What Everybody From Highvale Knows

One day an old, sour-faced pure strain human came to Highvale along with The Patrol. Somebody in the village learned from one of the members of The Patrol that this man was from the Eastern Lands, across the Middle Sea, and that he was a “Restorationist,” a member of a group who sought to bring things back to how they were in the times of the ancients. Rumors flew about how the Eastern Lands were a paradise of ancient wonders. The man a question, however, asking what it was that the folk of Highvale knew. The old cat-kin named Juriner stepped forward to answer him. What follows is what she said:

The beings of Highvale, human, plant, and animal, all know that once there was a time of the ancients, when the tribes of pure strain humans all lived in wondrous harmony with The World. They were guided by Cam, and the other Pylon Gods. They had amazing things, such as cities in the sky and on The Moon, and complete mastery over The World, and they did not age or die. There was peace and plenty, and there were no dreaded dog-men, the Arks, to terrorize the Lands. But these humans grew complacent in their plenty, and must have come to bicker with each other, becuase a war broke out between the tribes. Signs of this war are everywhere, such as the Crater outside of Highvale, and the damage to the City Ruins that lie to the north. Many of these places must be avoided because the dooms that brought them low often still are there. We do not go into the Crater, because to do so is to bring on the Slow Sickness, which kills the careless who wander into the wrong places. There are still poisons and diseases they created, as well, and it is best to shun their places unless we need to forgage there for their artifacts.

And then the ancient's war ended suddenly, because the Time of the Babbling came upon The World. A wave stretched everywhere, sent by malevolent Gods who sought to punish the men for warring in paradise. The World shook, seas flooded lands, and new lands rose, and The Moon was shattered. And this wave killed almost everything. A few survived, some due to Cam's protections, but almost all surviving things were changed, and often the lines of beings were crossed with each other. For a generation nobody could remember how to speak, and beings with the Spark of the mind invented trade-speak with the help of the Pylon Gods so they could talk to each other.

That was many, many generations ago. Our ancestors pass down the story of how a hardy few beings living in this area banded together to create the village of Highvale only a couple of generations after the end of the Babbling. We are proud of how old our settlement is, and how deep our traditions run. We have our rules, because we know that this is how we can survive, and that settlements that do not have rules eventually cease to exist. Like the Geckoid colony that used to exist down by the fen, which no longer exists because they have no rules of ownership, and could not use their few artifacts well enough to keep their colony alive.

We know that The World is dangerous, the changed creatures of the wilderness have strange powers, even as do our Folk who are not Pure like you. One can often hear the cries of the Yexils at night, perched on the high places nearby, and we keep bales of ancient rags we get from the City Ruins on hand to feed them if they come craving them, as they do. Though we have one Badder amongst our people, we steer clear of The Digger's settlement to the northeast, as they are cruel and use their empathic abilities to drive us crazy if we get near. And even a fool knows not to get near a wild Podog…

We compete with the folk of the Red Arrow tribe for hunting lands… but we hope to make peace with them soon, as it is only in banding together that any survive at all.

We know that Highvale is on a flat-land, atop a ridge that runs along the south coast of The Penninsula. The Penninsula ends to the East with the Middle Sea, but connects with the greater Lands to the West, where there are many things. North of the Penninsula is the North Ocean, and to it's south is the Great Bay. Unlike the Grens - the Green Men who have a small village nearby - who believe that the world goes on forever, we know it is a circle, and that if you travel to the East far enough, eventually you would come back to the West... but this is too far for anybody to travel without an ancient way to travel.

The Penninsula is a large land with several peoples... but the Meadow Folk, who send The Patrol you travel with, they who live in the central plain of The Penninsula, tell us that they rule it all. The Pure Strain Humans of the Meadow Folk send The Patrol, they say, to protect everybody. Your companions, with the shiny ancient armor and weapons they get from your people in the Eastern Lands, are surely potent. But we do not need much protecting here in our safe vale. We willingly pay our tax to them... as we hope to help all of the peoples rise to peaceful prosperity. And we hope that one day, in return, the Meadow Folk will share some of what you have given them with us, so we can prosper as well as they have.

We know of other settlements on the Penninsula, and occasionally send a group out to trade with them. There is Seafort's Grave to the East, which has a new castle built above a village on the coast. Past that are the fishing villages of Land's End. To the West are more fihsing villages in Pebble Dwelling, and the town of Grubport where I would suspect your ship landed... if you came on a ship, and not on some ancient flying machine.

Pebble Dwelling is also the home of Dowin, praise be. This Pylon God is the God of all Gods, and begotten of Cam. Cam is still worshipped by the strange people of Horse Bay, West of Pebble Dwelling, but it is known that Cam is now a dead God, and those people would do well to heed the word of Dowin. Dowin's Pylon is near a dome, in which Dowin keeps great secrets. None may enter, but he has servitors that sometimes issue forth. The Meadow Folk say that they are descended from a First Man, who came from this dome, and this is why they believe that it is their right to rule. This is not the word of Dowin, however, who says that all beings with the Spark have value and may not be killed or enslaved. But all agree that one day the First Man will emerge from the dome again, and lead all beings to paradise.

We, the Folk of Highvale, strive to be worthy of Dowin's salvation, in this generation or the next, and all but a few sinners follow the word of Dowin. In the meanwhile, we return relics of the dead to Dowin, which ensures their salvation in eternity.

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