

THE BURNING
OF THE FREE PORT
OF DOHN
AMURAN

A STORY KIT
— CRAFTED FOR —
GRIMWILD
BY
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THE BURNING OF THE FREE PORT OF DOHN AMURAN

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CREDITS

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INTRODUCTION

Gerabe's Run comprises a series of rivers and canals flowing north-south through the Grimwild. Trade along the Run is done on **narrowboats** and barges, pulled through the sluggish current by oxes from the parallel towpath. Every day or two's travel, there is a **caravanserai** with stables and enclosed artificial harbors.

The river terminates in the city **Suzh-Batan**, which contains a harbor carrying high berth fees and taxes. The narrowboat captains have begun expanding a caravanserai's harbor about a half-day's ride south, dubbed **Dohn Amuran**, to off-load cargo to land-carts and avoid many of the harbor's costs.

However, the new, free port of Dohn Amuran has been suffering a series of misfortune. As it threatens the personal fortune of Suzh-Batan's harbormaster, **Ubam Hiddor**, some believe he may be retaliating.

A narrowboat the PCs are traveling on is a victim of espionage.

In a dockside coffeehouse, the PCs hear a group of captains talking about the free port and its troubles.

The PCs are offered an opportunity to perform acts of espionage on behalf of Ubam Hiddor — through sufficiently deniable intermediaries, of course.

PRESSURE POOLS

4D ACTS OF ESPIONAGE



- trees are felled across the towpath
- block-and-tackles at the docks have their ropes cut
- a narrowboat is set on fire

6D BLOCKADE



- Chains are strung across the river between Dohn Amuran and Suzh-Batan
- Cargo bypassing Dohn Amuran is being seized and warehoused
- Sailors are carrying weapons and dockworkers are spending most of their time getting drunk and angry

4D RETRIBUTION



- The sailors at the blockade are savagely beaten
- The docked boats are burned
- Rezhra Waol, narrowboat captain of the Lazy Days, is found hanged just north of Dohn Amuran

4D ASSAULT ON SUZH-BATAN'S HARBOR



- Piers on fire
- Sailors fight dockworkers in the streets
- Either Ubam Hiddor or Dureh Kej is killed in the name of justice

The days are unpleasant while riding the boats of Gerabe's Run. The turgid water allows many mosquitos to be born. The oxen on the tow-path snuffle and shit constantly. It is an endless assault on the senses.

The crew chatters endlessly, sharing patently false bawdy stories of women with breasts the size of large melons and men whose members strain the confines of their trousers. The common traveler might fish from the boat —as if one would desire to eat the mudfish of the Run— or plink the strings of the lap-harps; strings never quite in tune, I am compelled to mention!

Traveling on Gerabe's Run is, simply, the least civilized form of transport of a dignified traveler such as myself!

I busy myself with tomes of poetry, patiently waiting to see the spires of Suzh-Batan rise on the horizon.

When they do come into view, it is near to sunset. The light casts over the western mountains and makes the spires burn with a golden light. It is in the plaster, you see, a high silica content which makes them glimmer as if in a dream.

After the interminable wait for a passenger dock, I summon a palanquin to carry me to Avizen's House, where a firm young man will cleanse me of the stench of this travel and then drive all associated memories from my mind with his tender ministrations.

Ah, the glories of actual civilization.

*- excerpt from **The Travels Of A Humble Poet***

USEFUL PIECES

Ubam Hiddor (*harbormaster, corrupt*): Minor nobility from Suzh-Batan, his position has allowed him to gain considerable wealth, and not entirely legitimately.

- ▶ Speaks of the greatness and convenience of Suzh-Batan's harbor
- ▶ Demures any investigative questions, referring the PCs to various dockmasters who are never present
- ▶ Will converse at great length to — perhaps intentionally — waste time

Suzh-Batan: A large city lost in nostalgia of its prior importance, but remains dominant due to its wealth.

- ▶ Neighborhoods defined by terraced levels ascending the riverside hills
- ▶ Residents who can afford to, swathe themselves in layers of rich and vibrant fabrics
- ▶ Dens of people lost in dreams fueled by smoking one addictive narcotic or another

Mellicafe is a delicacy I always partake of when I visit Suzh-Batan. The proprietor of the coffee house brings me the mellicafe disc on a small plate. It is a pressed mix of powdered coffee beans and honey. I place the disc in a small pewter brazier and add goat milk. As it simmers and melts the disc, I add a pinch of nutmeg. Soon, it has melted, and after a brief stir, I pour it into the ceramic cup and sip it: sweet, spicy, and bitter. A taste unique to this strange, dreaming city.

Dureh Kej (*narrowboat rabble-rouser, self-righteous*):
Lifelong narrowboat captain and unofficial community leader of Dohn Amuran.

- ▶ Skin toughened by constant sun
- ▶ Listens much and speaks little
- ▶ Quick with a blade and has one near to hand

Dohn Amuran: Originally a small caravanserai, recent and ongoing construction has expanded the harbor.

- ▶ Housing is mixed tents, yurts, and lean-tos, starting to construct timber and stone houses
- ▶ The day-long ringing of blacksmith's hammers as they make the endlessly required amount of nails and cribbing spikes needed for the construction
- ▶ Cheap food, cheap beer, cheap prostitutes — all of which are hygienically questionable

I love it here in Dohn Amuran. The port is safe. The warehouses are spacious. The beer comes in an extra large mug at the inn. Ialikka keeps my bed warm, and she never asks questions about where I stay while I'm on the river.

Do I miss anything about Suzh-Batan? Of course. The chef at Blue Lotus makes a wonderful dish with ginger and quail and it will be a long time before we have the same culinary wonders they do.

I've heard a rumor that some captains will found a smoking lounge. I don't know if I believe it, but if they do, I will enjoy their hospitality and the gentle dreams that come from their long pipes.

One day, we shall want for nothing that Suzh-Batan offers. One day.

WHAT IS A NARROWBOAT?

A narrowboat is a type of boat used in primary in England, appearing during its era of industrialization. Many local rivers were joined by canals to facilitate trade, and the boats needed to be small enough to navigate those canals and the river locks, typically between 6 and 7 feet wide, and 50 to 70 feet long.

Prior to the adoption of steam engines, narrowboats would be towed upstream by teams of horses walking on paths parallel to the river, dubbed tow-paths. Served by a crew of only a few people, narrowboats carry cargo and passengers on routes spanning just a few days of travel.

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrowboat>

As an explorer, I ask the boat's captain, Irsiahn, if there are any maps of the river. She pulls a leather tube from her cabin, retrieving a map. I notice immediately that I do not see the wriggles and curves that make up the actual shape of Gerabe's Run, but instead see a long, straight blue line that neatly bisects the page.

"I made this myself, and I began by trying to copy the river's course, but I soon realized I just didn't need to know that. If you look at these symbols, it shows the distance between the caravansaries. Here, there are sometimes owls that like to take a swipe, so I made that note", she gestures to a vaguely birdlike icon. Next to it is a small amount of text, written in no script I have ever seen "What language is that, captain?"

D66 NARROWBOAT NAMES

☐☐ A Little Behind Schedule	☐☐ Mer Mer Mer Maid
☐☐ Beguiling Crone	☐☐ Minnow's Saddle
☐☐ Berrig's Giant Nose	☐☐ Optimistic Stern
☐☐ Clamander	☐☐ Panflute At Midnight
☐☐ No Discounts, No Delays	☐☐ Possibly Drunk
☐☐ Dirty Waterfall	☐☐ Red Wren's Rasp
☐☐ End of the Rowed	☐☐ Representing
☐☐ Every Dam Day	☐☐ River Slug
☐☐ Folly	☐☐ Salt Water Pickle
☐☐ Grouse's Run	☐☐ Sunset Cygnet
☐☐ Hard To Port	☐☐ The Special Beans
☐☐ Hops & Barley	☐☐ Tideraven
☐☐ I'm Oar Tall o'Tea	☐☐ Unsinkable 2
☐☐ It's Bigger Underwater	☐☐ Vagabond
☐☐ Just For A Day Or Two	☐☐ 'Ware The Magpie
☐☐ Kelp Daddy	☐☐ We Patched The Bottom
☐☐ Lellow Yeather	☐☐ Wet Dog's Bone
☐☐ Liar's Lark	☐☐ Yet to be Found

"It's my own cipher. I know it, and my crew knows it, but if someone took it from me..." She gives an altogether uncomfortably vicious smile, "they would find some unpleasant surprises in their travels!" We both laugh, but my laugh is tinged with a fear I had not felt before. "I'm paying for passage, so that ensures my safety," I try to reassure myself.

SET IT UP

Suzh-Batan's Harbor Control: Choose 1 that Ubam Hiddor pays off, and 1 that wants to collect instead.

- ❑ The Upright Guild of Merchants and Carters
- ❑ The Deep Eyes
- ❑ The Percipient Order
- ❑ Majordomo Irrim of the Fifth Palace
- ❑ Benthos Oldroun

Funding Dohn Amuran: All this work at Dohn Amuran requires a lot of coin. Who's paying? Choose 1, or more.

- ❑ The narrowboat captains as an anarchic collective
- ❑ A nearby, landlocked city looking to supplant the importance of Suzh-Batan
- ❑ Upright Guild of Merchants and Carters
- ❑ An unknown person, only seen in hooded cloak, who smells of nutmeg

Other threats of Gerabe's Run: Other than the trade war, narrowboat captains have other threats to their lives and trade. Choose one active threat, one recently pacified, and one waiting in the wings.

- ❑ Brigands regard the slow-moving boats as easy prey
- ❑ River spirits angry at the artificial changes to the Gerabe river
- ❑ Lamprey men — vampires and ghouls — leaving narrowboats with exsanguinated crew
- ❑ Drought causing river levels to dip and forcing lighter cargo trips
- ❑ Flooding that has eroded the towpaths and damaged some river locks

THE POWERS OF SUZH-BATAN

A problem facing the adventurers, as well as Dohn Amuran, is that Ubam Hiddor is a noble in a powerful, if decadent, city. Using violence against him or the city, is likely to prompt a devastating militarized response. A reasonable adventurer, and the less hot-tempered of Dohn Amuran, can predict this outcome.

So, what should they do? Other than the obvious violence, here are a few approaches the adventurers might take.

Shall they assassinate Ubam Hiddor?

A sufficiently stealthy or crafty group could attempt to infiltrate Hiddor's home and assassinate him. While he would certainly be guarded at all times, this is the most straightforward approach to taking his life without inviting reprisal.

Arrange for Hiddor's exile?

As in any such rich and decadent city, the power structures are not monolithic. Hiddor has many supporters, but just as many who oppose him. If the adventurers can contact those groups — and entice their support — they may be able to frame Hiddor as corrupt and traitorous. Once beyond Suzh-Batan's walls, Hiddor is easy prey.

Perhaps they support Suzh-Batan?

The adventurers may choose to support Ubam Hiddor and Suzh-Batan in return for coin or other patronage. Capable and violent intermediaries can always find a comfortable home.

CHALLENGES

The adventurers have many potential courses of action, and these challenges represent some of the difficulties they may have to overcome.

4D | Calm the Captains

- * Distrust Outsiders
- * Justifiably Aggrieved
- ⦿ Accuse of Being Collaborators
- ⦿ Take Hotheaded Action
- ✗ Another Act of Sabotage

6D | Find Hiddor's Goons in the Docktown

- * Loyal to (or Scared of) Ubam Hiddor
- ⦿ Distract with Drinks
- ⦿ Frame for a Crime
- ⦿ Rough 'Em Up
- ✗ 6D Annoy the Dockworkers

6D | Defend the Blockade

- * Hiddor has hired Mercenaries
- * Assault From All Sides
- ⦿ Bring up the Giantkin!
- ⦿ Set It On Fire
- ✗ 8D The Blockade Has Been Destroyed

8D | Find Hiddor's Enemies

- * Ambiguous Support
 - * Disparate, Unorganized Groups and Individuals
 - * View the Adventurers as Disposable
-
- ⦿ Double Agent
 - ⦿ Wrong Social Standing
-
- ✗ 8D Too Suspicious

6D | Assassination

- * Halls Crowded with Servants
 - * Patrolling Guards
-
- ⦿ Stuck in a Dead End
 - ⦿ Distracted by Treasure
-
- ✗ 6D Alarms!

8D | Assault Udam Hiddor

- * Walled Estate
 - * City Guards
 - * Part of the City's Nobility
-
- ⦿ Another Wave of Goons
 - ⦿ Unarmed Witnesses
 - ⦿ You're Under Arrest

EPILOGUE

OR, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Regardless of how the adventurers are involved in the conflict between Suzh-Batan and Dohn Amuran, the region will have definitely suffered upheaval and destruction.

In the best case outcome for Dohn Amuran, the adventurers have found some way to get Ubam Hiddor disavowed by the greater nobility of Suzh-Batan, preventing a violent response by the city's nobility writ large. There certainly are power groups that want to supplant Hiddor's power, and might have been involved in Dohn Amuran already, depending on your choices made in "Set It Up".

Without that, it is likely the military of Suzh-Batan would be mustered to seize all the riverboat captains of Dohn Amuran, whereupon they would be taken to Suzh-Batan for trial. Whatever magistrate is deciding their fate, they will be unconcerned with facts or justification, instead sentencing the captains to death for their part in the events. Crew are likely to be taken as slaves, and the buildings of Dohn Amuran put to the torch.

The adventurer's would need to leave the regions near Gerabe's Run, for Suzh-Batan is a sleeping giant they should be loathe to wake.