

The Consuming of Morandi - Chapter 2

Chapter 1 Summary - the player characters are travelling to Decaris with a smuggler named Benneth. They stopped in the small village of Curiad to rest, and enjoyed a local couple's wedding. In the night the village was attacked by a group of masked cultists, and the player characters fled north, following Benneth's instructions.

Chapter 2: Whisp's Hollow

As the players approach the town of Whisp's Hollow in the late afternoon, they hear shouting and clanging, followed by the bellow of an Ogrillon, and they notice bloodhawks circling in the distance. Cresting the hill, they see a small skirmish. Multiple villagers are locked in battle with a large Ogrillon.

Ogrillon Stat Block here

The party may choose to watch the fight play out, skirt around the fighting, or engage in the battle. If the party approaches, they notice that at least one villager is already dead, and more are down and injured. The Ogrillon also looks wounded. If the party does not intervene, the Ogrillon will kill one more villager, then flee back to its home in the mountain. If the Ogrillon is defeated, the players may find some blue moss clinging to its clothing, signalling where it possibly came from. The villagers can point to the location on the mountain where this moss grows if asked. The villager Gregor Finsk will thank the party for helping if the party chose this option. Otherwise, the villagers will ask the party who they are, and what is bringing them to Whisp's Hollow. Benneth may answer that the group is coming from an attack at Curiad, to which the villagers will reply that other Curiad survivors have been showing up that day. The group is then led to the Mist Keeper's Inn by the villagers or Benneth.

GM NOTE - Gregor Finsk

Gregor will be leading the fighting against the Ogrillon, but once it is dead or flees, he will immediately begin tending to the injured. He is generally a talkative and friendly person, but if he sees the party stand by, he acts coldly toward them.

Whisp's Hollow Gazetteer

Whisp's Hollow is a settlement of approximately 400 people in the foothills of Highrange. The settlement lies beside Lake Solace to the west, where morning fog frequently settles across the water and surrounding lowlands. Farming and fishing provide most of the settlement's food, while the nearby dolomite mine provides for the economic wealth of the area.

Decaris lies east, approximately six days away by the King's Road. Curiad lies south toward the Roughlands. The town itself lies on one main road, with smaller branching paths cut out to get to the various clustered stone buildings. The mines lie a mile north of the town, where the mountains begin to rise in elevation.

Locations In Whisp's Hollow

Lake Solace and the Docks

Lake Solace supports fishing, local transport, and some trade.

Small docks extend from the settlement.

Warehouses stand nearby, including the warehouse associated with several optional situations during the characters' free day.

Morning mist over the lake is one of Whisp's Hollow's defining features.

The Commons

The Commons functions as Whisp's Hollow's informal public center.

Markets, announcements, arguments, gatherings, and occasional celebrations take place here.

Curriad refugees are being temporarily housed and supported in and around the Commons as space allows.

The Mist Keeper's Inn

The Mist Keeper is the settlement's primary inn.

It is warm, practical, and currently overcrowded.

Mara Holt runs it.

A public notice board can be found here, carrying local work, announcements, missing items, trade notices, and messages. This is also the location of the alderman's office, a small room on the first floor of the inn.

Valley Forge

The local forge handles ordinary tools, horseshoes, repairs, mining equipment, and weapons when necessary.

It is a working forge rather than an adventurer's armory.

Rock Bottom

The Rock Bottom is a local tavern frequented by mostly by miners.

Constance Hough and Marstin Hough are a married couple and the proprietors of the tavern.

There are several features of the tavern.

The Gem Wall behind the bar displays stones and mineral curiosities brought in by miners, and glitters in the torchlight. None of the gems are valuable.

A knife marked 301 dart board hangs among the tavern's accumulated oddities.

A large stump sits in the middle of the floor, with multiple hammers and nails piled on top, and multiple nail holes found around the rim.

Marstin's pet arctic fox is also a familiar presence around the tavern.

Whether the fox technically belongs to him depends on whom you ask.

The Mines

Mining provides part of Whisp's Hollow's economy.

The mines primarily produce dolomite and smaller amounts of iron.

Things N Stuf

Things N Stuf sells general supplies.

Its inventory should reflect the needs of farmers, miners, fishers, travelers, and local households rather than functioning as a magical department store.

Temple of Lights

Whisp's Hollow's temple predates the modern Church of Illumination.

Its pale stone, dark timber, colored glass, beeswax, old books, and mountain air give it a character distinct from newer Church buildings.

The Church now maintains the site.

Older local customs remain visible.

Miners sometimes leave stones on the small altar outside, while travelers occasionally leave small offerings before entering the mountains.

Watch House

The Watch House is small and currently overwhelmed.

Sergeant Garreth Kellen spends much of the time trying to manage refugees, injuries, reports, missing belongings, and the aftermath of the Ogrillon attack.

Warehouse

A warehouse near Lake Solace and the docks becomes the center of several optional situations during the characters' free day.

Two unrelated problems are present.

A shipment of grain was damaged during the chaos surrounding the attack on Curiad, and some strange markings were found inside the building.

Quelline's Farm

Quelline Alderleaf's farm lies near the edge of the settlement.

It is where the Ogrillon first attacked livestock.

Its damaged fence and the creature's tracks lead the characters toward the mountains.

People of Whisp's Hollow

Mara Holt

Mara runs the Mist Keeper's Inn.

She is quiet, observant, and discreet.

She is familiar with Benneth, and often helps smuggle items or goods through Whisp's Hollow discreetly.

Robint Laywell

Laywell, the town alderman, is an elderly human who remains surprisingly athletic.

He wears his curly hair beneath a bandana and carries the constant expression of someone whose morning schedule was destroyed before breakfast.

Laywell is practical and genuinely concerned about the settlement, but is often forgetful and needs the assistance of the inn keeper Mara.

Gregor Finsk

Gregor is a muscular, middle-aged human and a veteran of the Delvers' War.

He once belonged to the Delvers.

He does not pretend the movement was either entirely right or entirely wrong.

Several months ago, young scholars and adventurer-types passed through Whisp's Hollow asking questions about Delver research.

Val Hoskin

Val Hoskin is a dwarf with practical medical knowledge.

Val combines mundane medicine and magic without seeing much distinction between them.

“Magic is useful. So is washing the wound first.”

She will be treating the injured and sick inside the inn, and can help treat the players if needed.

Tarsh Porter

Tarsh is the foreman of the local mines, and a frequenter of the Rock Bottom.

He frequently writes his cousin in Decaris, and knows some about the goings on there. In a recent letter his cousin told him about the Secret Midnight Market there.

Quelline Alderleaf

Quelline is a farmer whose goats and fence suffered during the Ogrillon's arrival.

She is direct, hardworking, and unimpressed by unnecessary drama.

She can direct the player's toward where the ogrillon's trail is, and knows about where the blue moss comes from.

Sister Laidra Wales

Laidra serves at the Temple of the Lights.

She follows the Church of Illumination sincerely while respecting older local customs.

“May the Light guide your steps.”

Constance Hough

Constance works at the Rock Bottom and has little patience for unnecessary trouble. She is often frustrated with her husbands gossiping ways and lack of initiative.

If a patron starts a fight:

“You can finish the drink or the fight. Not both.”

Marstin Hough

Marstin works the Rock Bottom as a co-owner and cook.

He is also a reliable source of local gossip, much to the chagrin of his wife.

“I don't spread rumors. I collect them.”

Sergeant Garreth Kellen

Kellen oversees the small local Watch.

Current circumstances have stretched his patience.

During a night watch recently he noticed some strange markings in the warehouse, and is worried that officials might think the Delver's have been working there.

Gideon Vey

Vey is a local member of the Fulcrum, the merchants guild of Morandi. He manages the incoming and outgoing stock in the warehouse. He made an error when accepting the latest shipment from Curiad, and is looking for help in changing the ledgers.

Mira Debois

Mira escaped Curiad after witnessing more of the attack than most survivors.

She saw the ritual itself, and the Consuming Spread afterwards.

Jakob Udenturn

Jakob is a Curiad survivor whose family history remains behind in an ancestral journal.

He is not willing to ask someone to risk their life merely to recover it, but may inquire about it if the players mention going back.

Continuing The Adventure

Arrival At The Mist Keeper's Inn

As the night grows darker, the party is led to the Mist Keeper's Inn, either by Gregor or Benneth. There they find multiple injured villagers lying atop old wooden tables, the air heavy with the smell of blood. People crowd around each table, some applying salves and bandages, others whispering to each other quietly. Val Hoskin looks to be moving between tables, helping as many as she can. The sound of the Alderman Robint Laywell and the Inn Keeper Mara Holt's conversation is audible through the noise. As Mara looks up, she gestures a small hello to Benneth, and he leads the party toward her. Robint continues: "What if there are more where that came from. Too many of our people are injured, and we need the Watch to stay here to keep an eye on the refugees. We can't take another attack, and we can't send anyone to see if there are more out there."

The players may choose to offer their services in this moment, but do not have to. Mara will reassure Robint that the Watch can be on the lookout tonight, and that the refugees will be okay until the morning. She will then turn her attention to Benneth. If the party helped with the attack, or if they offer to help look for more, they will be given somewhere to sleep for the night for free. Otherwise they must pay. The refugees have insisted on sleeping together in the Commons, leaving some room in the inn for the injured and the party.

Mara speaks with a friendly demeanor to Benneth, asking about his current trip. They seem to be acquaintances. Benneth tells the player characters that they need to rest, and makes for bed without further ado. The players may choose to explore town, or join Benneth. Once they do go to bed, the curse from the Mask of Madness will take effect. Tell the players: "That night, you have a nightmare. What is it about?", and let the players describe their nightmares. They wake up remembering their dreams. This is where the party advances to Level 2.

GM NOTE - Mask of Madness Curse

This adventure assumes that each player character is seen by Blage during the Curiad attack, and that each character feels safe sleeping in the Inn. Each iteration of dreams gets increasingly more interrupted by visions. This first dream has no outside elements, but the later ones will. See the Mask of Madness in Appendix B for more details.

That morning, Benneth tells the players he needs at least a day or two to gather supplies and intelligence about the road before moving on. However, Benneth remains in his room the entire morning if the players check. He is still upset by the attack in Curiad and now his nightmares. Mara greets the players, and Robint will intercept them before they leave the inn. If the players helped in the Ogrillon attack, he will reference their bravery. If not, he will assume based on their general appearance that they are the adventuring sort. Either way, he will ask the party to follow the Ogrillon's trail if they haven't already volunteered. He tells the party that the Ogrillon broke through Quelline Alderleaf's fences first, and to speak with her at her farm.

The players may decide to decline this quest, in which case they may explore the town. The end of this chapter goes into the various free day activities and quest hooks the party may look into.

If the party accepts the quest, see The Ogrillon's Lair quest hook below, otherwise, skip to A Free Day In Whisp's Hollow.

The Ogrillon's Lair

If the adventurers choose to accept Robint's request for help, he will give them directions to Quelline Alderleaf's farm. It lies to the northeast of the town, up against the bottom of the mountainside.

Quelline's Farm

Quelline is working on building her fence back where the Ogrillon clearly broke through when the player characters arrive. She greets them curtly or gratefully depending on their previous actions. If the players question her, she says that she only ever saw the one Ogrillon, and that the tracks move further up the mountain. She will know that the blue moss grows in a specific area a few miles up the mountain. Otherwise, she doesn't know much more about the attack, other than the Ogrillon killing and eating many of her goats. This attack is very out of the ordinary for this area.

Up The Mountain

The characters can easily follow the tracks up the mountainside, and as they move further up they notice a small stream following the same trail, as well as days old carcasses of deer and other mountain goats. Eventually they will get to a spot where the blue moss grows. There they find what looks to be a recently unearthed tunnel entrance, where a small amount of water is flowing out.

The Unearthed Tunnel

Inside the tunnel, players will immediately notice the smell of rust and rot. It is dark and dank inside, and only 30 or so feet inside is a small chamber off to the right, where a pile of rags, leaves, and skins shows a sleeping area fit for a singular Ogrillon. If the Ogrillon fled the attack earlier, it will be here, injured and resting, and will defend itself. If it was killed earlier, other than small animal carcasses and this bed, there are no other signs of Ogrillon or any other living creatures. The players may choose to return to town here, or keep investigating.

Delver Signs

If the players continue down tunnel, they reach an area that contains small bags and boxes, with all manner of old and dust covered adventuring gear. One bag contains a small journal. The last page reads:

"We found a tunnel farther up the mountain today. The entrance is narrow, but it opens into what looks like the bottom of an old aqueduct.

The stonework is ancient. None of us recognize it.

We followed it far enough to find some kind of gate farther in, but decided not to open it until morning. If the aqueduct leads anywhere, there may be more of the settlement beyond it.

Ren thought he heard something moving on the other side.

Probably rats. I hope not. I hate rats.

We'll go in tomorrow.”

There are a few branching paths, one leading to a small abandoned encampment, and another leading to a caved in portion of the waterway. If the players follow the water stream, they will travel through a small aqueduct, then they will reach the sluice gate.

The Sluice Guardian

The last area is a medium sized room, with a small stream of water slowly flowing out from under a stuck open sluice gate. Here there are also the remains of several Delver adventurers. As the players enter the room, a sluice guardian will appear from underneath the gate, and attack the intruders. It will move into the room to attack the player characters, but will not follow the party if they decide to flee. The guardian has been here for over a millenium, guarding this area from potential intruders into the aqueduct system.

Sluice Guardian Stat Block here

Here the players may decide to return back to Whisp's Hollow, since they have successfully completed Robint's request of finding out whether there were any more Ogrillon where the first one came from. However, players may choose to continue exploring. If so, move to Chapter 3: Barrellion, to continue this branch. Otherwise, continue below to A Free Day In Whisp's Hollow.

A Free Day In Whisp's Hollow

After returning from the mountain—or after declining to investigate it—the characters should have time to pursue their own interests before official investigators arrive to question survivors about Curiad.

Whisp's Hollow contains several optional situations.

The characters may pursue all, some, or none of them.

The Warehouse

The warehouse sits on the shore of Lake Solace, housing both extra goods brought in by locals and trade goods brought in from the outside. It is one long building, 90 feet long and 30 feet wide. There is one entrance, a large doorway that carts can enter through, usually guarded by a member of the local guard, and several high windows that open outward on the lake side. The northwest corner of the building holds a small room where the receiving records are kept. Close to the entrance is the ruined grain sacks and slightly damaged crate, small black shard barely visible, still on the carts they were brought in on. In the rafters above the crate are Promethean markings warning about the dangerous crate object. Larger than normal rats scurry around beneath the cart, eating grain that has fallen below.

The Fresh Promethean Markings

Strange new markings have appeared inside the Warehouse since the refugees arrived. Seargent Kellen noticed them the night before through the windows while he was on guard duty. He has not been able to go inside to further investigate, since he is busy with the refugees and continuing his regular watches. He will be on guard duty outside the warehouse tonight, and requests that the player characters make there way inside to remove the markings. He fears

that these are Delver symbols, and once the authorities from House Belvor get to town, they may find them and accuse the town of being Delver sympathizers.

Forging The Ledger

Gideon Vey approaches the characters with a problem.

A shipment of grain he signed for has been damaged from the attack on Curiad and is unfit for sale. Under pressure he signed that the condition of all the trade goods had been fine, hoping to fix the issue himself. However, with Fulcrum merchants on their way to town in the next day or two, he needs the records forged to show less usable grain. He knows the warehouse is being guarded, and he cannot talk his way in without becoming suspicious himself, and requests that the player go in and change the receiving records.

The Unregistered Crate

Vey also arranged for an unregistered crate to travel with the shipment, and did not record it on the shipping receipts.

Sometime during the attack and subsequent travel to Whisp's Hollow the crate was damaged.

Vey does not know what is inside the crate, but is being paid well to move it. He asks the characters to bring the crate out of the warehouse and return it to him.

Inside the crate, if the players choose to open it, is a small fragment several inches long. Jagged and dark obsidian, light seems to disappear against its surface. It feels unnaturally cold, and faintly radiates a powerful but unfamiliar magic.

The crate's damage has caused some grain around it to spoil in a strange way, and some nearby rats have begun changing in unnatural ways. There are Promethean signs, that when translated leave a warning: Dangerous; do not handle without protection. This was made by the Promethean from Curiad who paid for the crate to be moved.

The rats may attack the characters if they are threatened. Use the swarm of rats stat block in the Monster Manual.

Elias Thorm

Elias Thorm is a Promethean, an underground group based off the original Delvers, working toward understanding and defeating the Consuming. The crate was sent here to Whisp's Hollow for Elias to retrieve. He enters the warehouse sometime after the players have explored the area.

If he sees the characters near exposed object:

"How long has that been open?"

If asked what it is:

"Something that shouldn't be sitting beside sacks of grain."

He produces or obtains a compact lead container.

"I can tell you more when it isn't changing the rats."

Elias is associated with the Prometheans.

He does not immediately explain the organization or give the characters a lecture on its goals.

If the characters surrender the fragment, he contains it in a lead box he has brought with him.

If they insist on keeping it, he warns them about the risk.

If they ignore the situation entirely, Elias eventually attempts to recover and contain the object himself.

He does not immediately share his association with the Prometheans, but tells the party if they want to know more, they can ask for Lenora at the Great Library in Decaris.

The Keeper's Lantern

Sister Laidra found records at the Temple of the Lights that contain an old entry:

“The Keeper’s Lantern was carried north and laid with its final bearer.”

The Keepers were part of an older local tradition involving mountain paths, shelters, and messages between isolated communities.

Another saying survives:

“Where the Keeper’s light walks, the mountain’s hungry do not follow.”

Sister Laidra is curious about this relic, and asks the players if they will visit the mountain shelter to find out more about it. The record can lead characters toward an old mountain haven several hours north of Whisp’s Hollow.

The Mountain Haven

The small, clearly older, building has a kitchen and several small bedrooms, enough for a small group of travellers to rest for a night. There is a small cemetery in the back. Inside a small central mausoleum sits the Keeper's Lantern. It sits on a pedestal, and the mausoleum's writing convey that this is the burial place of the keepers, including the last one. The lanterns flame still burns steadily, seemingly not needing fuel. The players can choose to take the lantern or leave it behind on their journey back.

This region is also hunted by a Hidebehind.

The Hidebehind

The Hidebehind is a tall, thin predator capable of concealing itself behind cover far too small to hide its body.

It isolates prey from the group and attacks when people become separated.

The Keeper’s Lantern is especially useful against it.

While a Hidebehind is within the bright light produced by the Keeper’s Lantern, it cannot use Unnatural Hiding or take the Hide action.

The hidebehind will attempt to corner one of the players while they are at the shelter. The characters can retrieve the Lantern, confront the creature, avoid it, drive it away, or leave the site entirely.

Statistics for the Hidebehind and the Keeper’s Lantern appear in the appendices.

Mara's Package

If Mara learns the characters still intend to travel to Decaris, she has a request.

“If you’re actually going to Decaris, I have something that needs to get there.”

The package is addressed to Gavina Lahm.

She doesn't describe what is in the package, even when asked, except that it's not dangerous and technically not illegal.

Gavina works as a runner and procurement contact for a successful gambling den in Decaris.

She handles supplies, messages, payments, and discreet transportation.

The gambling den can become important later in the campaign.

If the characters refuse, Mara finds another courier.

Jakob's Journal

Jakob may ask the characters to recover his family journal if they ever return toward Curiad. He offers what little money he can.

The journal is valuable to Jakob because it contains his family's history, and it's the only thing of value he cares to have returned.

Other Activities

Characters may instead spend their free time shopping, speaking with refugees, helping repair damage, assisting Val, drinking at the Rock Bottom, researching local history, speaking with Gregor, exploring Lake Solace, resting, finding ordinary paid work, or doing nothing particularly productive.

All are valid. Instead of a checklist of side quests to do, the free day exists to give the players control over what they care about.

The Investigators Arrive

The third morning after the characters arrive in Whisp's Hollow, three representatives arrive because of the attack on Curiad.

They are:

Fredrik Sabini, representing House Belvor.

Bishop Drake Lasidus, representing the Church of Illumination.

Ophelia Strong, representing the Fulcrum merchants.

They represent three institutions with different concerns.

Fredrik wants to understand the attack as a security and operational threat.

Drake wants to understand the supernatural effects and the condition of the survivors.

Ophelia wants to know how an organized force moved people and materials through regional trade networks without leaving an obvious logistical trail.

They willingly cooperate with one another and share information, however their priorities are not the same.

They will each seek out the characters to interview separately.

Fredrik speaks with them first.

Drake follows.

Ophelia comes last.

Each has access to the important notes gathered by the others, so the players should not be forced to repeat the same account three times.

The investigators' arrival marks the beginning of Chapter 4: The Curiad Investigation.

If the characters have decided not to explore Barrellion, proceed directly to Chapter 4.

The investigators should arrive around 3 days after the party, however, if timing at the table develops differently, adjust the investigators' arrival as necessary. They may arrive while the party is out of town.

They do not need to arrive according to a rigid calendar.

Whisp's Hollow should have enough room for the characters' choices to determine the order of events.