

# ALT HIDFURT

W=3 R=5 B=5

Location: Spurr



I imagine a fort located in a lagoon area, where the tides have pushed beyond the coastline, drawing a geography of small and medium-sized lakes of brackish water. The small lakes are temporary formations of brackish origin, formed by the action of the tides and by human intervention; in fact, according to the passage of the sea, the number of the small lakes and their conformation changes continuously, with the change of the seasons. The fort rises on a steep slope, connected to the beach by a series of paths that go through rocky walls, patches of glasswort and limonium, reeds near the lakes, winding mule tracks, until they settle on a raised plateau, where the fields of wheat and vines, in truth rather contained, surround the wooden fortifications that separate the village from its sources of supply. The climate is uncompromising: in the summer an almost torrid sultriness, in the winter howling wind and heavy rains; some fierce hurricanes that hit the coasts were not unknown to the inhabitants. The spring-summer period constitutes the immense fortune of this place: the gentry who colonized it, employing the massive mining labor of the peasants, were able to channel some of the brackish water courses into small natural pools, generating functional prototypes of salt marshes. There is still no mention of the typical rectangular tanks equally divided, and the volume of production could certainly not meet the needs of the entire Crescent Land. Usually the daily needs are met, but the gentry are eager to capitalize on this resource, and it is not uncommon for supplies to run out because they are shipped to the ports of Spurr; after all, this is why the outpost exists. To make-up for the lack of other resources, trade with Spurr's port cities is vital: climatic conditions make agriculture more vulnerable to prolonged periods of drought. In this regard, the settlement has a harbor that accommodates two of the largest cargo ships; the small boats of local

fishermen, on the contrary, are carried on the shoulders of the mule tracks or stored in some of the most isolated coastal ravines, and covered with straw. Another important resource is wood for boats, whose required type does not grow on the coast but covers only daily needs: this is exported from the hinterland, through rather distant junctions, near some hilly areas on the horizon. For such a place, fishing is a significant income; boats push along the coast with nets, or youngsters scour the area for limpets and seafood. Hunting focuses mainly on the birds of the area - herons or ducks - or frogs, as the hinterland is mostly barren and bare. Cooking is mainly focused on salted food: the typical dish is cod, or codfish, prepared for preservation by a process of salting and subsequent seasoning in large wooden barrels, served in soup or with bitter herbs. A very appreciated alcoholic beverage is produced by the fermentation process of myrtle.

I like to think that the main music here are rough songs, bickering, while long lines of peasants and freemen collect salt crystals or dig new connections, if erased by the tides. At sea, on the other hand, there is silence: there is respect for the craft, the fish flee if alerted, say the elders.

I imagine that this place has undergone attempted or successful raids by other merchant guilds, attracted by the possibility of easy earnings on these natural salt flats. The fort's location may be considerable, but a crew of pirates can still do significant damage on the coast. But the most significant damage is likely dictated by periods of drought, the fact that the salt marshes are still a resource that cannot be fully relied upon, and that the lakes are home to an aggressive population of mosquitoes and ticks and snakes, not infrequently involved in debilitating or fatal diseases. People may not be used to violence, but they have already seen their share of deaths.

The funeral rites are administered by priests, who wear a typical crown of intertwined shrubs and limonium, and a "mask" made of a bizarre mosaic of sea shells. These involve the sprinkling of salt on the head of the victim, some ritual formulas and the subsequent burial of the body, dislocated in the joints and narrowed by bands of cloth, in the sea.

I can imagine that the clothes are rather crude, but that there is a certain fascination for the lower social classes towards shells or stones polished by the sun. In the absence of gold or silver bracelets, these are the accessories that are woven into long necklaces, such as to reach the groin, very elaborate even in the simplicity of their materials.

5; ~~5+3=8; 8+5=13~~

#### **Monster or similarly dangerous specific threat:**

- Beast, monster, avatar, or undead
- It's more than a wumpus to hunt; it's fixated on or related to the local community in some way
- Circle knights try to solve obvious problems to garner good will

#### **Tone: Squick**

#### **One match of dice (5/5): double threat.**

Alt Hidfurt experienced a devastating combination of factors: during the particularly stormy winter period, a storm hit the coast, causing extensive damage to crops and generating a period of famine. To make matters worse, salt supplies were suddenly interrupted, hindering trade relations with Spurr. With their backs against the wall, the village population first called on the network of connections further afield by land; then, once supplies were exhausted and the possibility of rescue vanished, they turned to cannibalism

of the older members – and than the younger ones. The event cost the lives of about a third of the villagers. The trauma is still an open wound about two months later, where the return of more temperate climates has allowed the resumption of fishing activities: the remains of the dead are not hosted by their families, who preferred to erase the memory of them, along with their sins.

**The Ghouls** have risen from the remains of one of the fishermen who survived by feeding on human flesh (FRIEDEMANN), who died near the end of the famine period along with his daughter (FRAUKE). His wife, in a desperate attempt to "cure" them, hid them in a series of caves dug along the cliff sections. When the social order was still shaken by the emergency, funeral rites had been suspended since the departure of the local priest: it was easier to feed the two undead with the remains of cannibalism victims or with the corpses of the unfortunate ones caught searching for food on the sharp rocky ridges. But the return to a semblance of normality has meant again taking care of the dead, and for the woman it is increasingly difficult to feed the monsters. The undead, on the other hand, had no trouble chasing some unfortunate hunters in the reeds out of their refuge; their bodies, horribly devoured, were found and are a source of preoccupation among the population. **(B: 5, Q: 5, W:4, C:4, Armor 3)**

#### **Named characters:**

**Kinge**, fisherman, peasant: The former mother and wife of the two ghouls. A physically strong woman, accustomed to bad weather and toils at sea, but broken psychologically by the tragedy that has befallen her, she is convinced that there is a way to reinvert the curse that has affected her family (spoiler: there is no way to restore them to their previous state). She is involved in the disappearance of some bodies, although this strategy is raising more and more suspicions in the area. **(B: 8, Q: 5, W:4, C:2)**

**Hilde**, priest, freemen: the priestess of the village, belonging to the network of grey eminences expanded in the area of Spurr to contrast the magic of Rbaja; her recent arrival in Alt Hidfurt has involved energetic efforts to bring the lives of the inhabitants back to the sphere of normality. I imagine an older woman, quite brusque and fiercely determined to eradicate all forms of dark magic from the territory. The disappearance of a few bodies led her to believe in the presence of some wizard lurking in the area, a situation that prompted her to investigate the inhabitants with fierce determination. **(B: 4, Q: 2, W:5, C:8)**

**Ludolf**: Outdoorsman + martial (low), freemen: Kinge's brother-in-law, is aware of the ghoulish plague and its origin. He is intent on closing ranks to defend his family name, despite feeling nothing less than disgust for the monsters he feels compelled to protect. A sturdy man, resolved to extreme action by being put on the spot, but very quiet, his voice almost a sigh; very quiet and skilled with a bow. He has helped Kinge steal some bodies, but now fears that the priestess will come close to discovering the truth. **(highest sum)**

**Tripwire: If Circle members use black magic in front of witnesses: Hilde will mobilize the villagers against what is perceived as a Rbaja intrusion into the village.**

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#### **Space for notes:**

BERNHARD: cognato della vittima

BJÖRN Bulwark:



