

Campaign Frames for Hiraeth

CAMPAIGN PITCH CATALOGUE

Six roads into adventure

A complete campaign catalogue spanning northern dragon roads, star-touched seas, royal tombs, a magical frontier, the frozen courts of Hell, and a kingdom awaiting its constitution.

HIRAETH CAMPAIGN DESIGN | AUGUST 2026

At a Glance

Each campaign uses the same underlying game structure while promising a different kind of play. The table is a selection aid, not a ranking.

Region	Primary Mode	Campaign Promise
Icebeach	Frontier to faction war	Protect scattered settlements, uncover the Wyrmmroads, and judge a dragon crown.
Southern Thalassia	Maritime sandbox	Win a ship and freedom, build a crew, and decide who may possess the star below.
Kingdom of Nwt	Expedition and tomb	Recover a conquered history and decide whether the Azure Sovereign should return.
Goldwind	Magical western	Ride between rival laws as land, water, and the right to draw the map are contested.
Fearledell	Infernal rescue	Keep a fallen city alive while winter remakes Hell and every rescue carries a price.
Farnears	Realm-building	Unite freeholds through promises and determine what shall replace a dead king's peace.

How to Read These Frames

Every frame begins with its player-facing promise and seven touchstones, then supplies the foundations, principles, character guidance, map prompts, session-zero questions, opening crisis, and campaign shape needed to carry that promise into play.

“ **CANON DISCIPLINE.** Recovered or working setting material is separated from campaign invention. Contradictions remain visible, and no proposed outcome becomes

CAMPAIGN 01 | NORTHERN FRONTIER

Icebeach: The Wyrmsroads of Himmelsrand

Winter is broken; the old road wakes.

The Endless Winter is ended, yet the thaw has proved no gentler master: roads founder, barrows open, and a young white dragon hunts from settlement to settlement as though some greater terror drives it south. A vanished scholar and a plundered excavation draw the characters beneath Icebeach, where a buried giant way-station preserves the broken articles of an ancient compact between mortals and wyrms. Beyond those halls, the ruined roads run north into Himmelsrand, where priests, princes, and desperate common folk gather beneath the sign of a crown with wings. The friends made in mean taverns and snowbound hamlets shall decide whether the north gains a guardian, submits to a dragon sovereign, or burns in the war between them.

Dragon of Icespire Peak | Phandelver and Below | Icewind Dale by way of Skyrim | Hard northern settlement adventure | Buried giant roads and dragon-oaths | Rival excavations and compromised patrons | Sovereignty beneath the dragon's wing

Tone and Themes

This is a saga of recovery written upon a hard, inhabited frontier--not another tale in which an everlasting winter must be slain. The sun has returned, but the thaw exposes graves, collapses familiar routes, and tempts outsiders toward treasures Icebeach endured long enough to forget. Early play should be intimate and practical: missing fishers, poisoned wells, hungry beasts, failed ferries, disputed dig-sites, and one dragon whose shadow can turn any journey awry.

The widening tale concerns security and sovereignty. What will frightened communities surrender for protection, and what distinction remains between a guardian who demands obedience and a tyrant who keeps monsters from the door? The register should mingle hearth-smoke and immensity: maple cakes, patched wool, salt fish, mine lamps, and council gossip belong beside cyclopean mile-stones, sepulchral roads, dragon heraldry, and peaks lost above the cloud.

Foundations

- Icebeach is a small northern confederation governed through councils and settlement delegates rather than a centralized crown.
- The Endless Winter ended in 71 BEC with Morena's defeat. Its sequence remains incomplete, but its ending and regional aftermath are established.
- The country survives by fishing, sheep, winter crops, herbs, maple products, limited mining, and mutual aid. Boats bear most trade because overland roads are poor or ruined.

- Giant-era roads and ruins already cross Icebeach. The proposed Wyrmsroads are those works after later use, alteration, or appropriation by dragons.
- Windrich's fortress, undead experiments, divine terror, and contested memory remain historical scars, not the central villainy reborn.
- Castgate's gemstone workings and Athenaeum presence provide a starting nexus for miners, scholars, councils, foreign agents, and rival excavations.
- The dragon movement succeeds because its promise is credible. Some followers seek a guardian bound by oath, some an ancient compact, some an absolute monarch, and some control over whichever dragon receives the crown.
- The dragons remain persons with incompatible desires. The roaming white dragon may be marauder, refugee, claimant, witness, or some troublesome mixture of all four.

Player Principles

- Give your character a person, household, crew, clan, school, or settlement in Icebeach whose fate matters to them.
- Arrive with a reason to brave the roads rather than wait safely beside the fire.
- Treat small acts of aid as the foundation of later authority; the fisher rescued in the opening may speak for a town when armies gather.
- Regard ruins as the remains of somebody's history, even when treasure lies within.
- Hold an opinion about dragons, foreign scholars, and northern unity, but leave each open to injury and revision.
- Be willing to bargain with foes, investigate patrons, and question instructions whose legality exceeds their wisdom.

GM Principles

- Let the dragon roam. Its whereabouts change local dangers, displace monsters, interrupt plans, and generate rumor.
- Give every settlement a need, a grievance, a custom, and something it can contribute beyond coin.
- Make travel consequential through choices, weather, distance, and broken infrastructure without reducing the north to repetitive attrition.
- Place clues where action occurs. Maps, oath-stones, remains, and contradictory testimony should point toward people to confront and places to venture.
- Make every faction's offer attractive to somebody honorable. The dragon movement grows through promises kept as well as crimes committed.
- Show the wake of previous campaigns through memorials, institutions, resentments, survivors, and official lies; do not resurrect settled villains for borrowed grandeur.
- Allow the party's early allies, omissions, and failures to determine which delegates heed them later.

Character Origins and Roles

Characters might be cold-water fishers, whalers, shepherds, maple tenders, gemstone miners, reindeer drovers, wandering skalds, council runners, wilderness guides, goliath seekers, caravan guards, rescuers, prospectors, or survivors raised beneath the memory of the Endless Winter. Outsiders might be junior Athenaeum scholars, hired excavators, bounty-takers pursuing a renegade academic, merchants stranded by failed transport, treaty envoys, or agents sent to observe a rival dig and now doubtful of their orders.

Useful places within the company include guide, hunter, interpreter, chronicler, negotiator, delver, healer, quartermaster, and keeper of local promises. At least one character should know the starting settlement intimately, while another possesses a credible reason to ask dangerous questions about the buried past.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- The starting settlement: what warmth, craft, or communal custom makes it beloved, and what scar of the Endless Winter can no mason repair?
- The white dragon's first refuge: an abandoned watchtower, stranded ship, shattered giant monument, or peak older hunters refuse to name.
- A giant road newly exposed by the thaw: where does it run, and why did local tradition forbid clearing its stones?
- The rival excavation near Castgate's gem country: who finances it, what lie appears upon its charter, and which worker has vanished?
- The buried way-station: what sign proves people lived below long after the road was abandoned?
- A hamlet ready to welcome the dragon movement because every distant government failed it during the Winter.
- The northern pass into Himmelsrand: what tribute, oath, or terrible courtesy does an old marker demand?

Session-Zero Questions

1. Which Icebeach community claims you as one of its own, and what duty have you neglected there?
2. Who kept your family alive during the Endless Winter, and what unpayable debt remains?
3. What did you lose when the winter ended rather than when it began?
4. What tale about dragons did you believe as a child, and who taught it to you?
5. Which outsider institution has earned your trust or lasting suspicion?
6. What forbidden ruin have locals warned you never to enter, and why do you believe the warning conceals a lie?
7. If a dragon could truly keep the north safe, what price would make its protection intolerable?

Inciting Incident

At the first open-air Maple Faire since the roads began to thaw, a half-dead excavation team staggers into the starting settlement with a slab of blue-black stone lashed upon a broken sledge. Its face bears two inscriptions laid one atop the other: giant road-marks cut deep, and a later oath etched by talons. Before the council can decide whether the relic is treasure, treaty, or stolen grave-goods, a young white dragon descends through the festival smoke--not to gorge upon sheep or townsfolk, but to tear the stone from its bindings.

The attack breaks an ancient culvert beneath the square. Children, traders, and half the winter stores plunge into a stairway no living map records, while scarred hunters wearing new-made dragon badges close upon the fleeing wyrm from the north. By nightfall one excavator is missing, the dragon has carried away only half the sundered stone, and the opened stair breathes warm air from a road buried since the age of giants.

Campaign Shape

The Dragon on the Road

The opening adventures concern local jobs, approximately levels 1-2: rescuing travelers, reopening a ferry, clearing displaced monsters, guarding mine crews, and learning why the white dragon came south. Relationships forged here become political capital later.

The Settlement Below

Approximately levels 2-5, a missing scholar and stolen route-tablet lead through bandits, claim-jumpers, rival agents, and sealed galleries into the buried way-station. The shattered-object mystery concerns a broken covenant or instrument of draconic recognition whose routes continue beyond Icebeach.

The Councils of Icebeach

Approximately levels 5-8, the company travels the confederation along revived Wyrmmroads. Each settlement must choose among its own defenses, foreign aid, a northern alliance, or an oath beneath dragon wings.

The Crowned North

Approximately levels 9-13, the characters cross into Himmelsrand amid pilgrimage, factional war, and draconic diplomacy. They may destroy the claim, bind a guardian beneath mortal law, support a dragon ruler, expose a manufactured history, or forge a compact without sovereign wings.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Recovered setting material supports Icebeach as a sparse northern confederation with council government, poor roads, maritime trade, giant ruins, and a fish, sheep, herb, and maple economy. Windrich's tyranny belongs to its past, and the Endless Winter ended in 71 BEC after Morena's defeat. Numerous settlements exist in the archive, although several names and details conflict.

The current Elect, council configuration, Castgate's precise condition, and surviving institutions remain date-sensitive or under review. Himmelsrand's present political form, the roaming dragon, rival excavation, missing scholar, buried way-station, broken oath-stone, draconic crown, and nascent sovereignty movement are proposals for this campaign. Any claim that ancient Icebeach willingly accepted dragon rule remains disputed evidence until play decides what becomes true.

CAMPAIGN 02 | MARITIME SWASHBUCKLING

Southern Thalassia: No Master but the Sea

You begin in chains; thereafter, the chart is yours.

Press-ganged aboard a brutal vessel bound for the Southern Thalassia, the characters begin with neither coin, charter, nor liberty--only the knowledge that no captain commands forever. A storm amid star-touched waters gives them their hour: mutiny, shipwreck, or death beneath another's flag. Should they reach free Cavaross with ship and crew intact, they enter a sea of rebel harbors, watchful lighthouses, rival scholars, predatory navies, and islands whose inhabitants have endured a century of being called curiosities. Far below those troubled waters lies one of the fallen stars, and each voyage shall furnish another answer--or another claimant--to the question of what it is and who, if anyone, may possess it.

Ghosts of Saltmarsh | Seas of Vodari | Skull & Shackles | Swashbuckling mutiny and hard-won freedom | Crew as a chosen polity | Player-directed voyages from a living home port | Fallen-star maritime mystery

Tone and Themes

The prevailing mode is sun-bright swashbuckling cast over unfathomed waters: salt-stiffened charts, crowded quays, knife-edged reefs, black squalls, old wrecks, audacious rescues, and laughter heard through cannon smoke. Beneath this vigor lies maritime wonder and intermittent dread, for the sea keeps histories no sovereign has taxed and contains immensities that regard surface borders with perfect indifference.

Its principal themes are freedom and the obligations freedom creates; command by consent; family made among strangers; self-rule under threat; exploration distinguished from intrusion; knowledge distinguished from possession; and the transformation of a captured vessel into a home worth defending.

Foundations

- Captivity is the fuse, not the campaign. The characters possess meaningful freedom by the second or third session.
- The ship is livelihood, refuge, weapon, public reputation, and recurring dramatic location. Its identity arises from its people rather than elaborate vessel procedures.
- Cavaross is the favored home port: free, useful, suspicious, and accustomed to foreign powers treating its independence as temporary.
- Gale's Rest, Eastwatch, Pyrthia, and star-touched communities present distinct maritime lives: weather wisdom, vigilant passage, institutional learning, and guardianship of difficult history.
- No island is empty because a foreign chart lacks its name. Exploration reveals inhabitants, prior claims, old disasters, or deliberate concealment.
- Every voyage returns with consequences. Rescued people need homes, relics attract claimants, enemies learn the ship's flag, and discoveries alter local arguments.
- The fallen star's nature is unsettled. It may be relic, wound, prison, seed, mineral prodigy, divine remnant, or something no shorebound scholar can name.
- Every major faction desires something comprehensible: safety, recognition, profit, knowledge, vengeance, passage, independence, or the right to remain unexamined.

Player Principles

- Create a person who, once freed, will nevertheless choose to remain aboard.
- Attend to the crew and grant other characters authority where their knowledge warrants it.
- Pursue treasure and daring deeds, but ask who inhabited an island before it acquired a price and who lives with the consequences after your sails depart.
- Make decisions worthy of remembrance in the taverns of Cavaross, for your flag shall often arrive before you do.
- Establish shipboard articles that bind the company even when breaking them would bring safety or profit.

GM Principles

- Conclude the coercive opening swiftly and let the mutiny's outcome belong to the players.
- Present several profitable courses rather than one ordained voyage; let debts, shortages, rumors, and factional requests give each choice weight.
- Treat seamanship as competence and suspense, not an excuse to render non-sailor characters useless.
- Give the crew names, aptitudes, loyalties, grievances, and lives ashore.
- Telegraph storms and hazards through signs experienced sailors may interpret, then honor prudent preparation.

- Keep evidence concerning the star consistent even while interpretations change.
- No academy, navy, free captain, port council, or star-touched community is wholly correct by authorial decree.

Character Origins and Roles

Characters may begin among press-ganged prisoners, unwilling sailors, captive passengers, hidden stowaways, sympathetic crew, or people recovered during the opening disaster. Suitable origins include Cavaross households, Gale's Rest weather-folk, Eastwatch beacon keepers, Pyrthian port families, star-touched islanders or diaspora, foreign mariners, conscripted soldiers, debt prisoners, dispossessed fishers, wandering priests, escaped servants, smugglers, and scholars who discovered too late what their patrons intended.

Useful shipboard roles include elected captain or speaker, navigator, weather-reader, carpenter, rigger, sailmaker, healer, cook, quartermaster, interpreter, marine, lookout, diver, scholar, chaplain, negotiator, and keeper of the accounts. These are dramatic responsibilities rather than class restrictions.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- Cavaross: mark the harbor offering doubtful sanctuary, the shared resource locals fought to preserve, and the foreign banner whose appearance still empties a street.
- Gale's Rest: draw the reef every child fears, then name the vessel remembered whenever warning bells sound.
- Eastwatch: place its lighthouse above a dangerous passage and devise one signal the official tables insist never existed.
- Pyrthia: mark the academy-port, the neighborhood that services it without sharing its privileges, and the observatory claiming a local discovery under a foreign name.
- A star-touched community: decide whether its people conceal, venerate, study, or merely endure the remnant outsiders call treasure.
- The deepwater scar: give the waters above the presumed star one observable peculiarity and three incompatible explanations.
- The free anchorage: place a wreck-fort, hidden lagoon, or lawless quay where no sovereign warrant runs.

Session-Zero Questions

1. Which aspects of captivity, coercion, and mutiny remain offscreen, and how grim or exuberant should the opening be?
2. From whom or what were you taken when press-ganged?
3. Who aboard showed you one forbidden kindness before the mutiny?
4. What act will the crew's articles forbid even when committing it would bring safety or profit?
5. Is the company inclined toward piracy, privateering, smuggling, exploration, liberation, or some troublesome mixture?
6. Which Southern Thalassian port contains someone--or something--you still call home?
7. What did you once see beneath the water that sober folk refuse to credit?

Inciting Incident

Upon the third dogwatch, the press vessel Sovereign Remedy beats southward beyond Eastwatch while its prisoners labor below in irons. The lighthouse suddenly burns a violet signal found in no beacon table; every compass turns its needle toward the keel, and beneath the black water an immense seven-pointed radiance unfolds as though some buried constellation had opened its eye. Something strikes the vessel from below,

springing planks and flooding the lower deck, whereupon the captain orders the chained prisoners fastened to the pumps while officers provision the only sound cutter for themselves.

An ancient sailmaker, mortally crushed beneath a shifted spar, kicks the ring of keys through the bars and whispers, "If you mean to drown, drown beneath your own colors." At that instant the armory door tears from its hinges, the mainmast begins to fall, and a dark ship running no flag emerges from the rain.

Campaign Shape

The Iron Passage

The opening concerns captivity, conspiracy below decks, calamity off Eastwatch, and the winning of freedom. Success might yield the original ship, a captured cutter, a rescued wreck, or a vessel taken from the approaching raiders.

A Berth in Cavaross

Freedom brings provisions, repairs, legal ownership, unpaid crew, hostile warrants, and the distrust of a port that has seen armed liberators become petty tyrants. Coastal adventures establish allies while the company decides what manner of crew it intends to be.

The Wide Thalassia

Smuggling disputes, salvage, vanished fishing craft, academy expeditions, foreign patrols, haunted islands, sea-beast migrations, disputed beacons, underwater parley, and free-captain rivalries disclose the region and the consequences of the Night of Fallen Stars.

The Star Below

Changes in currents, dreams, weather, navigation, or marine life point toward a surviving celestial mass beneath the deepwater scar. The finale is determined by accumulated choices: approach, quarantine, conceal, awaken, salvage, bargain with, destroy, or entrust the star--provided the company can still agree whose authority governs such a decision.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Strongly grounded material includes the Southern Thalassia's transformation through the Night of Fallen Stars; Cavaross's contested sovereignty, revolt, trade, mutual defense, and fraught self-rule; Gale's Rest's dangerous waters; Eastwatch's strategic lighthouse; Pyrthia's academy-port; and star-touched identity as history, community, or stigma rather than automatic supernatural ancestry.

The press vessel, its officers, the mutiny, the company's ship, Cavaross as its home berth, a particular intact star beneath the sea, its disturbances, rival claims, and any underwater polity are proposals. Existing pirates, cursed vessels, and older maritime legacies remain optional material for individual voyages rather than required answers to the central mystery.

CAMPAIGN 03 | POLITICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The Kingdom of Nwt: The Azure Return

The storm remembers her name; the living must decide what it means.

Across Nwt, the dead speak the name of the Azure Sovereign when thunder rolls, while blue lightning reveals portions of a royal road erased after the conquest. From Caerulean and jungle-girt Darwishi, loyalists, republicans, foreign antiquarians, Beccin agents, and common tomb-thieves race toward the Lost Caverns, each bearing a different account of the dragon-queen whom older chronicles call Nut. Every ruin yields some fragment of her reign--law, atrocity, protection, tribute, learning, or rebellion--and some power by which she might be restored, recreated, or replaced. The characters must survive the road and enter the queen's deathless hoard, there to determine who may inherit Nwt's bones, treasures, history, and crown.

Tomb of Annihilation | Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth | Perilous expedition | Political archaeology | Rival interpretations of empire | Dragon-hoard dungeoncraft | Resurrection as a national choice

Tone and Themes

This is an expedition tale of hot rain, blue thunder, ruined observatories, jealous guides, rival camps, and subterranean immensities where the dead queen's wards yet retain their malice. Its surface possesses the vigor of old adventure--lost roads, monstrous rivers, maps bought with blood, and treasure beyond sober reckoning--but every recovered object returns to a living political world. A crown is not merely gold; it is evidence. A decree may be both legal foundation and record of dispossession.

The great themes are memory after conquest, ownership of the dead, archaeology as political power, the difference between restoration and freedom, and whether a nation may honor what a ruler protected without reviving what she ruled. Nwt must never reduce to saint, monster, or alignment entry. Contradictory truths may all be true of a sovereign who ruled long enough.

Foundations

- Nwt was a dragon-ruled realm in Astrousia. Beccin killed its sovereign, razed the palace, and left the country as an autonomous colony or territory under continuing influence.
- Loyalty survives, but communities need not agree upon monarchy, restoration, independence, accommodation, federalism, or departure.
- The Azure Sovereign is associated with Caerulean, storms, wisdom, protection, desert winds, magical learning, and formidable authority.
- The Stormwardens served as clergy, administrators, educators, warriors, scholars, and keepers of civic knowledge. Their surviving branches may disagree about what duty continues after their patron's death.
- The queen's children were taken into hiding. Their identities, wishes, and political significance remain open.
- Most treasure in the razed palace reportedly remained. Treasure may include public records, ritual regalia, war spoils, ancestral goods, and objects claimed from conquered peoples.
- An archived adventure places the Lost Caverns near Caerulean: a defended dragon lair of lesser and greater depths, haunted by monsters, devils, failed expeditions, and an unsurpassed hoard.

Player Principles

- Possess reason both to undertake the expedition and to care what happens when its discoveries return home.
- A Nwt character need not be a loyalist; a foreign character must possess more than an appetite for unclaimed gold.
- Name one community, household, institution, or dead person whose stake in the ruins you recognize.
- Choose one belief about Nwt you hold fiercely, one fact that might change it, and one treasure you have promised not to treat as plunder.
- Disagreement concerning the queen is welcome, but characters must be capable of hearing evidence and reaching decisions together.

GM Principles

- Present evidence, never an authorized biography. Each site establishes something concrete while leaving room to dispute its meaning.
- Let inscriptions flatter, enemies condemn, households remember, and material remains complicate them all.
- Divide every restoration faction internally. Loyalists may seek the sovereign, a hidden child, a vessel, a regency, or merely the force of her name.
- Treat Astrousia as a continent of particular peoples and polities, not an undifferentiated exotic jungle.
- Make travel demand choices concerning routes, alliances, time, safety, and promises rather than trivial privation.
- Keep the Lost Caverns dangerous and rich enough to tempt prudent people into folly.
- No trap or monster answers the political question. Resurrection, preservation, succession, dispersal, and destruction remain possible until the company acts.

Character Origins and Roles

Suitable origins include Nwt memory-bearers, former royal households, Stormwarden descendants, republican organizers, Caerulean archivists, Darwishi guides, caravaners, custodians of hidden dragon-children, Beccin veterans or deserters, Athenaeum antiquarians, foreign treasure-seekers, displaced villagers, tomb robbers seeking restitution, or heirs to households stripped of ancestral goods.

Useful expeditionary roles include guide, quartermaster, chronicler, interpreter, envoy, physician, scout, beast-keeper, delver, ward-breaker, and protector of recovered objects. The company should possess practical means to travel, negotiate, interpret, and survive below ground.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- Caerulean: what part still bears the queen's grandeur, and what part was rebuilt deliberately without her image?
- The razed palace: which chamber escaped Beccin destruction, and who now claims lawful custody of it?
- Darwishi: which guild or council controls the hiring of guides, and what relic may not legally leave its gates?
- The lost royal road: what weather reveals its stones, and whose villages were compelled to maintain it?
- A roadside sanctuary: which community remembers Nwt as protector, tyrant, or both?
- The hidden children's refuge: what natural wonder conceals it, and what betrayal makes its keepers distrust every claimant?
- The Lost Caverns: what warning stands at the entrance, and which later hand altered its meaning?

Session-Zero Questions

1. What name or title did your household use for the Azure Sovereign, and which name was forbidden?
2. What did Beccin's conquest take from your family or place within its keeping?
3. Which deed attributed to Nwt do you wish to prove--or disprove?
4. What object in the royal hoard belongs, by your reckoning, to someone other than the crown?
5. Which member of a rival expedition was once your companion, teacher, lover, jailer, or betrayer?
6. Which fellow character first showed you evidence that complicated your beliefs about the queen?
7. What would Nwt's return mean for you personally, apart from the kingdom's fate?

Inciting Incident

At noon beneath an empty sky, Caerulean holds funeral rites for a keeper of the old palace records. The bier passes between toppled dragon columns while officials, Stormwardens, Beccin observers, and common mourners watch one another more closely than they watch the dead. Then blue lightning strikes every ruined column at once.

The corpse sits upright. From the palace necropolis answer a hundred dead voices, yet they do not speak one message. Some cry, "Crown me." Others plead, "Keep me dead." A third chorus whispers, "They are making another." Lightning burns upon the plaza a map of the lost royal road, marking seven sites before vanishing into the mountains. Before silence returns, masked claimants seize the dead archivist's sealed case and flee through the rain.

Campaign Shape

The Many Voices

Investigate the necropolis, recover or copy the stolen records, meet competing sponsors, and decide under whose authority--if anyone's--the company travels.

The Royal Road

Cross Astrousia through river valleys, jungle margins, storm-cut uplands, and living communities bound unequally to the former realm. Each major site yields evidence and one material element sought by restorationists.

The War of Expeditions

Rival companies converge as discoveries alter politics in Caerulean. Sponsors split, guides defect, roads close, and foreign powers demand access. The party decides what to publish, conceal, return, trade, or carry onward.

The Lost Caverns

The lesser depths are an old-school underworld of deceptive guardians, subterranean rivers, failed treasure-seekers, and surviving defenses. The greater depths contain the sovereign heart of the hoard and several incompatible means of producing something that might be called Nwt.

The Azure Judgment

The company may restore the queen, awaken a reconstruction, crown an heir, transfer sacred authority into a civic institution, disperse the hoard, preserve the tomb, or ensure no sovereign wields its power again.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Source-backed material establishes a dragon-ruled Kingdom of Nwt in Astrousia, Beccin's killing of its ruler and razing of the palace, colonial ambiguity, surviving loyalty, most palace treasure remaining, and the removal of Cataclysm--Horus' Unwreckening. Working material associates the Azure Sovereign with Caerulean, storms, wisdom, protection, Stormwardens, and hidden children. An archived Lost Caverns adventure establishes a proposed lair, surviving defenses, lesser and greater caverns, dangerous inhabitants, and a legendary hoard.

Sources disagree concerning the ruler's name, pronouns, death, and moral character. The realm is Nwt while the dragon is often Nut; this frame treats Nut as an older or alternate form without settling the spelling. Competing accounts of her death become rival histories unless later canon review settles them. The speaking dead, royal road, seven sites, rival expeditions, reconstruction rites, and specific outcomes are campaign proposals; no supernatural voice is authenticated as the singular mind of Nwt before the players can test it.

CAMPAIGN 04 | MAGICAL WESTERN

Goldwind: No One Owns Goldwind

The surveyors have measured the desert; now the desert takes their measure.

Beccin drives iron and water westward beneath the authority of Transportation Essential Services, and each new mile of works brings another thirsty settlement within the empire's grasp. Then Vermonbend's prehistoric fountain fails, contradictory deeds lay claim to the same wells and mines, and House Peyote's visions disclose roads, homesteads, and graves absent from every imperial chart. The characters--wand-slingers, scouts, alchemists, laborers, lawkeepers, and rogues--form a posse amid the ensuing violence, riding where distant proclamations carry less weight than a neighbor's oath or a drawn wand. They shall determine whether Goldwind is conquered, purchased, liberated, or left forever beyond the dominion of maps.

Outlaws of Alkenstar | Deadlands | Once Upon a Time in the West | Wand-slinging frontier adventure | Contested land and water | Hallucinatory desert exploration | Reputation among rival settlements

Tone and Themes

This is a magical western of painted hills, alchemical gunsmoke, dry wells, freight camps, mirages, and old grievances riding beneath new uniforms. It should possess the pace of bounty posters and railway races while refusing the fiction of an empty frontier. Goldwind already contains homes, graves, roads, customary claims, and people who remember every conqueror describing them as an obstacle to progress.

Its themes are ownership, useful infrastructure and coercive dependence, the plurality of law, reputation, water as public life, and whether liberation means replacing one distant authority with a nearer one. The desert's strangeness is material: a mirage should uncover a road, a crime, a claimant, or a future somebody intends to impose.

Foundations

- Goldwind is no vacant frontier; its settlements, trails, wells, graves, and customary claims precede Beccin's surveys.
- Beccin rule is materially useful and politically coercive. Its pumps save lives; its ledgers convert dependence into possession.
- Vermonbend is the campaign's hinge: ancient fountain, layered walls, former elected government, alchemical castle, mines, and military industry.
- House Peyote remains compromised rather than secretly benevolent. Its illusions preserve suppressed truths, manufacture profitable ones, or do both.
- Every bounty begins as a local problem and exposes part of the larger struggle over ownership.
- There is no single correct answer to "Who owns Goldwind?" The question is which promises the posse defends when every answer carries cost.
- The railway, water line, and new surveys are proposed extensions of Beccin's established transportation and pumping interests.

Player Principles

- Take work from people rather than quest boards and learn who profits before choosing a side.
- Treat each settlement as a community rather than scenery.
- Expect yesterday's mercy or violence to precede you.
- Leave Goldwind altered wherever you pass.
- Name something Beccin brought that you cannot readily surrender and something its occupation took from you.
- Accept that the posse's reputation is a form of power no writ can entirely control.

GM Principles

- Give every settlement an urgent material need, every faction an honest virtue, and every villain a constituency.
- Make law plural: imperial statute, elected authority, guild privilege, local custom, and naked force should regularly contradict one another.
- Let infrastructure bring real relief before revealing its price.
- Make strange visions uncertain in interpretation but dependable as paths to action.
- Do not make Beccin omnipotent; occupation depends upon supply, local cooperation, paperwork, and people who may change sides.
- Return consequences to familiar places. A bounty resolved in one town changes prices, warrants, labor, or safety in another.

Character Origins and Roles

Suitable origins include Vermonbend natives, people of distant Goldwind settlements, Beccin soldiers or engineers left behind by occupation, House Peyote apprentices, displaced miners, caravan folk, prospectors, and outsiders arriving with warrants or maps. Useful posse roles include wand-duelist, desert guide, alchemical illusionist, mechanic or waterwright, healer, negotiator, investigator, outlaw, chronicler, and reluctant deputy.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- Vermonbend upon its mound: mark the fountain, occupied castle, one sealed gate in the oldest wall, and the industrial quarter.
- An unfinished rail or pumping line at a natural obstacle: which settlement awaits its completion?
- Ruby Crag, worn smooth by the desert: is it fortress, quarry, shrine, or all three?
- A homestead or burial ground omitted from official maps though someone still tends it.

- A House Peyote garden where different cactus draughts disclose different versions of the country.
- A disputed mine whose copper, iron, lapis, or gold could decide the corridor's fate.
- A crossroads where the posse's good name is honored on one road and cursed upon the other.

Session-Zero Questions

1. What did Beccin's works bring your home that it genuinely needed?
2. What person, place, or right did the occupation take from you?
3. Which settlement already calls you a hero, and which would sooner hang you?
4. Whose claim to land or water have you sworn to uphold?
5. What deed committed by another member of the posse binds you to them?
6. What impossible thing did you behold after drinking cactus water--and what later proved it real?
7. Can Goldwind be owned, and what discovery might change your answer?

Inciting Incident

At high noon, the Site Supervisor orders Vermonbend's ancient fountain opened to charge Beccin's new western pumping line. The water rises black with lapis grit, gives one tremendous convulsion, and ceases; at that instant, the color sloughs from a distant painted hill and reveals the walls of a settlement absent from every chart. A wandshot kills the imperial adjudicator, and the papers spilling from his case grant the same watercourse--under equally valid seals--to Beccin, House Peyote, and several Goldwind families.

The gates are barred, arrests proclaimed for sunset, and only the future posse saw who carried away the fourth deed.

Campaign Shape

Dust and Deeds

The posse forms amid the failed fountain, murder, arrests, and discovery of the hidden settlement. Early bounties establish how each character treats law, necessity, and the people whose claims never entered an official ledger.

The Iron and Water Road

Riding ahead of Beccin's expanding works, the company resolves disputes over wells, mines, labor camps, missing surveyors, stolen pumps, and settlements omitted from the map. House Peyote's visions reveal that the official route follows something much older.

The War of Claims

Beccin administrators, elected Vermonbend loyalists, Goldwind families, miners, alchemists, and outside investors raise competing governments and armed companies. Every ally asks the posse to enforce a different version of ownership.

The Unowned Country

The old road beneath the painted hills reaches a source capable of redirecting the region's water--or destroying it. The posse may recognize a federation, bargain with Beccin, return authority to local councils, entrust the water to a custodian, or ensure no single claimant can command it.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Recovered setting material supports Goldwind's magical-western character, contested ownership, painted hills, hallucinogenic cactus juice, Vermonbend's prehistoric fountain, House Peyote's alchemical illusions, Beccin military occupation under Transportation Essential Services, and redirected production of beams and water pumps.

The railway, failing fountain, contradictory deeds, revelatory landscape visions, hidden settlement, opening murder, posse, and buried waterworks are campaign proposals. Goldwind's exact status as nation, territory, frontier, or occupied province remains unresolved and should be sharpened through play rather than settled in advance.

CAMPAIGN 05 | INFERNAL SIEGE

Fearledell: The Chains Beneath the Lake

At Candlelight the lanterns blacken, and winter falls into Hell.

On the Festival of Candlelight, the folk of Fearledell send ten thousand lanterns aloft in memory of those slain by the Seelie. This year every flame gutters black, chains vast as towers burst from beneath the frozen lake, and the island capital is dragged bodily into Hell--where its snow begins freezing battlefields which have never known winter. Trapped beside King Einare, the hedge-witches, and a city succumbing to terror, the characters must hold the streets, discover what ancient power abides in the royal blood, and treat with infernal powers which each claim lawful dominion over the fallen kingdom. They may ransom their home, unmake the claim that drew it below, or forge from the doomed city a realm no power of Hell can command.

Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus | Besieged-city survival | Infernal court politics | Supernatural winter in Hell | Festival horror | Royal blood and broken covenants | Salvation without a single rightful price

Tone and Themes

Begin with candlelit pageantry and turn it, in a single dreadful stroke, into wintry siege fantasy. The capital remains a living community rather than a disposable ruin: skaters become couriers, vintners ration cellars, lantern-makers fashion signals, and old knights again stand beside mistrusted hedge-witches. Beyond the walls lies a Hell divided by rank, conquest, and incompatible law, where every promised rescue bears a carefully omitted price.

The themes are duty to home, inherited power, remembrance transformed into obligation, and whether salvation purchased through another's bondage deserves the name. Winter is both salvation and peril: it quenches infernal fire and preserves stores, yet cracks stone, kills crops, and makes the city a prize worth possessing.

Foundations

- Fearledell is a snowy, mountainous kingdom whose island capital stands in Fearledell Lake. Orchards, vineyards, swineherds, winter sports, and liquor trade furnish a homely civilization worth rescuing.
- King Marron died during a Seelie incursion. Einare, aided by hedge-witches, repelled the invaders and afterward gained standing invitation to the winter elves' court.
- The Festival of Candlelight commemorates those losses through paper lanterns sent into the sky.
- Circle Rock Port is the kingdom's sole major harbor and becomes the gathering place for those left behind.
- The royal line is rumored to bear an ancient gift of winter. Whether it is blessing, covenant, weapon, prison, or inheritance remains discoverable through play.
- Wyss became ruler of Hell's first layer after killing the Cave Mother in 75 BEC. Lilith is separately recorded as Queen over Hell; their relationship is unsettled and appears through rival claims, agents, and contradictory law.
- The winter power is not secretly evil. It is something Hell covets and something frightened mortals may misuse.

Player Principles

- Possess something within the capital you will not readily abandon: a household, guild, neighborhood, rival, shrine, or duty.
- You need not love the monarchy, but you must care what becomes of Fearledell.
- Be willing to enter dangerous negotiations without being compelled to accept any particular bargain.
- Let private debts and divided allegiances sharpen collective decisions rather than dissolve the company.
- Name what you refuse to surrender even if it becomes the certain price of taking the city home.

GM Principles

- Make the city's condition respond visibly to player choices. Saving a granary, bridge, healer, witch, or prisoner alters later possibilities.
- Every infernal offer is useful, costly once understood, and refuseable.
- No single bargain, relic, royal heir, or famous non-player character is the ordained solution.
- Keep citizens active: districts organize, argue, cooperate, profiteer, worship, and panic according to their interests.
- Let Wyss's new dominion and Lilith's older hierarchy remain competing claims rather than resolved cosmology.
- Transform infernal war machines through Fearledell's arrival: iron sledges, chain-crawlers, and engines racing across newly frozen wastes.

Character Origins and Roles

Suitable origins include capital skaters, artisans, guards, courtiers, vintners, royal servants, hedge-witches' pupils, veterans of the Seelie incursion, winter-elf envoys, Circle Rock sailors caught in the city for the festival, foreign pilgrims, and scholars of infernal covenants. Useful company roles include rescuer, scout, negotiator, chronicler, occult examiner, defender of common folk, keeper of stores, and breaker of chains. A character tied to Einare's bloodline may be included, but the campaign requires no solitary chosen heir.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- The island capital: which district is celebrated throughout Fearledell, and what ugly truth lies beneath its beauty?

- The Candlelight Way: where are the names of Marron and the Seelie dead kept, and whose name was removed?
- The frozen lake: what structure can be glimpsed beneath its oldest ice, directly below the royal seat?
- The hedge-witches' refuge: what common service made them beloved, and what royal prohibition still binds them?
- Circle Rock Port: who gathers there to mount a rescue, and who prospers while the capital is absent?
- The winter-elven road: where does its threshold appear, and what courtesy must no mortal violate?
- The infernal shore: what familiar landmark arrived twisted beside the city, and whose seal appears upon the nearest chain?

Session-Zero Questions

1. Whom did your household lose during the Seelie incursion?
2. What duty do you perform during the Festival of Candlelight?
3. What does King Einare--or the crown--owe your family?
4. Which hedge-witch once aided you, and why are you ashamed to admit it?
5. What place in the island capital would you sacrifice yourself to preserve?
6. What bargain, crime, or inheritance has already caused Hell to know your name?
7. What would you refuse to surrender even if it were the certain price of taking Fearledell home?

Inciting Incident

The skaters cease upon the sounding of the royal bell. Above them, ten thousand paper lanterns rise through gentle snow, each bearing the name of one whom Fearledell remembers. The first lantern blackens above the palace; then another, and another, until the heavens are crowded with dead stars.

A blow shakes the lake from beneath. Iron links broader than houses burst through the ice without spilling water, coil about the island walls, and draw taut beneath an unseen hand. The lantern flames burn downward; the mountains vanish behind curtains of steam; and, amid the deep tolling of bells no mortal forged, the whole capital is torn from Hiraeth.

When the convulsion ends, a brazen sky hangs above Fearledell. Infernal hosts gather beyond the frozen shore, yet snow continues to fall, smothering their fires beneath clean white silence. Upon the nearest chain stand two seals: one ancient and crowned with a serpent, the other newly struck over an older name.

Campaign Shape

The Black Candle

Survive the descent, rescue trapped districts, establish order, and learn why the lake's chains recognize the royal household.

The Kingdom Below

Defend the island against raiders and claimants while food, fuel, legitimacy, and public trust dwindle. Explore the frozen margins where Fearledell's winter remakes Hell.

The Courts of Ash and Rime

Seek passage, allies, and proof among Wyss's new dominion, Lilith's older hierarchy, winter-elven emissaries, rebellious fiends, and mortals bound by forgotten covenants.

The Severing

Decide what must be surrendered to raise the city. The characters might free Fearledell, transfer the claim, extinguish the royal winter, depose its bearer, bargain with one throne against another, or keep the city below as an armed sanctuary.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Fearledell's geography, island capital, Circle Rock Port, Candlelight festival, Seelie incursion, Marron's death, Einare's victory with hedge-witches, winter-elven invitation, and rumored royal winter power are source-backed but presently unconfirmed. Wyss's killing of the Cave Mother and accession to Hell's first layer are confirmed; Lilith's title as Queen of Hell is separately recorded.

The city's descent, chains, blackened lanterns, Candlelight's occult function, the bloodline's infernal significance, and conflict between Wyss and Lilith are proposals. The frame exploits their competing titles without deciding whether Lilith rules above Wyss, has been displaced, recognizes him as a vassal, or contests his accession.

CAMPAIGN 06 | REALM-BUILDING

Farnears: The Harvest Crown

The king lies cold; the fields shall choose.

King Stephen lies beneath Willowhallow, his heir is nine, and Viceroy Alistair's writ now rides with armed grain-takers. The crown's hard-won peace splinters among freeholds that remember older liberties, while hungry neighbors reckon the worth of every mill, bridge, and bushel. From a battered keep at the crossroads, the characters must bind quarrelsome communities by promise, favor, steel, and common necessity--for every oath wins a banner and incurs a debt. When the child comes of age, Farnears must become a kingdom restored, a compact of free peoples, a realm of the characters' own devising, or carrion for the powers gathered at its borders.

Kingmaker | War for the Crown | Pendragon | Rebellion from the freehold upward | Ruined keeps and buried elderworks | Harvest, famine, and seasonal consequence | A realm authored in oaths

Tone and Themes

This is agrarian statecraft with mud upon its boots: winter grain, broken millstones, flooded roads, inheritance, hospitality, and armed riders carrying dubious seals. It is Kingmaker inverted. The map is not empty, the communities are not waiting to be claimed, and expansion means persuading people with laws, guarantees, marriages, pardons, roads, and protection.

Its themes are consent to rule, promises as public architecture, material foundations of power, resistance to distant authority, and the difference between unifying a people and possessing them. Political rivals should hold defensible aims; removing Alistair never settles the larger question of who may rule.

Foundations

- Farnears is Fair's breadbasket, historically a loose and unruly confederation of farmers and communities.
- It rebelled against RossWin over elven taxation and remains resistant to distant rule.
- King Stephen's recent line brought unusual peace and prosperity; his death, nine-year-old heir, and Alistair's radical measures come from archived Lost Thrown material.
- The proposed reconciliation is that the monarchy is a recent crown laid over older freehold customs. Stephen governed successfully because communities consented to his compact; Alistair mistakes consent for submission.
- Attergo may serve as southern capital or principal port, but that status remains suggested rather than settled.
- The battered crossroads keep, negotiated terms of accession, and the characters' emerging compact are campaign proposals.
- Farnears is full of old works beneath productive land; ruins matter because living communities farm above them.

Player Principles

- Owe something to a Farnears community, household, institution, or person.
- Hold an opinion about the crown, but leave room for events to alter it.
- Treat public promises as consequential.
- Seek allies among ordinary people as readily as among titled houses.
- Accept that protecting one settlement may imperil another.
- Be willing to govern, delegate, negotiate, and answer for what is done in your name.

GM Principles

- Give every political dispute a face, place, and material stake.
- Make roads, granaries, mills, seed stores, and river crossings worth fighting over.
- Let every ally request terms and remember whether those terms were honored.
- Permit monarchy, federation, republic, partition, or stranger settlements to emerge honestly.
- Make Alistair dangerous through institutions and supporters, not merely secret wickedness.
- Allow seasons to change circumstances without introducing bespoke campaign rules.
- Return the party's decisions as prices, refugees, harvests, garrisons, laws, songs, and grudges.

Character Origins and Roles

Characters might be freeholders' children, millers, drovers, hedge-priests, itinerant judges, royal retainers, discharged soldiers, Attergo factors, RossWin cooperative envoys, tutors or guards once attached to the heir, or descendants of families who fought the old tax rebellion. Useful functions include emissary, scout, quartermaster, chronicler, protector, legal advocate, builder, and keeper of the company's promises. No character need begin as a ruler, but all should care what Farnears becomes.

Collaborative Map Seeds

- The damaged keep entrusted to the party: who built it, and why was it abandoned?
- A freehold that loved Stephen but will never kneel to another Willowhallow.
- A mill or river crossing upon which three hostile communities depend.
- An elder ruin beneath productive fields, said to predate much of Pythia.

- The RossWin border road where the old tax rebellion began.
- Attergo's granaries and docks, through which merchants may feed--or throttle--the realm.
- A village Alistair's reforms genuinely saved, making it fiercely loyal to him.

Session-Zero Questions

1. What promise made by Stephen bound your household to his crown?
2. Which decree of Alistair's crossed a line you cannot forgive?
3. What does your character privately fear the young heir might become?
4. Which freehold has a rightful grievance against you or your family?
5. What ancient liberty do the people invoke when rulers overreach?
6. Who fed you during a lean winter, and what debt remains unpaid?
7. If offered a crown, what would compel you to accept--or refuse--it?

Inciting Incident

At the autumn tithe-moot of the crossroads keep, Alistair's reeve arrives with soldiers and an order seizing the district's seed grain "for the preservation of the realm." A mud-spattered royal courier follows bearing a countermand allegedly dictated by the child heir; before either seal can be tested, hooded riders fire the granary, murder the courier, and attempt to carry off the moot's elected speaker.

The characters must choose between saving the winter stores, pursuing the assassins, and preventing frightened farmers from slaughtering the reeve's company. By dawn the keep is masterless, both orders are suspect, and the assembled freeholds name the characters wardens until spring--if they can keep the roads open and the realm from devouring itself.

Campaign Shape

Seed Grain

The company saves what it can from the tithe-moot, investigates the contradictory orders, restores the keep, and survives the first winter. Nearby freeholds judge the new wardens by whose hunger they answer first.

The Freehold Compact

The characters travel among quarrelsome communities, negotiating protection, law, roads, mills, and mutual aid. Each accession adds strength and an obligation written into the emerging compact.

The Hungry Borders

Alistair consolidates loyal districts while neighboring powers, merchants, pretenders, and raiders test the realm. Buried elderworks offer shortcuts whose activation could empower the compact or subject it to an older authority.

The Harvest Crown

The child heir nears majority as armies and delegates gather. The characters may restore the crown under binding terms, found a federation or republic, accept rule themselves, partition the realm, or discover a stranger form of government authored from the promises they actually kept.

Canon and Proposal Boundary

Recovered material supports Farnears as Fair's breadbasket, a loose farmer confederation resistant to central rule, and a former rebel against RossWin taxation. Archived Lost Thrown material establishes Stephen's death, a child heir, and Alistair's radical measures, but sits uneasily beside the older confederation description. Attergo's status is only suggested.

The recent monarchy-over-confederation reconciliation, crossroads keep, grain seizure, forged orders, party wardenship, negotiated compact, elderworks, factional sequence, and possible constitutional settlements are proposals. The campaign should not declare its preferred government before the players discover what each form demands.

Choosing Among the Six

Each frame offers a different first promise to the table.

- Choose The Wyrmsroads of Himmelsrand for local northern heroism that grows into dragon diplomacy and factional sovereignty.
- Choose No Master but the Sea for freedom, found family, a player-directed ship, and episodic voyages accumulating into a maritime mystery.
- Choose The Azure Return for dangerous exploration, contested history, and a final decision about what a nation should resurrect.
- Choose No One Owns Goldwind for magical-western action, reputation, disputed law, and communities struggling over land and water.
- Choose The Chains Beneath the Lake for immediate catastrophe, infernal bargains, besieged-city survival, and an extravagant planar rescue.
- Choose The Harvest Crown for realm-building, negotiation, logistics, and a political order authored by promises made in play.

Inspiration Library

These works are touchstones rather than required sourcebooks or plots to reproduce.

- The Wyrmsroads of Himmelsrand: Dragon of Icespire Peak; Phandelver and Below: The Shattered Obelisk; Icewind Dale; Skyrim.
- No Master but the Sea: Ghosts of Saltmarsh; Seas of Vodari; Skull & Shackles.
- The Azure Return: Tomb of Annihilation; The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth; classic expedition and underworld adventures.
- No One Owns Goldwind: Outlaws of Alkenstar; Deadlands; Once Upon a Time in the West.
- The Chains Beneath the Lake: Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus; besieged-city fantasy; infernal legal horror; road-war stories.
- The Harvest Crown: Kingmaker; War for the Crown; Pendragon; agrarian succession chronicles.

Revision #1

Created 2026-08-19 01:51:58 UTC by Codex

Updated 2026-08-19 01:51:58 UTC by Codex