly like a giant sea serpent with a scaly blue body wrapped around the ship.

Tatterhood wasted no time. With her Storm Rod in one hand and her trusty wooden spoon in the other, she hopped on Beauty's back and rode her right up the serpent's body. Holding her Storm Rod high, Tatterhood shot a bolt of lightning down the serpent's neck. The bolt turned red and scorched the beast with blazing fire. The serpent roared and snapped at Tatterhood. She jumped her goat off the serpent's back and swung with her big wooden spoon. The jump went all wrong.

Tatterhood and Beauty were spinning out of control. Tatterhood reached deep within herself, pushed Beauty hard, and corrected her attack in midair through the power of sheer will. The spoon smacked the serpent right in the eye. Burnt and bruised, the serpent uncoiled and slunk back below the waves. With a clatter of hooves, Tatterhood and Beauty landed safely on the ship. Thunder rocked the sky above. Tatterhood gazed up at the growing storm and laughed. If a giant sea serpent couldn't stop her, she wasn't about to let a little lightning get in her way.

STORMSTRUCK TREASURES

Did you know that a stray bit of lightning can make an item magical? Well, my Poppin pupil, sit down and I will educate you with my lesson on Typical Treasure Types, Part 1. When an object takes a direct hit from a bolt of lightning it becomes "stormstruck." It's infused with magical energy. Often this magic does something small or simple. I once had a spare bit of chalk get hit, fly up, and start doing math on the wall. The chalk was better at math than I was and it was a shame when it finally ran out. However, every so often, an object is granted more powerful magical abilities. In Storm Hollow, lightning truly never strikes twice. Every stormstruck item is completely unique with its own strange and wonderful abilities. As a result, there are always adventurers out searching in the wake of a storm to find the latest treasures.



Fidgewik



The Talespinner



The Talespinner is master of the spoken word. The Talespinner can tell funny jokes, give inspiring speeches, or move the hearts of an audience with a beautiful song. However, the Talespinner's true power is in the telling of a story.

A story told well is not simply exciting or fun. A story told well is magic, the weave of dreams. The Talespinner gives everything to the telling of a tale: voice, movement, and magic. Great stories drift throughout this land. They whisper from places deep and old. The Talespinner hears the tales and can spin them into incredible legends. These legends bring smiles. These legends bring tears. The Talespinner's stories change people, stir their courage, and push them to become greater than they imagined possible.

"Believe in your heart all the things that may be and your beliefs may become the world that you see."

STORY TREASURES

Ah, yes! It is time for Fidgetik's lesson on Typical Treasure Types, Part 2. Aren't you excited? Isn't it nice to know that you don't have to go chasing after lightning just to find a bit of magic? When an ordinary item is a part of an important event, it becomes empowered by the strength of its own story. It begins to exhibit unique properties and special abilities much like stormstruck items do. Sometimes it's not a single, formative event. It can often be a series of small but significant events that happen over and over again. A charm passed from person to person might eventually become truly lucky. Keep your eyes out for things that resonate with the power of a good story, for those treasures are some of the strongest in the land!

Fidgetik



Story Echoes

When an object is involved in a great story, it echoes with the magic of those events forever. The Talespinner can hear these echoes, track down the source, and learn those stories by listening carefully to the magic flowing from the object or place. Stories also echo from important people. Hearing these echoes allows the Talespinner to quickly identify and befriend those who might become helpful allies on a quest.



Spin the Tale

Even a quick story from a Talespinner can boost someone's confidence. Sometimes the story recounts a time when a person showed amazing skill in the past. Sometimes the story tells of great deeds that person might accomplish in the future. Either way, these words inspire such belief that the person actually becomes more skillful. The Talespinner's words are so moving they can even empower themselves toward greater heroic ability.



Strong Man Jack

Finally he'd found it!

Jack had found the Harp of Harmony.

He had been wandering the halls of the giant's castle for almost an hour. Jack had been following a beautiful harp song he was sure only he could hear. The harp's music and story of sadness had echoed off the walls, telling Jack how it longed to be free. It had drawn Jack closer and closer.

Finally, Jack had found the harp on top of an enormous pillow in the giant's bedroom. It had been a bit of a climb to get there and Jack was happy to be storing the harp away in his pack at last. Suddenly, the door swung open. There stood a fierce, green-skinned giant with fists that could flatten an anvil.

"Thief!" screamed the giant. "I'll crush you into pudding!" Jack's eyes went wide with fear. Then, he had an idea.

"Not me," said Jack, turning with a smile. "I'm Strong Man Jack. Ever heard that name? Strong Man Jack beat seven in a whack! That's me. I'm famous for bashing giants. I once knocked down seven in one blow!" As Jack got into his story, he began to believe it himself. He grinned at the idea of himself knocking down giants. Well, he thought, I guess Strong Man Jack had better give this giant a good wallop! Something in Jack's smile made the giant believe, too.

When that little Poppin came running at the door, the giant went running the other way.

MAGIC FROM THE STORY

With magic all coming from a heap of different elements, the world lit up by chaos, storms, and lightning, you might think Storm Hollow is a pretty scary place. Well, rest your worries, kid. Storms aren't the only magic that matters in this land. In Storm Hollow, stories have the real power. They are what last, even when you've gone home. You'll learn this yourself after you've walked this land a bit. You'll get swept up in all manner of weird happenings and surprising stories. Watch your back, kid, but have some fun out there! You've got potential, plenty of stories waiting to happen. Stories give you power, they teach you things about the world, and, more importantly, about yourself. Think about that! The more stories you collect, the stronger you'll get. We'll be telling tales of your deeds for ages, so make sure they're good ones!



Gump



The Whizbanger



What does a heap of broken wheels, bent screws, cracked pipes, and grandma's lampshade collection look like? Just a pile of junk? To the Whizbanger, this rusty wreckage looks like endless wonder and possibility.

The heart of the Whizbanger pounds with the rhythm of ticking clocks, whirring gears, and roaring engines. Old rubbish and scrap metal are ready parts of a marvelous machine waiting for someone with the skill to build it. The Whizbanger is a brilliant inventor who can create devices, gadgets, and contraptions for any occasion. The Whizbanger never runs from a problem. Instead, the Whizbanger goes looking for the right tool.

"My mind roars like a great steam engine, overflowing with all the wonders I have yet to create."



Gear Grabber

The Whizbanger always has plenty of gadgets, spare parts, odds and ends. Everything is useful given the right situation. Any hero can rummage in a pocket or two to see if they packed something extra. However, the Whizbanger never runs out of pockets to check. The Whizbanger's pack is filled to the brim with stuff, allowing the Whizbanger to pull out a nearly endless amount of gear.



Build Chug

The Whizbanger can bang out a tiny, useful machine in the time it takes most people to grab a hammer. These little machines are called chugs. A chug operates entirely on its own and is built to perform a single type of task over and over again. It might push, pull, crank, fly, bash, zap, or anything else the Whizbanger needs. The Whizbanger builds chugs at an astonishing speed, from whatever materials are available, but these chugs aren't built to last. After going and going for a few minutes, a spring comes loose or a gear slips and the chug falls apart.

GLITCHES AND WONKERS

Yeah, machines are fine, I guess. That is, until one grabs a hammer and mistakes you for a nail! You see, kid, sometimes machines just go wrong. They might get struck by lightning or get infested by gremlins. Sometimes they just slip a gear and go nuts. When it happens to some minor contraption, we call it a glitch. Glitches are a pain, but not too bad. The little machines usually just muck about a bit until you kick them hard enough. Now, when a golem ends up a few gears short of a drivetrain, things get really scary. We call these horrifying creations wonkers. Wonkers are huge, metal monsters with minds that have no mercy and no longer see reason. They're bad, kid. Real, real bad.

Gump



THE MARVELS AND MYSTERIES OF MACHINERY

Time to talk some tech! Storm Hollow is a magical place, but we also have many machines. We've got clockwork gadgets that wind up, steam-powered marvels that go puffing along, and even machines that harness magical energy from storms. The rarest and most extraordinary machines are called golems. Golems are built with their own mechanical minds. They can think and act for themselves.

Now, pop quiz, my Poppin pupil! Are these machines old technology or new technology in Storm Hollow? The correct answer is: both! My ancestors, the ancient Grumboks, created incredible machines ages and ages ago. Most of their civilization was lost when the great storms turned the world upside down and buried it under new rifts. However, in recent ages, much has been rediscovered and improved upon. You never know where the next great gadget will come from.

It might be created by some brilliant inventor or it might be found deep in an ancient ruin where no one has bothered to look yet.

Fidgenik

Doctor Dolittle fixes the Squeaking

"Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!" The noise came again and again from behind John Dolittle. Well, he certainly wasn't going to fix it by just standing there! He knew just what to do.

Dolittle opened his pack and began to pull out everything he needed. He grabbed some scrap metal, a couple of hammers, rivets, belts, gears, flashy lights (always important), hoses, a cone, and finally... a banana! What was that doing in there? No oil to be found, but he had packed a banana! Oh well, squish it up, and it should grease the works just fine.

"Squeak! Squeak!" Would it never stop? He had to work fast! Dolittle slapped together some wheels and spare parts to make a little helper. He handed his new friend a hammer and sent it chugging to the back of the machine. Together they banged, cranked, bent, and fitted until, at last, the translation machine was completed.

"Squeak! Squeak!" Dolittle spun around to face the little mouse again. He shoved the speaking cone of the translation machine right up to the mouse's nose and began tuning a dial. "Squeak! Squeak! Squeee and soon the entire town will be in danger!" said the little mouse. "Wait! Can you understand me, now?"

"Ah, yes," said Dolittle, "the machine is working perfectly! At last we can have a proper conversation, Mr. Mouse. Now, what seems to be the problem?"



Talents & Magic



WHEN MAGIC STICKS AROUND

Magic, my Poppin pupil, can get stuck on things and have a lingering effect. On a person, for instance, magic can get stuck in the form of a protective charm or a terrible curse. A charm prevents all harm an element would cause, but a curse makes you vulnerable to it. With a water charm, you could swim safely to the bottom of the ocean or stay warm in a blizzard. However, with a water curse, a small splash of water could be harmful to you. Sometimes, magic gets stuck in the world. It pools up in a rock or hangs invisibly in the air. You won't see it, at first. Then, you use some strong magic and the pool bursts forth. These bursts will surprise you with helpful or sometimes very dangerous effects. Making magic stick around isn't something most people, even most Poppins, can do. It happens by accident or through the use of incredible powers. Just remember, Poppin, playing with magic does not always give predictable results.

Fidgewik

Magic in your world is the stuff of miracles and dreams. It is so rare that some people foolishly don't believe it exists. Here in Storm Hollow, we see the magic in every element of nature. It runs in our rivers, blows on the wind, and lives in every creature. It is within every Poppin that visits our land, and it is within those reading this book as well. Each Poppin has a special talent. This talent gives them a knack for certain tasks and also a deep connection to one magical element.



Protective Earth

Protective Poppins stand firm with unbreakable determination. They think ahead, prepare for trouble, and guard other people against danger. Protective Poppins aren't afraid to put themselves in harm's way to make sure that everyone stays safe. They are as tough as the ground beneath their feet, giving them a talent for earth magic. Earth magic can shake the ground, shape and build with soil and stone, and raise rock walls from a scattering of pebbles.



Tricky Wind

Tricky Poppins swiftly change and adapt to any situation. They use deception, clever thinking, and every trick in the book to sidestep obstacles. Tricky Poppins rarely do anything obvious. They would rather find a smart way around a problem than meet it head-on. Their ideas rush and swirl like a dancing breeze, granting them power over the wind itself. Wind magic can create powerful gusts that scatter objects, blow them in different directions, throw items into the air, or speed people along with the wind at their backs.



Flashy Fire

Flashy Poppins explode with personality. They dazzle the eyes, talk loudly, and like to be the center of attention. Flashy Poppins are usually good with people. At the very least, they are entertaining. Their talent for burning brightly also helps them command fire magic. Fire can flare up, glow brightly, be shaped into different forms, and set monsters or objects ablaze.



Wild Storm

Wild Poppins long for the rush of danger and the thrill of adventure. They don't care much about thinking ahead. They throw everything they've got at a problem and hold nothing back. Wild Poppins are impulsive, but also fierce and brave. Their hearts thunder with energy and excitement that connects them to the chaotic storms of this land. Storm magic can control bolts of lightning, draw energy from stormstruck artifacts, power machines, and sometimes produce unpredictable side effects.



Helpful Life

Helpful Poppins care deeply for others. They feel a strong connection to every living thing. They enjoy coming to people's aid and supporting the efforts of their friends. Helpful Poppins know that every person has something important to offer. By putting others before themselves, Helpful Poppins create strong bonds with the magic of life. Life is the ambient magic found in all living things. However, it can only easily be controlled in plants. Life magic can make plants bloom, bend, move, grasp objects, or grow into different shapes.



Curious Water

Curious Poppins have a talent for finding what's hidden beneath the surface. They like to learn more about everything. Curious Poppins know things that others do not. This can cause them to act strangely and behave in ways that others don't always understand. Their ability to search the depths for more information gives them a connection to water magic. Water can wash away obstacles, fill containers to the brim, or be frozen to create ice and snow.

DARK MAGIC

Remember, kid, your talent aids you. It doesn't limit you. You, and every other Poppin hero, can use magic to bend and shape any element you want. Well, except one. Poppins are heroes born of light. As such, you have no power over darkness. Trust me. It's a good thing, kid. Dark magic is the stuff of nightmares. Only the most wicked creatures can shift the shadows and draw power from the darkness. It's strong stuff, kid, but don't worry. Your magic is even stronger.

Gump



Adventuring Kits

It might seem odd or even a bit funny, but most problems don't get solved with fancy powers or glittering treasures. Most of the time all you need is a good rope, a sturdy stick, or some other simple tool. Every hero needs good equipment. Adventuring kits provide gear that is easy to pick up and take with you. Each pack is filled with a different set of useful items. Of course, none of these items are rare or magical. They're just tools. Tools you can switch out or re-supply before any undertaking. Figure out what you need, and choose your kit well. Having the right tool for the job can make all the difference.

Landing Pad



Fireworks



Balancing Pole



Glider



Climbing Gear



Grapple Launcher

The **Daredevil Kit** gives you movement and speed, when rushing toward danger, it's helpful indeed.

Fancy Clothes



Delicious Pie



Hand Mirror



Bottle of Perfume



Costume Jewelry



Silver Dagger

The **fancy Pants Kit** lets you dress in fine style, with a dagger in case you need more than a smile.

SOME MORE BITS ON KITS

I love little kits, don't you? A pack full of tools teems with possibility. Now, do you know where these kits come from? Well, be a good student and pay attention. It's really quite exciting! These kits were based on the adventures of Poppins, like you! They were created from the typical tools used by the heroes of old. The daredevil kit has items favored by a Lightbringer named Rapunzel. She was a bold one. And that Riftwalker, Gulliver, was quite the fancy pants! The kits you see here are just the most common. These are the items you can find anywhere in Storm Hollow. Look around and you can find different kits in different areas of the world. Where I live, in Venture, we've got a clockwork kit with gears and schematics. It's one of my favorites! I have big hopes for you, Poppin. Eventually, you may even gather your own favorite tools and gadgets. Who knows? Someday I might be handing a Poppin hero an adventuring kit based on you!

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The **Healer Kit** lets you mix something spicy, or patch up your friends when things get too dicey.



Jar of Goo



Cooking Pot



Soap

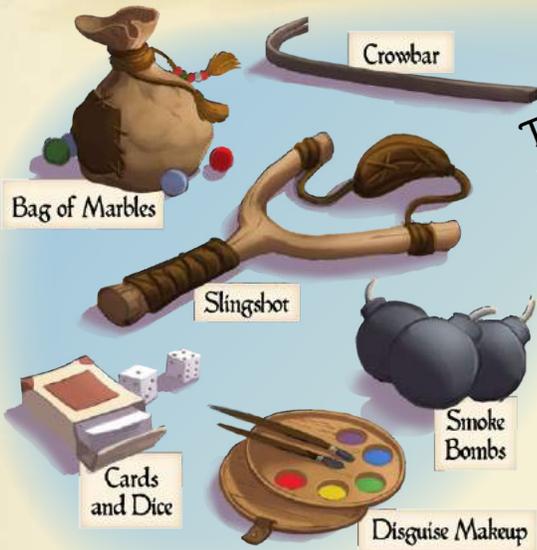
Mortar and Pestle



Bucket and Trowel



Cooking Spices



The **Mischief Kit** is a big bag full of fun; at least you'll be laughing by the time you are done.



The **Wanderer Kit** helps you wherever you head; it keeps you happy, clothed, sheltered, and fed.



The **Wizard Kit** lends aid to the magical arts; with robes and a hat you'll at least look the part.

POCKETS ARE UNRELIABLE

Kid, you can only rely on the stuff you see in your kit. You know it's there when you need it. Yeah, there might be other things you packed. Rummage around in your pockets and who knows what you'll find? I've seen Poppins pull out swords, telescopes, chicken costumes, and mini-catapults. Your kind do bring along some odd things. But, kid, I've also seen a Poppin go searching for ropes and pulleys she was sure she'd brought only to find a big, snuggly blanket instead. Of course, she didn't miss a beat. She ripped up that blanket, made some makeshift ropes and still hauled open the door in her way. Remember that, kid. You might not always have what you wanted. So, it's up to you to figure out how to use what you got.

Gump



Pocket Poem

What is a pocket? Well, here is a clue.
 It stores extra stuff. Each kit has just two.
 Pockets and pockets, with things stashed away.
 What did you pack in your pockets today?
 A string or some wax? Some tools from the lab?
 You'll never know 'til you reach in and grab.

Artifacts and Power Orbs

Poppins have a special connection to the stories of this world. This bond grants them power. As you travel the land, you will find that you are able to draw strength from the stories embedded in artifacts and power orbs to bolster your own abilities. The longer you stay, the stronger you will become.

Artifacts

A cracked eye glass? A pretty little brooch? A brass lantern? Artifacts are scattered all about this land. They come in many shapes and forms. Some artifacts are spectacular to behold, but many look so common you would never guess that they could be some of the greatest treasures in all of Storm Hollow. Artifacts are items of incredible magical ability. Each one is unique. Over the years, many people have tried to wield these artifacts. However, an artifact usually only reveals its full power in the hands of a true hero. What may seem like an ordinary pair of goggles to most who touch it could become something truly wondrous in the hands of a Poppin.

Power Orbs

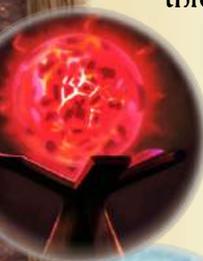
Storm Hollow is a land that overflows with magic and power. Power from stories, power from storms, or power from the different rifts. Sometimes this power gathers. Sometimes the roaring energies of this world swirl together, ebb from the air, flow through the rivers, seep into the rock, and form into one of the most incredible and unique of all treasures: a power orb. A power orb contains the essence of a place or a story. To most people, it appears as a beautiful stone with a mystical aura. To Poppins, it resonates with a deep magic, the kind of magic that opens up their hearts and reveals secret powers. It is said when Poppins touch a power orb, they look within themselves and choose which path they will walk. The orb itself isn't the source of the powers; it's merely a key to unlocking the potential within a hero.



THE DRAIN OF ARTIFACTS

You must understand, dear pupil, that artifacts rely on a supply of magical energy. Part of this energy comes from the artifact and part comes from the Poppin. They need that power inside you, Poppin. The artifacts that need your particular power will draw it from you just by being near you. I have made an extensive study of this, and I must warn you. Never hold more than two. It stretches your energy too far. The moment you grabbed up that third artifact, you would become quite sick to your stomach and, worse, none of your artifacts would work. So do please be practical. Store all your treasures someplace safe,

Fidgewik



The Right Kind of Hero

There is something in every Poppin hero, some inner power, that links that hero to certain artifacts. That same inner energy that lets the Lightbringer shine or gives the Whizbanger a connection with machines is the energy that is required to bring forth the full power of an artifact. Artifacts need the right kind of hero to unlock their full potential. That crackle of lightning in the heart of a Stormchaser will do nothing for an artifact that longs to share the Riftwalker's bond with the land.



A TALENT FOR POWERS

You got power inside you, kid. Trust it. That talent of yours is important. Not every hero gets the same power when they touch an orb. Who you are and where your talents lie make a big difference! Look, I'm no Poppin, so all I can pass on is what I've been told. I've talked to a brave Poppin or two in my day. Near as I can tell, some powers, they'll just work for you. They'll come whenever you call. But your greatest powers, they take something extra. I've heard it called a heroic boost, inner light, spirit, effort, and all manner of things. Point is, you can only use those powers so much before you have to rest them. That said, I've seen Poppins throw down feat after feat in an emergency. The difference comes when they play to their strengths. If you like to show off, then make a big show. If you thirst for the truth, feed that curiosity. Use your talent, kid. It's your true power. It will keep you strong.

Gump



A Thief in King Arthur's Court

Arthur awoke and immediately noticed three terrifying things. His bedroom door was open - someone had broken in! His sword, Excalibur, was missing from the wall - a thief had stolen it! Footsteps were clattering down the hall - the thief was getting away!

Arthur sprang out of bed. His magic pendant and shield were all the protection he could grab as he dashed out of the room. He caught the thief in the courtyard outside. It was a knight in inky, black armor. The black knight turned, pointed Excalibur at Arthur, and laughed. Nothing happened. The knight shook the sword as if expecting something more. Arthur was groggy with sleep but felt some mysterious light, some effort stir within him. He remembered a trick he'd gained while traveling in the north. He pushed his inner light forth. It burst upon the black knight as a flurry of blinding snow. The sword fell to the ground as the knight covered his eyes.

Arthur grabbed Excalibur and immediately regretted it. The power in the sword, the shield, and the pendant were too much to bear. Arthur hurled the shield behind him and felt his stomach settle as he held Excalibur high. "Fool!" cried Arthur. "You are no true knight. This blade won't work for you. Be gone, foul shadow!" The black knight stumbled back, and then ran screaming into the night.

The winds howled and clouds darkened the moon.

Arthur would learn the thief's true identity. That quest, however, could wait until morning.

Skills of Heroes

Not all Poppin heroes are good at the same things. Through dangers untold and hardships unnumbered, heroes must do what they can to forge ahead. All heroes must find their own strengths and learn which skills they can rely on.

Robin Hood Could Move

*Robin Hood was nimble and could move so well,
He would sneak past a wolf without leaving a smell.
He'd climb, swim, and jump to make a daring escape,
He'd ride a horse down a cliff and not get a scrape.
He once fired an arrow with such accuracy,
It flew through a forest without hitting a tree.*



John Henry Had Might

*John Henry was mighty, so mighty was he,
When he showed his muscles, monsters would flee.
He'd bend bars, crush rocks, or push trains down the track,
With one blow from his hammer, mountains would crack,
No magic machine made from iron or wood
Would muster the strength that John Henry could.*



Morgan le Fay Had Magic

*Morgan le Fay's magic was best in the land.
There wasn't an element she couldn't command.
She grew a boat from a leaf and pushed it with wind.
She waved away storms, calmed the waters and grinned.
She guided the fire of a star falling to sea,
Shaped that rock to an island where she could be free.*



Alice Could Explore

*Alice was curious and loved to explore.
She'd investigate places most would ignore.
A rabbit hole, a teacup, a weird wild rift,
She wanted to learn, so through clues she would sift.
She'd see trouble coming a mile away,
But she'd still track it down and ask it to play.*



Rosie Could Think

*Rosie the Riveter was quite a thinker.
With machines great and small she loved to tinker.
She'd disarm traps, see through puzzles and tricks.
Whatever the problem, she'd find a fix.
She once launched a tower through the air as a dart,
Using only some gum, five gears, and her smarts.*



Jack Could Talk

*Jack was a talker and so very clever.
He'd spin the tales you'd remember forever.
He'd inspire or scare, tell jokes or sing,
He could make people believe almost anything.
With a dare and a smile he could play a trick,
That would make a giant fight itself with a stick.*



POWERFUL POPPINS

You may discover, my Poppin pupil, skills you never thought you possessed. This can be exciting, but confusing. Please don't worry. Every hero goes through this awkward phase. If you're a sharp student, you will notice that you can't be great at everything. But, don't let this discourage you from trying anything. A small chance is still often a chance worth taking.

Fidgewik



New Moves for a New Hero

Jamal gazed up at the towering, rocky cliffs. He spotted the strange, eye-shaped symbol carved on a rock almost a hundred feet up. What now? The Great Guardian had said there was some helpful magic thingy hidden in a cave near that mark, but how was he supposed to get it? It's not like they'd practiced this in his 4th grade PE class!

What had the Great Guardian called him? A Stormchaser with a talent for being flashy? Whatever that meant. Nervously, Jamal started to climb. In no time at all, he was twenty feet up the cliff. He felt great! He was much better at climbing than he remembered. Jamal started having fun. He jumped, spun, and twirled from handhold to handhold and from ledge to ledge. It actually seemed easier for him to climb if he did it with style. He easily reached the right ledge and his heart sank. The small cave was blocked by a rock twice his size. There was no way he could push it aside. Still, this hero stuff was going well so far. He'd give it a try.

Jamal searched his kit and was lucky enough to find a crowbar. He jammed it into the side of the rock and tried to pry open the entrance. At first, the rock didn't budge. Jamal strained with all his might. He felt an inner power stirring inside. With a boost of strength he slid the rock open just wide enough to squeeze through. Jamal grinned and caught his breath. Back home, his dad and uncle together couldn't have moved that rock. He really was some Stormchaser hero type. Jamal lit a candle from his kit and eagerly entered the gloomy cave. He couldn't wait to see what else he could do.



Part 2: Creatures of Storm Hollow

In which you learn about those who live here.

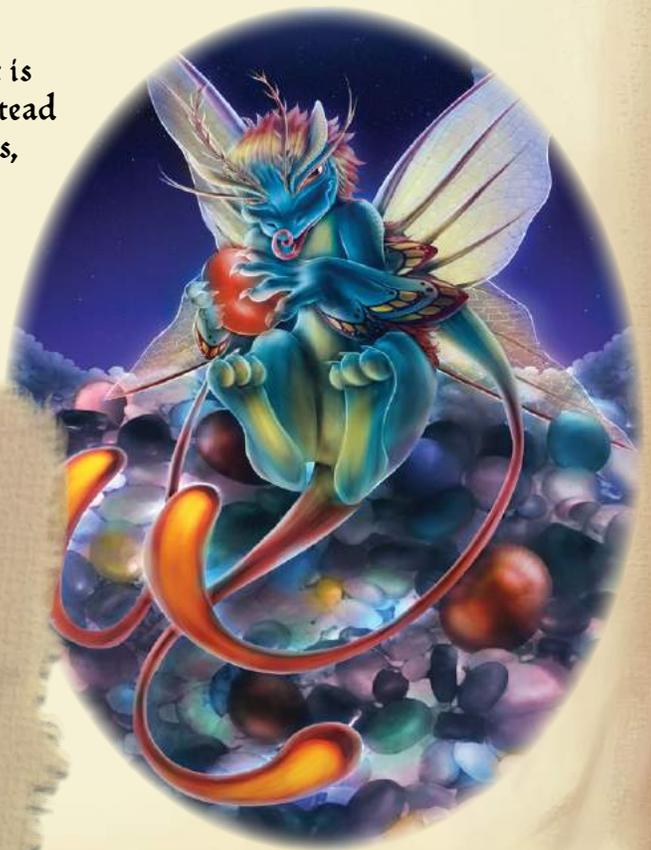
Three Types of Creatures

Storm Hollow has so many types of creatures that it is impossible to give a full scope in this guidebook. Instead of trying to provide a long list of outlandish animals, they are divided into three simple categories: People, Monsters and Beasts. Not everyone fits perfectly into one of these categories, but it is a useful way to think about the many creatures of this world.

HERE THERE NOT BE DRAGONS

One kind of monster you don't have to worry about, kid, is dragons. They were enormous, terrifying creatures that could blaze up a fire that would burn entire cities to the ground. But they're all gone now. No one's seen a dragon in ages. Not sure where they went. Don't much care. I'm just glad they're gone. Oh, there is one odd lizard kicking around who claims to be the last dragon. Goes by Schmites or Spites or something like that. He's a little feller with fairy wings who says he's collecting dragon eggs to help bring back his kind. He's probably just a winged toad that's gone goofy. Still, don't go looking for dragons, kid. No good can come of it.

Gump



STORM HOLLOW ETIQUETTE

A little lesson in manners, my Poppin pupil.
It's always right to be polite. In Storm
Hollow, you will see many unfamiliar
creatures. When in doubt, you should say
"hello" and treat a creature with respect.
How can you be sure that roaring monster
isn't really just a person who is hurt and
howling in pain? You can't take too much for
granted, Poppin. True heroes don't attack
unless they are attacked first. Of course,
just because it's a person doesn't mean you
can trust them. Not everyone is honest and
nice. Still, you should give people the benefit
of the doubt. Now I want you study a little
poem I've provided titled "What Kind of
Creature?" It's a rhyme for Poppins on
proper etiquette. The next time you see a
new creature, use this little rhyme to help
remind yourself how to act.

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People

In your world, identifying who is a person is pretty easy. They're all human. Here in Storm Hollow, Poppins are the only humans. But there are many different kinds of people. Some walk on two legs, have two hands, and use weapons or tools. Others do not. Some people are rainbow serpents or unicorns or fairies. In Storm Hollow, it can be difficult to tell at first glance, but a person is anyone that talks, thinks, organizes, or acts like people do. There are five types of people that are the most common and widespread. They are sometimes called the City Folk since some of them have left their traditional homelands or rifts, wandered out into the world, and created grand cities together. These people are the Big'uns, the Grumboks, the Monyx, the Shimmers, and the Stumbletoes.

Monsters

Monsters are different from people or beasts in one important way. Monsters really are out to get you. Some stand on two legs and talk like a person. Some snarl, roar, and claw like a beast. There are bandersnatches, bollycatchers, giants, trolls, and many other dangerous creatures. A monster never wants idle chitchat or to be simply left in peace. They do not attack to protect or feed themselves. They attack because they want to cause destruction, devastation, and sorrow. They are vicious creatures that can never be trusted and can rarely be reasoned with. Monsters should be avoided by all but the bravest Poppin heroes.



Beasts

Beasts are similar to animals that you may be used to back home. In fact, Storm Hollow has many of the same animals as your world. Storm Hollow is also home to many strange and magical beasts unlike anything you've ever seen. There are deer, ravens, squirrels, and wolves, but there are also griffins, gemagons, firebirds, and sea serpents. Some beasts are dangerous when they are scared or hungry, but most beasts keep to themselves. As long as they are not threatened, they pose no threat to anyone else.



What Kind of Creature?

*If it waves or smiles,
Sits and talks awhile,
You should try not to offend.
It's a person, dear,
There's little to fear,
So go make yourself a friend.*

*If it snorts and sighs,
Lacks spark to its eyes,
Do not chase, scare or harm it.
It's a beast, young one,
When all's said and done,
It's best not to alarm it.*

*If it snarls or snaps,
Catches you in traps,
You should hide or run away.
It's a monster, child,
Mean, scary and wild,
And it hasn't come to play.*

*Monster, person, beast
To say in the least
It can be quite tough to know
Which one sought you out
So when you're in doubt
It's best to start with hello.*

Big'uns



Big'uns are big. Really big. A Big'un is more than twice as tall as other people. An adult from your world might come up to the waist of an adult Big'un. Big'uns are tall, broad, and incredibly strong. They are also the most gentle and good-natured people in all of Storm Hollow. Big'uns have never tried to use their physical advantages to bully or push people around. They try to use their strength to take care of others. Big'uns try to live peaceful lives, but can also be fierce allies when called upon to defend people from danger. In all this world, you will rarely find a better friend than a Big'un.

Keepers of the Trust

Everyone trusts Big'uns. Sometimes people make mistakes. Sometimes people get angry. Sometimes people even let darkness fill their hearts and are driven to do terrible things. For some reason, Big'uns are rarely those sorts of people. Big'uns feel a deep responsibility for everyone in Storm Hollow. They watch out for others and never betray people. When Big'uns want to know how wealthy they are, they do not count up their stuff. They count up their friends.

BIG'UNS AND STUMBLETOES

Big'uns get along well with just about everyone, kid, but they've always been particularly fond of Stumbletoes. For as long as anyone can remember, Big'uns and Stumbletoes have been like two peas in a very strange pod. They make an odd pair, for sure. Stumbletoes are barely taller than my pants and Big'uns are, well... big. Still, Stumbletoes and Big'uns have been living together and helping each other out for ages. Makes sense if you think about it, I suppose. Sometimes being big seems pretty great. Still, sometimes it takes a smaller person to get where no one else can. It just goes to show ya, kid. This life takes all kinds of people.

Gump

Big'uns Lead the Way

Big'uns make wonderful leaders. They have a rare gift with words. They are great at organizing and inspiring people. People often look to Big'uns for guidance or advice. Big'uns don't desire power, but they have a long tradition of service to others. When someone asks for help, Big'uns do not see it as a polite request. They see it as if they have been charged with an important quest. Whether it's finding a way to stop a terrible flood, or just getting a pet down from a tree, Big'uns are humbled and honored to perform their duty. That's why, across Storm Hollow, when someone asks for the man or woman in charge, they will often find out it's a Big'un.

BIG'UNS REMEMBER THE LITTLE THINGS

I must admit, dear Poppin, I am sometimes jealous that Big'uns don't really need books or records. Big'uns just remember. They remember every little thing. They'll remember your birthday, your fourth cousin's middle name, and your favorite kind of pie. Events big and small are equally important. Big'uns celebrate everyday life just as vigorously as they try to serve the perfect thornplum pudding on Grand Harvest Day. Their love of details makes them fascinating storytellers. Big'uns pass down all their knowledge through stories. If a Big'un gets up to talk, it's time to listen, Poppin. The story you hear won't just be a rousing tale. A Big'un will evoke the sounds of a fierce storm or describe a flower so well you'll recognize the scent when you smell it. The effect is more like being given a memory. You won't feel like you listened to a story. You will feel like you were really there.

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Eternal Night Falls on Aurawyn

It can be at the happiest moment that life suddenly changes for the very worst. So it was for Bria, and all the people of Aurawyn.

Cresting the hill on the road home that day, Bria stopped and gazed at her homeland. Its big hilltop houses, its small burrow homes, and its rolling, lush farmland had been the place of her people for ages. Bria smiled, took three more steps, and fell flat on her face. Looking back, she saw her old friend Barris, who stood no taller than her knee. A Big'un had tripped over a Stumbletoe. The two friends laughed at becoming the punchline of a very old joke. It was at that moment, when Bria laughed with the purest of joy, that the sky cracked open. Thunder roared from above, and the sun vanished behind a storm that tore the world. Everything changed then.

The storm passed in a day, but darkness remained. A shadow had fallen over Aurawyn that no light could disperse. Then the monsters came. Dark Doors opened again and again. Unspeakable horrors clawed their way out. Many wanted to fight, but to what use? No one knew how to fix the sky. In the end, Bria gazed once more from that hilltop. Aurawyn now looked broken, a dream twisted into a nightmare. Her heart was bursting with sorrow when she felt a pat on her leg. Barris was at her side. There was hope in his eyes. There was always hope there. Bria smiled.

She turned away from the ruined hills and faced the distant horizon. Big'uns and Stumbletoes would find a new home. They would find it together.



Grumboks



Grumboks look very different than the people Poppins are used to. They have knobby noses, grayish skin, and love to wear beautiful, ornate outfits. Grumboks take pride in themselves and everything they do. Grumboks believe they know more than anyone else, and they are usually right. This is because Grumboks live a very long time and they devote their entire lives to learning. They love to share this learning with others. They love to tell people what they are doing wrong, and how to do it right. Grumboks do not make friends easily. They will certainly help out a Poppin in need. It's tradition. However, Grumboks won't show much interest in a person unless that person can tell them something they don't already know.

Scholars and Engineers

Their passion for knowledge leads most Grumboks to become scholars or engineers. Grumbok scholars learn absolutely everything that can be learned about a subject. They share their knowledge with people it can help or people they think have earned it. Grumbok engineers love technology. They spend all day building and researching new things to build. They don't always care if an invention has a good use as long as it does something exciting.

PEOPLE WITH NO PAST

I'm gonna share a Grumbok secret with ya, kid. It's not something easy to say, but I think you should know it. We think of ourselves as smart people that know all kinds of stuff. And we are, so pay attention. Still, it bothers a Grumbok not knowing something, and we really don't know much about our own history. A few scholars look for the truth, but most of us choose to ignore it. Even me, kid. Even me. Oh, Keepers like me love the history of the Poppins. The history we've kept. We don't like to face what's gone. That's why we're always out to prove something. It's like every Grumbok walking around has a little piece missing. We learn everything we can because we're scared by how much we've forgotten.

Gump

Forward Thinking

Grumboks come from the world that was before there was a world. Their people have seen many changes and have learned to adapt. Grumboks care little for history. They are excited by all the new wonders the rifts have brought into the world. They look to the future and hunger for new knowledge. If Grumboks study an ancient ruin, it is only to find lost technology they can make use of today. The Keepers of the Eddur in the city of Venture are an odd exception. These Grumboks are devoted to keeping the Poppin history. Still, even these historians long for the thrill of recording new stories created by new Poppin heroes.

HEAD WRAPPING

Would you like to know why I am so smart, dear Poppin? You see, Grumboks have a trick, a tradition that lets us learn faster than anyone. We make scrolls of knowledge and use a special paste to wrap them around our heads. As we continue to wear the scrolls, we absorb the knowledge they contain. Impressive, isn't it? We can copy down an entire book and learn it in just seven days. Then we replace the old wrap with a new one and learn some more. Sadly, my Poppin pupil, you will never know as much as me, but don't worry. I will continue to teach you as much as I can.

Fidgewik



Ishnog Uncovered

Orlo and his young assistant pulled hard on the ancient door. The stone slab slid sideways and light poured into old Ishnog once more. A whole team of Grumbok engineers would soon be scouring these ruins for useful artifacts, but Orlo wanted the first look all to himself. He motioned his assistant to stay behind, and walked into the large, dusty chamber.

The walls were carved with old runes and faded paintings of Grumbok crafters. So, it was true. Their ancestors really had built this place. What was it for? Orlo felt a click beneath his feet. Suddenly, the whole room came alive. Steam and fire blasted out from the walls, the runes began to glow, and the door slammed shut. Orlo screamed and stumbled through the darkness. Something knocked him back. Through the spurts of flame came a hulking, metal figure with drills where its hands should be. Orlo's mouth hung open in horror. A golem of legend? Impossible!

The golem struck at Orlo. He dodged but a spurt of steam blasted Orlo into the wall. He landed next to someone else. His assistant stood there, flipping switches and pressing runes on the wall. The golem came at them, its drills ready to strike again. And then silence. The steam and flames stopped, the golem sat down, and the door slid open. He'd done it. Orlo's assistant had solved the puzzle trap. "Well done, young Hogreb!" Orlo congratulated his assistant. "Snuck in behind me, eh? A golem! I knew there were treasures here! Let's get the team in and tear this place apart. The first door we open and we've already found a golem. Just think of what we'll see in the next chamber!"



Monyx



In Storm Hollow, there are few people more wonderfully different than the Monyx. Monyx are covered from head to toe to tail in fur. Monyx women tend to have blue or purple fur while the men's fur is usually brown or red. Monyx have pointy, inquisitive ears, pouches on their bellies, and beautiful music on their lips. They walk on two legs, but can run and climb on all fours, and soar through the air on small wing flaps. They have journeyed out from their homeland and found new lands to love. Despite being so different, the Monyx have made strong bonds with the other people of Storm Hollow and found new songs to sing.

Wild Runners

Monyx feel the rhythm of the wild calling out to them for adventure. Monyx find little time for study or craft. They prefer to run. They yearn to experience things for themselves. With their wing flaps and agile bodies, Monyx can flip, spin, twirl, and soar around any obstacle. Monyx love to explore the wilderness at a running pace. Even the Monyx that choose to live in cities like to get out of their houses, dash across the rooftops, and learn every inch of their town.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Yeah, you Poppins never could keep the Monyx straight in your head. You never get the stories right. Monyx get called big squirrels, foxes, bats, dogs, or even bears when you're really off the mark. You know, kid, I guess whatever ya got to tell folks back home to make it make sense is fine. A Monyx isn't the easiest kind of person to describe. Just remember that while you're here, they're called Monyx. They're not cat-people or rat-people or half-person, half-beast. They're all Monyx. You want to make some friends out there on the long road, kid? Get the names right. No one likes being told they were made up of parts of something else.

Gump

Songspeak

Monyx have amazing voices. They can copy almost any sound they hear and can sing the most beautiful songs in all of Storm Hollow. Monyx have learned to talk like other people do, but this language does not come naturally to them. The Monyx's natural way of talking is through wordless music called songspeak. Different tunes, tones, and rhythms convey different ideas, stories, or emotions. Songspeak lacks precision. A Monyx does not describe little details or list off facts. However, a Monyx can relate an experience with such passion and feeling that a single sentence can cause someone to laugh with overwhelming joy or weep with the deepest sorrow.

THE NEWEST PEOPLE

Fun fact, Poppin! Monyx are the newest people to arrive in Storm Hollow. Their homeland in the Windsong Refrain was the last rift to appear. Some of my elders still remember when it first arrived. The Monyx are fascinating people. I've tried to learn what I can of them. It took a few ages before they wandered out of their treetop homes and joined the rest of Storm Hollow. They maintain strong traditions and ties to their homeland. Most still live there. Of course, over the last few ages, more and more Monyx have joined the people of the cities. However, I have observed an interesting ritual. At least once in their lives, all Monyx return to the Windsong Refrain. They say they need to "ride the winds" or "feel the rhythm of the ancient trees." I'm not really sure what that means, but it is interesting.

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First Friendship

Senza rushed through the branches of her new forest. The rhythm was strange and wonderful to her. The Windsong would always be beautiful, but this new song was like a thundering heartbeat.

It was a fierce forest with many fierce creatures. Her people never understood her. They had been scared to come. That was okay. She was Senza. She needed nothing. She loved these dangerous new woods. She came to a break in the trees and made a giant leap into the air. She landed with a crash halfway across a meadow and tumbled into the grass laughing. A startled voice yelped nearby.

Senza turned and saw one of the strange people from the southern village, one of the small ones. It was pointing an arrow at her and said something that sounded angry and scared. Poor thing. Senza hooted a few notes of friendship and greeting.

The little creature looked confused. Senza smiled. It lowered its arrow and seemed to ask her something. "Kan yoo tok?" Senza said, repeating the creature's sounds. Then she whooped and sung tones of an old funny story about meeting strange people in the most unexpected ways. The creature didn't understand, but began to sway a little to the music. Senza laughed. The creature spoke again and grinned. Again Senza copied its sounds. "I um naht sher wut yoo ar," repeated Senza, "boot I laik yoo!" She smiled and sung a song of friendship and funny jokes. The little creature smiled back and began to dance a silly little dance to her song. Soon it began to sing along. Together they danced and sang for quite some time.

She was Senza. She needed nothing. But, it was always nice to have a new friend.

Shimmers



To look at a Shimmer is to see something exquisite and impossible living and breathing right before your eyes. Shimmers are strikingly beautiful and possess magic unlike any other magic in Storm Hollow. They have short antennae that sprout from their heads and brightly colored skin that sparkles and glows softly. Which bright color they are is different from Shimmer to Shimmer. There are Shimmers of every color possible and Shimmers change their colors slowly over the very long span of their lives. There is something about a Shimmer that doesn't quite belong in this world or any other world imaginable. However, the whole world shines just a bit brighter because of these marvelous, magical people.

The Shine

Shimmers claim that there is another unseen realm that blankets Storm Hollow - the opposite of the Dark - a realm of light and magic called the Shine. The Shine is a source of magic that only the Shimmers can feel and draw power from. All Shimmers are capable of some elemental magic. Using their connection to the Shine, each Shimmer also develops a unique form of magic, different from any other magic in the world. A Shimmer might be able to instantly travel anywhere, befriend animals, change shapes, make objects change color, or any number of other wonders. As Shimmers grow older and change color, their connection to the Shine changes and grows stronger. The Shimmer's magical talent takes a slightly different form and the Shimmer finds new ways to use it. No one really understands how Shimmer magic works, but it is spectacular to behold.

The Whisper

Sometimes a Shimmer will seem distant or distracted. Shimmers have been known to stop talking to a person and begin conversing with a nearby tree, rock, or doorway. This is because Shimmers hear the Whisper. The Shine that covers the whole world empowers Shimmer magic and also speaks to them. Shimmers can hear the world whispering all the time. Most Shimmers have a particular type of object or place where they can hear it better. When a Shimmer is in a bustling market, a joyful party, or some other noisy place, the Whisper is often drowned out by the sound. Some Shimmers enjoy this. They move to cities where the Whisper won't be so overwhelming. Still, many Shimmers prefer to live somewhere peaceful and quiet where they can listen to the whispering world and feel connected to all living things.

Baffling Beauty

Yeah, I guess you'd say a Shimmer is beautiful. Not pretty, mind you. There's not really a good word for it, kid. Me? I think pretty is tough gray skin, smart eyes, and ears that flop just the right way. Still, like everyone else, the first time I saw a Shimmer I was awestruck. My jaw hung open, and I just stood there looking foolish. It's like they keep stepping in and out of a dream. You never quite get used to it, either. Watch out though, kid. Shimmers are beautiful because all that light and magic is wrapped around peaceful folks that usually mean well. I once saw a Shimmer get mad. It's rare. It's got to be some big threat to something the Shimmer loves dearly. When I saw it happen, that same quality that most call beauty became something pretty terrifying. Let's just say I was happy the Shimmer was on my side that day, kid.

Gump

THE GREAT CYCLE

Did you know, Poppin, that Shimmers live longer than anyone else in Storm Hollow? It's true. Oh, I do envy them. So much time to learn. It is whispered that as an old Shimmer finally fades away, that same Shimmer is reborn as a baby of the same color. Something they call their "Great Cycle." That baby keeps growing, learning, changing colors, and eventually remembers all of the Shimmer's old memories, too. So as a practical matter, it could be that Shimmers live forever. Just speculation and rumors, I'm afraid. Unfortunately, Shimmers live so long I have not had much opportunity to research the matter, and good luck getting a Shimmer to talk about it. If you do, however, get a Shimmer to talk about it, would you let me know? I am eager to learn more about them. Fascinating people, Shimmers, simply fascinating!

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The Discovery of Danger

Penalee explored the marsh, enjoying her glowing green body and the fun things it could feel. She loved listening to the world whisper as she went.

Hello! The plants all greeted her. Each tree and rock had something new to tell. There were so many wonderful things in this land. The rain had been exhilarating at first, then cold and wet. Also, it seemed that bodies needed rest and resting on the ground made you sore. Fortunately, there were giant round things that called themselves onions. They were easily hollowed out with magic, and had a wonderfully strong smell. Now that dry resting places were completed, Penalee delighted in exploring her newfound power. She snapped her fingers and made an image of herself appear high in a tree. The image opened its eyes and Penalee saw through them. She could find the best views.

"Well, hello," came a friendly new voice. It was not the Whisper. "Never seen you before. How do you do? My name is Tom." Penalee turned and saw a strange, thin man in dark clothes. When she turned, Tom went wide-eyed with amazement, then quickly collected himself.

"Hello, Tom," she smiled at her new friend. "I am Penalee. I am looking for fun new things."

"Fun new things?" he said. "Why, I know the best place of all! It's just over here. Follow me and you won't be disappointed."

Wrong! Sorrow! Darkness! The Whisper screamed now. This man was dangerous. She was in danger.

Summoning all her power, she snapped and snapped, making dozens of images that ran off in every direction. Penalee ran too.

She thanked the world for whispering this lesson. Some things were not to be trusted. The rain was not the only thing that must be kept out.

Stumbletoes



Stumbletoes are small. Really small. A Stumbletoe is less than half the size of other people. An adult from your world might see a Stumbletoe come up to their waist. Stumbletoes are short, spry, inquisitive, and love to talk. They have perky little ears that roll up while resting, but unfurl as soon as they hear an interesting conversation. Stumbletoes are cheerful, adventurous, and always eager to act if it will leave them with a good story to tell. Stumbletoes have a way of finding hope in a hopeless situation and seeing the good in almost everyone. No matter how dark things get, there is always a light twinkling in the excited eyes of a Stumbletoe.

Gift of Gab

Stumbletoes love to talk and be social. They talk to learn information. They talk to entertain others. They talk just for sport. Stumbletoes love riddle contests, storytelling, plays, debates, friendly arguments, and any other chance to entertain an audience or match words with a chatty challenger. Stumbletoes enjoy a good conversation, but are never bothersome about it. Stumbletoes always find subjects that will entertain their audiences and never talk someone's ear off if they are clearly uninterested.

SIZE COUNTS

Look, kid, you think you got some flaw? Some shortcoming that gets in your way? Bah! Look at the Stumbletoes. Being small makes some big challenges. There's places they can't reach, times they get overlooked, and items that are just too big to use. Do you think Stumbletoes let these problems stop them? Never. They turn their "flaw" into an advantage. They squeeze into places no one else can. They hide better than anyone. Their small hands can work smaller places. Stumbletoes got a different angle on the world. They spot problems and opportunities no one else sees. Learn from them, kid. Whatever problem you got, find some strength in it. Remember, you're a hero. You can overcome anything.

Gump

Nose for a Good Story

Stumbletoes can sniff out when a person or event is going to lead to something interesting. It doesn't take much. The look on a person's face, an unusual object in the market, or a party guest being just a few minutes late can be enough for a Stumbletoe to sense that a grand quest is afoot. Stumbletoes leap at the chance to help solve a mystery or fight a noble cause. They love to be a part of a good story. For Stumbletoes, the best reward is the song they will compose, the play they will write, or the delightful tales they will get to tell around the campfire of the daring challenges they have faced.

FRIENDS BIG AND SMALL

Look lively, my Poppin pupil. We are about test your thinking. Ready? Answer this. Are you big or are you small? Think now. Do you know? I do. You are pretty small for an elephant, but enormous for a mouse. You see, Poppin, the remarkable thing about size is that it all depends on what you compare something to. Stumbletoes are tiny next to a Big'un, but they are twice the size of your average fairy or Heartfolk. Tiny people of Storm Hollow often befriend Stumbletoes because Stumbletoes aren't too much bigger. Of course, Stumbletoes also have a long history of friendship with the Big'uns. In a world home to the tall and the small, Stumbletoes seem to be just the right size to get along with everyone.

Fidgewik



A New Home

When all hope seems gone, life can present a surprising opportunity. So it was for Barris and all the scattered people of Aurawyn.

When the great shadow forced them from their homes, they fled east to the Fairy Bloom. The fairies did not appreciate the intrusion. After mischievous tricks and bickering debates, they agreed to let the Big'uns and Stumbletoes stay for a short time, but not forever. Scouts were sent in all directions to find a permanent home. Barris and his best friend, a Big'un named Bria, went north. Leaving their families was horrible. The search could take months. Every day, they trudged on miserably, their hearts growing heavier.

Then, as day dawned on only the ninth day of wandering, there it was. The Bloom's huge fairy flowers gave way to an open plain overgrowing with an astonishing, brassy grain perfect for farming. Barris and Bria looked at each other in disbelief. They smiled. Their smiles turned to giggles, their giggles turned to laughs, and soon the old friends were whooping and running through the fields like children. But there was more. Far into the fields, seven spectacular towers stood amongst rubble, wreckage, and abandoned buildings. Barris' heart pounded with excitement.

Shifting the debris revealed enormous gears and machinery still working beneath the ruins. All day they explored, marveling at the ancient towers, imagining the homes they could build, and running their fingers through the strange grain. This was it. Barris looked up at Bria and saw the same resolve in her eyes. They had found their new home. They would gather their scattered people. There was work to be done. This would be the greatest venture that Big'uns and Stumbletoes had ever taken on. Venture. That was it, thought Barris.

They would call it Venture.



The Dark

In Storm Hollow, there is good reason to be afraid of the Dark. It's much more than the simple darkness from your world. Danger lurks in the shadows and cruel monsters live there. Poppins need to understand just how wicked creatures of the Dark can be. They threaten peaceful folk across the rifts. They attack without warning. They drag people off. They lie. They trick. They corrupt. They will do anything to spread darkness and become more powerful. The Dark is the reason why this world needs Poppin heroes to save it.



BUMPS IN THE NIGHT

I'm sorry to have to tell ya, kid, our worlds are connected by more than just stories. The Dark reaches both our realms. Now don't get too scared. That bump in the night is probably just your cat out for an evening stroll. In Storm Hollow, the Dark holds monsters. In your world, it just holds fear. The darker things become in Storm Hollow, the more powerful the Night Haunts become, the more they spread fear in your world. They'll make you scared that those odd noises are more than just the cat. They'll invade your thoughts and bring you bad dreams. Night Haunts live off that fear. That's why we need you so badly, kid. If you Poppins don't put a stop to them, they'll turn all hearts to anger and sorrow. They reach out from the Dark and twist both our worlds into nightmares.

Gump

The Dark Hollow

When people of Storm Hollow speak of the Dark, they do not mean nighttime, dimly lit rooms, or places that simply lack light. The Dark is a different realm that covers Storm Hollow like an invisible blanket. It is a frightening and twisted version of the world. People cannot see it or visit it easily. Wherever there is deep shadow or darkness in Storm Hollow, there is a chance that something from the Dark can come through. Creatures of the Dark enter Storm Hollow through Dark Doors. Dark Doors are made of shadow, but otherwise resemble any other simple door. They can open up on the floor, ceiling or wall, but they can only open in areas of darkness.



Monsters in the Dark

There are many horrible monsters in the Dark. There are little hobs that skitter around in a shadowy swarm of razor-sharp teeth. There are mysterious wisps that glow with a faint light and lure people into trouble. There are frightful grims with skeletal hands reaching out from their flowing, black robes. There are many dreadful monsters with scraping claws, gnashing fangs, and malice in their eyes. The most terrifying of all these creatures are the Night Haunts.

SHADY AND SUSPICIOUS

You must learn, young pupil, that not all minions of the Dark are monsters. When a heart is consumed with greed or anger or fear, a person can turn to the Dark as well. It's just awful. Please, Poppin, stay safe. Learn to recognize the signs. You have to be a little suspicious of people that like to linger in the shadows or repeatedly wander out into the gloomy night. Do they just like an evening stroll or is something more going on? You must ask yourself why, my Poppin pupil. Why do they not fear the dangers of the Dark?

Fidgewik



Days of Shadow and Gloom

They were days of shadow and gloom, my friends. When, oh when, would a Poppin arrive?

The sun dimmed dark so early those days. No blazing finale coloring the evening sky. Just a few minutes of hazy twilight before the sun gave up and went to bed. Dorgan wiped the sweat from his Big'un brow. He'd let himself stay too long in the fields that day. He grabbed up his bushels of beans and started back for his home.

First he walked and then, growing fearful, began to run as night fell and a storm rolled in. There was no moon or twinkling stars. Dorgan became lost trying to find the road. He saw a lantern light up in the distance. Dorgan called out for help and made his way toward the light. He fumbled in the darkness, spilling beans everywhere. Finally, the dim lantern was just a few feet away. He still couldn't see who was holding it. "Hello?" said Dorgan, unsure of what else to say.

There was a groaning creak like an old door swinging open. Dorgan heard gibbering whispers all around him and felt hundreds of tiny claws crawling across his feet. He started to scream, but the noise was muffled by a monstrous voice that echoed all around him.

"Yes, hello," boomed the voice. "What do we have here, my pets? This one is so large. What sort of fun shall we have tonight?" The voice gave a nasty little chuckle, and then the dim lantern winked out.

They were days of shadow and gloom, my friends. When, oh when, would a Poppin arrive?

Night Haunts

Dullahan chases people across the rifts. Black Tom tricks the gullible into making horrible mistakes. Baba Yaga, the witch, curses lost travelers. Even a short glance from the snake-covered Medusa is dangerous. There are many more. Night Haunts rule the Dark. Each one is unique. Each one is a different bad dream come to life. People do what they can to hold them back, but only Poppin heroes can truly defeat them. Thanks to Poppins, these vicious monsters have never been able to spread the darkness too far across Storm Hollow.



Part 3: Gazetteer

In which you learn the lay of the land.

Storm Hollow has many strange places and odd traditions. Each rift is like a slice of another world, with creatures, dangers, and a culture all its own. Still, all the people of Storm Hollow struggle against the Dark, celebrate the arrival of Poppins, endure the great storms, and marvel at all the magic in their world. It is important that before Poppins learn about the many things that divide this world, they first understand what keeps it connected.

Rifts

The big regions of Storm Hollow are called rifts. A rift is a piece of another world that has been ripped away and magically transported to Storm Hollow. Sometimes rifts arrive teeming with creatures and people from these other worlds. Everyone in Storm Hollow lives with this simple truth. Their histories lie in worlds they can no longer reach, and their people have had to adapt to live in this new land. To make matters stranger, rifts can be prone to Rift Shifts. A Rift Shift is a sudden change to the environment of a rift. Plants twist unexpectedly, storms come with no warning, or rocks move for no reason. Different rifts shift in their own unique ways. The people of Storm Hollow learn to live in a world that can be very unpredictable.



Landmarks

The people of Storm Hollow have mapped out the most visible features across the known rifts. Each has its own story. Landmarks are known areas, but most have not been fully explored. They still have many adventures and mysteries waiting to be discovered. No matter where someone is in this world, a well-marked mystery is always close by. The legendary Lodran is famous for his writings on the Landmarks of Storm Hollow.

The Long Road

The Long Road is the major trade route of the realm that connects all three major cities of Storm Hollow. It stretches all the way from the grand city of Venture, through the frontier city of Chaser's Folly, to the port city of Land's End. The Long Road winds across many rifts along the way. Wandering through the rifts is dangerous and people aren't usually eager to wander very far. The Long Road provides a less perilous path that encourages travel, trade, and cooperation. Not all areas of the road are safe. The Long Road passes through the maze-like Quizzleplex and the stormy Blasted Rock Badlands. It is unwise to stray from the path. Walking the Long Road is a significant journey even for those that travel it regularly. Some walk the Long Road just for the challenge of it. It is a tradition in Storm Hollow for adventurous folks, especially Poppins, to set out on the Long Road to find their fate.

The Rifting River

There are small streams and creeks across this world, but the Rifting River is Storm Hollow's one great waterway. It sprouts up from a geyser in the Soaring Stones, plummets off the great cliffs, and snakes its way across all of southern Storm Hollow. As it runs through the Soaring Stones it flows up and down, defying gravity. In the Thunderdrum Forest, its waters are deep and filled with dangerous creatures. As it winds along the Dry Dock Desert, it becomes shallow with almost no fish. The Rifting River connects many rifts of Storm Hollow and is changed by every rift it travels through.

The Poppin Walking Song

A traditional song to guide a Poppin

*Shadows grow long,
The darkness so strong
Threatens all we hold dear.
Then you pop in
And so it begins
Your quest for why you're here.*

*You may ponder
Where did you wander
To end up in this place?
Walk, walk along,
Be brave and be strong.
There's dangers you must face.*

*What dare you do
When the world needs you?
You bear a heavy load.
Go find your fate,
Your answers await
Out upon the Long Road.*

THE EDDUR AND THE KNOWN AGES

All right, Poppin, a little history lesson on the counting of the Ages and how we mark the time. We have hours, days, and weeks just the same as you do. What you call months and years, however, are a bit more vague in Storm Hollow. We don't mark time by the movements of stars. We mark time by the stories of Poppins like you. An Edda is a collection of Poppin adventures that make up one grand story. All of the Eddas that pertain to one hero or group of heroes is called an Age. The Edda of Jack and the Giant is the period when Jack had many battles against the giant, Blunderbore. The entire span that Jack was adventuring in Storm Hollow is called the Age of Jack of the Tales. We Keepers track all of the Ages and the many Eddas in the Tower of the Eddur in Venture. I won't bore you with the details of which Ages came in which order. That won't be on the test. Besides, you can look to your own world for that. The ages in Storm Hollow happened roughly in the same order that the stories appeared in your world. So if you're wondering which came first, the Age of Rapunzel or the Age of Alice, you need only think about which story is older.

Fidgewik

Treasures and Trade

Glittering gold and sparkling gems are pretty, but have no real value in Storm Hollow. People do not treasure items that are simply beautiful or shiny. People treasure items with a good story. Being a part of a story leaves an object with a story echo that can give it meaning and power. Grand stories imbue objects with luck, magic, health, and prosperity. A lump of coal is worth far more than a diamond if it has played a part in an ancient legend. Gemstones and beautiful objects are abundant in Storm Hollow. People like a pretty ruby as much as they might like a sweet-smelling rose from a garden. However, collecting a lot of gems or flowers on a journey is meaningless. It only dilutes the story echo. Instead, people want the one perfect object that captures the essence of a journey or an event that will echo with that story for all time.



Bartering for Goods

In Storm Hollow, people do not use the odd scraps of paper or rounded discs of metal that Poppins know as money. In Storm Hollow, there is no money. There is only barter and trade. People of the realm trade favors and do jobs for each other in the spirit of cooperation for the benefit of everyone. A carpenter might fix the baker's roof in exchange for bread. In a bustling market, people carry baskets or push around carts filled with items they want to barter with at the different shops.



Favor Tokens

Each of the three main cities in Storm Hollow has its own systems of barter and trade. When a direct trade cannot be arranged, a token of gratitude is given instead. These tokens are swapped for other favors, and everyone is able to get the things they need or want through this simple form of trade. A favor token is very different from money. First, only one favor token is ever exchanged during a trade. One favor is exchanged for one good or set of goods. There are no standard prices. Second, a favor token is a promise to provide help or goods in the future. Favor tokens vary from city to city. People are really only interested in trading in favors they can collect, so tokens from one city are usually only accepted as payment in that city. Unless someone expects to be traveling soon, a citizen of Venture is unlikely to accept a favor token from Chaser's Folly.

Gears

Favor tokens started long ago in the city of Venture in the form of brass gears. Sometimes these gears are used in making clockwork contraptions, sometimes they are melted down and reused for building or decoration, but most often they are traded back and forth between people as a form of payment. When someone really appreciates a job well done or a valuable trade, they will take the time to carve their initials onto the gear. They will usually also carve a few words about the wonderful item or service that was worthy of this gear. These etched gears are worth a little more when they are traded back to the person that etched them. As a result, connections between people have become an element in trading. A gear with an etching from a farmer might trade for a higher quality item because it can be returned to that farmer for the best crops he has to offer.

Glow

The people of Chaser's Folly use a different kind of favor token since brass gears are not as plentiful or useful.

Their favor tokens are glass vials filled with a greenish liquid called glow.

Glow is a mixture of roots and leaves found in the Weeping Marsh that shines brightly when shaken.

Glow provides a convenient, portable light source, and the contents of the vials can be combined to create large beacons of light that keep darkness at bay. Etching onto glass is much harder than etching onto gears, so etched favors are much more rare in Chaser's Folly. They are only created for the most impressive goods and the most important favors.



POPPINS RIDE FOR FREE

Don't worry, kid. You won't need to figure out how many apples it takes to get a bushel of beans. People know Poppins are here to help. Saving people is the most important service in the world. You're like a walking favor token, more valuable than a thousand etchings. People usually want to help you. Most people will offer you what they can and give you anything they can spare. Don't let the popularity go to your head, kid. People want to help, but no one likes being cheated. Acting greedy and demanding things you don't need will make people mighty mad. Honor their gifts like a true hero, and the people of this world will risk their lives to aid you.

Gump

Sinkers

In the seaside port of Land's End, brass is harder to come by and there are no materials to make glow. Instead, their favor tokens are blobs of dull metal called sinkers. Sinkers are used in fishing and on board ships to weight stuff down. They can also be melted down for metal crafting of all sorts. The size and shape of a sinker is unimportant. What is important are the etchings. In Land's End, connections are everything. Every sinker is adorned with various initials and abbreviations. Instead of being carved with a description of the favor performed, sinkers are covered in letters and symbols that make up all sorts of codes. There are rumors of sinkers that contain valuable secrets and clues to hidden treasures. Land's End citizens will trade highly for the sinkers with the most etchings. The more connections on a single sinker, the more valuable that sinker becomes.

PLEASE STAY SAFE

Remember, my Poppin pupil, this guide is meant to prepare you for the road ahead. Study it well. Everything sounds fascinating and wonderful when it's in a book. However, you will face real dangers out in the world. That's what heroes like you do. Just be careful and stay safe. Also, come back and visit us. We are Keepers of the Eddur, after all. We will need to make a record of your adventures.

Fidgenik

The Known World



Top of the World

Stormrise Mountains

Veiled Valley

The Tower Neath

Nightmare Marrow

Shadowlands

Bone-Scarred Throne

Toadstool Caps

Bren Gunny's Farm

Venture

Poppin Fields

Rainbow Prism

Starfall Deeps

Jolly Atoll

Sandhaven Castle

The Green

The Coil

Fairy Bloom

Passiflora Palace

Shifting Sands

Footfall Canyons

Rubk Rock Ravine

Bog Walk Gorges

Lurking Lake

Thunderdrum Forest

The Tangle

Old Gnarl

Asteria Isle

Becher Village

Vale of Vines

The Long Road

Wee Ma

Coral Castle

Levathar Bay

Land's End

Tiptoe Top

Knuckle Knob Knoll

Elder Tree Grove

Rifting River

Port Penchant

Dry Dock Desert

Ulzma's Dream

The Gilded Tower

This is the known world. As far as anyone can tell, the borders of Storm Hollow go on forever. The sea to the west, the mountains to the north, the badlands to east, and the desert to the south all stretch further than anyone has ever explored. We have shared what stories we could. Now, dear Poppin, we borrow some help from our friends. The Rift Cartographer's Society in Venture has made every effort to map this world. They have compiled their notes on each rift and every major landmark to help you see what dangers you will face.

Of course, what's written here is but a beginning. In your journeys, you will find your own wonders and your own stories to tell.



HAVE FUN OUT THERE

A map and guidebook is a fine place to start, kid, but don't hang around here too long. You'll just be thinking Storm Hollow is just some made-up place you read about in a book. There's a world out there for you to explore. You'll make some mistakes, but don't worry about it. The best adventures always start with a few big blunders. Keep your wits about you, and have fun out there, kid.

Gump

Blast Rock Badlands



This broken, rocky badlands is ravaged by magical storms. Few people choose to live here and travelers avoid it when they can. It is home only to outcasts, ne'er-do-wells, criminals, and a fierce tribe of earth trolls. The blast rocks that give the badlands its name are lightning-scorched geodes. When a blast rock cracks open, it releases a huge force of living elemental energy called a blast. Blasts of earth, storm, wind, and fire roam wild, destroying all hope of trees or plants ever growing here.



Lightning Rills

As lava from the Everblaze seeps down into the blast rocks, it forms rivers of liquid lightning. The Lightning Rills crackle with pure magic and chaos as they weave through the badlands, burning their way through earth and stone.



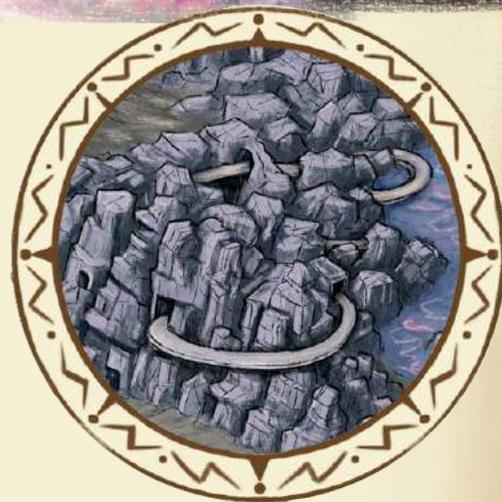
Troll Tooth Crag

Outsiders are not welcome in the crags. The Ugzu, a tribe of earth trolls, live here and believe they rule the Blast Rock Badlands. They demand tolls from any traveler they come across and regularly visit the people of the Riddle to demand a "shiny" tax. If the trolls do not leave with something pretty, they will raid supplies in the Riddle until they are paid. As a result, the crags are filled with odd parts and shiny machines that the trolls like to look at, but have no idea how to use.



Wrongway Ridge

The long ridge, filled with hundreds of caves and rill tubes, has a bewildering magic that muddles the mind. People traveling here lose all sense of direction and racers have been known to race right off the side of the cliff.



The Riddle

The Riddle is a twisting network of tunnels, called rill tubes, that were burrowed out by the Lightning Rills. People of the badlands use the Riddle as a safer place to live and a fun place to race. They build all manner of storm- or steam-powered machines and race each other through the Riddle to show off, win parts, or settle arguments. Grumbok Engineers from the Breaker provide a steady supply of materials in exchange for the right to race with the locals. An active racetrack is bustling with activity, but as new rill tubes get hollowed out, older tracks are abandoned and the crowds move on to new raceways.

Chaser's folly



Chaser's Folly is a wild frontier town built to hold out against incredible dangers. Five different rifts converge at one point roughly in the middle of the town. Chaser's Folly is exposed to all the beauty, all the wonders, and all the perils of the Weirding Wilds, the Blast Rock Badlands, the Windsong Refrain, the Weeping Marsh, and the Thunderdrum forest. The people who live here are brave and strong. They are proud of the life they've made out in the wilds and they fight to keep it. Chaser's Folly has endured attacks from Night Haunts, raiders, and all manner of monsters. It doesn't matter if the walls are burned, bashed, or knocked down entirely - the hearty folk of this town endure and rebuild.

The City

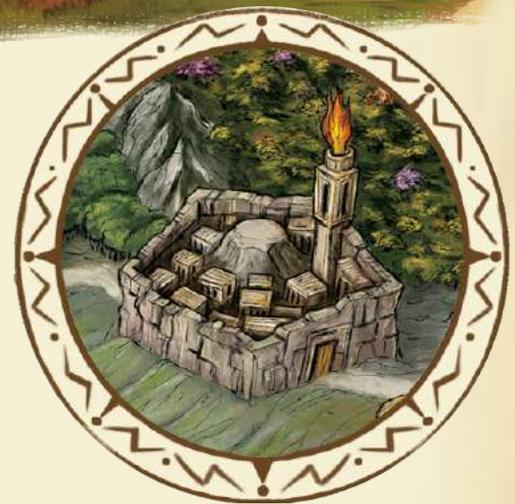
The five walls surrounding Chaser's Folly are built in a pentagon, each wall facing off against one of the rifts. The walls are built of wood and stone cobbled together to make a barrier more than two Big'un's high. Inside the walls, the homes and buildings are mostly wooden structures. Many have been patched up in several places where they were damaged from battle. At night, the city is lit by glow lamps and protected by city guards called Shakers. The lamps are on top of posts built from a flexible wood and contain a reserve of glow mixture. Each evening, the Shakers go around the city shaking the lamp-posts to activate the glow and make sure every street stays lit until morning.

The People

The people of Chaser's Folly stand armed and ready. Every able-bodied Big'un, Grumbok, Monyx, Shimmer, and Stumbletoe is a member of the militia. Any of them could be called upon to defend the walls at a moment's notice. Its citizens don't scare easily. When not embroiled in a battle for survival, the people of Chaser's Folly toughen up and prepare. They test their skill against each other in duels or challenges. They gather and tell tales of strength and accomplishment. They scout the rifts for weapons, supplies, and anything helpful. The people of Chaser's Folly see little point in pretty things. If it isn't useful, it isn't needed.

The Sites

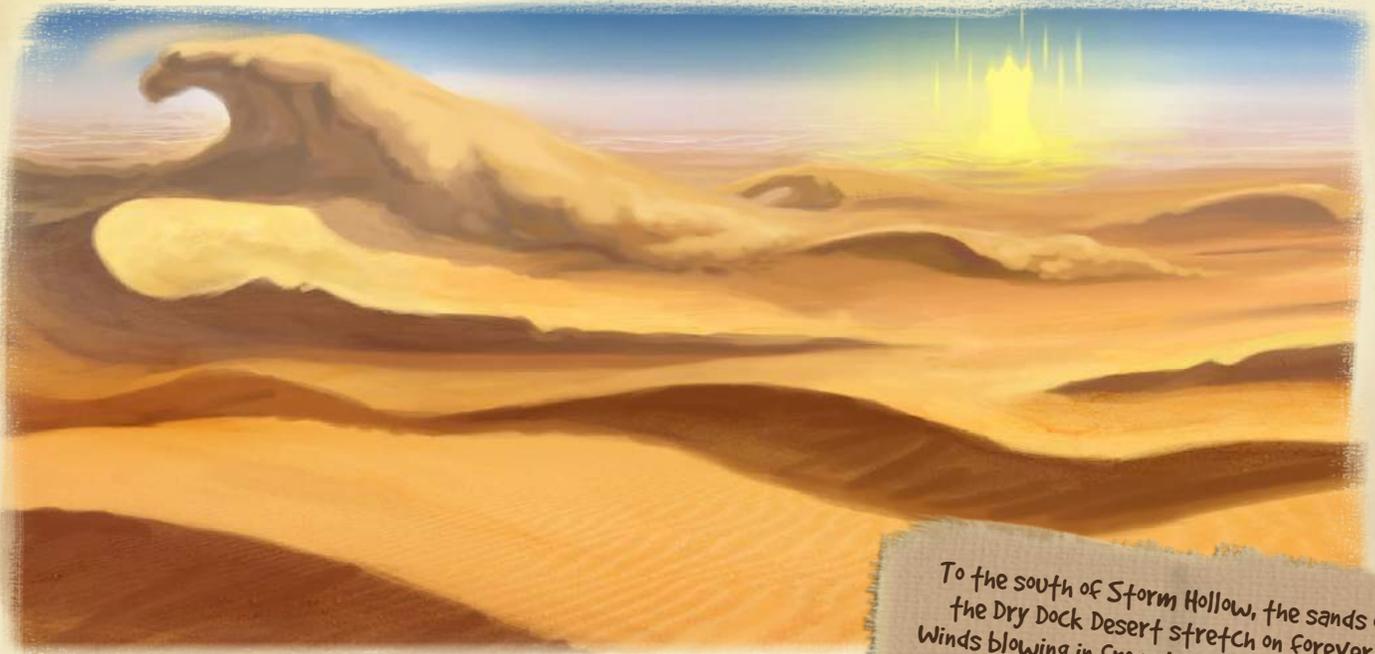
The **Holdfast** is a small fort within the town walls. It holds the sheriff's office, a small jail, the barracks of the Shakers, and training grounds for the militia. It's also a fallback point if the walls are ever breached. The **Conflux** is the point in the city where the five rifts meet. It sits atop a large flat hill near the middle of town. A wisp of magical energy that contains all elements can be seen here. This mound is used for dueling and settling disputes, usually by knocking your opponent off the hill. The **Stormstorm Saloon** provides a place to relax, sing songs, tell stories, and have a sarsaparilla.



The Beacon

Up on a thin metal tower rising higher than anything else in this town is a magical device known as the Beacon. It holds a massive amount of glow. Instead of simply being shaken up, this glow is lit on fire whenever Chaser's Folly is under attack. It creates an incredibly bright blaze. The Beacon lights up the whole town and sends up a signal to the nearby rifts. The people of Chaser's Folly fight to protect the whole region, and they have made pacts with peoples of the surrounding rifts. Any warrior able to see the Beacon is duty-bound to rush to the battle. The Beacon's magic weakens creatures of the Dark and lends strength to anyone who rallies to the aid of Chaser's Folly.

Dry Dock Desert



Gilded Tower

This tower of pure gold has turned the surrounding sands to golden dust. It is home to the Alchemists. These tall, thin folk have dark cloaks and bushy, gray beards that entirely cover their faces. They are obsessed with trying to turn anything and everything into gold. Gold is no greater than any other shiny trinket in Storm Hollow. Still, the Alchemists believe it to be the most incredible material of all.



Uzma's Dream

The images one sees in this area of the desert can be as real as a steely blade or as ephemeral as a mirage. Legends tell that it is the realm of Uzma, a powerful sorceress who journeyed deep into the desert to create a land of her own making. Those who have wandered through this dream world have seen a grand castle, deep forests, lively festivals, and sometimes terrible monsters. Even stranger, there are some who say they saw mirrors lying scattered in the sand.



The Black Pyramid

This pyramid is made entirely from blocks of smooth black glass. It has no known entrances and has never been explored. Approaching the pyramid brings visions of danger and darkness. With every step, the mind is gripped with more fear. No one has gotten within a stone's throw of the Black Pyramid.

To the south of Storm Hollow, the sands of the Dry Dock Desert stretch on forever. Winds blowing in from the Starfall Deeps and the Windsong Refrain make the dunes of this rift flow, roll, and crash like waves. Every week the moving sands reveal some lost locations and bury others. Walking the desert is treacherous. Instead, people use sand skiffs to sail across the dunes. Visitors must usually board a skiff near Land's End or the bridge to the Weeping Marsh and catch a lift to Port Penchant before they sail out to explore the vast desert sea.



Port Penchant

This "port" town is a paradise built around the rift's largest oasis. It has gaming halls, theaters, and spectacles to amuse and enthrall visitors. It is also the jumping-off point for any sailing expedition that is going to traverse the desert. Sand skiffs come and go every day. It is rumored that visiting Port Penchant renews your health, but makes you lose track of time. Those who live there say the oasis water keeps them young. However, very few of these locals can remember their exact age or how long they've actually lived in Port Penchant.

Everblaze



Fire Dancers' Revel

Popping up all across this lake of lava are flickering figures of dancers that look as if they were made of fire. Their dance is captivating and they chant beautiful music that holds great mysteries. When a question is shouted out across the lake, their songs and dances shift in tone and style as if to provide an answer. It all comes in riddles, but there is much that can be learned by those clever enough to understand.



The Great Forge

Near the base of the great volcano, a river of lava flows into a deep cavern. It is home to the Blacksmith, a Big'un-sized person covered head to toe in metal armor. He works an ancient forge and uses the heat of the Everblaze to craft the finest weapons and armor in Storm Hollow. To purchase his wares a customer must give up a memory, and the Blacksmith chooses which one.



The Bellows

The narrow canyons of these high rock formations draw the winds from the rest of Storm Hollow and blow a steady breeze out into the Everblaze. The power of these winds can sweep creatures right off the rocks, and out into the lava. Despite this danger, the Bellows provide a great view of nearby rifts and daring explorers have found ways to catch these winds to fly safely over the lava.



Endless lava flows from the mouth of the Dragon's Maw volcano and fills this land with burning rivers and molten lakes. The Everblaze is extremely hot and extremely dangerous. It takes great perseverance to endure a journey into this realm of black rock and fire. The Everblaze has no cities or even small villages. Few creatures live here and travelers avoid it when they can. Those who do dwell in the Everblaze begin to lose themselves in the flames. This fiery furnace burns more than the land. Over time, it burns away a people's memories until they can remember nothing of who they were before.



Dragon's Maw

This enormous volcano is split halfway down the middle, making it resemble a large dragon's head screaming toward the sky. It is the source of all lava in the Everblaze and still erupts from time to time. This volcano was once home to dragons, though such beasts are long gone from Storm Hollow now. Legends say there are still ancient dragon treasure hoards locked deep within the fiery caverns of the Dragon's Maw.

Fairy Bloom



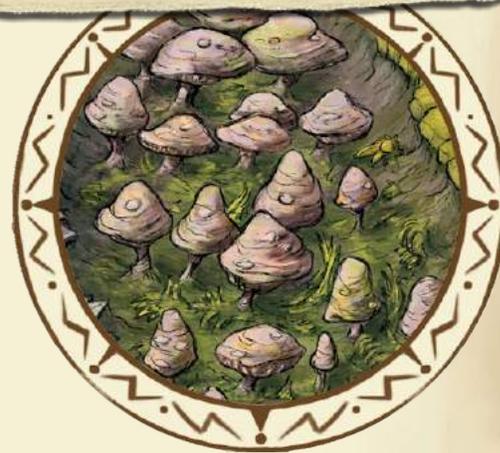
This lush garden rift bursts with endless varieties of plants and flowers that grow to enormous proportions. It is the realm of Titania, Queen of the fairies, and all her many children. Most fairies stand knee-high to a Stumbletoe, fly on beautiful wings, and glow a bright color. There are also wingless fairies, spider-fairies, water fairies, and more. Titania is very protective of her children and the beautiful Bloom they have created. Occasionally, a child, Poppin, or imaginative person is permitted to enter. However, most visitors are not welcome and will quickly find themselves victims of countless fairy pranks. Still, the Fairy Bloom stands as a vibrant barrier between the Shadowlands and all of Northern Storm Hollow.



Passiflora Palace

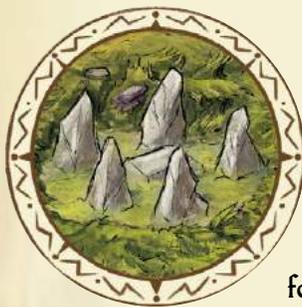
This grand palace, made out of a castle-sized passion flower, is the heart of the Fairy Bloom. From here, Titania, Queen of the Fairies, watches over the Bloom, detects any trouble, and can magically appear at any location to speak with whomever she wishes.

Passiflora Palace holds all the deepest secrets of the fairies. Outsiders are never permitted to visit the palace unless it is a matter of incredible importance.



Toadstool Caps

Most of the fairies of the Bloom bip about from flower to flower, curling up to sleep under whichever leaf suits them. They appear to live a carefree life. The fairies in the Toadstool Caps live in a much more organized fairy village. They live in houses built from giant mushrooms and have a greater sense of purpose than most fairies. Many take turns in scouting parties that keep a watchful eye on the Shadowlands border. The toadstools glow in the dark, keeping the area safe and well-lit even on the darkest night.



The Stone Circle

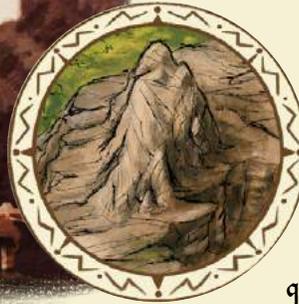
There is one area of the Fairy Bloom that the fairies have promised to allow outsiders to enter, upon request. It is a large circle of standing stones built around a great stone table. The Stone Circle amplifies the power of magic, making it a sought-after destination for ceremonies and magic rituals. One such ritual is used to summon the Protectorate of Light, a group of unicorns devoted to fighting the forces of the Dark. Summoning the unicorns does not guarantee their help, but they are honor-bound to consider any request.

Footfall Canyons



Vale of Vines

Vines hang everywhere in this canyon and dangerous predators roam the jungle below. The only safe way to travel is to climb and swing across. Even still, the vines are crawling with pink monkey-like creatures that are more than simple beasts. They twist the vines into shelters, nets and bridges. They create barriers to deter travelers from finding whatever it is they are hiding amongst the vines.



Ruhk Rock Ravine

Thousands of different breeds of brightly colored birds make their nests here. They nest in the trees, on the ground, and in the ledges of the ravine. The Ruhk is queen of the birds, so large that her wings can block out the sun. Her talons can carry off an elephant. The Ruhk is old and knows many secrets, but it is dangerous to approach her high nest uninvited.



Knuckle Knob Knoll

The caverns and caves beneath this plateau are home to small lizard people called gnolls. The gnolls of the knoll are cowardly bandits that raid travelers on the Long Road and adventurers in the Footfall Canyons. They maintain secret routes and rope bridges that help them get about. Gnolls strike without warning, but at the first sign of trouble they retreat back into the depths of the knoll.

Tiptoe Top

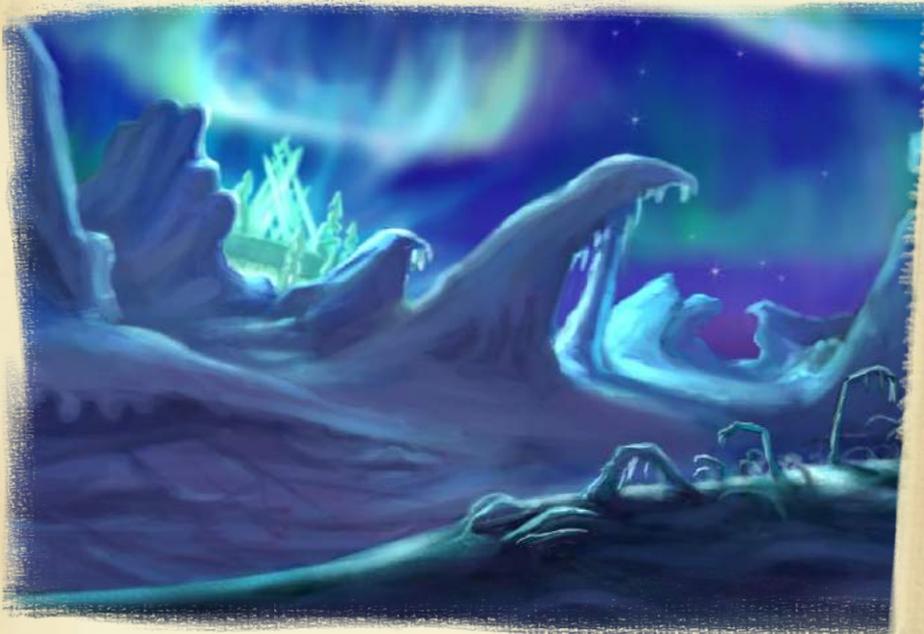
This flat top is the highest point in southern Storm Hollow and its sides are incredibly hard to climb. It is used as a test of skill. Prove yourself by meeting a rival at the Tiptoe Top. Those who are strong enough to climb are treated to an amazing view of all the rifts.

Bog Walk Gorge

This is the lair of the Gorger, a purple centipede longer than ten fallen trees that gnaws the cliffs with its gaping mouth. The Gorger feeds on stone, but will devour anything in its way. It has gorged out jungle and rock so much that water fills this basin from below, creating a muddy bog. As the Gorger gnaws, ancient treasures are freed from the cliffs and slip down into the muck below. Adventurers walk the bog again and again. There is always something new to find.



Frostshard



Frostshard, forever covered with ice and snow, is the coldest rift in Storm Hollow. The light here gives everything a dazzling shine. Unless the sun is clouded by a storm, the snow is blindingly bright. At night, a spectacular aurora lights up the sky and the snow below. It becomes easy to see, but the dancing radiance can confuse travelers. For a place with so much light, there are many dangers. The frozen lakes, icy plateaus, and windy mountain paths are treacherous. The Barbegazi, fun-loving little people, roam the snowy mountains starting avalanches so they can ride down on their wide feet. The Night Haunt Baba Yaga travels this rift in her hut with chicken legs. The glittering northern wastes are breathtaking to behold, but never an easy journey.

Glimmerwall



The Glimmerwall is the source of the aurora in Frostshard. This icy castle has high, impenetrable walls. The ice shines with a brilliant light from inside that shoots up into the sky in a dazzling dance of brilliant colors.

No one knows where the light comes from. No one has found a way in. Still, there is not a traveler to the Frostshard that hasn't marveled at the beautiful aurora and dreamed of the wonders that might lie inside Glimmerwall.

Shiv's Cut



This perilous pass filled with razor-sharp shards of ice was formed when the Grumbok Shiv tried to cut a path to the frozen north. In a pinch, it can still be used as a shortcut out of Frostshard. The slick tunnels of Whitefall are a perilous climb, and searching for a way through the high mountains is still more dangerous than navigating the blades of Shiv's Cut.

Ice Shackle Tundra



This frozen tundra is formed into grasping shackles of ice that grip the legs of anyone trying to pass through. It must be traversed to explore most of Frostshard, but unlucky travelers spend days trapped by the terrible shackles.

Whitefall



Whitefall is the main entrance into Frostshard. The road winds by an icy cliff face that is being slowly melted away by the Everblaze. It then plunges into smooth, icy tunnels that lead down under the mountains, past the underground city of Hearth Home and up to the tundra above. Getting down through Whitefall is a simple matter of taking a slide. However, getting back up the slick tunnels to leave Frostshard is a difficult climb.

Hearth Home



Deep beneath the mountains, molten lava has seeped in from the Everblaze, forming a cauldron of bubbling fire. A group of Hearthfolk have built a small village here. These Hearthfolk do not live in the homes of others, taking care of a family in need. Instead, they gather here to welcome travelers of any kind with the only warmth in the whole rift. Hearth Home is a great place to gather supplies, get directions, and hear advice before climbing the icy steps that lead up to the Ice Shackle Tundra.

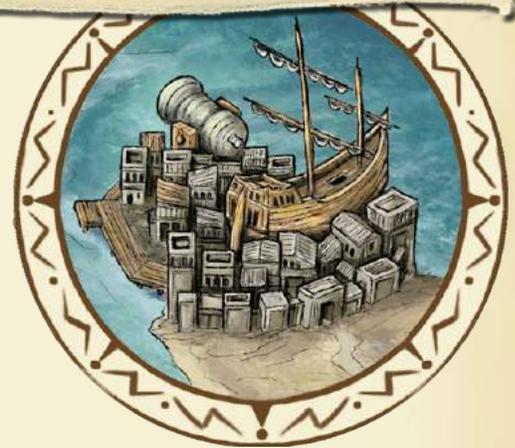
Land's End



Land's End is a rowdy port town where bold adventurers explore the rifts for treasure, fame, and fortune. Ships sail out into the Starfall Deeps to discover new islands and return to Land's End with plunder and stories to trade. The people of Land's End don't give much thought to laws or traditional government. They respect skill, wits, and daring actions. They cheer for tales of dangerous exploits and perilous journeys. A person has to be at the center of great stories to become a leader here. Famous ship captains, brave buccaneers, or renowned explorers with enough admiration can often command crowds of townsfolk to follow their lead. With enough guts and a little luck, anyone can become big in this town.

The City

Many ages ago, a gargantuan pirate ship called the Queen Anne's Revenge ran so far aground that it could never set sail again. Land's End grew out of a community of sailors building a town into the dozens of different floors of the great sea vessel and fashioning a harbor with many docks along the shore. As Land's End has grown, it has expanded out as a shantytown of shabby structures built from the spare lumber of the Queen Anne's Revenge and other shipwrecks. Some areas have been rebuilt with finer materials and other ships have been retired and turned into buildings. However, slapping dingy houses together out of spare boards remains common. The town is filled with side alleys and secret routes that continue to change as shacks are thrown together or torn apart.



The People

In addition to the more common city folk, Land's End is home to the Nim, rat-like people famous for their skill at sneaking around and discovering secrets. Information and connections are everything to the people of Land's End. Knowing the right people, especially if those people owe you favors, is far more important than owning a fancy ship or a powerful weapon. The people of Land's End also love treasure. Anything with a good story or a magical effect can be traded for favors or good information. People here even appreciate shiny coins and glittering jewels more than most. Chests full of pretty baubles are proudly displayed to show off an adventurer's skill and good fortune.

The Sites

The Court of Fools is a lavish banquet and dance hall hidden in the lower decks of the Queen Anne's Revenge. It is owned by a notorious merchant of secrets known as the Pied Piper. The Flophouse is a vast and unruly inn with hundreds of bunks where any sailor or traveler is welcome. Rowdy parties are common here. Wild tales are told and rousing sea chanteys are sung well into the night. Big Bessy is a colossal cannon that shoots hollow cannon balls big enough to fit several people inside. It can fire travelers off to nearby islands, making several days' journey in only a few minutes. Most people even survive the trip!

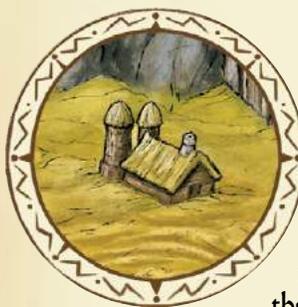
The Warren

This maze-like marketplace winds through rundown buildings, dilapidated shacks, and even extends into caves and sewers beneath Land's End. There are permanent shops, carts of goods, and people selling merchandise right out of handbags or trunks. However, not everything in the market can be trusted. Some shady traders have learned to alter the stories that echo from objects. They create false histories that make dull items seem magical. Fake charms and phony artifacts are common here. Despite this trickery, the Warren remains the heartbeat of Land's End. Valuable rumors and amazing relics are traded back and forth every day here. For those with the right connections or the right information, almost anything can be acquired.

Poppin fields



These rolling farmlands and fields of brassy grain stretch out for miles around the City of Venture. The long, wavy stalks in the Poppin Fields glisten and glow in the sunlight with a slightly metallic shine. The farmers here grow the food for Venture and the grain is spun into brass for building. The Poppin Fields are a peaceful place that has a strong connection to the Poppins. More Poppins arrive in the fields than anywhere else in Storm Hollow. No one is quite sure why. Most believe that the fields echo with a history of joy and laughter and that this echo calls out to the hearts of Poppin heroes.



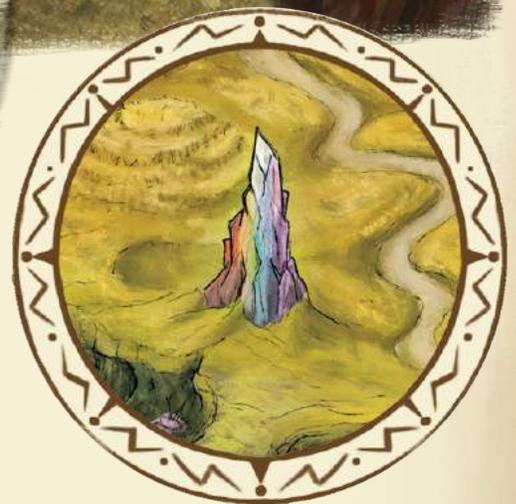
Bren Gunny's Farm

There are many farms dotting the Poppin Fields but Bren Gunny's is the largest and most famous. This motherly Stumbletoe employs Gronge, a twenty-foot-tall golem of stone and metal that works the fields tirelessly. Bren and Gronge can produce more food than any other farm, though they do take on extra hands during the harvest. Bren Gunny's farm is also well-known for its comfort and delicious home-cooking. Anyone is welcome at Bren's farm, and travelers will make up excuses just to visit. She loves to take care of folks and tell stories of her old adventuring days.



Brass Mill

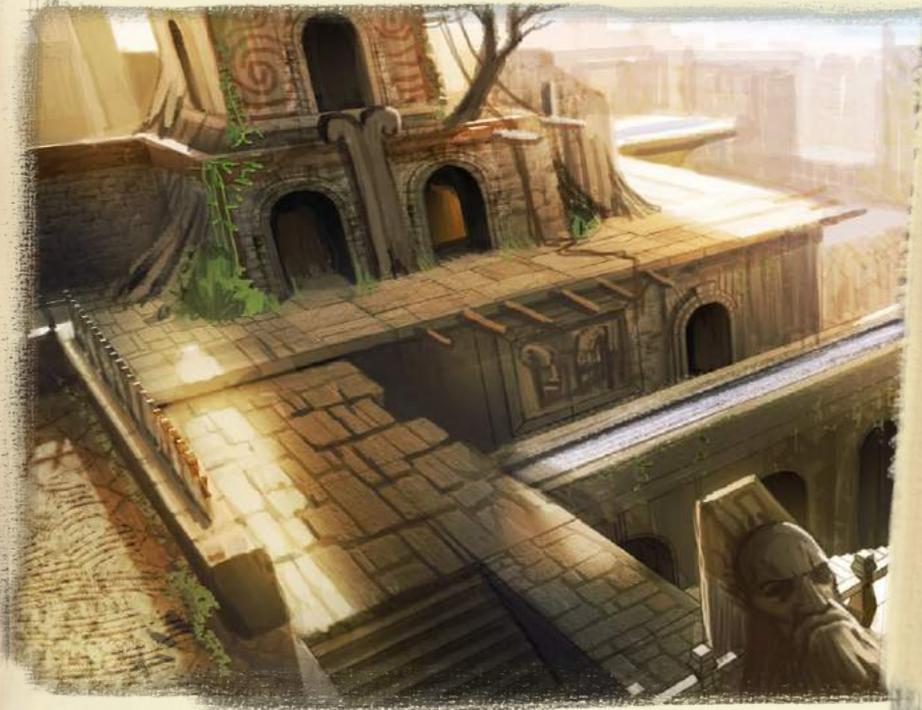
The Brass Mill is run by the Miller, her husband, and their seven daughters. The mill is powered by storm crystals, but this family of Big'uns still has to do plenty of work. Here the grain of the Poppin Fields is spun into solid brass bars that are used to repair and construct the many machines in the city of Venture. The city goes through the brass about as fast as the mill can make it, so great care is taken in the mill's maintenance to make sure it doesn't break down.



Rainbow Prism

This tall, crystal pillar has many angles and edges that bend and reflect the light around it. The Rainbow Prism also has a powerful inner source of light. During the day, it shines with a radiance that casts rainbows all about the surrounding area. By night, it glows with the silvery light of the moon. Day or night, the Rainbow Prism shines out across the fields and keeps the Long Road in the surrounding rifts safe from creatures of the Dark. It serves as a beacon of hope so magical and sacred that the fairies of the Bloom have sworn to protect it. They send out patrols to keep it safe and guard it well.

Quizzleplex



An immense labyrinth stretches across this entire rift. Its lower floors are entirely flooded by the Riftling River. Across the upper floors are countless corridors, stairs to different levels, ancient traps, mysterious puzzles, and room after room of oddities and bizarre creatures. Some rooms are as small as a closet. Others are vast areas that could fit a small town. Traveling the Long Road here is never simple. Its winding path is clearly marked with signs and a few walls have been knocked down to straighten the route. However, some force of the Quizzleplex seeks to lure travelers down the wrong corridors. Once off the marked path, the walls and passages can shift and spin. Bringing a guide is a wise choice if you can. It is easy to get lost forever in the twisting maze.

Village of the Lost



Many strange creatures and lost travelers end up finding their way to a hidden village deep within the labyrinth. Finding the way back out is difficult and dangerous. Many here have decided to give up such pursuits. They have made a good life for themselves in this strange land so far away from the worries of the rest of the world.



The Breaker

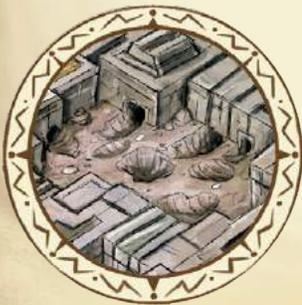
When the Quizzleplex first appeared, it destroyed the Long Road in this rift. The Grumbok Engineering Corps built a camp here with one simple purpose: knock the labyrinth down. Ages later, they have somewhat repaired the Long Road, but still have a long way to go on the labyrinth. The engineers of the Breaker are a wild and rowdy bunch. They love to take things apart. People from other rifts send them failed experiments, wonky golems, and glitched machines to be destroyed. With heavy machinery, explosives, and inventive gadgets, the engineers wreck anything that needs wrecking. For sport, they build their own contraptions from this scrap and run them against each other in contests. The Quizzleplex is massive. The Grumbok's don't expect to knock the whole thing down anytime soon, but they'll be happy when they do.

The Plunge



This deep pit of water is the main entrance to the flooded lower levels of the Quizzleplex, which are incredibly dangerous and not very well explored. However, there are scattered pockets of air that can be found by those willing to brave the depths and learn the greatest mysteries of the vast labyrinth.

Bandersnatch Burrow



Bandersnatch Burrow is the filthy den of the bollycatchers and bandersnatches. The bollycatchers, vicious little goblins, ride the shaggy bandersnatch beasts and use nets to capture people in the surrounding areas. There are rumors that they serve a goblin king who lives somewhere in the Quizzleplex and believes himself to be ruler of the rift.

Shadowlands



Once, this rift was a bright and beautiful land. It was Aurawyn, home of the Stumbletoes and the Big'uns. Small villages dotted the rolling hills and vast farmlands. Tiny Stumbletoe homes were built into the hills with huge Big'un cottages built on top. Then the sky above broke apart and a great shadow fell across the plains. Now, Aurawyn is no more. Its ruins have become twisted by the Dark. This is the Shadowlands. The Dark is always present here. Neither the sun nor the moon ever shines. No stars ever twinkle in the sky. Foul monsters and dark minions roam the barren land and the Night Haunts rule through cruelty, fear, and manipulation. The fair and good-hearted are not welcome here. Those foolish enough to wander here usually never return.



The Tower 'Neath

This wide tower juts from the ground at a very odd angle. It is not of Aurawyn. It came with the great shadow. Whether it rose from the ground or fell from the broken sky remains a mystery. It is a place of vile magic and terrible Night Haunts. Only the roof and top floor rise above cracked plains. The rest of the tower descends far down into the Dark itself, much farther than anyone has explored.



Bone-Scarred Throne

This stone throne bears the scars of battle and jagged scrapes of a thousand claws. It rests on a barren plain high atop a broken rock and looks out over the entire rift. It is the seat of power in the Shadowlands. Across the ages, brave explorers have spotted many different Night Haunts holding court here. It seems that no creature of the Dark has the strength to rule for very long. Hunger and greed hang thick in the air. Even the most of humble of explorers have felt their hearts thirst for power in the presence of this dark throne.



Nightmare Marrow

This was once Plum Gully, the largest town in Aurawyn. Its gentle hills and majestic homes have become broken and twisted. There are hundreds of Dark Doors here. Each house is the dreadful lair of some awful monstrosity. The Night Haunts visit here to rally hordes of dark minions and nameless terrors. A few brave explorers have managed to travel its streets safely, but ruin and woe befalls anyone that opens a door.



The Coil

The fairies of the Bloom fight off the Shadowlands, but the Fairy Bloom has lost some ground over the ages. The Coil is where the shadows have wormed their way into the Bloom, bent its branches, polluted its plants, and turned its lush garden into a wilderness wriggling with horrors. The Coil is ruled by the Unseelie Court, fairies corrupted by the darkness. Instead of flowers, they cultivate carnivorous plants that prey upon all trespassers.

Shifting Sands

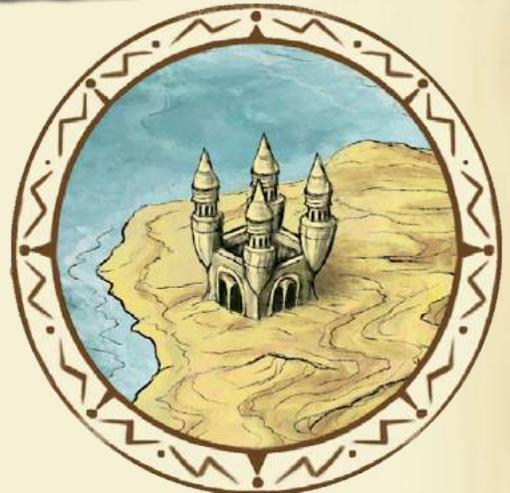


The Shifting Sands is a sunny paradise where weary travelers, brave explorers, and scrappy pirates can all relax and enjoy themselves, free from the threats of the nearby Shadowlands. It is the realm of the Beachers, people made entirely of sand. They cannot speak or write, but can shape themselves and the sand into different forms. Beachers usually look similar to the people they are greeting. They are a lonely lot, eager for company. Their sole desire seems to be making people happy. They shape the sand into slides, castles, sculptures, or anything else amusing. They require only that people play nice. Walls of sand and great upheavals of the beach are summoned to eject any monsters that wander in or visitors that get too rowdy. Still, no one stays too long in paradise. The Beachers start to get oddly clingy and needy toward long-term visitors. It's nothing to fear, but reason enough to end your holiday.



The Green

The Green is the only place in the Shifting Sands where any plants grow, and here they grow in abundance. It is a garden paradise where every imaginable food grows on the bushes and trees. There are apple pie trees, candy rocks, salad gardens, stewpot shrubberies, and every other delicious delight. Beachers seem unwilling to travel on the Green. In fact, no one has seen them set foot off the sand. A green Shimmer hermit named Borago serves as caretaker and is the only person living here. He quietly tends the Green, avoiding visitors as much as he can.



Sandhaven Castle

This enormous sand castle is the main resort where people stay on their holiday to the Shifting Sands. The sand is so fine and soft that it never sticks to a visitor or scrapes them in any way. The Beachers gather here each day to adjust the rooms and create fantastic entertainment for the guests. Nothing grows on the Shifting Sands, so there is little food that can be offered here. However, almost every other whim can be indulged. Sand horses can be ridden along the beach. Sand tunnels can be explored. The entire castle and its surroundings change with every visit.



Beacher Village

This village is the home of the Beachers. It is always falling victim to some oddball problem or incredible drama. Whatever the trouble is, it always seems well-suited to be solved by whoever is visiting. Most people believe this some form of skit or play put on to amuse visitors. Perhaps the costumes for the big parade have been stolen or a Beacher boy needs help winning the heart of his beloved Beacher girl. There is always an intriguing mystery or amusing quarrel. Of course, the Beachers have no language, so visitors must understand these problems through gestures and charades.

Soaring Stones



Amber Meanders

One particularly interesting section of the Gem Pools is the Amber Meanders. These pools are filled entirely with precious amber stones. People are warned to steer clear of these dangerous pools. While no gem-creatures are seen guarding the pools, the amber gems seem filled with all manner of things. Items, plants, animals, and even people that wander too close to the pools become forever trapped in amber stone.



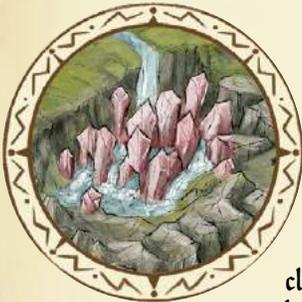
Firegem Falls

The Rifting River pours over boulder-sized red gems before plunging down an enormous cliff to the Thunderdrum Forest below. These gems are infused with fire from the destruction of the Lucent Citadel. As the water rushes over them, spurts of flame randomly blast out in all directions. The incredible beauty of this waterfall is best seen from a distance.



Sagestone Academy

A path of floating stones leads up to this majestic academy hovering high in the sky. Here, three Shimmer sisters, known as the Sages of Stone, use gem sorcery to study the mysteries of magic. The Sages seek out people with odd magical talents to come study at the academy. They guide these magical misfits and teach them to control their powers. The Sages will also offer knowledge and advice to people who seek their help, but they do not appreciate being bothered with trivial requests.



Riffle Rock Rapids

This dam of giant gems is all that remains where the Lucent Citadel once stood. Larger gems get caught up here as the rushing water passes through the small gaps in the dam. Many people have searched the rapids for clues or treasures from before the Sundering, but nothing has been found yet.



Smites' Hatchery

High atop a pile of rocks and gemstones sits a small fairy dragon no more than 3 feet tall. This is Smites, the self-proclaimed "last known dragon in the world". Smites is fiercely protective of his pile of rocks and gemstones as he believes them to be dragon eggs that he must guard until they hatch. He has been guarding them as long as anyone can remember. Most people think he is crazy, but he does have knowledge and artifacts for trade if people can bring him another shiny stone that might be a likely dragon egg.



This rift was very different when it first appeared. It was a simple grassland and home to the Lucent Citadel, a sparkling tower made entirely of gems. Wizards practiced gem magic sorcery, a rare and powerful magic that uses gems instead of the elements. Then came the Sundering. Some unknown gem spell ritual went horribly wrong and this entire rift was rent apart by a burst of magic. The Lucent Citadel was blasted to pieces, spreading gems far and wide, and the stones of this rift became infused with strange magic. Now, this land is littered with gems of every kind. Gemagons, strange crab-like gem creatures, hatch from these gems and scuffle about the rift. Stones big and small float above the land. Some are simple rocks drifting lazily about the sky. Some are hovering landscapes, fixed and unmoving, with grasslands, rivers, or even old ruins on top of them.

Starfall Deeps



This vast ocean is dotted with countless small islands. The islands were formed when stars fell from the sky and crashed into the sea below. Each was a piece of a rift that might have been. There are bits of new worlds out there on the sea waiting to be explored. New stars frequently fall into the deeps. Most create tiny islands with nothing but a few plants of a forest or the corner of some unknown building. On rare occasions, the entire sky will light up as a star of incredible size plummets through the heavens. Hopeful explorers continue to launch ship after ship from Land's End. As far as anyone knows, the sea goes on forever and there are always new wonders to discover.



Asteria Isle

The banks of this island and the waters of its star-shaped cove are coated with sparkling stardust that shines in the moonlight. This glittering isle is incredibly beautiful and well-lit at night. It is a popular spot for romantic boat rides and dreamy courtship. Less well-known is that this island is used as a meeting place between ship captains who do not trust each other. It is considered very dishonorable to start a fight on Asteria Isle.



Jolly Atoll

This hideout is home to a band of buccaneers led by the Stumbletoe pirate, Jolly Roger. Most boats cannot reach the inner waters of the atoll. Jolly Roger has a way to dive his ship beneath the waves and come up on either side. He plunders ships returning from treasure hunting out in the Deeps. These pirates are masters of jokes and jests. Crews of most ships are simply shamed into handing over their cargo. Few can match insults with Roger, but he will grant safe passage to anyone that can best him in a duel of wits.



Coral Castle

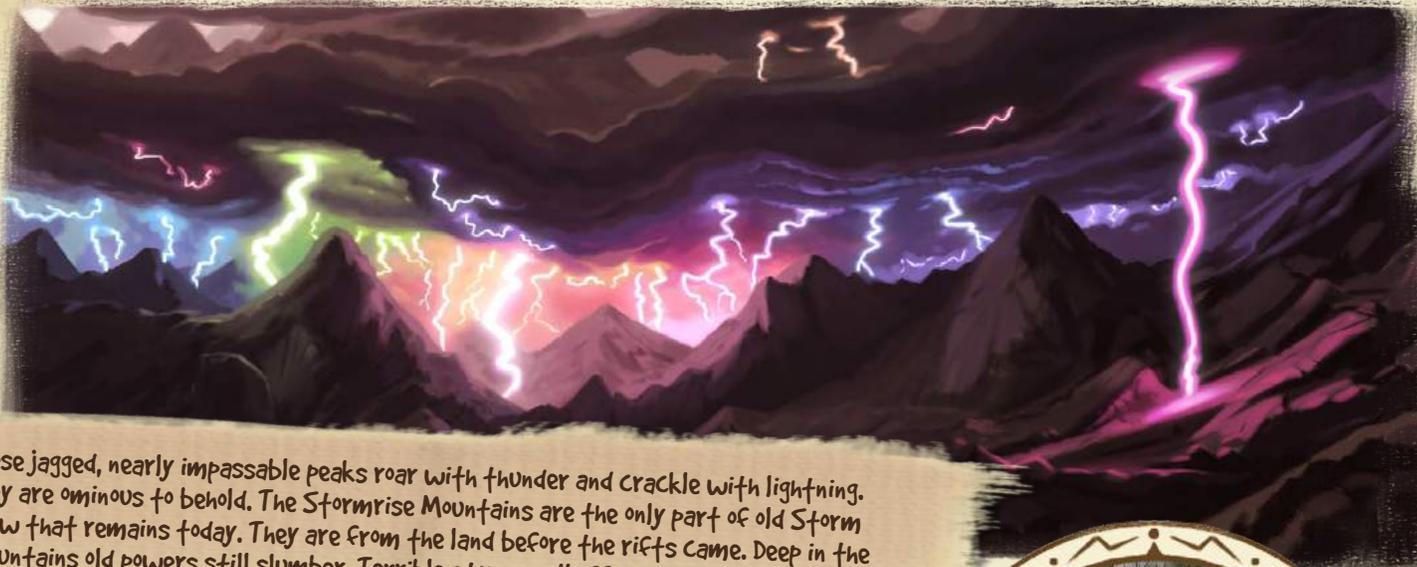
Not far off the coast of Land's End is a small coral island. Here the merfolk hold court to aid sea travelers and trade with the people of Land's End. The island is only the tip of the Coral Castle. The rest of the castle stretches all the way down to the ocean floor where only merfolk are permitted. Merfolk are well-meaning, but easily offended. They have bizarre customs and a strict system of honor. Outsiders aided by the merfolk do not always fully understand how they are expected to repay the debt.



Leviathan Bay

Deep beneath this bay lives the Leviathan, a sea serpent able to devour ships and crush entire fleets in its coils. Merchants and explorers steer clear of these waters, but brash captains and wild-eyed pirates are fond of challenging each other to races or even ship-to-ship combat in the middle of the bay. Spectators watch the action from the docks of Land's End, waiting for the Leviathan to rise up and attack. The added danger, it seems, is part of the fun.

Stormrise Mountains



These jagged, nearly impassable peaks roar with thunder and crackle with lightning. They are ominous to behold. The Stormrise Mountains are the only part of old Storm Hollow that remains today. They are from the land before the rifts came. Deep in the mountains old powers still slumber. Terrible storms roll off the mountaintops and ravage the valley below. The clouds are dark but they burst with a rainbow of colored lightning. Bolts crash through the sky in red, blue, orange, purple, green, and yellow. These are the storms that litter the land with magic. The greatest of them have brought new rifts into the world. Through it all, these mountains continue to tower over Storm Hollow, immense, unchanging, and ancient.

Crystal Caverns



These caverns go deep into the mountain and are filled with storm crystals. The crystals can be used to create wondrous devices or power magical machines. The caverns are home to the Crystal Mavens, four-armed people with translucent bodies that look like fluid, bending crystal. The Crystal Mavens create amazing magical crafts from the storm crystals. They trade these crafts and supplies of storm crystals for peculiar items like exotic herbs, woven cloth, and brass. For particularly valuable crafts, Crystal Mavens require specific oddities like a captured gremlin or a lock of Scheherazade's hair. What the Mavens do with these knick-knacks is entirely unknown.

Veiled Valley



An eerie calm hangs over the Veiled Valley. The magical storms sweeping off the peaks never touch down on the valley floor. Fierce lightning, blustering gales, and pouring rain all seem to dissipate high above it. Everything seems perfectly still. The valley is more than peaceful; it is truly unchanging. Explorers have noted that they leave no footprints. Rocks that are moved return to their original position the moment you look away. Trees cut down upright themselves when no one's looking. No change made seems to last for very long. It's as if the entire valley is trapped in a moment of time that will not move on.



Top of the World

While the storms shift and roll across the rise, one peak remains eternally concealed by clouds. The Top of the World is the highest peak in Storm Hollow. The actual top has never been seen. No one has managed to climb above the cloud cover or fly high enough in the air to glimpse what lies above the storms. There are many legends. Some say the peak goes up forever. Some say it pushes through to other worlds. A few people say storm giants are up there stomping the lightning out of the clouds. Wild speculation abounds in the face of this unsolvable mystery.

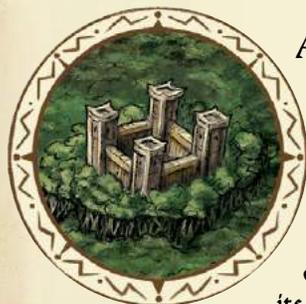


Thunderdrum forest



Thunderdrum is an ancient forest of dark trees and deep shadows. A haunting drumming sound endlessly echoes from the heart of the woods. It can be heard from anywhere in this rift. The great woods burst with life. It is home to some gentle beasts, but there are also wolves and forest trolls. Thunderdrum forest has become polluted by the Dark. Many Dark Doors are hidden here and Night Haunts are always on the prowl. Many of the woodland beasts have become vicious and cruel. The forest is no place for idle travelers. Those wishing to explore its dark depths are wise to take caution at every turn. Sorrow and woe befall anyone careless enough to disturb the trees.

Bittershade



At one time, the southern rifts of Storm Hollow were more removed from the terrors of the Night Haunts. To increase the terrifying reach of the Shadowlands, they built a bastion of darkness deep within the great woods. They shaped an impenetrable canopy and built themselves a fortress above the branches. Few details are known about Bittershade, but since its arrival, ages ago, rifts around the dark woods have been a whole lot darker.

Old Gnarl

This ancient tree is the guardian of the forest. His roots stretch far and wide. Old Gnarl can move and speak. He is wise but very bitter. He seethes with anger as his forest grows darker and darker. He will grant an audience to anyone that helps the forest. However, he can also summon the aid of the entire forest to severely punish anyone who harms the plants and beasts that live here.



Ishnog Ruins



Ishnog is the largest known remnant of the ancient Grumbok civilization that existed before the rifts. When the Thunderdrum Forest ripped its way into the world, the machines of Ishnog somehow kept the ancient city in place. Despite great effort, only a fraction of the ruins have been explored. The Grumboks of Ishnog built puzzle doors, mechanical traps, and clever defenses that have made further exploration incredibly challenging.

The Tangle

The Tangle is the dark heart of the woods. Here the trees are impossibly old and surrounded by a mass of briars with razor-sharp thorns. Giant spiders called Black Weavers spin webs to catch and devour intruders. The drumming of the forest is loudest here. Whatever causes the maddening rhythm pulses somewhere deep inside the Tangle, but no one has ever made it through the barbed bushes and wicked webs to see it.



Lurking Lake

This enormous lake holds great wonder and peril. There are rumors of a magical island on the lake, but the center remains shrouded in mists. The Lurking Lake is home to the Lady of the Lake, a beautiful water sprite who has aided heroes and travelers in the past. Still, most believe something else dangerous lurks beneath the waters. Not everyone is greeted by the water sprite. Many travelers have gone missing from the shores of the lake, never to be seen again.



Venture



Venture is the city of innovation and wonder, built around the ancient site of seven different magical towers. It is by far the largest and most diverse town in all of Storm Hollow. Magical machines powered by steam and storm crystals maintain the streets. Lightning collected from mountain storms is broadcast as energy to Tesla coils across the city. Beneath the ground, ancient gears whirl away for some forgotten purpose. Fantastic gadgets are everywhere here. All these marvels are protected by the Aegis, an invisible shield of magic that covers the town. It keeps out most Night Haunts and other terrors. The people of Venture are left free to build, invent, create, and pursue their dreams without fear of seeing it all torn down by monsters of the Dark.

The City

Venture has eight districts spread across three tiers that rise higher and higher. The lower city has four districts. **Diamondhold** is devoted to competitive sports and protecting the city. **The Brassworks** is an industrial district built on huge, spinning gear plates. **Silverwall** is the seat of Venture's government, devoted to truth and peace. **The Wood Ward** is a park district built largely in the branches of a magically manufactured tree that is hollow inside. The middle tier has three districts. **Crystalcade** is home to wild-eyed inventors building bizarre gadgets. **The Weave** is an enormous market in the middle of the city. **The Emerald City** is a place of beauty, art, and entertainment. High atop the city is the district of **Parchment's Perch**, devoted to knowledge, books, and history.



The People

Venture is a prosperous place to live. Many different kinds of people with diverse skills and trades call Venture their home. There are crafters, inventors, entertainers, scholars, merchants, and magical folk. The people here like to stay busy doing something useful or learning something interesting. Though Venture remains largely safe from the Night Haunts, the city is not free from all problems. Old machines break down, new inventions occasionally run amok, and terrible lightning storms frequently sweep down from the mountains. However, the people of Venture do not let mishaps deter them. In fact, they are often delighted by the opportunity to fix, redesign, and improve part of their city.

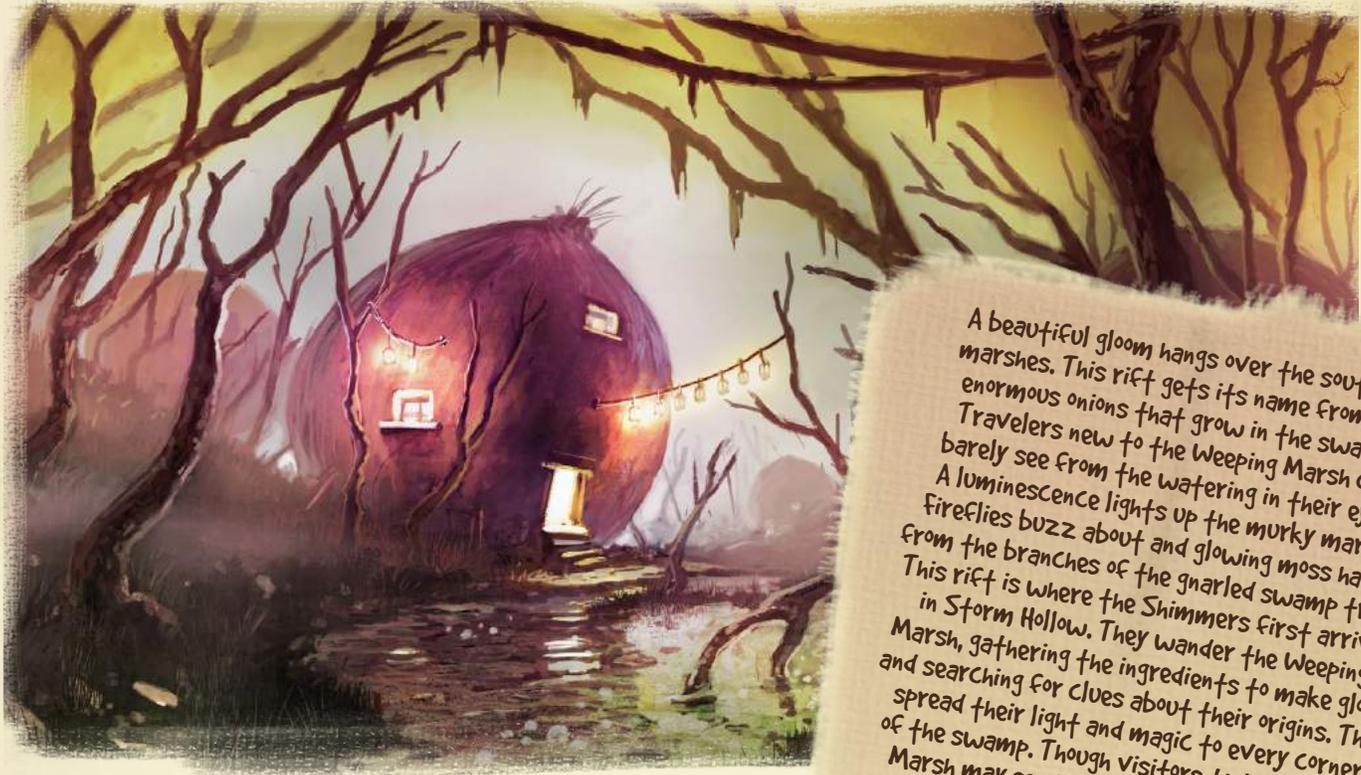
The Sites

The **Diamond Arena** hosts charge ball derby competitions, a team sport involving racing, roller skates, and lots of fun gadgets. The **G.E.C. Headquarters** runs engineers out to every district to maintain the city and fix broken machines. **Hollow Heights** gives sky tours over Storm Hollow aboard a one-of-a-kind flying airship called the **Falcon**. The **Walk-a-Mile Inn** offers amazing comfort to visitors willing to walk the long path that winds up the hill to reach it. It is owned by the city's mayor, a Big'un named **Gurbin Eberhart**. **Lodran's Lodge** is the meeting hall of the **Rift Cartographers Society**, an organization devoted to exploring and mapping all of the rifts.

The Tower of the Eddur and the Poppin Museum

The people of Venture have more love and reverence for Poppins than anyone else in the world. Many of them listen for rumors and look for signs of new Poppins. When a new Poppin does arrive, the people of Venture are eager and welcoming. The most devoted Poppin admirers are a group of Grumbok scholars called the **Keepers**. Up in **Parchment's Perch**, the Keepers maintain the **Tower of the Eddur** and the **Poppin Museum**. The **Tower of the Eddur** holds the records and legends of every Poppin that has ever visited Storm Hollow. The **Poppin Museum** displays alcoves with the images and artifacts of Poppin heroes. **Scheherazade**, the only Poppin ever known to remain in Storm Hollow past her own story, gives tours of the museum and brings the legends to life with her words.

Weeping Marsh



A beautiful gloom hangs over the southern marshes. This rift gets its name from the enormous onions that grow in the swamp. Travelers new to the Weeping Marsh can barely see from the watering in their eyes. A luminescence lights up the murky marsh. Fireflies buzz about and glowing moss hangs from the branches of the gnarled swamp trees. This rift is where the Shimmers first arrived in Storm Hollow. They wander the Weeping Marsh, gathering the ingredients to make glow and searching for clues about their origins. They spread their light and magic to every corner of the swamp. Though visitors to the Weeping Marsh may see it as a melancholy mire, the Shimmers love their new home. They see only splendor in the twisted trees and giant onions of the swamp.

Elder Tree Grove



These intelligent trees were once a part of the Thunderdrum Forest. They are every bit as ancient and wise as Old Gnarl. The Elder Trees grew tired Old Gnarl's hatred of outsiders. They uprooted and moved themselves to the Weeping Marsh so they could be of service to people in need. The Elder Trees love travelers. They will offer advice and even protection to anyone that seeks their help. The Elders are particularly fond of the Shimmers of Luminora. They call them "saplings." Though they rarely leave their grove, the Elder Trees will uproot and charge through the marsh if they ever feel that Luminora is in danger.



Luminora

The Shimmers have built an entire village out of the oversized onions of the Weeping Marsh. This village is the first homeland they built when they came to this world from the place they call the Shine. The Shimmers believe that the light of the Shine glimmers in the waters of the Weeping Marsh. They explore the swamp looking for a way to return there. To keep themselves safe and able to focus on their pursuits, the Shimmers of Luminora make large amounts of glow, which they trade to Chaser's Folly in exchange for protection from the monsters and Night Haunts of the Dark.

Clomp Stomp Bayou

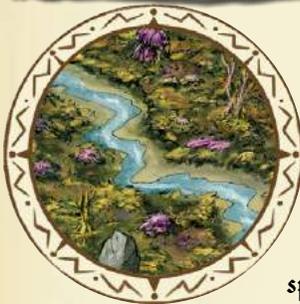


Clomp Stomp Bayou is thick with mud and muck. Most of the trees and plants have been stomped into the mire. It is the realm of the kubu; huge, hippo-like monsters with greenish skin and sharp fangs. Isantim, king of the kubu, is larger than ten hippos. The kubu are always hungry, always eating, and always expanding their territory. The bayou is the most dangerous area of the marsh. King Isantim will not stop and will not hear reason. The kubu try to eat anyone who approaches. Little by little each day the kubu trample down more of the surrounding marsh and spread the borders of the bayou.

Weirding Wilds



The Weirding Wilds are a bright and colorful jungle where anything goes. The laws of nature have gone completely on holiday and won't be visiting this rift again anytime soon. The scenery can shift and change without warning. Up can become down and down can become up. Magical elements might burst out from any bush. Anything, absolutely anything, could start a conversation with travelers. A fricky shrub, a lonely rock, and even a rabbit late for an important date might yell out a few choice words. It is the realm of nonsense, as if the Weirding Wilds has refused to make up its mind about exactly what kind of wilderness it wants to be. Most rifts like to stick to one kind of strange, but any kind of weird can happen here.



Beastlands

Far into the wilds lies an area of jungle ruled by talking beasts. The squirrels spread gossip with the moles and shrews. The hyenas crack jokes with the monkeys and the lions give grand speeches. Any simple beast that wanders into the Beastlands slowly becomes more thoughtful, more aware, and more able to speak. Some of the beasts are welcoming, but most are distrustful of people. A visitor to these lands must be respectful to the beasts. Anyone wandering into the Beastlands to hunt may find it impossible to ever wander back out.



Burabi's Beard

The stony face of Burabi sticks out from the side of the Quizzleplex, mumbling cryptic phrases as he slumbers. His beard forms a wiry plain of white grass that grows out into the jungle. Large, woolly caterpillars graze on his beard and chat about Burabi's mutterings. Occasionally, Burabi will wake up and speak to travelers. According to Burabi, he was forced into holding up the Quizzleplex long ago. When it ripped into Storm Hollow, Burabi's body was buried deep in the dirt. For ages he has rested, while still longing to be free. He promises great rewards to anyone that can find a way to dig him out.



The Upside Downs

In this stretch of the Weirding Wilds, gravity has become unreliable. Objects can get lighter or heavier. Frequently, gravity reverses entirely and travelers will fly straight up into the sky. The canopy is thick with vines. Anyone falling upward has a chance to grab ahold and save themselves. However, anyone not fast enough must hope to be saved by one of the giant bats that live here. The bats can snatch people mid-air, but they will let go if you don't pay their price. Oddly enough, the bats love music.



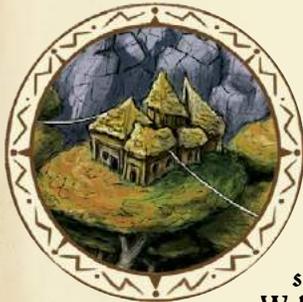
Ripside Chutes

Water spouts in great arcs from the high cliffs that mark the boundary between the Wilds and the Quizzleplex. These tunnels of fast-moving water extend deep within the Quizzleplex and desposit all manner of strange flotsam and jetsam into the Weirding Wilds. Out of the confusion has evolved a strange new form of life. Thriving in the wetlands at the base of the Chutes live creatures that are part animal and part machine!

Windsong Refrain



Throughout the Windsong Refrain a constant tune plays, the melody of all living things in harmony with the wind. As the breeze blows over reeds, cattails, and grasses, the song of this rift flows and changes. Rising far above the ground are the colossal domesa trees. Their rounded canopies form great treetop hills high over the grassy plains. This is the homeland of the Monyx. Their villages dot the treetop hills. Strong updrafts blow between the giant trees. The Monyx use their wing flaps to glide from place to place. Other travelers must climb great rope ladders or ascend paths that wind their way up the domesa trees if they wish to reach the treetop hills.



High Tree Hill

High Tree Hill is the largest Monyx village in the Windsong Refrain. Here the entire town has been constructed to craft beautiful music. Every house, every shop, and every structure is built from woven branches that have been carved, shaped, and angled to create unique songs as the breeze flows through buildings. Walking down the leafy roads of High Tree Hill, a traveler is treated to dozens of beautiful melodies.



Underbells

Hanging from the underside of this treetop hill are large bell-shaped flowers that ring when the wind blows through the branches. The song they play is not random, but part of a powerful spell of imprisonment. Long ago, a vicious serpent named Nidhogg tried to destroy the Windsong Refrain. The Monyx trapped her in a cage of roots beneath the Underbells. Now they maintain this tree with careful rituals to make sure Nidhogg never escapes.



Lullaby Timbre

This grove of trees has many dangerous beasts slumbering beneath its branches. The wind blowing through the Timbre plays a soft lullaby that can put anyone to sleep. The Monyx drive dangerous creatures into the grove to capture them. The Timbre's sleepy song can be counteracted by playing a jaunty tune, but doing so risks awakening the sleeping monsters.

Treble Cliffs

This large tower of rocks rises up even higher than the treetop hills. The wind blowing through the holes and caves in these rocks play high-pitched notes. The Treble Cliffs are a Monyx playground and live performance hall.



The strong gusts make it easy for the Monyx to fly and pull off incredible acrobatics. Rushing through the caves or twisting on the wind sculpts the sound and changes the tune.

Lofty Leaf Meadow

The winds gather and churn here, keeping an entire plain of leaves constantly in the air. The leaves are so steady that they can be walked upon like a meadow. The winds react to nearby melodies and the music of the Windsong Refrain.



By the swirl of the leaves, the Monyx can see the beauty of a song or spot the early signs of danger when the entire rift is threatened.

Credits

This game is dedicated to our children in the hopes that we will always find new worlds to explore and new adventures to embark on together.

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...and all the new friends who played the game at events and conventions, all the old friends who encouraged us and cheered us on, all the backers whose belief brought this game to life, and all our beloved family members whose support makes every dream seem possible.

We couldn't have done it without you.