

Cobton-on-the-Shiver

1104—A thriving village of humanoid animals, ruled by cruel crookhorn ruffians.

OVERVIEW

An idyllic-seeming village situated at a bend in the River Shiver, in the Valley of Wise Beasts. Most of the buildings in the village are quaint little houses of wood, half human size, with charmingly carved and painted gables. Mingled among them are a number of treehouses, stilt-houses (beside the river), and a few larger buildings of stone (located around the village square).

Inhabitants (200): Humanoid animals, 2'–3' tall, dressed in dapper woollens and tweed (see the *Dolmenwood Monster Book*). Many species of animals live in Cobton—see the *Humanoid Animal Species* table.

Ruler: The village is within the dominion of **Atanuwë (p45)**, under the totalitarian rule of the goatman **Baron Fraggleshorn (p46)** from his tower in hex 1004 and his band of crookhorn ruffians.

Religion: The animals of Cobton worship **Atanuwë (p45)** as lord of all creation. The villagers refer to their master as the Nag-Lord, not knowing of its other names.

Atanuwë as Lord of Creation

Upon taking up lordship of the abandoned reaches of northern Dolmenwood, Atanuwë decided it needed servants and worshippers. It created the crookhorn goatfolk to do its bidding in war, but also saw fit to awaken sentience in the woodland animals of the nearby valley. The animals—given humanoid form and intelligence—were to serve merely as adoring worshippers. Several centuries later, the animals of the Valley of Wise Beasts worship the Nag-Lord as master of all creation, as they know nothing of the world beyond the Valley.

Former Human Settlement

Cobton was built upon the ruins of a human settlement which had lain derelict and overgrown for untold centuries. Atanuwë tasked the newly awakened animals with clearing the ruins and building a village for their own kind there, in mockery of the proud doings of humankind.

The Tyranny of the Crookhorns

Upon first impression, all in Cobton seems well. Animals merrily go about their business, fishing, sailing little boats, making and mending, smoking pipes and drinking tea. In truth, however, the inhabitants of the Valley live under the totalitarian rule of the crookhorn **Baron Fraggleshorn (p46)** and his band of ruffians. Daily communal worship of the Nag-Lord is enforced and it is illegal (on pain of death!) for any animal to leave the Valley. While the majority of animals simply wish to lead a quiet life and stay out of trouble, a rebellion is brewing—see *The Grey League*.

HUMANOID ANIMAL SPECIES

d12	Species	d12	Species
1	Badger	7	Rabbit
2	Fox	8	Rat
3	Hare	9	Squirrel
4	Mole	10	Toad
5	Mouse	11	Water vole
6	Otter	12	Weasel

The Grey League—Resistance Movement

Purpose: A secret (and blasphemous) resistance movement against the tyranny of the Nag-Lord, with the ultimate aim of expelling all crookhorns from Cobton.

Membership: After a recent backlash, the League is reduced to three mice, a badger, and two water voles, in addition to their leader, **Wallobry Trundlehorn**.

Wallobry Trundlehorn—Grey League Leader

An old mole lady with twinkling eyes and a grey patch on her head. Dresses in ill-fitting woollens and a floppy, floral hat.

Demeanour (Lawful): Timid, principled. Looks at the ground when speaking.

Speech: Hesitant mumbling. Woldish, Gaffe.

Desires: All crookhorns expelled from the Valley. To marry the innkeeper, **Smunkey O'Brady (p100)**.

Illegal to Bear Arms

The bearing of anything more threatening than a dagger or a stout staff is banned in Cobton. Transgressors will quickly attract the attentions of the crookhorn guards.

Reaction to Outsiders

Visitors from beyond the Valley are a once-in-a-lifetime event for the residents of Cobton. Strangers will rapidly come to the attention of the crookhorn village guard, who will try to imprison them or see them off.

EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY

All items for sale in Cobton are sized for humanoid animals—approximately half human size. Basic gear and common tools (e.g. backpacks, bedrolls, candles, chisels, cooking pots, fishing rods, lanterns, oil flasks, ropes, sacks, standard rations, torches) can easily be found for sale. Weapons larger than a dagger are not available (except in secret, to trusted friends of the smith—see *p101*). Mounts and armour cannot be bought in Cobton.



Map Key

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The King's Head (Inn) | 5. Village Church |
| 2. Village Square and Docks | 6. The Smithy |
| 3. Guardhouse and Gaol | 7. Toad's Hole (Herbalist) |
| 4. Shiverston Brewery | 8. Water Mill |
| | 9. Dobbledown Tea Rooms |
| | 10. River Path |

The Crookhorn Village Guard

Lazy, cruel, and anarchic crookhorns clad in a rough patchwork of chainmail, plates, and studs. The guard is under the command of **Briggsy Bugber** (p100).

Arrival on the scene: If word of unrest (i.e. against the crookhorn regime) or of outsiders reaches the guard, 2d3 will arrive within 1d12 minutes (1d4 turns at night). A further 1d6 guards may arrive 10 minutes later (1d4 turns later at night), if reinforcements are called for.

AC 6 [13] **HD** 2+1* (10hp) **Att** 1 × bite/butt (1d6 + disease) or 1 × weapon (2d4 or by weapon + 1) **THACO** 17 [+2] **MV** 120' (40') **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2) **ML** 8 **AL** Chaotic **XP** 35

Disease: Anyone bitten or butted by a crookhorn guard must **save versus poison** or be afflicted by a nasty infection (see crookhorn—DMB).

COBTON ENCOUNTERS—DAY

d6 Encounter

- 1d4 cackling crookhorn guards tripping passersby.
- 2 moles flounder in the river, their boat capsized.
- One of the **mouse millers** (see the **Water Mill**) with a glazed expression, gazing into empty space.
- 2d3 crookhorn guards round up everyone in the village to the church to celebrate the Nag-Lord's birthday (of which there are several per year).
- The public hanging of the rat **Hackle Kingsley**, who has been lingering in the gaol for some months.
- 1d4 crookhorn guards drag a yelping rabbit—caught with a knife longer than the permitted 6"—to the gaol.

COBTON ENCOUNTERS—NIGHT

d6 Encounter

- 1d3 heretical mice remove the hanged hares from the village square and replace them with unicorn effigies.
- Briggsy Bugber** (p100) slipping into the mill's back door to consult with **Old Madame Whiphorn** (p101).
- Loud cheers and merry singing drift from the Dobbledown Tea Rooms—a birthday party.
- 1d4 crookhorn guards enforcing an impromptu curfew.
- Briggsy Bugber** (p100) and 2d4 crookhorn guards march through the streets to welcome a visiting party including **Baron Fraggleshorn** (p46) himself.
- Wallobry Trundlehorn** sneaking round the back of the Shiverston Brewery for a secret meeting of the Grey League.

1. THE KING'S HEAD (INN)

A human-height ground floor of ancient stone, augmented with a miniature upper floor in red-varnished wood. The King's Head is the social nexus of the village.

Sign: A portrait of Atanuwë, depicted (as is traditional in the Valley) with white fur, purple horn, pink mane, a toothy smirk, and seven eyes in a row.

Common room: Cheery and spotlessly clean. Miniature (half human size) tables are decked with embroidered tablecloths and lace doilies and ringed with dainty stools carved with sylvan scenes. Little cast iron lanterns hang from the human-height (8') ceiling, lending a warm, flickering glow to the space. Rocking chairs with cosy cushions stand in the corners. The landlord, **Smunkey O'Brady**, serves from a bar stacked with shiny brass tankards.

Guests: Animals of all kinds, drinking, singing, and dancing upon tables. Crookhorn guards poke their heads in periodically.

Services at the King's Head

Common lodgings and food: See the *Dolmenwood Player's Book*. Only animal-sized beds are available. Human-sized persons may be offered a cramped space in the common room.

Shiverston ale: The only drink served is the local brew from the Shiverston brewery—a golden ale with a smooth texture and a hint of honey. 1sp a (half-sized) mug.

No stabling: The inn has no stable, and the village no facilities for handling large mounts.

Smunkey O'Brady—King's Head Proprietor

A tan male hare, with one bent ear. Dresses in red and white polka dot pantaloons with a black apron.

Demeanour (Neutral): Excitable, boastful, conspiratorial. Tugs on his bent ear when thinking.

Speech: Whiny drawl. Woldish, Gaffe.

Desires: For Cobton to be freed from slavery. To sail upon the mythical Lake Longmere.

Knowledge: Knows of the Grey League and has contacts. Knows that Baron Fraggleshorn is afraid of snakes.

2. VILLAGE SQUARE AND DOCKS

A neat cobbled square beside the river, with a set of small piers and moorings.

Gallows: Hanging ominously in the middle of the square are the rotting corpses of three hares (erstwhile members of the Grey League).

Boat travel: Animals seldom travel far by water. Passage on a boat to hexes 1004 or 1104 can be bought for 1gp per foot passenger. Mounts and vehicles cannot be handled. The journey takes 1½ hours to 1004 and 2 hours to 1104.

Frisk market: Once a week—on Frisk—animals from throughout the Valley gather here to sell their wares and produce.

Briggsy Bugber—Crookhorn Guard Captain

A red-furred, hunch-backed female crookhorn with frenzied, staring eyes and a single, spiralling horn in the centre of her forehead (regarded as highly auspicious). Wears a chainmail hauberk daubed with blood.

Demeanour (Chaotic): Brutal, utterly humourless.

Speech: Dictatorial braying. Woldish, Gaffe.

Desires: To serve in battle under **Captain Snarkscorn (p46)**—bored of her post in Cobton.

Combat Stats

AC 5 [14] **HD** 4* (22hp) **Att** 1 × bite/butt (1d6 + disease) or 1 × weapon (2d4 or by weapon + 1) **THACO** 16 [+3] **MV** 120' (40') **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4) **ML** 9 **AL** Chaotic **XP** 125

Disease: Anyone bitten or butted by Briggsy must **save versus poison** or be afflicted by a nasty infection (see crookhorn—DMB).

3. GUARDHOUSE AND GAOL

An old stone house of human dimensions, extended with a wooden lookout tower and used as the village guard's base of operations.

Guards: 12 crookhorns (DMB) are barracked here, along with the guard captain **Briggsy Bugber**. 2d6 of them are present at any given time, when not on patrol in the village.

Prisoner: A rat named **Hackle Kingsley** is currently in the gaol, awaiting trial for the crime of attempting to leave the Valley.

4. THE SHIVERSTON BREWERY

A long, low building of black-glazed bricks, alive with the sounds of cheery industry.

Secret meetings: Of late, the Grey League (see *p98*) has held their candlelit meetings in the cellars of the brewery.

5. VILLAGE CHURCH

A wee, human-sized chapel repurposed as an animal-sized church praising the Nag-Lord. The walls are of pebble-dashed stucco and a wicker unicorn is perched atop the pointed roof.

Interior: Polished river stones serve as seats. A gaudily painted clay effigy of the Nag-Lord stands upon a 4' high altar. A holy unicorn horn (actually a painted piece of carved wood) hangs by a chain from the ceiling.

Populace: Animals cowering before the effigy of their lord, praying for mercy. Every evening, the whole village gathers at the church for (forced) communal hymns and prayer. **Briggsy Bugber** acts as priest, bearing a viciously spiked ceremonial mace and wearing a cloak studded with hundreds of horns.

6. THE SMITHY

The village's smithy is dug into the banks of the eastern side of the river, its location signified by a tall brick chimney emerging from the grass. Entrance is possible from a dock on the riverside or via the back door.

Services at the Smithy

The smith, **Fosbry Hollowhop**, cares for the village's supplies in pots, pans, and tools. He also illegally manufactures weapons for the Grey League in secret, at 10 times the normal price.

Fosbry Hollowhop—Smith

An middle-aged male fox with grizzled fur and an eye patch. Dresses in scorched leathers and always carries a flask of strong spirits in his belt.

Demeanour (Neutral): Affable friend-to-all. Remains carefully neutral, politically.

Speech: Eloquent and meandering. Woldish, Gaffe.

Desires: To be the wealthiest animal in the Valley—and leader of Cobton—if the crookhorn regime is deposed.

7. TOAD'S HOLE (HERBALIST)

A round door and windows in a little knoll, bordered by well-tended herb gardens and a wicker fence. The village herbalist does nothing to advertise the presence of his business, but is known to all locals.

Entrance: A plain wooden door with a brass plaque: "Dr. Simeone Fisher—all who ail are welcome".

Interior: A series of cosy subterranean chambers with rounded doors, walls, and ceilings (6' tall at their highest point). Shelves stacked with textbooks, notebooks, and jars of ointment line the walls. Bundles of drying herbs hang beside fireplaces. The herbalist, **Dr. Simeone Fisher**, hurries earnestly from his studies to greet visitors.

Services in Toad's Hole

Mushrooms and herbs: The preparations listed in the *Dolmenwood Player's Book* are sold at the standard prices and with the standard chance of availability.

Infirmary: For a fee of 5gp per day, the doctor will admit patients to his home for private care. Ailments are cured after half the normal duration and there is a 1-in-4 chance of magical diseases being healed after 2d6 days. The cost of any specific herbs required is extra.

Dr. Simeone Fisher—Herbalist

An elderly male toad with dark blue skin and unusual pale violet eyes. Dresses in pristine, medical whites, with little spectacles perched upon his nose.

Demeanour (Lawful): Cantankerous but kindly.

Speech: Rumbling and burping. Woldish, Gaffe.

Desires: Rare herbs and mushrooms. To cure the crookhorns of their maladies (believing their evil nature to be in truth a product of their sickness).

Old Madame Whiphthorn—Harpy

A bent, warty, pallid-skinned crone with staring red eyes and the legs, tail, and wings of a great crow. Scrawny, 3-jointed arms emerge from her shoulders, below the wings. On her head is a luxuriant cascade of blonde curls. She adorns herself with pearls.

Demeanour (Chaotic): Narcissistic, loves flattery.

Speech: The beautiful, clear voice of a young noblewoman. Woldish, Gaffe, Harpy, Sylvan.

Desires: Magic items. To eat the flesh of magic-users. To bear an Atacorn—a spawn of the Nag-Lord.

Possessions: A charred willow stick (*wand of illusion* with 12 charges). Pearl necklace (1,500gp) and earrings (250gp each).

8. WATER MILL

An imposing stone building of human dimensions with a granary tower at the rear. The lapping of the mill wheel and the grinding of the stone are ceaseless—the place produces sack after sack of fine, white flour.

Inhabitants: The mouse millers (husband and wife) and their four children. Utterly unbeknown to them, all are in the thrall of the harpy, **Old Madame Whiphthorn**, who lives secreted in their cellar.

Harpy in the cellar: A secret door in the mill's cellar leads to a suite of plushly decorated boudoirs and bedchambers, where the light of hypnotically flickering purple lanterns reflects off dozens of mirrors. This is the lair of the harpy **Old Madame Whiphthorn**, a servant of Atanuwë placed here as a spy.

Mouse informants: Every evening, the miller mice go below and tell the harpy of all that they saw and heard that day. Anything suspicious soon reaches the ears **Briggsy Bugber**, who secretly visits at night.

9. DOBBLEDOWN TEA ROOMS

A little white-walled farmhouse with a thatched roof, sitting at the edge of several acres of arable.

Sign: A smiling cow wearing a chef's hat.

Interior: The front room and kitchen of the farm now serve as a public tea room, with little rickety tables and chairs situated around a circular, green rug embroidered with the smiling cow. The owner, a twitchy squirrel named **Nathan-iel Nutkin**, scurries between tables serving guests.

Services at Dobbledown Tea Rooms

Tea and scones: A pot of tea with creamy milk costs 2sp. A full cream tea—with scones, butter, clotted cream, and blackberry jam—costs 1gp.

10. RIVER PATH

A little footpath (not suitable for large mounts or vehicles) that winds along the northern bank of the River Shiver, leading from Baron Fraggleshorn's tower (hex 1004) to Longshanks Falls (hex 1203).