

ADMIN and the Armory

Skyquarters

ADMIN's base of operations is the impressive and hubristic Skyquarters, a needlessly over-engineered construction that hangs over the street below. This impressive structure serves little practical purpose. It does allow for guards to keep a closer watch on citizens and tourists underneath, but also provides a fairly easy shot for an errant arrow to take out one of the ADMIN in broad daylight.

Regardless of its functionality, Skyquarters is the governmental seat of power in Meddenfirth, and the head workshop of its Architect, the fifth member of ADMIN's council. The Architect is responsible for providing building permits and has a heavy hand in designing any new construction. Though technically not a member of The Most Humble Company of Builders and Artisans, the Architect works closely with them to ensure Meddenfirth as a whole is structurally sound and won't suddenly collapse into the river below.



Kinneth Tetrid

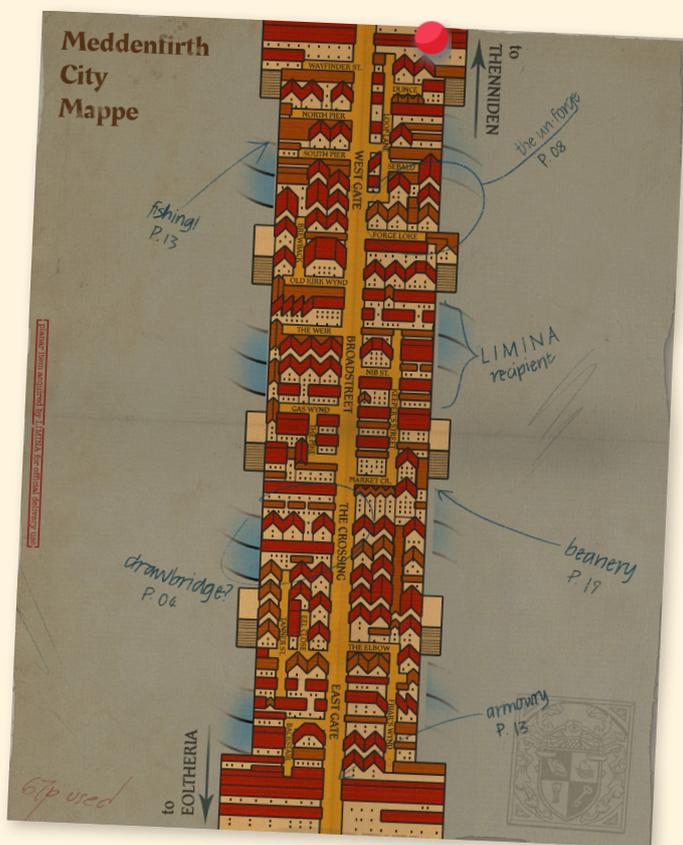
The current Architect of Meddenfirth, Kinneth is a master builder, and one of the few prominent residents of Meddenfirth who is neither Thennidane, nor Eoltherian, nor Bridgeborn. He was previously responsible for the construction of various wonders in a far-off kingdom, working under the auspices of a now deposed king. After his sudden fall from grace, Kinneth was hand-picked by the previous Architect to lead Meddenfirth's unceasing expansion and reconstruction.



Kinneth is single-minded. He understands that his city's strength arises from its unique legal classification, and he wants to capitalize on that hard-won independence by maximizing the city's density. If buildings can be taller, he will find a way to make them taller. If buildings can be cantilevered over the edges of the bridge, he'll find an appropriate counterweight. If buildings can somehow be jam packed closer together, he'll find a way to do that as well.

Much to the chagrin of the actual residents of Meddenfirth, Kinneth is myopic to the drawbacks of such unsustainable density. He ignores the effect that the claustrophobic layout has on sunlight, on ambient noise, and on air quality. Kinneth has staunch opponents who believe that Meddenfirth should begin to reclaim some of the bridge real estate to be used for open spaces, but a majority of Kinneth's colleagues will side with him time and time again.

On the following page is a look at Meddenfirth before it got modernized:



Favor:

- +1 for any sizeable donation to the Un-Forge
- +1 for any officially sanctioned purchase of Company goods
- +1 for aiding in any negotiations or sales of new construction or maintenance
- +2 for smuggling in any non-Company raw materials or components for use in Company crafting
- +2 for befriending the Architect
- +3 for any discreet purchase of a potentially illicit component (or for finding a suitable buyer)

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- 1 for smuggling in your own weapons
 - 1 for pointing out any structural flaws in recently maintained buildings
 - 2 for buying any final goods from any non-Company vendors
 - 2 for becoming “too close” to Meddenfirth’s Architect (the Builders and Artisans have a good relationship with Kinneth, but try to keep him at arm’s length)
 - 3 for blowing their cover illicit good manufacturing or selling

The Most Humble Company of Builders and Artisans

Altogether The Most Humble Company of Builders and Artisans are the most uncomplicated of Meddenfirths four livery companies. They represent both the construction workers who handle bridge maintenance, upgrades, and expansions, as well as the various craftsmen whose goods are sold in No Man’s Bazaar. Everyone from tinsmiths and coopers to brickmasons and engineers fall under the purview of this company. Though their work is often seen as less intrinsically noble than that of the Repurposers, their expertise is fundamental to the economic prosperity of Meddenfirth.

Given that there is a self-serving or insidious element to all of the previous livery companies, you may expect there to be something unsavory about the Builders and Artisans as well. The corruption here is more subtle: buildings are never built to be optimally efficient or long-lasting, thereby necessitating future maintenance. Additionally, many of the goods created by these craftsmen might not be explicitly outlawed in Meddenfirth, but they can be used to create finished goods that are. Company members would never dare build a fully-functional blunderbuss, but if they make a barrel, a stock, and a firing mechanism, it’s quite possible someone else might know what to do with those components, and this would be-gunman will happily pay top dollar for these conveniently bundled parts.



Builder and Artisan NPCs

Athol Cambridge: The foreman for any and all bridge construction. A mastiff kennelborn, Athol is one of the largest and most imposing citizens of the bridge, but his responsibilities are squarely in the realm of management. While Kinneth the Architect designs any new buildings on the bridge, it’s Athol that determines how those structures get built. He’s fickle and frequently holds a grudge, so if he doesn’t want something built, he’ll assign one laborer to spend an hour per week on it with an expected completion date one or more centuries in the future.

Misty Lazear: If you’re buying a souvenir, a knickknack, or a small household item anywhere in Meddenfirth, there’s a good chance it was crafted by Misty. Despite not being able to focus on any one task for more than a few minutes, Misty capitalizes on her short attention span by juggling dozens of different projects at a given time. Her workshop looks as though it had been ransacked by vandals, but Misty embraces the mess, and it doesn’t seem to impact her prolific output.

Barron Instasia: Barron is a plant, a Tarhand agent who works for the Company of Builders and Artisans to get premium access to raw materials, building a variety of illicit goods with which he outfits his gang. Seemingly no one in the company is aware of his dual-allegiance, and he’s able to avoid questions so deftly that he’s become basically immune to reprimand from his superiors. Barron is also a masterful painter of still lifes, though he would never dare sell even a single painting. Truth be told: he could almost certainly leave the criminal life altogether and enjoy a comfortable career as a portrait artist or muralist if only he had the courage.

The Loft

Full-time couriers are essentially unnecessary in a city as small as Meddenfirth. It never takes more than a few minutes to pick up a package or deliver a message to a friend. As such, there isn't much need for a formal internal postal system on the bridge.

There is, however, considerable demand for international correspondence. Many residents in Meddenfirth need to communicate with family and friends abroad who may not be able to traverse war-torn countrysides just to visit some strange bridge. These residents rely on The Loft for their postal needs. The Loft is a rooftop operation that delivers messages across the known realms in Eoltheria, Thenniden, and beyond. Selene Aman and her band of expertly trained pigeons are responsible for the majority of correspondence both to and from Meddenfirth.

Despite its significance to life on the bridge, the Loft is one of the few truly independent commercial ventures left in town. The Loft remains unaffiliated with any of the livery companies or gangs, and operates with minimal oversight from ADMIN. If a Meddenfirth resident needs to correspond with the outside world, they need but bring some feed for the pigeons and an optional donation to Selene herself. While in Meddenfirth, adventurers should keep their eyes on the sky in case a messenger pigeon arrives from abroad to deliver a letter directly into one's hands. How the pigeons are able to pinpoint an addressee is anyone's best guess.

[Boxed text] We would humbly request that any LIMINA couriers dispatched to Meddenfirth do their utmost to investigate Selene and her brilliantly trained pigeons. In addition to these creatures' unrivaled ability to home in on targets as vague as "the man in Kirkshire with the funny hat," they seem to defy their own biology with how rapidly they make deliveries. There is sufficient evidence that some manner of witchcraft is involved, and our authorities at the Lodge seek to learn these postal magicks

Selene Aman

Known affectionately as the Pigeon Whisperer, Selene lives the life of a pauper. Sleeping each night in a tent on a rooftop owned by a landlord who would happily allow her to sleep inside, Selene forgoes the postal tycoon lifestyle for something far more rugged and animalistic. Perhaps this is her secret; she lives in such close quarters with her pigeons that she's able to fully get inside their heads.

It could be that.

Or it could be magic. The incredible success rate of Selene's messenger pigeons implies something more curious is afoot.

Few know Selene well. She is quiet and unassuming, if a bit foul-smelling. She demands no proper payment for her

services, and will quickly but politely end any conversation with a customer before it can even start. Presumably, there's much more to Selene, but the only folks in town who seem to know her at all are the half-dozen or so children who bring her lunch from the Bazaar each day. Their affection for Selene is the best hint anyone else has to go on.



The Armory

Almost everyone who arrives in Meddenfirth was armed before they walked through the gates. After being stripped of their weapons, it is strongly in the best interest of just about everyone in town that these weapons remain safely stowed away until their owners leave town. In order to keep the weapons safe (and the citizens even safer), all impounded arms are stored in Meddenfirth's Armory, a large structure attached to the bridge's East Gate.

The Armory is both the oldest and most defensible structure in Meddenfirth. This bulky stone citadel would make for a highly strategic fort if the need ever arises... and the powers at be know that such a need very well might arise if the war ever gets out of hand. In the meantime, the Armory is used as a customs checkpoint and vault. It is widely known that the Armory houses all impounded weapons, but what is less widely discussed is the Armory's role as a high security storage facility for wealthy visitors and residents, as well as the only true prison on Meddenfirth proper.

When a criminal is apprehended in Meddenfirth, by far the most common punishment is simply a significant fine. This is a useful enough deterrent for most low level offenses. For more wanton misdeeds, however, it is customary to exile the perpetrator forcefully (i.e. throwing them in the river). Though this may not truly strike fear into the hearts of potential dastardly villains, the punishment at least ensures that the exiled felon is no longer Meddenfirth's problem.

The Armory's jail cells are reserved only for heinous criminals who specifically need to be kept in Meddenfirth: traitors who must be interrogated, suspects in ongoing investigations, and serial murderers that the city deems too great a risk to release. With real estate at such a premium, the Architect would prefer to dedicate as little bridge space as possible to matters of law enforcement and detention, so there are typically no more than ten criminals detained at any given time.

Silas Frother

Both Eoltheria and Thenniden require passports for stays longer than a month. Though this is tremendously difficult to enforce, it is comparatively easier to simply keep track of citizens who have had their passports revoked. Meddenfirth resident Silas Frother was unlucky enough to have both his Eoltherian and Thennidane passports retracted. Now he's stuck on the bridge with no ability to return to either of his former homes or escape to realms beyond.

There is no need to pity Silas, however, for in truth he deserved a far worse punishment. After a truly pitiful attempt at espionage on behalf of the Thennidane army, he defected to Eoltheria where he again became a spy. While working for a Eoltheria agency, he was captured by his old employers after crossing back West. With now two nations furious at him for his failure to gather intelligence, he is legally trapped between them with no means of leaving.

Though not quite yet resigned to his fate, Silas is still looking for a way out. Maybe there's a way he can redeem himself in the eyes of one his former homes, or maybe he can somehow hop on an unaffiliated river barge and head out to sea. Realistically, Silas is getting on in age, and it's unlikely the arc of his character bends toward redemption. He's far more likely to fail again at some form of criminality in Meddenfirth before being "forcefully exiled" from this his final home as well.

Plot Hook: Amory Heist

After befriending either

1) Silas Frother, 2) the Underfed, 3) the Tarhands, 4) a guerilla platoon of Eoltherian soldiers, 5) a conniving group of street urchin children, or 6) a radically pacifist band of Repurposers, the adventurers may be tasked with conducting a heist of the Meddenfirth Armory. It is, after all, the site of many of the most valuable items in the city: both rare and powerful weaponry, as well as whatever treasures are stored within the secret vaults that the party may or may not be aware of. If the adventurers have demonstrated a willingness to get their hands dirty, their would-be handlers will attempt to convince them to rob the Armory blind and split their yield. Though this may seem a herculean task, the adventurers will likely have a number of tricks up their sleeves: magic, deception, the aid of their allies, and probably at least one or two concealed weapons.

GM Note: If your particular group of adventurers tend to stay on the right side of the law, flip the script here! Present the armory heist as a threat to be thwarted. Even if the adventurers don't care terribly about the morality of the burglary, they will likely do everything in their power to stop a would-be robbery if it meant that their weapons would also be stolen.

It is unlikely any of the aforementioned groups would be willing to attempt a heist of the Armory unless they had some particular ace in the hole. Consult the table below for boons that might be provided by each of the potential quest givers.



Potential Heist Boon

Silas Frother

1. Silas was able to steal a keyring from the guards last time he was locked up.
2. Silas has spent so much time in and out of jail, that he's been able to sketch together a nearly perfect map of the bottom three floors of the Armory.

The Underfed

1. There's a full moon tonight, and the Balance Keepers normally on watch might be distracted by some aggressive howling from nearby rooftops.
2. From underneath the Armory, the Underfed have managed to chisel most of the way into the floor of the jail.

The Tarhands

1. One of the Tarhands' wealthy foreign benefactors will be making a sizable withdrawal from the secret vaults this evening, providing a perfect opening for someone to slip in undetected.
2. One of the guards keeping watch over the north tower is secretly a Tarhand plant. If the adventurers can scale the tower, they'll gain easy access to the upper floors of the Armory.

Eoltherian soldiers

1. The soldiers have established a camp just east of the Armory. On the adventurers' command, they can create a distraction or provide suppressing fire.
2. Though they have limited firepower to begin with, they can part ways with at most one or two muskets to aid the party in their "nonviolent assault."

Street kids

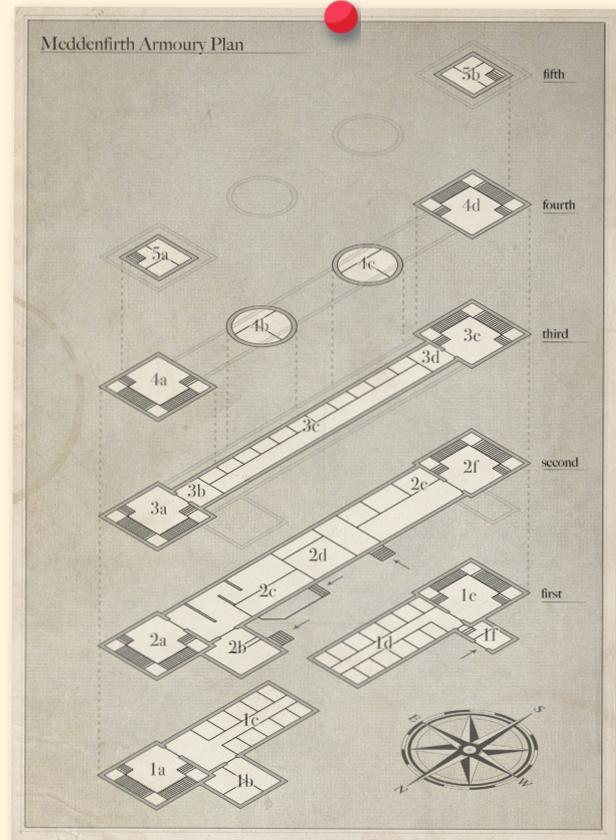
1. One of the children is the daughter of the Armory chef. She'll happily sneak in and add some devastating toxin to this evening's meal, potentially sending a bevy of guards straight to the lavatory.
2. The kids are the masters of the rooftops. They can show you a nearly imperceptible rope they've attached from a nearby eave up to one of the towers for a quick entrance to the upper floors.

Radical Repurposers

1. Perhaps counterintuitively, the Repurposers have a massive stock of weapons that they can provide, so long as the adventurers promise to only threaten violence and not actually commit any.
2. A jar of gaseous fuel could blow a hole in a vault door, create a thunderously loud distraction, or if worse comes to worst: function as a deadly weapon.

Map of the Meddenfirth Armory

The Most Humble Company of Builders and Artisans keeps meticulous records of all of their building plans, and if the players are able to infiltrate or befriend their ranks, they might be able to come into possession of the adjoining blueprint. If not, they'll be left to explore the Armory without any visual aid.



First Floor

Very few civilians ever enter the first floor of the Armory. These floors are dedicated solely to barracks for the Balance Keepers stationed in the Armory, as well as a jail for a select few criminals.

Staircases (1a, 1e): Both sets of staircases leading down into the ground floor feature frequent guard movement, if only because those in the barracks or the jail need to so regularly speak with other Balance Keepers on the upper floors. The door from the north staircase (1a) to the jail (1c) is unlocked, but the doorway from the south staircase (1e) to the barracks (1d) will likely be locked at most times.

Jail Security (1b): At any given time, at least 2 or 3 wardens will be in the jail, keeping watch over the inmates and dealing with any paperwork, visitors, or logistics involved in maintaining the small jail.

Jail (1c): Each cell holds no more than one inmate, and the cellblock is usually only kept at about half capacity. Individual cell gates can be picked, and the wardens will have easily stolen keyrings on their person.

Barracks and Kitchen (1d): A handful of Balance Keepers are stationed directly in the Armory so as to be readily available for potential threats to the Armory. Within this barracks, they maintain a communal kitchen that also prepares the food fed to the inmates. There is also a lavatory (with a hole leading into the river), as well as a room for bathing and washing clothes. If an intruder is detected in the Armory, whoever is currently manning the tariff collection desk (2d) will pull a cord, triggering a bell to ring at the northern end of the hallway in the barracks. If this occurs, the entire force will become active in a manner of minutes, likely creating a tense obstacle for anyone attempting to burgle the Armory.

Balance Keeper Entry (1f): Only Balance Keepers are permitted to enter via the southern ground-floor door. Though this entryway is not permanently manned, the door is locked at all times.

Second Floor

Despite not being the ground floor, most entering the Armory will first come inside via initial processing (2b) before eventually exiting via the staircase between the tariff collection room (2d) and the interrogation rooms (2e). This floor sees by far the most foot traffic, and though none of the doors are locked, it is comparatively difficult to explore this floor unseen.

Staircases (2a, 2f): The staircases on the second floor are periodically guarded, though the north staircase (2a) sees far more traffic than the south. For this reason, it might be advisable for sneaky burglars to attempt to climb the southern staircase (2f) to reach the higher floors.

Initial Processing (2b): Whenever someone enters Meddenfirth from the East, they are ushered into the Armory via the northern entrance. Inside the first chamber, the Balance Keepers thoroughly search for weaponry or other contraband before ushering the new arrivals into reception (2c). Any confiscated goods are immediately brought up the stairs (2a) to the primary weapons vaults (3c). At any given time, there will always be at least one guard in initial processing.

Reception (2c): After being searched, travelers must wait in line before speaking directly with a customs officer. At this desk, a Balance Keeper will check their passports, discuss their intentions in the city, and inquire as to their political leanings. If the traveler seems at all suspicious, they will be ushered into one of the interrogation rooms (2e). Otherwise they will be given a quick lecture regarding the laws of Meddenfirth, and then sent into the tariff collection room (2d).

Tariff Collection Room (2d): Any traveler who is allowed entry to Meddenfirth must first pay a complicated set of duties and tariffs. While the total quantity requested will likely be trivial for most travelers, it is nonetheless an important “buy-in” to acclimate visitors to paying

regular taxes and fines. No money is actually kept here; a dumbwaiter is used to regularly haul payments up to the actual vaults in the floor above (3c). Note: This dumbwaiter could theoretically support the weight of a smaller adventurer. After payment is remitted, the tariff collector will provide the traveler with a visa that they will be required to periodically present to officers while in the city.

Interrogation Rooms (2e): Travelers deemed suspicious must submit to further investigation before being granted entry to the city. Though this may sound intimidating, it rarely involves torture or intimidation. The Balance Keepers simply want to make sure that there are no partisan agitators coming to town. Notably, the southern half of the floor is typically less closely guarded than the north, which might incentivize those committing a heist to seek out a further interrogation.

Third Floor

The vast majority of adventurers will be targeting the third floor first and foremost. This is where the bulk of the weaponry is held, and though it is well guarded, getting even a small portion of the goods held within could be extremely valuable to their contacts, and will up their firepower greatly.

Staircases (3a, 3e): Surprisingly, these staircases are no more guarded than those on the lower floors. There are, however, large windows in both third floor staircases which might make for quick entry / exit points for more acrobatic adventurers.

Weapons Checkpoints (3b, 3d): These rooms are merely stopgaps. Only Balance Keepers are allowed within, and they will drop off the confiscated weapons or other contraband with an attendant at either checkpoint, though the northern checkpoint (3b) is used almost exclusively due to its proximity to the staircase leading directly from initial processing (2b). The actual vaults will be nearly impossible to enter without first passing through one of these checkpoints first, due to their lack of windows or other potential means of ingress.

Primary Weapon Vaults (3c): The vast majority of weaponry that is being held in storage within the Armory is kept in these 11 storage lockers. The weapons are meticulously categorized so as to avoid mixups, and each vault requires a unique key to open. If adventurers can get a hold of the current log of weapons, they will be able to specifically ascertain where any weapon they might desire might be located. Importantly, the third locker in from either checkpoint also contains a concealed hatch leading into the secret vaults (4b, 4c) that house loot that might be even more enticing to adventurers. Unless they specifically know to look for these hatches, they will be difficult to notice. There are no windows on this floor, so adventurers will likely have to make their way back through the weapons checkpoints (3b, 3d) and into the staircases before they can escape with their spoils.

Fourth Floor

Containing only the staircases and the secret vault towers, it is possible that adventurers will bypass the fourth floor altogether. What's more: there is no easy way to get from the fourth floor to the windowless secret vaults without scuttling across the roof, potentially opening themselves up to sentry notice.

Staircases (4a, 4d): The top floors of the staircases actually do maintain a constant guard presence. This may be a useful hint to the adventurers that there is more of value on the upper floors of the Armory. If they seek to gain entry to either the permanent armory (5a) or the war room (5b), they will likely have to deal with these guards one way or another.

Secret Vaults Towers (4b, 4c): Within these beautiful windowless towers, the Balance Keepers store their clients' most valuable treasures. Though few would guess that these easily visible towers house the most concentrated wealth in all of Meddenfirth, it's possible that the unexpected twist of these vaults being visible in plain sight was the intention all along... it's the last thing anyone would expect!. Though typically these vaults contain mundane riches such as gold and gems, it is possible that they may house more surprising treasures. Consult the table below, or concoct your own unique loot for the party to discover.

1. Perhaps it is no surprise that Gubban Lance—one of the wealthiest employees of the Most Humble Company of Balance Keepers—keeps the deed to his Meddenfirth mansion inside one of the company's very own vaults. The Balance Keepers are notorious sticklers for laws and contracts, and if the party were to “legally” transfer ownership of the mansion to themselves, it's likely the Balance Keepers would uphold this bizarre theft.
2. While Morévie's Toes are still on sale at No Man's Bazaar, most would be shocked to learn the embalmed corpse of the now-deceased guru is being kept in a coffin in the secret vaults. Is this weird dead body worth anything? Probably! You'll just have to find a strange follower who wants him.
3. The Long War might just conclude tomorrow if the Eoltherians could put an end to their famine, and that might just be possible if they were to come into possession of Thennidane agricultural patents. These detailed documents outline many of the farming sciences that Thenniden uses to cultivate crops with staggering efficiency.
4. The Thennidanans aren't the only ones keeping important secrets in the Armory. It turns out that a rogue Eoltherian magus has in fact placed a heinous hex on Lord Hiram Pandey. The key to this curse is a decidedly unflattering voodoo doll that is permanently housed in one of the secret vaults.

Fifth Floor

There are only two rooms on the fifth floor of the Armory: the permanent weapons vault, and the war room. The walkways that surround either room are guarded by Balance Keeper archers who keep a vigilant watch over the Eoltherian border, Skyquarters, and the city streets below.

Permanent Weapons Vault (5a): While the vast majority of confiscated weapons end up in the primary weapons vault (3c), a select few items of particular value get placed up in the highest point of the northern tower. Within this locked room, the Balance Keepers place weapons that have never been reclaimed by visitors leaving the city, weapons that are too valuable to part with (they simply tell the visitors that their arms were lost in a bureaucratic mixup), or weapons meant to be held as bargaining chips with particularly elite visitors. Needless to say, if adventurers are able to make their way up the permanent weapons vault, they will have their pick of the most valuable and powerful implements of violence that can be found in Meddenfirth.

GM Note: Feel free to roll on a random magical item table, or provide something that befits the themes of the campaign. Alternatively, consider asking your players what their ideal weapon would be, and give them a particularly souped-up version of whatever they suggest.

Even run-of-the-mill Balance Keeper guards aren't allowed in the permanent weapons vault, and they would not be carrying keys to it. It is only accessible via one of six keys held by Balance Keeper higher-ups. If adventurers were to break in, they would still have to contend with the tamed riverwyrm youngling who keeps watch over the hoard.

The War Room (5b): When visiting dignitaries wish to discuss politics or the progress of the Long War, they meet in Izetta's Beanery. When Balance Keeper elites need to have a tense conversation about the progression of the evolving conflict, they head to the war room. This small meeting space is richly decorated, with fine ceramics, imported wooden furniture, and a wide assortment of exotic liqueurs. Though adventurers might be intrigued by the fancy goods on display, they'll be more intrigued by any documents left behind by Balance Keeper tacticians. These documents might outline plans for increased undermining of peace talks, disinformation campaigns, or other nefarious plans to ensure the war never actually ends.

Concluding the Heist

Successfully pulling off a heist of the Armory will be no easy feat. Even if the party is able to get into the various vaults, they will still have to make their way out, back to their contacts, and remain undetected in the days and weeks after their burglary. It is entirely possible, of course, that they will alert the Balance Keepers of their presence,

thereby ending up in jail in the very same building they were attempting to rob. More likely, however, they will simply be exiled from the bridge, forced into one of the neighboring nations or simply the river below.

If everything goes off without a hitch, they will gain an exceptional amount of favor with whomever tipped them off to the potential for a heist... assuming the party chose to reconvene with their handlers and not simply make off with their loot all by themselves. Any one of the factions (or Silas) can prove to be compelling repeated quest givers. If the adventurers choose to continue working with the Tarhands, the Eoltherians, or any of the other groups, consider escalating future quests even further. Meddenfirth is full of the potential for intrigue, and the plot will likely get even hairier if they take their exploits beyond the confines of this single bridge.