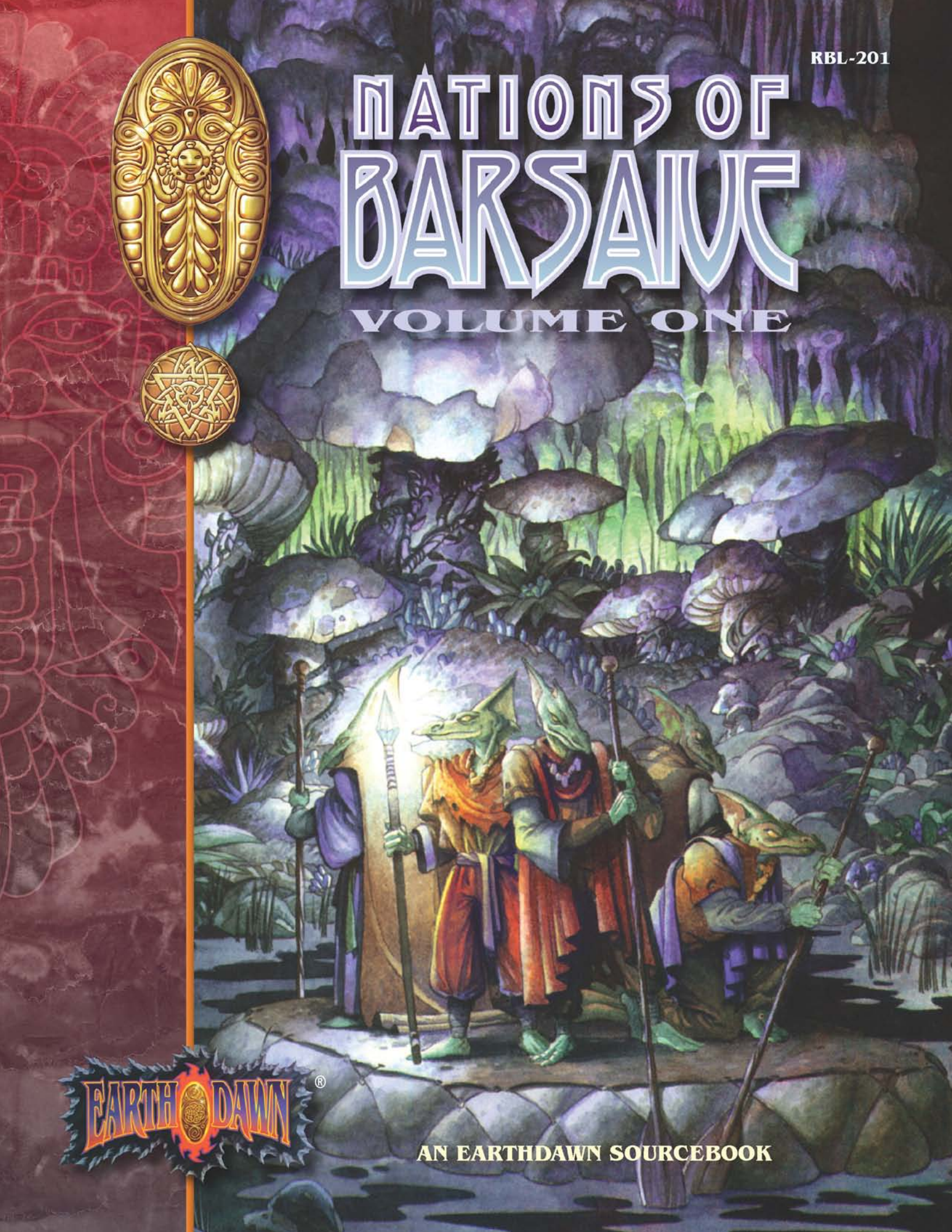
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NATIONS OF BARSAIVE

VOLUME ONE



EARTHDAWN®

AN EARTHDAWN SOURCEBOOK

ON THE BRINK OF WAR

Where the Kingdom of Throal is the heart of Barsaive, the center of culture, commerce and knowledge, the endless network of waterways known as the Serpent River is what fuels Barsaive's trade. The dwarfs united the people of Barsaive and threw off the yoke of oppression; now traders and adventurers from across the land, bringing properity and liberty to every town and village. From the Grand Bazaar of Throal to the loaded cargo boats of the powerful t'skrang trading houses, people of all kinds ply the waters of Barsaive's mightiest river, risking its dangers for profit or adventure.

But the end of those peaceful days is looming on the horizon, and the nations of Barsaive struggle to survive the great war that seems inevitable. The return of the Therans and the brutal assassination of Throal's greatest king have thrown the province off-balance and divided the t'skrang houses of the Serpent River. The only heir to the throne, King Neden, turned out to be a hot-headed youth who began his reign with a military assault against the hated Therans. He failed, and soon realized that the Denairastas of Iopos have played a deadly game to put the dwarf kingdom and the Theran Empire against each other's throats and Throal's population on the verge of civil war...

Nations of Barsaive, Volume One offers gamemasters and players and in-depth look at the Kingdom of Throal and the Serpent River. This book features revised and updated content, and reams of additional material for adventures in the world of **Earthdawn**. Requires use of the **Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums.**

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NATIONS OF BARSAIVE

VOLUME ONE

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This has to be done right, *but I'm going to do it myself, lad. People intend using this section to find stuff, not to giggle about your inability to arrange letters properly.*

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INTRODUCTION

Throal has become the heart of Barsaive, and the waters of the mighty Serpent River serve as its lifeblood.

• Sephiria Mons, Troubadour to Queen Alachia of the Blood Wood •



The age of **Earthdawn** was an era of magic that existed thousands of years ago in our world's dim past. Magic touched every aspect of the lives of men and women of the Name-giver races: humans, elves, dwarfs, orks, trolls, windlings, t'skrang, and obsidimen. However, as the levels of magic rose, so did the dangers in the world. The rise of magic brought the Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devoured all life in their path. For four centuries, the people of Barsaive hid underground as the Horrors devastated their lands during the dark time that came to be called the Scourge.

Now, the Scourge is over, and people have emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes step forward to champion their land, arming themselves with powerful spells and magical treasures. Through magic, skill, and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge, and fight the oppression of the Theran Empire. By doing so, they become Barsaive's living legends.

Nations of Barsaive, Volume One offers gamemasters and players an in-depth look at the Kingdom of Throal and the Serpent River. This book provides detailed descriptions of Barsaive's mightiest Kingdom and the six great t'skrang trading houses, featuring revised and updated content, and new material for adventures in the world of **Earthdawn**.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Nations of Barsaive, Volume One is a sourcebook for the **Earthdawn** game. This book describes the vast underground realm of the dwarfs and its immediate surroundings, including the sprawling city of Bartertown and the Throal Mountains from which the dwarf kingdom takes its Name. The book also offers readers a cross section of legends, history, customs, and lore of the people who live along the Serpent River, with a particular focus on the masters of the river, the t'skrang. Players can use this information to enhance their characters' backgrounds and increase their knowledge of the world of **Earthdawn**. Gamemasters can use the wealth of opportunities in this book to create new adventures, flesh out the game world, and expand the scope of evolving campaigns.

Aside from the **Earthdawn Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums**, the gamemaster and players need no other material to use this product, though gamemasters may find other published **Earthdawn** products useful. For example, more information on dwarf and t'skrang culture can be found in the **Name-giver's Compendium**, and several references are made to this book in **Nations of Barsaive, Volume One**.

This sourcebook begins with an overview of life in **The Dwarf Kingdom**, followed by a detailed history of Throal from its earliest days to the recent and infamous Death Rebellion. Additional chapters include an in-depth discussion of trade in the kingdom, complete with profiles of prominent trading houses and guilds, and a richly detailed description of the kingdom's cultural life. **The Halls of Power** details the Throalic government and law, diplomatic relations with other influential powers in Barsaive, and gives overviews of important organizations in Throal, from its diplomatic corps to its army. **A Tour of the Kingdom** highlights places of interest to player characters who may live in or visit the dwarf kingdom. This book also offers a detailed look **Outside the Kingdom**; at Bartertown, for example, the scruffy but lively place where many adventurers may prefer to spend their off-hours, and describes areas of interest in the Throal Mountains from the treacherous underground chambers of Braza's Kingdom to the home of the cliff-dwelling, flying t'skrang. The final chapter offers guidelines for running **Adventures in Throal**, including several sample adventure outlines. In addition to these, brief adventure hooks are scattered throughout the book.

The second part of this book begins with an overview of **The Serpent River**, offering a brief glimpse of the waterway and surrounding lands, the various t'skrang trading houses that control it, and the manner in which travel and

trade are conducted along the river's length. Following this overview is a chapter devoted to **The T'skrang Aropagoi**, each of which controls a region of the river, including notable settlements and communities, famous and infamous characters that players may encounter, and other items of interest. **A Tour of the Serpent** highlights places of interest to player characters who travel along the Serpent River. The final chapter, **Adventures on the Serpent**, includes several sample adventure outlines.

The final part of this book offers game mechanics and rules for situations that might arise when adventuring in and around Throal and along the Serpent River. **New Creatures** provides descriptions and game information for a variety of new creatures and unusual plants. The **New Goods and Services** and **New Magical Treasures** chapters include descriptions and statistics for various magical and common items that adventurers may encounter on their travels in Throal and along the Serpent River. The **New Riverboats** chapter includes game statistics for several different types of riverboats. Finally, the **Character Index** summarizes the many gamemaster and other characters described in the book, and a comprehensive **Index** completes this volume.

Like other **Earthdawn** sourcebooks, **Nations of Barsaive, Volume One** provides the gamemaster with detailed background information to read at his leisure. It also offers plenty of solutions for problems that gamemasters are likely to run into in the course of an adventure. In a city environment like Throal, you may find it difficult to predict exactly where your player characters will go and what kinds of trouble they will stick their noses into. Likewise, the Serpent River and its major tributaries form a network of waterways that extends for more than 10,000 miles throughout Barsaive, so this sourcebook can't possibly describe it all. The purpose of this sourcebook is not to fill in all the gaps, but to open the doors of the gamemaster's and players' imaginations.

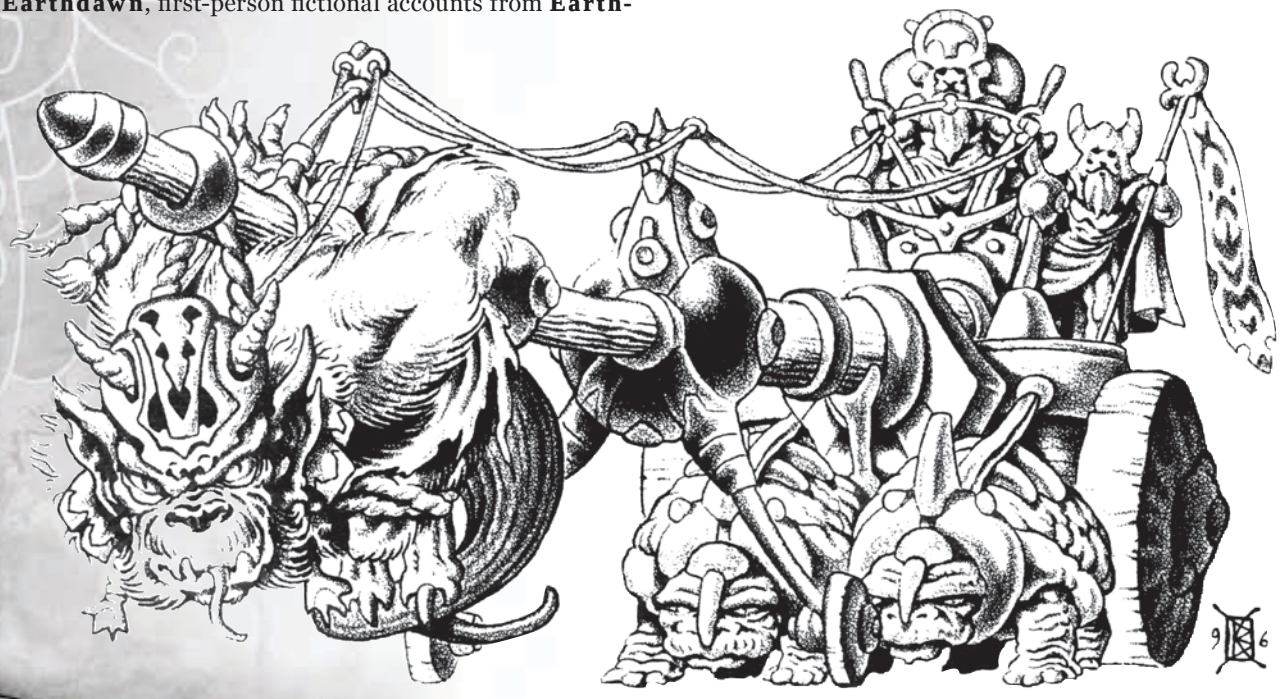
To give gamemasters and players a taste of the flavor of **Earthdawn**, first-person fictional accounts from **Earthdawn** characters are interspersed throughout the book. You can use them as a guide to the game's atmosphere, or as jumping-off points for story lines in which the player characters get involved.

Though the material offered in this book is presented as fact and should be treated as accurate in terms of **Earthdawn** continuity, remember that you are the ultimate author of your campaign. If a fact in this sourcebook contradicts something you have already established in your game, or if you find it inconvenient, go ahead and change it. Any player who claims that the gamemaster is wrong about some detail of Barsaive deserves to have as many changes thrown at him as you can dream up. In some instances, this book presents contradictory accounts of a setting or character as **options** from which the gamemaster can choose. These options allow you to decide which version of the truth is real in your campaign.

At the Brink of War

In addition to providing gamemasters with basic information on the recovering civilizations in Barsaive, this book details several conflicts developing in the province. Whether groups of adventurers explore the length of the Serpent or settle down in Throal to explore its mysteries, terrible dangers are brewing in the background. Barsaive has staged a remarkable recovery from the devastating effects of the Scourge, largely because of Throal's efforts. Thanks to the dwarf kingdom and a few legendary heroes, Barsaivians can live in relative safety in the province's larger cities and towns.

However, this surface stability is currently facing a crisis. When the threat of the Horrors receded, the major powers of Barsaive felt secure enough to focus on their political and military rivalries. When the Therans established the fortress of Triumph near Lake Ban, a new, bloodstained chapter in Barsaive's history began.



THE DWARF KINGDOM

Throal stands as a beacon of civilization to all of Barsaive. We cannot bow to the pressure of hostile forces. To do so betrays the trust of those who look to us for guidance, and dishonors everything our late king worked for.

• Umo Yilwaz, in an Address to the *j'havim* of House Yilwaz •



I expected Throal to be a dank and musty place, like the countless derelict kaers in which I've risked my skin these past few years. I know we dwarfs are supposed to be earth-lovers, never happier than when we're traipsing around a big hole in the ground. Me, I like dirt and stone well enough, but I've always preferred it under my feet instead of over my head. Understand: I grew up in a wee speck of a farming village out in the hinterland, out on the plains, with nothing but miles of bright blue sky overhead. Just the idea of mountains makes me dizzy. And being underground—well, if it means treasure, I'll grumble and get on with it, but until I came to Throal, I thought anyone who wanted to live in a hole had to be cracked in the head.

When I stepped through those magnificent gates into the Bazaar, I realized that all my imaginings of the place were nothing like the reality. Throal was no more like a kaer than an ocean is like a puddle. The ceilings of the vast rock chamber were enormously high—thirty feet at their lowest point. The air smelled fresh and clean and cool, with no stink of dust or mildew like I'd expected. Instead, I could smell spices and perfumes. Nothing overpowering, mind you, just a few tantalizing, intoxicating hints. I'd expected grim pillars of crudely worked stone. Instead, I beheld polished marble, sparkling crystal, intricate mosaics of colored glass and semi-precious stone. All around me, walls and floor and ceiling caught and reflected the rays of dozens upon dozens of light quartz fixtures, each one more ingeniously placed than the last. There was nothing gaudy or garish about it, either; on the contrary, I found it deeply soothing. The architects who designed this place, and the craftsmen who built it, had created a light more beautiful than that of the sun itself! The light drew me through the Bazaar, pulled me deeper into the heart of Throal, as if it were welcoming a long-lost daughter. Tears spilled from my eyes and ran down my grimy cheeks.

I found myself in the middle of a throng, surrounded by all sorts of Name-givers doing business in the Bazaar. But by far the most common were dwarfs, clad in colorful silks. In other surroundings they might have looked foppish to some, plumed like foolish and preening birds. But together, under the harmonious light and dancing colors of the Bazaar, the assembled dwarfs became something else. They were a walking celebration of honest pleasure, of their community with one another, of life itself.

One of the patrons of the Bazaar, a dwarf woman some five years younger than myself, saw my tears. She approached me, and without a word wrapped me in her arms. Within moments, other dwarfs joined her. They enveloped me in a rough huddle of love and welcome. After a long moment of silent communion, the young woman said to me, "Welcome, my sister. You are home."

—From the Journals of the Weaponsmith
Javira of Awett, 1505 TH

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THROAL

The Kingdom of Throal lies in the midst of the vast mountain range of the same Name. Founded a thousand years before the Scourge, it has become the dominant political and economic power in most of Barsaive, especially in the eastern region of the province. Roughly one-third of Barsaive's people live in Throal's underground passageways and cities, and new cities are under construction to accommodate increasing population. Dwarfs are the largest group of

Name-givers in Barsaive at large, and are an even greater majority of the population in Throal. Though the kingdom encourages members of other races to settle within its stone borders, dwarfs remain in charge.

In addition to its sheer size and economic clout, Throal is best known for its cultural influence. During the years of Barsaive's domination by the Theran Empire, the dwarfs of Throal acted as intermediaries between Barsaive's people and its imperial rulers. In so doing, they shielded the people from the worst of the Theran brutalities, built a lasting network of trading and political contacts, and made the Throalic language the unifying tongue that bridges Barsaive's many disparate cultures. T'skrang traders from the Serpent River can communicate with troll raider chieftains of the Twilight Peaks, thanks to the common language given to them by the dwarfs of Throal.

Even more important than a common language, however, is the dwarf kingdom's contribution to Barsaive's common culture. The few common cultural threads that Barsaive has to draw upon exist thanks to the efforts of King Varulus I, who commissioned the Book of Tomorrow—a vast compendium of stories, facts, and essays on almost every conceivable subject. Barsaivians took copies of this book with them into almost every kaer and citadel during the Scourge, where it served as a reminder of everyday life during the awful days when the Horrors ravaged the earth. The Book of Tomorrow gave Barsaivians hope in the depths of despair, offering concrete proof that darkness and dank earth were not their only birthright. Because of this book's enormous influence over their lives in the kaers, Name-givers throughout Barsaive tend to think of Throal as the most important repository of learning in the land since the Scourge ended.

Throal's recent monarchs, the late King Varulus III and his predecessor, Varulus II, furthered the influence of Throal by promoting a sweeping political agenda. The most important expression of their reformist beliefs is the *Council Compact*, the legal code developed by Varulus II. Its principles mark a dramatic departure from the authoritarian practices of previous Barsaivian rulers, from the mighty Theran invaders to petty local dictators. The *Council Compact* affirms the fundamental equality of all Name-givers, setting forth the radical premise that no Name-giver is innately superior to another. More than anything else, the leaders of Throal want to spread this idea, along with their vision of benevolent rule, throughout Barsaive. Slavery is anathema to them, and they are fighting to abolish it by any means necessary. The Therans, who depend on slavery and intend to re-conquer the entire province, consider the *Council Compact* an open declaration of hostility. They would like nothing better than to see Throal destroyed and the idealistic beliefs of its rulers repudiated. The Therans are not alone; certain malcontents and would-be local tyrants claim the *Council Compact* is mere propaganda designed to camouflage Throal's own plans of conquest.

Though some people call Throal's motives into question, the kingdom so far has kept the loyalty of most of Barsaive's adepts, both legendary and obscure. The majority of them accepted Varulus III as a genuine reformer, a good monarch deserving of the aid of heroes, and continue to do so with King Neden. Others have less lofty reasons for using Throal as a home base. First, it is an extremely safe place to store treasure (magical and otherwise); second, it is a splendid place to rest and recuperate after a dangerous mission; and third, it is the center of knowledge and scholarship in Barsaive. The renowned Great Library of Throal contains a great deal of information useful to explorers, mercenaries and other adventurers.

On Everyday Life

Though adventurers may think of Throal primarily as a rest stop, it is in fact a vast metropolis where thousands of Name-givers sleep, work, and enjoy themselves. Exotic though it should seem to players and their characters (unless they are natives of Throal), the dwarf kingdom's residents feel perfectly at home there.

If you use Throal as the setting of a scene in your campaign, the kingdom will seem much more alive if you take the time to describe some of the most striking features of daily life there. A few good examples are given below.

On Activity

Something is always happening during the day in Throal. Business takes place in large market areas, and also in any lane or public walkway. Vendors of snacks, sweets, toys, perfumes and other small items can be found everywhere, loudly extolling the virtues of their goods. Performers and musicians are just as common, from buskers hoping to earn enough for a meal to dedicated amateurs who simply enjoy entertaining people with their art.

Public spaces are also full of people engaged in debate: Throalites of all social classes are devoted to the art of the argument. Knots of onlookers often surround debaters. If the debaters are particularly eloquent, the crowd listens attentively. If they are merely average, passers-by feel free to join in the controversy. The issues being argued may be obscure or trivial, or may be something everyone in Throal feels passionately about. Though manuals of Throalic etiquette claim that it is extremely poor form to display anger while debating, this custom is no longer much in evidence (if it was ever followed in the first place).

Most Throalites believe a little anger adds spice to a good argument, but to threaten violence in a debate is a grave offense. A good citizen of Throal is expected to be able to argue articulately, even passionately, but without completely losing control. Sometimes this leads to trouble between newcomers and longtime residents. Orks and trolls, for example, have a hard time keeping their emotions (and weapons) out of arguments. If a debate degenerates into a scuffle, Throal's omnipresent Royal Guards are quick to appear and wrestle the troublemakers into submission. This happens seldom, however, and usually because the participants have been overindulging at a nearby tavern. The people of Throal feel great respect for their guards; even the most notorious drunkards can be counted on to behave themselves when Royal Guardsmen show up.

Unlike the citizens of most other places in Barsaive, the



people of Throal clearly feel safe and secure. Throal's reputation for secure streets and passageways is well known throughout Barsaive. Because Throalic law requires that the government reimburse those whose property is stolen within the kingdom's borders, law enforcement is extremely well funded. Throalic citizens love to grouse about high taxes, but they treasure their unequaled personal safety. Most Barsaivian adventurers are accustomed to cities whose people instinctively look over their shoulders for trouble no matter what the time of day. In Throal, people stroll around casually, afraid of nothing.

Throal's citizens love public life. It is considered strange, even sinister, to keep to oneself in Throal. Those who spend time milling about in public squares are not presumed to be lazy or shifty, but assumed to be waiting for something entertaining to start happening. In any well-traveled part of Throal, of course, something entertaining is bound to begin at any moment. In the unlikely event that nothing interesting is happening, many a Throalite will happily create his own diversion, usually by striking up a conversation. Talk is the favorite recreational activity in the kingdom.

How the Personal is Public

Dwarfs throughout Barsaive are known for their inquisitive natures; they consider it rude not to ask their conversational partners a string of personal, probing questions. Those of other cultures who have lived a long time in Throal tend to pick up this habit. Total strangers may approach player characters when they enter the kingdom, wanting to know everything about them. Adventurers will most likely find this off-putting, as most of them have learned through bitter experience to keep a low profile in a new place. Player characters who intend to live in Throal, however, must learn to give up the idea of keeping secrets, at least within the kingdom's borders. Dwarf culture has turned the kingdom of Throal into a gigantic small town, where everyone is expected to know everyone else's business. The concept of gossip does not exist in dwarf culture; dwarfs see nothing shameful about wanting to know all the intimate details of another's life. They do, however, recognize a character flaw that they call *wech'nes*, an overwhelming or exclusive interest in the negative aspects of somebody's life.

The eagerness of the average Throalite to discuss personal business (his own and everyone else's) has several implications for adventures set in Throal. Player characters will often find it easier to get information out of witnesses when conducting an investigation, as no one will consider their curiosity suspicious or even unusual. Because Throalic informants tend to be forthcoming, the presence of a tight-lipped Throalic citizen is a clue in itself that something strange is going on. On the downside, enemies of the player characters also find it easier to gather information about them. When the adventurers do something impressive, word will spread quickly; unfortunately, reports of foolish or shameful acts will just as swiftly tarnish their reputations.

When player characters discover that Throalites easily give out information they would have to struggle to learn elsewhere, they may forget that even well-intentioned people can have the facts wrong. News in Throal passes by word of mouth, and people inevitably exaggerate some details and forget others as they recount stories. As an old Throalic proverb says, "Legends change as they dance across many tongues." This adage applies as much to rumors and minor details as to legends. From the gamemaster's viewpoint, an investigation need not be simple just because Throalites happily answer questions. A quick answer to a question is not necessarily the truth, and the Throalic gift of gab makes its people accomplished liars when they wish to be. In Throal, the trick is not to get someone to talk, but to discern the truth behind the person's words.

On Marking Time

In an underground kingdom, time is not measured by the rising and setting of the sun and moon. In Throal, as in kaers all across Barsaive, a variety of ingenious timekeeping devices substitute for the cues normally visible in the heavens. The people of Throal divide their days into twenty-four hours, but not into two twelve-hour halves. Instead of saying 'Three p.m.," a Throalite would say "the fifteenth hour."

The most common clocks in Throal are candles made from a special wax that burns at a measurable, steady rate. The candles are marked with twenty-four stripes, spaced so

that the time it takes to burn from one stripe to another is exactly an hour. These "hour candles" are placed in special holders equipped with a dial marker. The user then lights the candle and sets the dial marker to show the hour at which the candle was lit. To read an hour candle, look at the dial marker and then count the number of stripes on the candle. Subtract this number from twenty-four; the result is the number of hours that have passed since the candle was lit. That number of hours, added to the hour shown on the marker, tells the reader precisely which hour it is: tenth, twelfth, fifteenth, and so on. Of course, hour candles must be lit on the hour in order to give the correct time; however, the low cost of hour candles compensates for the inconvenience.

More expensive timepieces include mechanical clocks, which measure time by keeping track of water that pours through them at a steady rate. The richest Throalites own costly magical clocks made from modified light crystals.

Though visitors to Throal can easily find out what time it is, they often find it difficult to adjust physically to a sunless world. All Name-givers, except for dwarfs and obsidimen, rely on exposure to sunlight to tell their bodies when to get tired and go to sleep. Though Throal abounds with light-quartz crystals that grow bright during the day and fade to dimness at night in the same manner as the sun, the lack of natural sunlight means that new arrivals in Throal often find it hard to sleep well. They may be prone to insomnia, have difficulty waking up in the morning, or feel drowsy or irritable during the day. After living for a month or so under the mountains, most Name-givers adapt and harmonize their internal clocks with those of long-time residents of Throal.

Adventure Hook

After King Neden rebuffs a typically haughty Theran diplomatic overture, the Therans decide to teach Throal just how vulnerable it is. The Empire hires a company of mercenaries to infiltrate the dwarf kingdom, posing as traveling merchants, entertainers, and scholars. The group enters Throal over a number of days so as not to arouse suspicion; its members are of various races and backgrounds, making them difficult to identify as a unit. At a prearranged time, the infiltrators smash as many of the air sponges as they can find in one of the kingdom's Inner Cities. Within a day, the air in the target city will turn poisonous, so its residents must evacuate. The sabotage kills no one, but causes serious inconvenience for thousands and severely embarrasses the king's administration.

The adventurers are hired to track down the head of the mercenary company and bring him back to face Throalic justice—alive. Unfortunately for the adventurers, one of their quarry's underlings decides to assassinate him and take over his position. The player characters must not only find and capture a dangerous enemy, but must safeguard their prize on the long journey back to Throal.

On the Importance of Color

The dwarfs of Throal love bright, vivid colors, and the cheerful sight of the gaily clad residents helps compensate other Name-givers for the absence of the sunlight they love and miss. This tradition of wearing bright, colorful clothing began during the Scourge, when garment makers deliberately created clothing with intricate patterns and eye-popping hues as an act of defiance against the despair brought by the Horrors. People associated bright colors with pleasure and the joys of life, the brighter and richer the better. The architects of Throal soon joined the weavers and tailors, decorating structures new and old with complex and brilliant-colored mosaics. Some mosaic tiles are made of polished semi-precious stone, though most are fired clay covered in bright glazes.

Throalites have lost none of their love of color since the Scourge's end, and visitors to the kingdom may find its vividly dressed people and colorful buildings gaudy or jarring. Citizens less fond of the underground life than the typical dwarf, however, find the wild swirl of colors a welcome tonic for the eyes and soul.

Of Sounds Ever Present

The acoustics of Throal's underground passageways and buildings intensify sounds, making the dwarf kingdom a loud place. Throalites love to talk and make music, and the everyday business and bustle generates a cacophony of noises. The constant background noise makes Throal seem vibrant and full of life, but can be distracting to new visitors. Non-stop ambient sound also makes it difficult to perform tasks that rely on careful listening, such as eavesdropping, picking certain types of locks, or guarding against intruders. If a player character attempts any of these actions in Throal, add +2 or more to the Difficulty Numbers for all appropriate tests.

The noise level also confers one advantage: it masks sounds that characters may want to conceal. Characters can easily avoid attracting attention when doing noisy things such as putting on armor or unsheathing a sword, or when trying to sneak quietly into an area. If a player character attempts any of these actions in Throal, they gain a +2 bonus to all appropriate tests.

In contrast to its daytime bustle, Throal is so quiet during the night hours, when most residents are asleep, that the difference can seem eerie. The modifiers listed above do not apply at night.

Of Smells and Other Fragrances

Throal's ventilation system leaves much to be desired. That residents can breathe at all is a tribute to the ingenuity of dwarf (and Theran) engineering. In addition to the fresh air supplied by the abundant plant life in Throal, air circulates through a magical system devised by the Therans. Special crystals called air sponges, usually grown by Elementalists, are situated throughout Throal. They magically transmute stale air into fresh air, converting carbon dioxide into oxygen much as plants do outdoors. An air sponge large enough to freshen the air breathed by a hundred people costs 100 silver pieces and weighs about ten pounds. Air sponges do not wear out, and only need to be replaced if damaged.

Though the air sponges make it possible to breathe in Throal, they do not make the experience pleasant. Odors, dust, and humidity escape slowly from Throal's underground chambers. Few of the ventilation shafts sunk before the Scourge have been reopened, as sealing them was much easier than unsealing them. Residents become used to the discomfort, which increases as one travels further back and lower down. The Bazaar, which lies near the surface, smells fresh and pleasant; the author of the opening account was no doubt unpleasantly surprised when she ventured deeper into Throal. Every so often, teams of engineers propose various expensive ways of better ventilating the kingdom, sparking perennial political debate between those who feel that the Throalic citizen's tax burden is already heavy enough and those who consider any tax increase a small price to pay for air as clean and sweet as that in the Bazaar.

Throalites bathe about once every seven days, covering any offensive odors with perfumes on non-bath days.

Even the poorest Throalite spends money on fragrances, though wealthier citizens can afford finer ones. Though a modern reader walking into Throal's Bazaar on a busy day might well find his nose under assault, by the standards of the world of **Earthdawn** the people of Throal keep themselves remarkably clean. The most common perfumes in Throal are fairly subtle and mask personal odors well. Stronger and more noticeable fragrances tend to be made from exotic ingredients; because they are more expensive, wealthy citizens tend to be the ones wearing them. This practice often leads working-class Throalites to remark that they "smell honest" in contrast with to rich folk.

On the Muckers' Bells

Waste disposal is a major industry in Throal. The kingdom has no sewer system, and so people rely on chamber pots. As the contents of these pots cannot simply be dumped in the hallways, waste collectors—known as "muckers"—pick up and empty the chamber pots daily. The muckers have predetermined routes, and householders make sure that they are home to dispose of their waste when the muckers come around. Muckers travel in groups of four, pulling large metal tanks mounted on hand carts to hold the waste. The muckers' carts are covered with bells so that people can hear them coming. Those with waste to dispose of get their chamber pots; everyone else runs for cover to avoid the stench. In Throal, endless variations on the phrase, "the ring of the mucker's bell" are used to refer to approaching trouble, as in, "We saw the ork scorchers massing on the hill, and we knew the mucker's bell was ringing."

The muckers dump the waste into disused mine shafts, which are full of worms, flies and luminous bacteria that feed on nutrients in the sewage. These tiny creatures, many of them first bred by Theran Nethermancers, also attack and eat disease-bearing bacteria, making them an invaluable contribution to safe living in the kaers. The muckers keep a close eye on the waste-eaters, breeding more whenever necessary. Several magicians in Throal recently came up with a variety of spells designed to mask the odor in the mine shafts, and so dumping wastes has become a little less distasteful.

The Royal Guild of Muckers has considerable clout in Throal. The first muckers were badly paid, and were treated as outcasts despite the importance of their unpleasant job. Since the formation of the Royal Guild, muckers have been extremely well paid, but remain social pariahs. The guild leaders learned during the Scourge that Throalites feared nothing more than the thought of a mucker work stoppage, and through careful blackmail they managed to raise their

Adventure Hook

The adventurers are hired to investigate the murder of a perfume manufacturer, who was found in a passageway with a short sword in his back. The sword is the standard weapon carried by Throal's city guards. If the adventurers ask the right questions in the perfumer's neighborhood, they discover that many people in the area recently took sick, and that the illness was traced to the local well. As the guards reported no disturbances or incidents of poisoning, the well was closed under the assumption that some Horror or other fell creature contaminated it. As it turns out, the well was indeed poisoned.

Further investigation reveals that the poisoner and the guard captain knew each other and did business of some kind. The guard captain is the murderer; the perfumer, a parsimonious soul, paid the captain off to allow him to dump wastes into the well instead of hiring a worker to cart it to the proper place. The perfumer always dumped small amounts of harmless waste water, until one day he got sloppy and put something toxic in the well. The guard captain, not wanting to reveal his corruption to his superiors, took matters into his own hands. Solving the murder allows the reopening of the well, winning the adventurers the entire neighborhood's gratitude.

wages again and again. Modern-day muckers are paid better than healers, and leading guild members are second only to members of the great trading houses in personal wealth. With the Scourge over, the Throalic government could theoretically fire all the high-paid muckers and replace them with immigrants willing to do this unpleasant work for less money; however, the king and his advisors would pay a high political price. Other guilds would view such an act as a threat to their own power, and would fight it tooth and nail. In addition, the mucker guildmasters are skillful politicians and have vocally supported King Neden and his agenda. For these reasons, the king accepts the drain on the treasury that they represent.

The current mucker guildmaster is Pabumius, an immensely fat, rich old miser of a dwarf. A hard-bitten leader, he maintains the muckers' loyalty by acting as a stern father figure. Muckers are a society unto themselves, and Pabumius rules the guild through an intimidating presence. He hates the rich traders, especially the old guard who often trouble the king, and loves to think up new ways to vex them. In contrast to his usual tightfistedness, Pabumius gives generously to organizations which pay homage to various Passions, and is also a member of several *olzim* (see **Passions and Their Followers**, p. 55).

Fighting a constant battle with the unpleasant odors of Throal are the glorious smells that waft daily from the kingdom's ovens. The scents of simmering spices and baking bread are so omnipresent in Throal that a minor (and completely false) tale has sprung up to explain it. According to the story, the King pays legions of bakers to continually bake much more fresh bread than the people of Throal can eat, at least partly to make the kingdom smell better. Every day, tons of bread are allegedly thrown out to rot. Now and then, anti-Throal agitators talk up this story to highlight Throal's supposed wealth, selfishness and waste.

Of Daily Routine

The industrious people of Throal are early risers. Most people wake up around the sixth hour, and business typically begins at the eighth hour.

At the thirteenth hour, most businesses (except for food halls, taverns and the like) close for the *mado'yeh*, a two-hour lunch break. Eating is only a small part of the *mado'yeh*; Throalites consider it a fine time for socializing, indulging in hobbies and sealing business deals. Though it is improper by custom to drink heavily during the *mado'yeh*, Throal's more dissolute citizens do it anyway. Some people even use the *mado'yeh* for romantic assignations.

Business resumes at the fifteenth hour and concludes at the nineteenth hour. Evening in Throal lasts from the nineteenth to the twenty-second hours, and may be spent in a variety of ways: in taverns with groups of friends, at home with the family, attending political or philosophical meetings and so on. Even the most austere-minded dwarfs consider the evening a socially acceptable time to knock back an ale or three.

By the twenty-second or twenty-third hour, most Throalic citizens retire to bed. The period between the twenty-third hour of one day and the sixth hour of the next is the only guaranteed quiet time in the usually noisy kingdom, and so restless sleepers are well advised to adopt the habits of the locals.

Throalic custom does not include a set day of rest when businesses are closed, but holidays fall every five to ten days on average. Most businesses close on these holidays, but one can never be sure whether a particular business will be open or not on a given festival day. Those men and women who do not run a business of some kind frequently spend their days in housework, unless they can afford to pay servants. Unlike some human cultures, the dwarfs of Throal do not regard any type of work as being better suited to men or women; people of either gender are just as likely to run a shop or maintain the house and look after the children.

Keeping a home up to Throalic standards of cleanliness is hard work, requiring plenty of physical labor. The average Throalic householder's day starts with a trip to the nearest well, as Throalic homes do not have running water.

Throal is full of extraordinarily deep wells fed from various springs and underground water sources. Because water is heavy, fetching it is taxing, and so to use more water than one needs is considered extremely rude. Civic authorities know very well how vital a supply of clean water is to the dwarf kingdom, and wells are heavily guarded to discourage poisoners and saboteurs.

After fetching enough water to last the day, the householder heads to market to buy the day's food. Throalites have no means of keeping meats or vegetables from spoiling, and must get them fresh each day. The largest and cheapest market is the Bazaar (see **The Grand Bazaar** on p. 101 of the **A Tour of the Kingdom** chapter), but there are many smaller markets in the Inner Cities and in the Halls of Throal. Buying quality food at a reasonable price is time-consuming, and the householder needs a keen eye and a tongue sharp enough for clever haggling.

By the time the marketing is done, the householder must begin preparing the midday *mado'yeh* meal. Family members and servants who stay home during the day customarily eat together, often joined by those returning from their places of business. Among the wealthy, family members customarily eat apart from the help.

After the *mado'yeh*, the typical householder spends the afternoon cleaning and laundering, or baking the week's supply of bread. Around the eighteenth or nineteenth hour, the householder prepares a small evening meal. The evening is the householder's (or servant's) to spend as he wishes, in rest or recreation.

Of the Kingdom's Population

The population of Throal is approximately 190,000 and growing. Thirty thousand people live in the Halls of Throal, and another 20,000 live in outlying communities that dot the mountains of Throal (see **The Mountain Settlements** on p. 144). The remainder live in the Inner Cities, all of which were built in the past 75 years. During the Scourge, about 50,000 Name-givers lived in Throal proper; with the

construction of the Inner Cities, the overcrowding in the Halls of Throal has eased considerably.

Common wisdom has it that the population of Throal is one-third of the total population of Barsaive. However, as no practical way exists of counting the population of the entire province (much of which remains unexplored), this figure is popular conjecture rather than hard fact.

THROAL RACIAL COMPOSITION TABLE	
Race	**Population**
Dwarf	44%
Elf	7%
Human	15%
Obsidiman	handful
Ork	25%
T'skrang	1%
Troll	8%
Windling	handful

The racial composition of Throal appears in the **Throal Racial Composition Table**. The proportions listed are not equally valid throughout the kingdom; dwarfs almost exclusively inhabit some areas of the Halls of Throal, and orks, trolls, and humans predominantly inhabit neighborhoods in various Inner Cities.

The barons and baronesses who rule the various Inner Cities are trying to encourage new immigrants to settle in cosmopolitan neighborhoods, as troubling riots have occurred between areas segregated along racial lines. Unfortunately, many Name-givers prefer to settle among people who look, think and behave as they do. Integrating the remarkable number of immigrants with the rest of the kingdom and with each other is one of the primary challenges facing Throal in the present day.

On Throal's History

***Korelsed**: I am betrayed! Red blood stains the tunic of the king! Stabbed! Stabbed!*

***Ambica**: The king is not betrayed, Tav Korelsed, for you are not the king. You have not been a king, nor shall you be.*

***Korelsed**: Did my cruel wounds not impede me I would fall upon you as a mountain lion falls upon its prey! I would tear your jawbone from your head! These arms that have held you would rend you!*

***Ambica**: Your own words condemn you. They have broken your dream, not I. You are a fine warrior, my love. A killer born. And that is why you shall not take the throne. Other dwarfs exist only to prove your conquests. This Throal you would make is a pen for sheep. By day, you would be the shepherd of the flock; by night, the lion that preys upon it. You have won dwarfs to your side with mighty words of freedom and honor. Those words are greater than you. You must die so that they may live.*

***Korelsed**: Will none of you avenge me? As the river of my blood flows from me, find another source in her dark heart. Take her, dwarfs of Throal! Take her!*

***Ambica**: They shall not take me. One of them shall be king.*

***Korelsed**: Not you, Ambica? You do not slay me to be queen?*

***Ambica**: We are too much of a part. I too am a lion of the mountains. I will not stain this kingdom a-borning with my bloodied hands.*

***Korelsed**: Garaham! Take her!*

***Garaham**: No, milord, I will not.*

***Korelsed**: Byrnicus! Take her!*

***Byrnicus**: No, milord, I will not.*

***Korelsed**: Weak and trembling cubs! Thandos, my brother, vengeance falls to you. Blood for blood!*

***Thandos**: Enough blood has been spilt to found a thousand kingdoms, elder brother. I am sick at heart, but what must be done has been done.*

***Korelsed**: Traitor! You are a boil on my flesh! Now I see. Now that my life falls from*

me, now that it is too late, I see!

***Thandos**: Do you see?*

***Korelsed**: While I fought for our ancient dream, you slipped into a bed that belonged to me. You caressed flesh that was mine to caress!*

***Ambica**: If you thought me property, I was never yours.*

***Korelsed**: I was a fool to trust you.*

***Ambica**: If you could see, it would not be too late.*

***Korelsed**: Garlen, protect me. I fall from this treacherous bosom into yours. Light my final path, my final way. Thystonius, find strong arms and sharp swords to punish this day's treason! I call the curse of the slaughtering pen upon the House of Korelsed. As I die, so shall...*

***Ambica**: The king is slain.*

***Thandos**: You would prop a corpse upon the throne?!*

***Ambica**: Now that he is slain, it is safe to pay him homage. Follow me, my warriors. We shall bring the news to the hosts of Throal. We shall exalt his Name—the Name of Tav Korelsed, first king of Throal.*

—From the Final Act of Donalicus' Classic Play, *The Founders*

On the Time Before the Founding

The founding of Throal took place in legendary times. Though scholars are forever digging into old documents and poets are constantly reinterpreting ancient legends, it is virtually impossible to know exactly how the kingdom was born.

The earliest legends told in the Throal Mountains portray the dwarfs as a unified force. These stories tell very little about their style of life, their political institutions, or their beliefs. Scholars assume that the earliest dwarfs in the Throal Mountains lived a nomadic existence as hunters and raiders. These early stories have one common thread: great battles fought between the dwarfs and a race of beings characterized as "giants." As the tales have it, these giants were the original inhabitants of the mountains and the dwarfs were invaders. Because these stories are told from the dwarfs' point of view, the invasion is portrayed as entirely just. Rashomon, the Passion of fatherhood and rulership (now the Mad Passion Raggok), is said to have promised the dwarf king Bujmon dominion over the mountains if the dwarfs first destroyed Rashomon's "rebellious children," the giants. Some storytellers from the hinterlands who tell the tales of Bujmon replace Rashomon with a benevolent dragon called the Scaled Father, but other than that the stories do not vary much.

Most modern-day scholars believe that the so-called giants were trolls. Trolls are known to inhabit mountain ranges, and are much larger than dwarfs. Artists and poets frequently insist on portraying the giants as an unknown race of Name-givers so large that they make trolls look puny, but scholars have found scant evidence to support this fancy. Scholars also generally agree that Bujmon is probably a composite of several dwarf kings or chieftains, to whom all legends of giant fighting have become attached over the centuries. Artists almost universally portray Bujmon as a flawless, noble questor of a once-pure and benevolent Passion.

This group of ancient legends, known as the Bujmon Cycle, is followed by another set of stories that is more difficult to understand. In these tales, known as the Warring Tribes Cycle, the dwarfs have split into dozens of kingdoms. Most likely these "kingdoms" were individual tribes whose "kings" and "queens" served as the village headmen. Tales from the Warring Tribes Cycle lack the moral clarity of the Bujmon legends. Instead of a righteous, divinely inspired king fighting a great war against stronger enemies, the Warring Tribes tales depict bitter, often pointless squabbles between larger-than-life characters. The many monarchs who appear briefly in the Warring Tribes Cycle battle one another for petty reasons, frequently losing much more than they win. These stories are packed with betrayal and soaked in blood. Because the characters are flawed and passionate, the Warring Tribes stories are much richer material for poets and playwrights than the Bujmon Cycle.

On the Birth of Throal

Only in the third cycle of Throalic legends can anything approximating a date be attached to the stories. This cycle, called The Founding, deals directly with the creation of the dwarf kingdom. According to the legends, three or four generations before the beginning of the Throalic calendar the countless small dwarf tribes began merging into two great tribes. This occurs at roughly the same time as the banishment of the martyr scholar Elianar Messias from the Elven Court, which touched off the chain of events that eventually led to the birth of Thera. The tribes of the eastern Throal Mountains called themselves the Huari, and those of the western mountains called themselves the Mishwal. To this day, the dwarfs of Throal still keep track of which tribal group they belong to (see p. 11 of the **Name-giver's Compendium** for more information on dwarfs and tribal loyalty).

Not long after their formation, these two huge tribes went to war with one another. In the legends, King Stehwon Leis of the Huari and Queen Bodal Korelsed of the Mishwal both claim the right to rule all the dwarfs of the Throal Mountains. Why the dwarfs suddenly wished to be united under a single ruler remains unclear; the legends simply assume that the unification of the dwarfs is necessary and inevitable. The only dispute—protracted, fierce and bloody—is who should reign over them. A few of the Founding legends contain oblique references to dragons; evidently both sides received boons or advice from them. In some legends, one group of dragons appears to aid both sides. In others, two dragons (or groups of dragons) compete for some unknown prize, using the Mishwal and Huari as their instruments.

As the tales unfold, Stehwon and Bodal both die in battle. Their children, Stehwon II and Tav Korelsed, succeed them as tribal leaders.

Tav Korelsed is assisted by a number of legendary figures. Foremost among them is his lover, the great warrior Ambica. Other notable heroes of Throal's founding include Byrnicus, a Weaponsmith who forged a great sword and shield for each of his allies, and the Elementalist Garaham, who won the support of the mountains themselves against the Huari. Together these mighty heroes lead many battles against the forces of Stehwon II.

After many years of fighting, a terrible plague falls upon the Mishwal, reducing their numbers to the point where a Huari victory seems inevitable. Then Tav Korelsed's younger brother, Thandos, appears on the scene. Queen Bodal had given him as an infant to a dragon in exchange for some great favor; some scholars claim that this dragon was Icewing, but the legends remain murky whenever dragons appear in them. Thandos learned many mys-

Adventure Hook

Feodering, a mining community in the eastern Throal Mountains, is destroyed in a raid. Terrified survivors report being attacked by strange, giant humanoids who stand 12 to 14 feet tall. The adventurers are sent to determine the truth; does this raid herald the return of a forgotten race of Name-givers, the ancient foes of the dwarfs? Or is a tribe of ork scorchers or troll raiders, aided by Illusionists, using the old legends of the giants to strike fear into their victims?

Adventure Hook

The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made five great swords and five great shields during the war with the Huari. One pair he used himself; the others he gave to Tav Korelsed, Thandos, Ambica and Garaham.

Each item is said to give the wielder legendary powers. Byrnicus' sword could cut through all armor worn by the enemy; his shield countered all metal weapons used against him. Tav's sword won the loyalty of all whose blood was spilt upon it; his shield bore the growling face of a bear that struck fear into all who beheld it. Thandos' sword allowed him to relive the memories of all whose blood was spilt upon it, and his shield bore the grinning face of a dragon; it hypnotized his enemies and made them forget their purpose. Ambica's sword could bite enemies from a distance even though it remained in her hand, and her shield could disarm any foe at the moment he considered fighting her. Garaham's sword danced through the air, striking enemies whenever he loosed a spell at them. His shield absorbed spells cast at him by the enemy, allowing him to cast spells of greater power himself.

One of the minor mysteries of the Founding is what happened to these great weapons. Instead of keeping them and passing them along to Throal's kings and heroes to defend the realm forever, after Thandos' death Ambica gathered them up and hid them away in a cave known as the Last Place. She may have done this as a symbolic act to show that Throal would prosper through peace, not war. Or she might have been trying to counter Tav's dying curse. Scholars and treasure seekers have been searching for the Last Place for centuries, with no luck. Can the player characters discover this long-hidden cache of legendary weapons?

See the **New Magical Treasures** chapter on p. 302 for more information on the Armaments of Byrnicus.

terious talents from the dragon, which he uses to aid his brother. His wily strategies complement the courage and ferocity of Tav Korelsed and Ambica, culminating in a decisive battle in a valley known as Upandal's Forge. During the Battle of Upandal's Forge, Tav Korelsed and Ambica personally engage Stehwon II and his queen, Lekhara, in combat. Ambica kills Lekhara before Stehwon's eyes; overcome by grief, he surrenders to Tav Korelsed.

Though this battle ends the war, the bloodletting goes on. Soldiers of Tav's personal guard are ordered to provide an escort for Stehwon, but instead assassinate him. The defeated Huari troops threaten rebellion, blaming the assassination on Tav Korelsed. As battle erupts anew, Thandos Korelsed and Ambica appear before Huari and Mishwal troops. They announce that Tav Korelsed has been slain, and venerate him as the first king of Throal. Tav's childhood friend Byrnicus steps forward to confess that he has murdered the king. He reveals that he loves Stehwon's daughter Marakh, and claims to have killed the king to avenge the assassination of her father. Byrnicus willingly goes to the gallows; Stehwon's daughter, grief-stricken, commits suicide. Thandos Korelsed takes the throne of the new dwarf nation and marries Stehwon's younger daughter, but maintains a tempestuous love affair with Ambica.

Later artists and historians reinterpreted the bloody events that followed the Battle of Upandal's Forge, and most dwarfs have come to believe that either Thandos or Ambica slew Tav Korelsed because he planned to expand his conquests, attacking the dwarf city-states to the north and southwest. Thandos and Ambica wanted the new nation of Throal to develop in peace, and decided that only Thandos could make the transition from warrior to king. According to this interpretation, Byrnicus volunteered to die in order to expiate the new king's guilt in his brother's death. Legend also has it that Tav's dying words were a blood curse upon his own house; the gruesome fates of the later Korelsed kings give this story credence. Some see the curse as just punishment for the assassination of Stehwon II, assumed to have been ordered by either Tav or Thandos.

Despite the blood on their hands, Tav and Thandos Korelsed are still revered as great leaders in Throal. Tav is regarded as a fearsome warrior, and those who risk their lives for Throal still invoke his Name as they prepare for battle. Most dwarfs see the story of Tav's death as a cautionary tale against dreams of conquest. Had Tav lived to continue his military campaign, Throal would likely have collapsed within a generation. As for Thandos, he is seen as a martyr who made great sacrifices in order to build Throal on the right foundation.

On the Age of City-States

The early years of the kingdom of Throal passed in the shadow of the great dwarf nations of northeastern Barsaive. The greatest was the kingdom of Scytha, located to the north of the Throal Mountains. A mighty economic and military power back when the dwarfs of Throal were mere hunters and raiders, Scytha was held in check by several neighboring dwarf city-states, Killea and K'rzon foremost among them. Tribal and national rivalries drove the kings of these states to fight irrational wars against one another. Scytha in particular was founded upon a myth of constant conquest; the Scythans believed that the Passion Thystonius anointed them kings over all other dwarfs. During Throal's first two centuries, Scytha launched alternating attacks on Killea and K'rzon with the regularity of a swinging pendulum. The Scythans conquered Killea first, then turned their armies against K'rzon. After K'rzon fell, the people of Killea revolted against Scytha, starting another round of costly fighting. By the time Scytha managed to retake Killea, the

people of K'rzon had taken advantage of their conquerors' depleted resources to stage a revolt of their own.

While the great city-states were caught up in this mad pattern, Throal grew unmolested. The curse of Tav Korelsed, however, began to show itself within a generation of his death. On the twelfth anniversary of Thandos' coronation, he vanished. Though no body was ever found, Thandos' personal guards were accused of killing him and disposing of his corpse. Despite the spectacle of their execution, the public blamed the murder on Tav's ghost. Thandos II succeeded his father to the throne and ruled for two dozen years, gradually going mad. As his last act, Thandos II ordered the execution of all the heads of Throal's noble families. The king's son, Thandos III, commander of the Throalic army, refused to carry out the order; instead, he deposed his father and took the throne. Thandos III ruled for many decades, and for a time people believed that the curse on the house of Korelsed had abated. On the fortieth anniversary of his coronation, however, Thandos III melted like a candle in the midst of a speech to Throal's noble families. His son Thandos IV ascended to the throne—to the consternation of nobles and commoners alike, almost all of whom considered him a fool. Fortunately for Throal, Thandos IV turned out to be the cleverest of Throal's kings to date.

The people of Throal became prosperous mining the rich minerals of the mountains, especially iron. At first, they sold raw ore to their neighbors. As their profits grew, Thandos IV brought ironworkers to Throal to teach his people how to make finished products from the ore. Soon afterward, Throal became an exporter of worked iron—including weapons—to Scytha and other city-states in the region. Throal grew richer still, peacefully prospering from the violence of others. Scytha and its rivals periodically considered attacking and looting Throal, but each city-state feared that overextending itself in a difficult mountain war would make it a ripe target for assault. In the end, Throal remained at peace for all of Thandos IV's eighty-year reign.

His successor, Thandos V, ruled cautiously but well, never straying from the lessons of kingship passed to him by his father. Upon his death without an heir in 220 TH, however, a crisis erupted. As the dead king's councilors frantically searched the royal genealogies for some clue as to who had the strongest claim to the throne, they discovered that Thandos IV was not the son of Thandos III—worse, he was not even related to the royal house of Korelsed. Thandos III and a few trusted advisors had concocted the hoax to counter the curse of Tav Korelsed, but the discovery threw the legitimacy of the throne into question. Simmering Huari resentment boiled to the surface, and nobles of that tribe demanded their long-forgotten right to rule. In the resulting war of succession, thousands of Throal's people died fighting one another.

Eventually, a family of ironworkers recently arrived in Throal managed to broker a peace. The family claimed neither Huari nor Mishwal ancestry, and so both sides found the peace proposal acceptable. The peace ushered in the second dynasty of Throal, founded by another legendary king, Braza I. The son of a mixed Huari-Mishwal marriage, he furthered Throal's commercial interests as the first trader-king.

Braza believed that the future of Throal lay in trade, and did what he could to advance it. At that point in time, Throal consisted of a dozen or so settlements—most of them mining towns—perched on the sides of the mountains. Each of the settlements looked for leadership to a baron or baroness, a hereditary ruler descended from commanders of Tav Korelsed's army. Braza I announced that each baron and baroness must create a trading company to find new markets for Throalic iron and other goods, and that each company's profits must be spent in its home communities. Further, he decreed that barons who failed to make enough money to keep their towns prosperous would be replaced. Finally, Braza I granted trading charters to several Huari families to counter lingering tensions from the war of succession.

The leaders of the trading houses, both new and old, became a new aristocracy. Braza himself supervised a major trading house, and with its profits built a fantastic marble city inside the Throal Mountains. This city, now sealed, lies beneath the Halls of Throal.

Throal's dazzling new wealth overcame the caution of the greedy Scythans, who trumped up an ancient tribal grudge and attacked several Throalic settlements in the western mountains. The local barons, used to dealing with the Scythans, fortified their towns heavily and dealt the

Adventure Hook

A wave of mysterious killings strikes Throal. Though the victims have little in common, the crimes are all remarkably similar. In each case the victim seemed to be alone, and could not have been killed by mundane means. Panic grips the people: has Throal been invaded by invisible Horrors? The adventurers are hired to investigate and to somehow deal with this terrible threat.

In fact, the murderer is the ancient spirit of Tav Korelsed, summoned from its restless grave by a misguided Nethermancer and scholar Named Cibonicus. Cibonicus wanted answers to the ancient mysteries of the Founding, but Tav is more interested in finding and punishing the unknowing descendants of the house of Korelsed. The true Korelsed bloodline has been obscured since the coronation of the false Thandos IV in 76 TH, but the vengeful spirit of the first king of Throal can smell the blood of his treacherous family. The adventurers must find Cibonicus, discover what is going on and figure out how to exorcise this mad ghost from Throal's bloody past.

Scythan armies a humiliating defeat. Almost immediately afterward, forces from Killea and K'rzon attacked Scytha in concert for the first time. The Scythans beat back these assaults at a terrible cost, and swiftly abandoned their notions of conquering Throal.

Meanwhile, the trading houses had begun to explore areas beyond northeastern Barsaive in search of new avenues of profit. Their successes in this area laid the groundwork for an uneasy alliance with a power new to them: the Theran Empire.

Of Throal and Thera

The Therans arrived in Barsaive during the waning years of Thandos V's reign, in 216 TH. Caught up in the subsequent war of succession, the dwarfs of Throal paid little heed at first to reports of the foreign invaders and their incalculably powerful navy. The progress of Throalic traders across the province in the wake of Braza I's reforms mirrored that of the Theran diplomats and traders. Thera was a young and hopeful nation in those days, and had yet to show its dark side. To the Throalites, Thera represented a rich new market. Therans in Barsaive needed Throal's trade goods, and also sought a new commodity: orichalcum. Rich veins of orichalcum ran throughout the Throal Mountains, but its people had never bothered mining it in quantity before. Tantalized by the immense profits to be made, Throal became the first nation of Barsaive to supply orichalcum to Thera. For nearly a century, Throal possessed a virtual monopoly on this trade; Theran records show no extensive imports of orichalcum from other areas until the early 330s TH. Countless new towns and settlements sprung up around orichalcum mines, many of which soon eclipsed the old nobles and their trading houses. When Braza I died in 275 TH, the orichalcum trade was firmly established and Throal was well set on the path to peace and prosperity.

The long peace ended abruptly and brutally around 400 TH, with the devastating Orichalcum Wars. Inspired by greed for Theran silver, Barsaive's petty rulers warred fiercely with one another for trade supremacy. All too soon, the war for trade became an excuse to fight about everything from ancient grudges to revenge for recent defeats. Waves of ork raiders swept down the mountain slopes and over the plains of Barsaive to attack Throal, laying waste to many of its settlements. Several wrecked towns, judged too insecure to defend, have never been rebuilt.

The beginning of the end came when troll raiders made the fatal error of attacking Theran mining vessels. This act brought the full might of Thera's navy down on them, and the defeated raiders were taken away in chains. Thera then declared Barsaive an imperial possession. Barsaive's new rulers lost no time in building the vast military base of Sky Point in southern Barsaive and the provincial capital of Parlainth, to the northeast of Throal.

The first overlord of Barsaive, Kern Fallo, was an enlightened despot by comparison with many of his successors. Seeking local allies to administer the province, he naturally thought of the dwarfs of Throal, with whom his family had long-standing trade connections. Throal's vast trading network had given it widespread contacts throughout the province, and its policy of neutrality had made it no major enemies aside from scattered ork raider tribes. Fallo therefore considered Throal an ideal intermediary between Thera and the dozens of petty kings and leaders in Barsaive.

Despite grave misgivings about the Therans, Queen Jonatha of Throal saw little choice but to accept Fallo's offer.

Adventure Hook

One of the legendary Throalic adepts of this period was Bozwicus, a Warrior who became one of the first Horror Stalkers (see p. 174 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). According to legend, the Passion Garlen gave Bozwicus a magical treasure: the clay figurine of a cow. Bozwicus' self-appointed mission was to seek out as many different types of Horrors as she could, and defeat each in turn. Whenever she defeated a Horror, its powers would flow into the cow figurine. Bozwicus could then use these powers herself, but Garlen warned her to do so only in the direst emergency. Bozwicus, however, soon came to rely upon the terrible powers held in the cow. Eventually she came face to face with the Horror Ubyr, who slew her easily.

A t'skrang Nethermancer Named T'shan V'ruda recently found Bozwicus' Cow submerged in the silt of the Serpent River. V'ruda was exiled from Throal in 1507 TH, accused of summoning a Horror during a speech at the Royal Auditorium. (Whether he is guilty of this charge or not is up to the gamemaster.) V'ruda has attached several threads to the cow, and wishes to attach another. To do so, he must perform a deed: he must pay homage to Garlen at a shrine just south of the Great Library. The Royal Guard has advance word of V'ruda's illegal return to Throal and plans to fight him off.

How the adventure proceeds depends on V'ruda's motivation. If the gamemaster decides that V'ruda ultimately serves the cause of good, the adventurers' task is to get him to Garlen's shrine without the authorities finding out. There Garlen charges him with a great mission, on which the player characters can accompany him.

If V'ruda is simply a menacing and ruthless character, the adventurers must stop him from entering Throal. This means that they must face the Horror powers of Bozwicus' Cow. If they defeat V'ruda, they must then figure out how to destroy this dangerous item.



The Thera-Throal alliance, sealed in 443 TH, allowed the dwarf kingdom considerable freedom in administering the province. The agreement permitted them to continue their trading operations, spread their language, and embark upon scholarly and cultural projects, provided they kept Barsaive's people quiet and its orichalcum flowing toward Thera. Kern Fallo cared little about other details of Throalic policy, and Queen Jonatha wished above all to avoid conflict with the Therans. She appointed administrators for all of Barsaive's populated areas from the ranks of the trading houses, some of which became involved in the Theran slave trade. Others came to abhor slavery, though they did not voice their objections to their Theran masters.

Over the next three centuries Throal's coffers filled to overflowing with Theran silver, and its settlements grew into towns and cities populated by all manner of Name-givers. Many of the greatest works of Throalic art were created during this period. Throalic administrators occasionally bloodied their hands putting down local revolts, but they remained much more benevolent than Theran overlords would have been.

Another succession crisis briefly threatened this Throalic "golden age" when Queen Bevelona, last of the heirs of Braza I, died without issue in 634 TH. House Ueraven, a Huari-connected family, lobbied aggressively—some historians say criminally—to become the royal family, stirring up long-dormant tribal rivalries in their bid for the throne. House Avalus led the largely Mishwal opposition, and the Mishwal nobles even went so far as to proclaim Jothan Avalus the rightful king of Throal. In response, Ueraven troops massed in that house's stronghold of Jalasa. Before they could act, however, forces loyal to Jothan attacked and defeated them. House Ueraven's leaders accepted the inevitable in public, but in private their determination to possess the throne remained undimmed (and does to this day). The reign of Jothan I ushered in the third dynasty of Throalic monarchs, from which Varulus I, Varulus II, Varulus III, and Neden are descended.

Meanwhile, the Scourge drew ever closer. Powerful Horrors began to appear in Barsaive around 700 TH, and heroes arose in Throal to oppose them. Throal became a training ground for adepts, and its craftsmen and magicians created great magical treasures to fight these abominations from beyond the physical world. Throal's rich treasury stood the kingdom in good stead; Throal's kings and queens spent the nation's long-acquired wealth to prepare it for the coming disaster. Meanwhile, Theran rule became more decadent and chaotic with the accession of every new overlord. The slave trade accelerated, and the dwarfs of Throal began secretly working against the interests of their Theran masters. More and more adepts from Throal set out to hunt down and fight Horrors all across Barsaive, and they slowly began to win the hearts of Barsaive's ordinary people.

On the Building of Throal

As the Scourge drew nearer, Throal turned its orichalcum and other raw materials over to the Therans in exchange for the knowledge of how to safeguard the kingdom from the coming Horrors. Recognizing the impossibility of protecting the many communities scattered across the Throal Mountains, Queen Ulutur decided to expand Braza I's underground capital city. United within its sheltering walls, deep in the mountains that had nurtured them for so many centuries, the people of Throal could preserve the achievements of Barsaivian civilization for later generations. Some Throalites considered this massive project folly, and broke away from the kingdom to build their own smaller kaers with Theran aid. Most, however, preferred to live in a massive kaer where they could find what they considered the amenities of civilized life: plays, sports, and plenty of people to debate with. Determined not to allow the Horrors to rob them of the things they valued most, the dwarfs of Throal began building their vast underground refuge.

Construction of the new Halls of Throal began in 910 TH, after it became clear that Braza I's old city could not serve as a foundation for the giant kaer; it had too many holes and ventilation shafts through which Horrors might gain entry. The workers sealed Braza's city shut and began new excavation. Meanwhile, Throalic magicians grappled with the particular problems of a vast kaer; among other things,

they devised a system of magical crystal greenhouses to ensure a supply of fresh food to a population of more than 50,000 Name-givers.

Construction continued slowly over the next century, with several setbacks. At one point, when Theran experts warned the Throalic architects that the layout of a certain hall formed a mystical pattern that might attract Horrors, Queen Ulutur suspected that the Therans were deliberately forcing her workers to drag out the construction process in order to extort more orichalcum. She had little choice but to trust their word, however, and tolerated the delays as best she could.

In 950 TH, the aging queen died peacefully in her sleep. Her son, King Varulus I, presided over an increasingly unstable kingdom. Intelligent Horrors made several attempts to infiltrate the king's inner circle, directly and through corrupted Name-givers. Doomsday cults began springing up, fueled by the increasing fear and despair of Barsaive's people; several fomented revolutions against the king, hoping to curry favor with the Horrors by destroying their Throalic enemies. A quiet, bookish dwarf when crowned, Varulus gradually became the tough and uncompromising ruler that the times demanded. He swiftly put down any signs of revolt, ensuring temporary stability but also making enemies in a number of trading houses close to the Theran Empire. The most serious incident occurred in 997 TH, when Varulus exiled fourteen young nobles from the houses of Heovrat, Erud, Pay'ar and Turlough for plotting against him. The nobles proclaimed their innocence, and their families cried foul; in the light of the coming Scourge, exile from Throal was a virtual death sentence. Though the evidence against the alleged plotters could be read in several ways, Varulus stood firm, knowing that he must seem unwavering in order to keep a fearful populace in line. The Fourteen, as they became known, took refuge with their Theran business partners in Parlainth.

In 960 TH, Varulus officially commissioned the archivists of Throal to begin work on the *Book of Tomorrow* and to assemble a great library to preserve the world's knowledge during the Scourge. Informal work on both of these grand projects had been going on for years, but the pace increased tenfold with the king's open backing.

Thera sealed itself off from the world in 1000 TH, somewhat ahead of schedule and well before the construction of Throal was complete. The abrupt departure of their Theran advisors sent a wave of panic through Barsaive and through Throal. Many people, believing the end of the world had come upon them, rioted and debauched themselves or committed suicide. Over the protests of his courtiers, King Varulus invoked various draconian measures to quell these disturbances. After several months, as the people slowly realized that the full fury of the Scourge was not about to suddenly sweep over Throal, the panic died down. For his firmness during the crisis, Varulus won great praise from his subjects.

The final stages of Throal's construction were completed over the next 40 years, during which Horror manifestations became increasingly common. Even though these terrible creatures were still rare enough that most Throalites had never seen one, King Varulus decided to take no chances. He decreed that Throal's citizens must regularly prove themselves free of Horror taint. Under a less judicious ruler, these measures could easily have become an excuse to punish political enemies and troublemakers, and many of those whose relatives were banished on the grounds of Horror taint accused Varulus of doing precisely that. Certainly the decree was harsh, but most historians agree that the king applied them fairly. Anyone exhibiting signs of derangement was exiled, lest their weak minds be dominated by Horrors. Those unable to demonstrate artisan skills were also sent away, on the chance that they might be Horrors in disguise.

Complaints about the decree ceased abruptly in 1032 TH. During a public ceremony celebrating the Passion of rulership, the members of one particular *olzim* (see **Passions and Their Followers**, p. 55) devoted to Rashomon suddenly swarmed the royal dais and attempted to slay the king. King Varulus miraculously escaped unhurt, but dozens of minor royals were killed, along with many guardsmen and hundreds of Rashomon's devotees. After the incident, the surviving attackers claimed to have been overtaken by temporary madness. For a day and a night, the royal executioners beheaded captured followers of Rashomon. Many Throalites compared the outburst to orkish *gahad*, and used the orkish Name for the Passion, Raggok, in reference to the event. The "Raggok Incident" is the first recorded indication in Throal of the corruption of the Mad Passions and its disastrous effect on their devotees. The effect on Throal was so profound that "Raggok" replaced "Rashomon" in day-to-day use, and the Name change has since spread across most of Barsaive. The royal family never recovered from the slaughter of its members during the Raggok Incident, and it remains dangerously small to this day.

In 1040 TH, controversy erupted anew when the Theran Overlord of Barsaive, the ork Ersh Wearg, arrived on the doorstep of Throal demanding refuge. The cowardly Wearg, having lost faith in Parlainth's plan to seal itself away from the world for the duration of the Scourge, tried to bluster his way in by claiming his right to rule Throal as imperial representative. His appearance touched off a fierce dispute among Throal's people. Many demanded that the king turn Wearg and his entourage away, while traders with strong ties to Thera argued that Wearg should be admitted but stripped of any authority. Armed clashes began to break out between squabbling trading houses while Wearg and his companions spent a fearful month in the hamlet of Gatemouth, where Bartertown now stands. Unwilling to let Wearg's presence start a civil war, King Varulus allowed him in. When Wearg demanded a large and luxurious area for the officers of the Empire, as Varulus had known he would, Varulus installed him in the unfinished hall that had been abandoned during his mother's reign because of Theran warnings that it might attract Horrors.

In 1045 TH, the city of Parlainth vanished from the world and from the memory of Barsaive. The magic that hid the city created false memories for all who had once known of it or lived there, including Ersh Wearg. Suddenly convinced that he had ruled in Throal for years, Wearg and his delegation became confused when the dwarfs refused to follow his orders. Varulus disarmed the Theran entourage

upon their entry into Throal, but their arrogance nonetheless greatly offended loyal Throalites. The Throalites, of course, had forgotten Parlainth, too—they remembered only that Ersh Wearg gave them the strong feeling of something gone magically wrong.

In 1049 TH, Varulus I flew aboard an airship of the Throalic Navy to a rendezvous requested by the dragon Icewing. To this day, no one outside the royal family knows precisely what happened in that meeting. According to legends that sprang up during the long centuries of the Scourge, Icewing gave Varulus three potions to extend his life and the lives of his heirs. Though grateful for the boon, Varulus wanted to know why he was receiving it. Icewing remained evasive, as dragons are wont to do; he threatened to turn Throal to smoking rubble if Varulus shared his potion with anyone other than his direct heirs, or failed to keep the details of the meeting a secret.

Early in 1050 TH a rain of flesh-eating worms fell for twenty days and twenty nights in the mountains of Throal, obliterating the hamlet of Gatemouth and its inhabitants. Deciding that Throal could remain open no longer, King Varulus sent messengers out to the various adepts and traders still at large in Throal. The messages gave them two months to return to the giant kaer; after that, the gates would be closed.

During those final two months people streamed to Throal from all over Barsaive, begging to be allowed into the kingdom. But Throal had no room in its kaer for these last-minute refugees; only known citizens of Throal were permitted to pass through its gates. The throngs of hopeless applicants camped outside Throal attracted droves of Horrors that attacked and devoured them by night. King Varulus, seeing the refugees as a danger to Throal, sent his army to drive them away; many fought back, preferring to die on the swords of Throal's army than in the jaws of the Horrors. A number of ballads have preserved this terrible time, known as the Weeping, in memory; however, few Throalites like to think about it even now. The Weeping tarnished Throal's reputation as a shining refuge.

At the end of the two months, despite the fact that many great heroes and famous traders had not yet returned, Throal closed its gates. None would pass in or out of the vast dwarf kaer for the next four hundred years.

On Throal During the Scourge

Having done their best to prepare themselves, the people of Throal settled in for their long-anticipated retreat from the world. At first, kaer life seemed a miraculous deliverance from the evil that stalked the land above. In the midst of Barsaive's darkest days, Throal enjoyed a new golden age; its artists created works of joy and light, its philosophers found meaning in the catastrophe of the Scourge, and its rulers sought to create a new era of perfect government.

In the way of this last goal stood the irritating Ersh Wearg, a baleful reminder of the hateful compromises Throal had made in order to preserve its great civilization. In 1055 TH, Ersh Wearg conveniently ceased to be a problem when his unsound quarters collapsed on him and his servants. King Varulus attributed Wearg's death to Upandal, Passion of builders, calling it the Passion's vengeance against the Therans for turning the building of the kaers toward their own political ends. Houses sympathetic to the Therans privately (and perhaps incorrectly) assumed that Varulus caused Wearg's death, but this assumption caused the king no trouble. On the contrary, scions of these houses admired the king's ruthlessness and quietly postponed their designs on the throne.

Two years later, Horror manifestations began occurring in the Halls of Throal. Despite Varulus' tough measures, Horrors had managed to infiltrate the kingdom. King Varulus and a team of adepts tracked the manifestations to the manor of House Endour, and in a heroic struggle slew a major Horror Named Whisper. Eleven members and *j'havim*

Adventure Hook

The month of Riag is known as "the Weepers' Month" in Bartertown, because it was in Riag of 1050 TH that the Throalic army drove off the hordes seeking last-minute refuge in the kingdom just before the closing of the city gates. The Weepers' Month is feared as a time of haunting. Unfortunate individuals may endure terrifying visions of the Weeping, encounter phantasmal Horrors, or simply vanish. Soldiers and others bearing the insignia of Throal seem to be singled out for these experiences.

When Riag rolls around one year, the manifestations are especially severe. Bleeding ghosts walk the streets of Bartertown in broad daylight. Babies are smothered in their cradles. Responsible citizens seized by sudden madness perform bizarre and savage acts against others or themselves. The adventurers, recuperating quietly in Throal from their latest adventures, must find out who or what is behind these terrors and stop them (if they can).

The Rememberers, a living legend cult, turn out to be the culprits. Led by Nethermancers, the group seeks to punish the descendants of those who refused shelter to the desperate as the Scourge approached. The group is using magic to allow spirits trapped on the astral plane by the terrible events of the Weeping to easily return to the physical world. The cult's members are quite mad; they are the descendants of those rare people who managed to find shelter outside Throal during the Scourge. The adventurers must find the cultists and stop their dread activities before the ghosts of the Weeping become Bartertown's only inhabitants.



of House Endour were beheaded as collaborators with the Horror, though some of them were innocent. In retaliation for the innocent blood shed, House Endour swore blood vengeance on the House of Avalus.

In 1160 TH, at the age of 270, Varulus I died. He had lived nearly twice as long as a normal dwarf; three successive wives preceded him to the grave along with a dozen children, most of whom died soon after birth. Only one son of the king lived to sit vigil at his bedside: Varulus II.

Varulus II ascended the throne without incident. Wishing to redeem history's judgment of his father and his harsh deeds, the new king studied his father's writings and announced his intention to make Throal an ideal society. Varulus II's quest for Utopia culminated in the proclamation of the *Council Compact* in 1270 TH. Allies and enemies of the royal house alike hailed it as a work of political genius, and Varulus II's trusted councilors immediately began planning the rebuilding of all Barsaive along the *Compact's* lines. As for Varulus II's enemies, they chose to bide their time. With trade routes closed by the Scourge, they no longer had an excuse to maintain the private armies necessary for a coup attempt.

In 1373 TH, at the age of 258, Varulus II passed away in his sleep. His use of Icewing's gift prolonged his life, but at a steep cost; he and the son who ultimately succeeded him had extreme difficulty fathering children. Throal mourned the king's death, celebrated his life, and welcomed Varulus III to the throne. Varulus III proved an able monarch, shepherding his people through the last years of the Scourge and leading their return to the surface world in 1420 TH.

On Throal Since the Return

By the beginning of the 1400s TH, based on calculations by Throal's finest magicians and scholars, King Varulus III began to believe that the Scourge might have ended. Beginning in 1409 TH, the king sent annual scouting parties into Barsaive; the first successful expedition returned from the

The Legend of the Earthdawn

In the first days after the end of the dark times known as the Scourge, King Varulus of Throal decreed that the bravest and boldest among his people should go forth and explore the land of Barsaive. After centuries of living in underground kaers and sealed citadels, the people hungered for the sight of the sun and the scent of the wind and many answered his call. Of the hundreds who ventured out into the Horror-ravaged countryside, however, not a single soul returned, until the day the troll sky raider Vaare Longfang came back to tell His Majesty that the Horrors were retreating to the hellish place that had spawned them.

Longfang's courage and strength so impressed Varulus that he immediately ordered an airship made ready for her and commanded the raider to explore the length and breadth of Barsaive, documenting the world the Horrors had left and spreading the joyful news of the Scourge's passing to those still in hiding. Throal's finest mages gave the ship strong magic for defense against the Horrors that remained, and Varulus provided a crew of heroes fit for a grand adventure. To represent his hopes for the expedition, the king christened the ship the *Earthdawn*.

For a year and a day the *Earthdawn* sailed across Barsaive's skies, surveying the ravaged land and battling many perils. Though some Horrors lingered in places still thick with magic, Longfang and her crew found most of Barsaive free of the abominations. But these glad tidings fell on deaf ears, for though the *Earthdawn* landed at every kaer and citadel it encountered, all but two rejected their words. Fearful and unbelieving, the people refused to come out of their shelters.

When Longfang returned to Throal and told Varulus of the people's fears, he commanded her to set off once more, this time for the larger kingdoms of Barsaive. Varulus hoped that if Longfang could persuade the great kingdoms to open their doors, the example of the mighty would banish fear among all of Barsaive's people. And so the *Earthdawn* set sail once more, this time toward the human kingdom of Landis. The airship was never seen again. Though many believe Longfang and her valiant crew fell prey to the Horrors, the true fate of the *Earthdawn* remains a mystery to this day.

Occasionally, travelers in remote areas report seeing the airship slowly sailing through the Barsaivian sky. According to another tale, the "ghost ship" still carries invaluable maps of Barsaive drawn by Longfang's own hand.

Adventure Hook

The abandoned *Earthdawn* may indeed still drift through the skies of Barsaive, appearing every so often near the Throal Mountains or the area once known as the kingdom of Landis. Her original crew, however, is likely long dead or perhaps trapped in another plane of existence.

Some unknown force—Horrors, questors of a Mad Passion, or even Theran spies—may be guiding the *Earthdawn* now. And if Longfang's maps truly exist, such artifacts would be invaluable. Of course, any attempt to recover such artifacts would undoubtedly attract the attentions of any number of gamemaster characters—Therans, Horrors, elves, and the like.

wilderness in 1412 TH. Four years later, the legendary airship *Earthdawn* made its famous voyage of rediscovery. The gallant ship disappeared on its second voyage in 1418 TH, but by that time the evidence was overwhelming that the Scourge had indeed ended. Throal opened its gates, cautiously at first, in 1420 TH. (For complete details of events following the reopening of Throal, see the **How It Came to Pass** chapter on p. 30 of the **Player's Compendium**.)

One event of this period is of particular importance to modern-day Throalic politics: in order to encourage the rapid resettlement of the Throal Mountains, Varulus III granted free ownership of land to anyone who claimed and agreed to make productive use of it. In so doing, he declared previous rights of ownership null and void. Most of the lands in question had belonged to various Throalic noble houses, whose members had acted as absentee landlords before the Scourge. Most nobles accepted these losses, partly out of loyalty to their sovereign and partly because they expected to enrich themselves as traders rather than landlords. As traders make no money without someone to sell goods to, the would-be merchants wanted the people of Barsaive to prosper quickly. Varulus III won their support by convincing them that giving up rights to land they had never seen would allow others to become rich enough to buy their trade goods, thereby benefiting the nobles in the long run. To nobles already threatened by the reforms of the *Compact*, or holding old grudges against House Avalus, the land policy was simply one more provocation. The king's enemies vowed to bring him down once and for all, and have continued to make trouble where they can.

Varulus found himself confronting greater enemies than his rivals in Throal when the Therans returned in 1449 TH. Enraged by the anti-Imperial implications of the *Council Compact*, the Therans declared Barsaive and all its people possessions of the Empire, and launched a war against Throal. Their rash act succeeded where Varulus III

had failed; far from intimidating Barsaivians, this display of Theran might created the first genuine sense of Barsaivian unity. The peoples of the province rose up against their would-be masters, fighting a fierce guerrilla war and ultimately routing the Theran armies and navy. The Theran forces withdrew to Sky Point to lick their wounds and plot revenge.

of the Death Rebellion

As Barsaive slowly returned to normal, the anti-Varulus noble houses continued to dwell on their grievances. Some saw the Therans as instruments of their vengeance. Houses Heovrat, Erud, Pay'ar and Turlough bitterly recalled the events of 997 TH and the long-ago Exile of the Fourteen; House Endour remembered the executions of its members in 1057 TH; and House Ueraven nursed the most ancient of grudges, its defeat by House Avalus at Jalasa in 634 TH. In the early 1480s TH, these seven rebel Houses proposed a diabolical scheme to the Therans for destroying Varulus' regime from within. They plotted to kill Varulus III and magically dominate young Prince Neden, turning him into a puppet of Thera.

Allying themselves with the worst criminals and mercenaries in Barsaive—including Vistrosh, leader of one of the most vicious gangs in the Thieves' City of Kratas—the conspirators nearly succeeded. In 1484 TH, Varulus III and Neden were forced into hiding. Shortly afterward, Neden was kidnapped and mercenaries loyal to the rebel houses briefly took over the Halls of Throal. Many loyalists lost their lives in the fighting and the subsequent round of executions.

King Varulus rallied after Vistrosh's chief rival, the ork gang chieftain known as Garlthik One-Eye, helped foil an assassination attempt against the king. Soon afterward Varulus was able to rescue his son Neden, whom the dragon Mountainshadow cleansed of sorcerous taint. Varulus III then retook Throal, beheaded the leaders of the rebellion, and permanently dissolved Houses Heovrat, Erud, Pay'ar, Endour, and Turlough. The leaders of House Ueraven had hedged their bets by acting behind the scenes, and so escaped punishment. Varulus III christened the entire incident the Death Rebellion, saying that Death was the only true winner.

on the Death of a King

The years since the Death Rebellion unfolded in comparative tranquility. Throal and Thera maintained an uneasy standoff, and Varulus' opponents, even the diehards in House Ueraven, kept to peaceful (if sometimes underhanded) opposition.

All that changed with the arrival of the Theran behemoth and the assassination of Varulus III in 1509 TH (see the **How It Came to Pass** chapter on p. 31 of the **Player's Compendium**). Varulus' death transferred the power from the old king to the young and untested Prince Neden. While Varulus III spent decades at his father's side before assuming the throne, Neden was thrust into the position with relatively little time to prepare for his responsibilities. Enamored with adventure and the military life, the hot-tempered king remains contemptuous of the subtle maneuverings required of a successful politician.

Their defeat at the Battle of Prajjor's Field was a serious blow to the dwarfs of Throal—almost everyone knows someone who was killed or injured in that conflict. The defeat left Throal demoralized, weakened in the eyes of the Theran Empire and of other Barsaivians. The defeat also began to erode public confidence in King Neden. Neden's resolve in dealing with Varulus' alleged assassins, his efforts to avenge his father's death, and his aggressive posture toward Throal's enemies initially earned him respect among Throal's nobility and commoners, but his failure at the Battle of Prajjor's Field cost him much of this support. Members of the court who doubted Neden's capabilities before are now emboldened to say so openly. Even ordinary citizens have begun to argue that Neden should only be allowed to act with the consent of the nobles who attend him at court.

Perhaps most important, public discontent with Neden has empowered the king's rivals among the Throalic nobility, most notably Selenda (see p. 75), whose influence grows as Neden's wanes. Houses whose support for Varulus' reforms was tentative or opportunistic have shifted toward the old-guard, conservative line. King Neden must now govern cautiously, as the young king cannot afford to offend Selenda or the other old-guard courtiers. Selenda has begun a campaign to whittle away at the edges of the *Council Compact*; as a first step, Selenda and her allies have pressured the new king to decrease the share of taxes paid by the Throalic nobility.

on the Brink of Civil War

While the shaken Arm of Throal campaigns for greater spending on mercenaries and airships, the citizenry is divided on the question. A slim majority wants to strike back at Thera and erase Throal's shame. Others advocate some type of accommodation with Thera that will enable them to resume business in a peaceful province.

The old guard recently allied itself with the accommodationist forces. In reaction, the pro-*Council Compact* nobles support a military build-up. In a compromise that pleased neither side, King Neden shifted the tax burden to ordinary Throalic citizens and devoted more of the treasury to strengthening the Arm of Throal.

To further restore Throal's prestige and assuage his own wounded pride, Neden also authorized a program to covertly destabilize Theran forces and allies in Barsaive by instructing his diplomats to make contact with the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane. His officials quietly circulate the word among adventurer and mercenary circles that rewards are available to groups that significantly damage Theran interests.

Unfortunately, King Neden's preoccupation with the Therans clouds his judgment, resulting in other priorities going by the wayside. Displeased at the number of foreign agents turned up by the investigations into his father's death, he recently authorized a ruthless assassination campaign against suspected Theran and Iopan spies in Bartertown.

The campaign contributed to the growing lawlessness in Bartertown and violated the town's independent status, enraging its citizens and spawning virulent anti-Throal sentiments. Known agents of Throal are still facing open hostility in Bartertown's markets and inns.

On the Challenges of the Future

Though King Neden has many concerns at home, he has realized that he cannot ignore the rest of Barsaive. The arrival of the Theran behemoth and death of King Varulus III have caused concern across much of the province about Throal's ability to lead effective resistance to Theran encroachments. To help stave off this growing anxiety, Neden has begun to stretch the Arm and Eye of Throal across more of Barsaive than ever before. Increasingly, Neden relies on the Eye of Throal for information on Iopos, offering rewards to adventurers who provide intelligence on the doings of the Denairastas. To reassure Barsaive's inhabitants that Throal remains strong, King Neden frequently sends troops around Barsaive to "show the flag."

The uneasy truce that existed between Thera and Throal is gone, most likely forever. Though neither side has made a formal declaration of war, the Battle of Prajjor's Field has greatly increased the tension between these two powers. To this day, Throalic and Theran forces in Barsaive face off in numerous encounters. Some of these end peacefully and others in vicious skirmishes, though none has yet matched the scope of the Battle of Prajjor's Field.

Thera still wants to see Throal humbled and the "seditious" *Council Compact* repudiated, and Imperial agents are constantly working toward that end. And while Throal had long considered the Denairastas a minor power, the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus' assassination transformed the Denairastas and Iopos into the dwarf kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. In fact, Uhl Denairastas and his Holders of Trust have increased their strength in Barsaive by slaying the great king of Throal and set Throal and Thera at one another's throats. Name-givers throughout Barsaive view the Holders of Trust and the Denairastas clan with increasing terror. Despite the exposure of the plot, Uhl's Throalic and Theran enemies remain locked in a deadly dance that will inevitably lead to widespread war and chaos, which Uhl and his clan will undoubtedly exploit.

With so many enemies looking for a chance to strike a blow, Throal will need heroes for some years to come.

On Trade

Certainly the Council Compact *contains many inspiring words. In it are brilliant ideas, beautiful stories, much of the learning of our people. Yet all of us in this chamber can point to the threads that truly bind the peoples of Barsaive to our nation of Throal. These threads are not made of words or thoughts. They are molded of clay, forged of metal, carved in wood, grown from the soil. The common goods in which we trade, the everyday transactions of business, are the things that reshape our shattered province. Our recovery rests on a foundation of simple things: pots, saddles, blankets, spices, ointments, charms, tools, weapons, boots…*

"We, the traders and merchants of Throal, are the true vanguard of civilization. As we forge new trade routes, as we reopen markets for our goods, we shine light on a land still almost entirely concealed in darkness. In making profits for ourselves, we bring profit to all. Every traveler knows that to step more than one hundred yards from a trade route is to risk one's life. But who forged those trade routes? Our fathers did. Who guards them still? We do. Without the great trading houses of Throal, the cities of Barsaive would be isolated, disconnected. It would not be safe to travel to Jerris, or Travar, or anywhere. The Serpent River and its t'skrang children would be no more than legend. Urupa would be a faraway rumor. We would know these places only from books.

"There is an old saying that silver breeds all ills. But we know that nothing could be further from the truth. Without the silver brought into the treasury by trade, Throal would be a breeding ground for misery. Throal would be but a shadow of itself. We would be huddled in our grim hovels with none of the luxuries our people now take for granted. The treasury could not pay for the city guards who guarantee our safety. We would be dirty, diseased wretches, living by the whim of bullies and thugs.

"The role we merchants of Throal play in Barsaive is not a new one. Our genius for trade made our nation mighty in the days before the Scourge. We were able to unify Barsaive with the Book of Tomorrow *because the other inhabitants of this vast province wanted our goods. They learned our language because they wanted to make fair deals with us. The Name of Throal became synonymous with the good faith bargain, and our nation and province prospered for it.*

"In those days, we sometimes worked with the unscrupulous Therans. Many otherwise well-meaning folk, looking upon those times in hindsight, tar this occasional partnership as a moral error, a stain on the conscience of Throal. We all know such a view is utter foolery. As the great Toberoc Garsun, renowned founder of my House, once said: 'There is no dishonor in dealing with a Horror, so long as you outsmart it.' What the Therans wished to accomplish with swords and soldiers, we achieved with innumerable routine business deals. The business arrangement, unlike the military engagement, is built on trust. And trust is the strongest foundation of all when one wishes to build a nation.

"Barsaive has yet to fully recover from the Scourge. We have shone our light on the cities, but the thousands of villages and isolated settlements between them remain trapped in fear, ignorance and poverty. Our civilizing mission continues. At year's end, as you tabulate your profits and losses, do not forget to count the enlightenment you have brought to the distant corners of Barsaive. Remember that as you build our realm's future, you invest in your House's future.

"With our success, new challenges will arise. As we make Barsaive ever more prosperous, it becomes an increasingly attractive target for thugs and bandits. We are more than

experienced in dealing with minor thieves. But the great bandits, the Therans, remain strong, their dedication to conquest unwavering. Perhaps we can again weave them into helplessness, tying them in a constraining web of contracts. Or we may have to stand and fight once more for the deserved fruits of our labors, just as we would against the scruffiest of scorcher tribes. We must avoid rash action and work for peace as long as we are able.

"When new catastrophes threaten our nation, the philosophers will philosophize and the lawmakers will make new laws. But the merchants and traders, as ever, will act.

—From the Address of Lomron of Garsun to the Annual Banquet of His Majesty's Trading Commission, 1508 TH

Roads of Silver

Though Lomron of Garsun spoke the above words to flatter an audience of his fellow traders, they are not far from the mark. Trade is the linchpin of Throal's power and influence in Barsaive, and also of its prosperity. Throal's trading houses have poured money into the royal treasury, and this money has largely paid for the construction of the new Inner Cities. The Inner Cities in turn benefit the trading houses, providing homes for the many immigrant artisans and craftsmen who produce goods for the trading houses to sell throughout Barsaive. These makers of goods are attracted to the Inner Cities because Throal is safer than any other settlement in Barsaive, thanks to the rich tax base provided by the trading houses. The immigrants also come to Throal to live nearer to the traders who distribute their goods. A craftsman or artisan based in Throal has more bidders competing for his merchandise, and can thus command a higher price.

People who live near trade routes, or in major cities connected by those trade routes, refer to themselves as living in "civilized Barsaive." They have the traders of Throal to thank for this status. Most Barsaivians think of merchants when they think of Throal. To the ordinary folk of Barsaive, the face of Throal is the local representative of some great trading house or other. Only an elite few meet Throal's diplomats. The first representative of "civilization" encountered by people living in Barsaive's dangerous, unexplored wild lands is usually a Throalic trader.

In civilized Barsaive, Throal's traders are known for a peculiar sort of honesty. Though they stand staunchly behind their words, they also have a reputation for wrapping negotiations in confusing contract language. As a popular Urupan saying goes, "A Throalite's as good as his word—but his word doesn't mean what you think it does." In a similar vein, an old t'skrang joke explains that the people of Barsaive had to learn the Throalic language in order to keep Throalic merchants from swindling them in contracts. In some quarters, envy of dwarf business acumen fuels racial hatred against them, and many Barsaivians who fear Throal's political ambitions subscribe to a stereotype of its people as greedy and exploitative.

Despite the occasional misunderstanding (or even outright swindle), the trading relationship between Barsaive and Throal is of great mutual benefit to each. Throal has taken the initiative in rebuilding trading routes that merchants from other cities have come to rely on. In taking the steps necessary to rebuild Barsaive's economy, Throalic traders have filled their own vaults with silver and gold.

Most Throalic trading houses invest their earnings beyond Throal's borders. They have bought interests in existing trading outfits in cities such as Jerris and Urupa, and their holdings are particularly strong in eastern Barsaive. Their monies have helped build shops, warehouses, inns and other businesses throughout the province. They sell goods produced by other Barsaivians, and employ many foreigners in their caravans and local operations. Their various business activities are creating an interdependence that will stand Throal in good stead if the Theran Empire takes further action to reclaim Barsaive as part of its empire. These business partnerships are also alliances that will help Throal against any new political threat that may appear. The prosperity of many influential people outside Throal is linked to the dwarf kingdom's, and so they will have every motivation to come to Throal's aid should the need arise. These links are still new enough, however, that even a minor disruption to trade routes could collapse the province's still-fragile economy and create terrible hardship.

Adventure Hook

To demonstrate that not everyone sees the people of Throal as heroes, send the adventurers to rescue a group of traders being held hostage in the town of Oasis. Oasis is a settlement that has sprung up on the trade route to Jerris, north of the Liaj Jungle. Rami, the mayor of the town, is a would-be petty despot with ties to local scorcher tribes. She is holding the traders for ransom in the wake of a soured business deal; the traders took advantage of Rami's lack of negotiating experience and convinced her to sign a one-sided contract. As compensation for what she regards as fraud, Rami is demanding payment from the traders' families. If the families delay too long, Rami is going to start lopping off heads.

Members of the captured traders' families hire the player characters to free them. The adventurers are given ransom money, but much less than Rami is demanding. Their employers have agreed to let the adventurers keep whatever remains of the ransom after freeing the traders by whatever means. Do the adventurers try to dicker with the angry mayor, risking a confrontation with her ork scorcher allies? Or do they decide to earn the entire ransom by staging a daring rescue attempt?

On Throal's Economy

Like every kaer in Barsaive, the kingdom of Throal had to be self-sufficient during the Scourge. Throal's people took care of all their own needs, from food to shelter to basic goods like clothing, shoes, simple tools, and so on. Throal's famous crystal greenhouses (see **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p.100) allowed for underground farming on a far more extensive scale than was possible in most other kaers, and Throal's population was large enough to support the production of luxury goods during this period. Though the influence and wealth of the great trading houses was temporarily reduced by the total absence of trade, the average Throalite enjoyed a much higher standard of living during the Scourge than most other Barsaivians.

In the generation since the Scourge's end, significant changes have taken place in the dwarf kingdom. The expansion of Throal's economic role over the past century has brought a new vulnerability in its wake. Throal is no longer capable of self-sufficiency; the waves of immigration to the Inner Cities have increased the population to the point where the existing crystal greenhouses cannot produce enough food for everyone. Constructing additional greenhouses would be an enormously expensive and labor-intensive enterprise, and some people would likely starve in the meantime.

The expansion of trade has brought other potential problems with it as well. Currently, the most successful trading houses are those that have been boldest in expanding their empires beyond Throal. Most of these are also staunch allies of the king. If major trade routes were cut off by some catastrophe, these trading houses would suffer enormous losses of wealth and prestige that might well destabilize Throal politically and give the houses opposed to Neden a chance to expand their power.

On Throal's Trading Houses

Though prominent traders like to pretend to be above mere political concerns, business and politics in Throal are different sides of the same silver piece. King Neden's foreign and domestic policies are built around Throal's needs as the foremost trading power in Barsaive. For example, the royal treasury taxes the traders and spends the revenue on things to the traders' benefit, such as the building of the Inner Cities. Military spending primarily benefits the trading houses too, because the army's chief function is to protect trade routes from bandits and troublesome local rulers. The treasury functions as a sort of central clearing house that invests the traders' money in projects beneficial to them in the long run.

Despite his commitment to trade, the king and his courtiers do not always see eye to eye with the large trading houses. Personal rivalries and narrow self-interest often cloud the picture and complicate the relationship between traders and the government. Though the trading houses have interests in common, they also compete with one another. Those who can secure special privileges from the king do so, while those left out in the cold tend to make trouble at court. Noble families run most major trading houses. Some of them, such as House Ueraven, bear historic grudges against the royal family. On certain issues, the king is at odds with the trading houses as a group. The traders tend to take existing benefits as their due, concentrating their energies on getting rid of policies they dislike. The main point of contention between government and business revolves around the passages of the *Council Compact* that punish the rich and powerful more severely for their transgressions than the average or poor citizen. Traders are also notorious for the determination with which they seek tax loopholes. If all the loopholes sought by various traders were instituted, the average resident of Throal would end up paying for services that benefit only the wealthiest members of society.

Many of the trading houses founded by the old noble families of Throal, commonly referred to as the "noble houses," can trace their lineage back to the dwarf civil wars that preceded the foundation of Throal fifteen hundred years ago. Not all of these families were on the same side in these wars, and ancient grudges still shape political and business rivalries. A young dwarf brought up in one of these so-called noble houses is reared on epic stories of ancestral triumphs and the treachery of ancient rivals. The traders as a whole revere history, and place great importance on their tribal heritage. In contrast, dwarfs outside the trading houses are likely to consider tribal rivalries a quaint relic of the past.

Not all of the noble houses became powerful trading concerns. Some faded before the Scourge, and their descendants maintain meager lives in once-impressive living quarters in the Estates of the Halls of Throal. Their family Names still give these people a ceremonial role in Throalic life, and they still send courtiers to attend the king. However, they have no real clout in Throalic society.

The noble trading houses break down into two factions. The first is variously referred to as anti-reformers, conservatives, the old guard, or the Huari faction. (The latter Name refers to their supposed tribal heritage; however, not all traders who oppose the king's reformist measures are of Huari descent, and some Huari families are staunch royalists.) Members of the old guard want to repeal portions of the *Council Compact* they see as interfering with their rightful privileges. Though not exactly friendly to Thera, the anti-reformers want the king to soften his public opposition to slavery in order to avoid a costly conflict with the Empire. Though their enemies sometimes paint them as cowards, the old guard has a certain logic on its side: an all-out war would be extremely bad for business. Old-guard traders tend to be cautious in their business dealings, wary of overextending themselves. They have a reputation for taking over markets that others have already developed.

The second faction is known as reformers, loyalists, radicals, or the Mishwal faction, though not all descendants of the Mishwal tribe agree with the king's policies. The ancestors of many loyalists helped draft the *Council Compact*, and their modern-day descendants support it out of family pride and ideological conviction. Others recognize the business advantages of being on the king's good side. Reform traders tend to be innovative risk-takers who build new markets for their goods. This makes them natural allies of the king, who wants to expand Throal's cultural

and political influence over as much of Barsaive as he can. They cultivate a reputation as gamblers and swashbucklers, but they are no less canny than their more cautious rivals. Many of King Neden's friends belong to this circle of well-connected merchants.

Whether old guard or reformist, the noble houses are all run by extended families. Dwarfs related by blood or marriage to the central family of the house are considered part of it, even if they do not work for the trading house. As family members, they get a say in the general direction of the firm and in the selection of courtiers. The importance of the family in decision-making varies from house to house. Strong-willed matriarchs or patriarchs run some, paying only token heed to the advice of their younger relatives. Others defer to a number of influential family members. A few operate by consensus or make decisions by secret ballot.

Serving the families are many *j'havim*, or associates. *J'havim* are mere employees, with little influence over the policies of the house. However, *j'havim* who show initiative and business acumen often become connected to the house through marriage. Members of noble houses rarely marry for love; suitors for the hand of a dwarf noble must demonstrate exactly how they can increase the house's fortunes if they hope to have any success.

Before the Scourge, noble houses had a monopoly on trading operations. In the past century, however, dwarfs of humble origin have created new and prosperous trading houses to take advantage of Barsaive's growing economy. Groups of other Name-givers have done the same, often forming under the direction of boards composed of members of several races. These houses are collectively known as the free traders, the new generation, or the Inner City traders (the latter because the headquarters of most of these new operations are in the Inner Cities rather than the Halls of Throal). Politically, the new generation tends to ally with the reformers. In addition, the free traders want their economic clout reflected in the ceremonial life of the court. They want to send courtiers to attend the king, and want better access to royal officials. As the spearhead of the movement to make Throal a truly multiracial kingdom, the free traders enjoy the support of many average citizens in the Inner Cities. The free traders' most radical notion is making non-dwarfs eligible to ascend the throne when a royal line ends. The reformist houses, though generally tolerant of other Name-giver races, part company with the free traders on this issue.

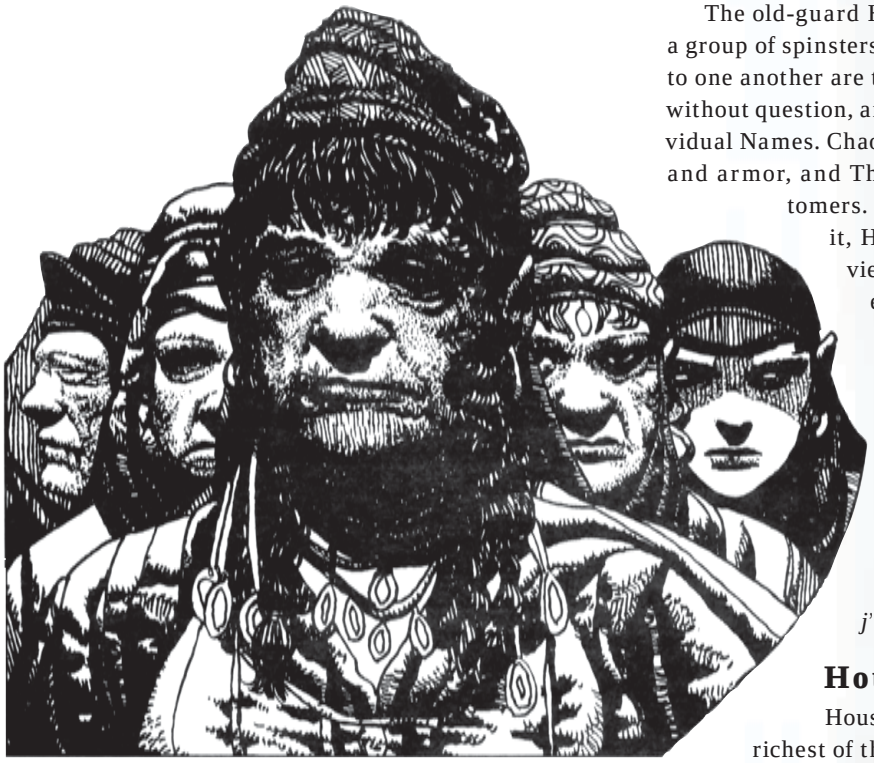
The average company of free traders consists of a small administrative board that oversees a hierarchy of *j'havim*. The structure of the board varies from company to company, and *j'havim* can be promoted to it.

The Major Houses

Throal has a total of 28 noble trading houses, each privileged to select a courtier to attend the king (for descriptions of prominent courtiers, see **Advisers and Courtiers** on p. 68 of **The Halls of Power** chapter). Three of these houses may send two courtiers each. Though most trading houses belong to a given faction, not all houses are equally dedicated to their factions' political goals.

Countless minor free trading houses also exist in the dwarf kingdom, but only six of them have real economic clout. Unlike noble houses, free traders do not customarily use "House" as part of their business Names. They call their businesses "companies" as in the "Dream Spire Company," the "Circle Path Company," and so on.

This section describes some of the more prominent houses; gamemasters may create their own houses if they wish.



House Chaozun

The old-guard House Chaozun (CHOW-zun) is run by a group of spinsters known as the Five Sisters. So attuned to one another are they that each can speak for the others without question, and few people bother to learn their individual Names. Chaozun specializes in the sale of weapons and armor, and Throal's military is one of its chief customers. Like the stern-minded sisters who run it, House Chaozun espouses conservative views; despite differences of opinion, however, the Five Sisters bear no personal grudge against the royal family. House Chaozun will sell armaments to anyone in Barsaive who is not a direct threat to Throal. Local folk in some far-flung areas of the province despise House Chaozun for equipping ork scorcher tribes. Adventurers wishing to sell or purchase fabulous magical weapons should consider approaching the *j'havim* of House Chaozun.

House Garsun

House Garsun (GAHR-sun) is the largest and richest of the trading houses, long protected from

adversity by its sheer size. Members of House Garsun have been among Throal's wealthiest citizens for generations and do not expect (or desire) to see that position jeopardized. Many communities in Barsaive still associate the Name Garsun with stability and honesty; they remembered the Name of the trading house through all the years of the Scourge. In a popular ballad supposedly written during the Scourge, called "Waiting For the Garsun Trader," a young child dreams of the day his kaer will be unsealed, and the House Garsun caravan will arrive overloaded with toys and exotic foods. House Garsun's reputation is its most valuable asset, and the house is becoming increasingly complacent about its place in Barsaive's markets. House leader Lomron is a popular figurehead for the old guard; with a manner reminiscent of a long-winded favorite uncle, he puts a smiling face on caution and traditionalism.

Adventure Hook

Snorutia's maiden aunt, Volumnia, hires the adventurers to protect her niece from Osbaldo, who has hired a notorious band of assassins from Iopos to make him an instant widower. Though Snorutia refuses to believe that her darling Osbaldo could possibly want to dispose of her, she accepts her aunt's offer of a bodyguard troop because she knows that personal guards are a status symbol. She treats the adventurers like menial servants as the assassins draw nearer, and the player characters may have to overcome increasing feelings of loathing for their charge in addition to fighting off the killers. If the adventurers expose Osbaldo's plans, they win the patronage of several of the other old guard houses, who consider Osbaldo a loathsome upstart.

House Ludi

House Ludi (LOO-dee) chalks up its remarkable business success to the favor of the Passion Chorrolis. Only family members who are questors of Chorrolis are permitted to vote at board meetings, where they make decisions by consensus. The public face of this old-guard house is the courtier Vamban, who appears at court only when matters affecting House Ludi's balance sheet are in question. Vamban is known for his awful table manners, his unseemly interest in the misfortunes of others, and his cleverness in striking deals. He and his fellow board members see no distinction between conducting business and engaging in worship. They are notorious for tricky contracts and other practices that fall just short of fraud, and can justify any ethical lapse as an act of devotion to Chorrolis. According to family legend, House Ludi has the blood of the Passions in its veins; the ancient founder of the house was allegedly born of a brief liaison between Chorrolis and a Huari noblewoman.

House Mikul

House Mikul (Mik-OOL) is a very prosperous house that lives by the motto, "Trust is the foundation." Members of House Mikul have always believed in the long view, and pride themselves on their honest and above board approach to business. In addition to their trading operations, representatives of House Mikul serve as a sort of shadow diplomatic corps, building good relationships with governments throughout eastern Barsaive. The leader of House Mikul is the charismatic Curticia, a middle-aged woman who exudes warmth and common sense.

Curticia was a personal friend of King Varulus III, but always opposed the king's hard-line anti-slavery campaign. She believes that Barsaive will inevitably be partitioned between Thera in the west and Throal in the east, and that peaceful and productive business can be done under this arrangement. The arrival of the behemoth at Ayodhya has reinforced that belief, and House Mikul's relationship with the crown has become strained. Any sign of war or discord is bad for the network of partners she has built, which includes some strange bedfellows: she trades with everyone from Garlthik One-Eye of Kratas to minor Theran merchants.

House Pa'vas

House Pa'vas (PAH-vass) is a prime example of a trading house that withered during the Scourge. The family lost its interest in business when Throal was sealed, spending its fortune rather than increasing it. Unprepared for the competition to re-establish trade routes after the opening of Throal, they have sold their noble heritage to vulgar but vigorous traders such as the greedy Osbaldo, a jumped-up nobody who has recently become the de facto head of House Pa'vas.

In exchange for a generous allowance to the remaining blood kin of House Pa'vas, Osbaldo recently installed his idiot son Drumilica as a courtier. Osbaldo wants to marry into House Pa'vas and become its official leader, but his quarrelsome wife Snorutia is inconveniently in the way. Over the past year, Snorutia has survived a series of mysterious and potentially fatal accidents through indomitable dumb luck.

House Ueraven

House Ueraven (OO-ee-raven) sees itself as the nemesis of the royal family, House Avalus. Ueraven built its business empire on the trade monopoly with Iopos granted to the House by Uhl Denairastas, ruler of that city. Though known for their unsavory connections and often accused of underhanded maneuvers in politics and business, the Ueraven family excels at covering its tracks. The current leader of House Ueraven, a strong-minded, aging woman Named Selenda, is among the most vociferous opponents of royal policies on virtually every front. As for Selenda's personal connection with King Neden, the gamemaster may use either of the following options.

Option One

House Ueraven was a party to the abortive coup of 1484 TH, but their involvement was never proved. Varulus III suspected the truth, and he and Selenda circled each

other like wary predators until his death—a dance that continues with King Neden.

Option Two

The rebel houses approached House Ueraven just before the coup of 1484 TH and invited Selenda to join them. Selenda was more than willing to work against Varulus III legitimately, but considered a coup far too destabilizing to Throal, and ultimately warned Varulus of the attempt on his life (which failed). King Varulus III and now King Neden owe House Ueraven a major debt, one Selenda does not intend to let them forget.

House Byril'ah

The reformist House Byril'ah (Buh-RIL-ah) has always maintained close ties to the king's family. One of the smaller noble houses, Byril'ah specializes in the sale of luxury items such as sculptures, paintings, books and antique and modern jewelry. It also acts as a broker for architects, painters and mosaic artists. Many Byril'ah family members are artists themselves, with skills far surpassing those of the average Name-giver. House Byril'ah has also produced more than its share of philosophers, diplomats and politicians. Many of the major contributors to the *Council Compact* were scions of House Byril'ah, which considers its trading empire a mere vehicle for its true mission: to bring education and beauty to all Barsaive. House Byril'ah sees the egalitarian message of the *Compact* as central to this project.

The House leader, Beracia, is a renowned designer of jewelry. Like other members of her house, she projects an image of sophistication and enlightenment that helps buyers feel good about paying the premium prices Byril'ah charges. In politics, as in business, members of this trading house feel that the subtle approach reaps the greatest rewards. House Byril'ah owes the bulk of its political influence to the dazzling parties it frequently hosts; any Throalite who wants to pick up on court and business gossip considers attendance at these affairs a must. Even hardened traders like Selenda Ueraven and House Chaozun's Five Sisters are reluctant to cross House Byril'ah lest they be cut off from the rich opportunities for contacts on the social circuit.

House Elcomi

Highly active before the Scourge, House Elcomi (ELL-kohm-ee) now does little business outside Throal. This reformist house remains a major force in Throal, however, as a prominent financier of ventures by many other reformist and old-guard trading houses. House Elcomi owns pieces of many of the other noble houses, and can easily shake up the current balance of economic power by calling in a few strategic loans. The venerable head of House Elcomi, Tholon by Name, also serves as its courtier (see **Advisers and Courtiers**, p. 68 in **The Halls of Power** chapter).

Elcomi is reformist less out of ideological conviction than because Tholon supports the throne without question. If an old-guard monarch were to legitimately take the throne, Tholon would almost certainly ally himself with the new ruler.

Adventure Hook

The adventurers, having achieved considerable status in Throal (by a method of the gamemaster's choice), receive invitations to one of House Byril'ah's glittering affairs. Not long after their arrival, a stunning and mysterious guest appears: a dwarf maiden of staggering beauty and charm. So lovely is she that the room seems to light up when she enters. She dances with all the male dwarfs, including a young nobleman Named Zudian Ludi, and chats briefly with all the women. Everyone seems to love her on sight. As the party draws to a close she slips away, without having left her Name.

In the days that follow, Zudian cannot get her out of his mind. Obsessed with possessing the mystery woman, he approaches the player characters, whom he recognizes from the night of the party. He offers them a fortune to help him find the woman. The mysterious beauty left Throal all alone and headed into the mountains, far from safe trade routes. If the player characters escort Zudian in pursuit of her, they face many dangers. Somehow the woman made it safely through a series of hazards that nearly kill Zudian and the adventurers.

When they finally find her, Zudian tries to buy her favors with boasts of his vast wealth. She laughingly rebuffs him. Enraged, Zudian attacks her. The adventurers must choose to help Zudian or stop him. The woman turns out to be the Passion Astendar, and she destroys Zudian whether the player characters help him or not. If the adventurers do the right thing, they earn Astendar's favor. If not... well, attacking a Passion is never a good idea.

In an ironic twist, upon their return to Throal the characters hear the legend of Astendar's triumphs over Chorrolis, a tale that has many parallels with their recent adventure. This adventure also gives the gamemaster a chance to set up long-term plot lines via gossip, rumors and contacts that the adventurers pick up as they mingle with the party guests.

House Neumani

House Neumani (NEW-man-ee), a minor house before the Scourge, has spent the past few decades rapidly expanding. The house leaders put their time underground to good use, planning ways to open new trade routes after the Horrors departed. Knowing that their intended ventures would be dangerous propositions, they relied heavily on adepts and adventurers in their plans. Many family members trained as adepts, and to this day a surprising percentage of Neumani scions follow various magical Disciplines. Such conduct is highly unusual for a noble house of Throal; most nobles are content to let employees risk their necks. The Neumani think like adventurers, relying on bold action and strategic gambles to increase their holdings. Now that the major trade routes have been opened, at the cost of much Neumani blood, other houses are taking advantage of their accomplishments. Meanwhile, the Neumani are searching for the next frontier, still pushing the boundaries of "civilized" Barsaive and bringing their goods to the province's small and isolated villages. The leader of House Neumani is the Swordmaster Grindo, who brings all the bravado and flair of his Discipline to his business dealings. He respected Varulus III as a risk-taker and is even closer to King Neden, with whom he has adventured on a number of occasions. Should King Neden ever be threatened with a coup, the flashing swords of House Neumani would swiftly defend him.

House Sarafica

House Sarafica (Sah-RAF-i-ka) is noted for its secrecy, personified by its enigmatic leader. Thirty-year old Zendes, a reclusive dwarf woman, is the youngest head of a trading house in Throal's history. Zendes never attends social functions, and almost invariably sends delegates to attend meetings on her behalf. The mystery surrounding Zendes and her house merely makes her more interesting to other Throalites. Some believe that she and House Sarafica have sinister plans; others say she is merely shy. Whatever her motivation, it is clear that the house's confidence in her is fully justified. Since Zendes took over, House Sarafica has grabbed vulnerable markets previously controlled by a number of old guard and reformist smaller houses. Zendes has shown a remarkable talent for spotting and exploiting weaknesses in the competition; indeed, many other traders attribute Sarafica's recent growth to an unparalleled intelligence network. Though this network is often talked about, solid evidence of its existence is scarce. Most of the rival houses believe that some of their *j'havim* feed information to Sarafica agents, and rumors persist that Zendes is favored by several of Barsaive's dragons, including Icewing. As the rumor goes, Zendes is involved in dragon affairs, and so it is little wonder that she is as secretive as a dragon herself. Politically, House Sarafica is a quiet but staunch supporter of the king. No one, not even King Neden, knows whether this support represents House Sarafica's true goals or is merely a useful position in some greater game.

House Yilwaz

House Yilwaz (YILL-wazz) is a minor reformist house known for making major waves. Twenty years ago, ork scorchers captured three members of the Yilwaz family on a trade mission near Iopos. They were sold as slaves to the Therans, necessitating a rescue attempt financed from the house's operating expenses. A family member was killed in the rescue, and the survivors—twin brothers Umo and Pepara—have since become joint heads of the house. Upon the brothers' return to Throal, the Yilwaz family decided to use its trading operations against the Therans. They have made it their mission to out-compete Theran trading companies in regions of Barsaive served by merchants of Thera and Throal, especially the regions around Urupa and Vivane. Since the arrival of the behemoth, they have begun to focus on the region around Lake Ban and Travar as well. Though this strategy is not consistently profitable, the house makes enough money to support a large number of *j'havim*. Those stationed outside Throal double as anti-slavery agitators. Yilwaz caravans are always heavily guarded, and their armed employees are encouraged to pursue slavers and rescue slaves whenever possible. House Yilwaz is even more strident in its opposition to the Therans than King Neden is, and they would like to see Throal wage a



military harassment campaign or even all-out war against their hated foes. As part of this agenda, they have developed a close relationship with the obsidiman merchant Omasu, helping supply the efforts of the Liferock Rebellion.

On the Free Trading Companies

The two most prominent free trading companies in Throal are the Dream Spire Company and the Circle Path Company.

Dream Spire Company

The Dream Spire Company is a multiracial trading house currently headed by a cantankerous human Named Oberh. Founded by a group of ambitious immigrants anxious to prove that business success is not the sole preserve of dwarfs, the company has carved out a niche for itself in areas of Barsaive where anti-Throal feelings run rampant. Some hinterland settlements look on the kingdom of Throal with fear, regarding its trade moves as a mere prelude to conquest. In some areas, Throal's former allegiance to the oppressive Therans is too well remembered, while in other places Theran and Iopan agents plant dark rumors about the king's true intentions. Though the Dream Spire Company does not conceal its Throalic origins, many traders wary of the dwarf kingdom prefer to do business with this company on the assumption that its relatively low number of dwarf employees means that Dream Spire is less than sympathetic to the Throalic government's aims.

The small number of dwarfs working for Dream Spire has led some old-guard trading houses to publicly question the company's loyalty, accusations to which Oberh responds by saying that his people present a friendly, multiracial image of Throal to the ignorant. Oberh sincerely believes this, but also knows that if fear of Throal were to evaporate tomorrow, many of his markets would go with it. In domestic politics, Dream Spire is a vocal proponent of opening up the monarchy to other races when a royal line dies out. This makes Oberh unpopular among conservatives and reformers alike, but he thrives on controversy. Whenever Throal hardens its stance against Thera, Oberh's voice is among the loudest to object; any aggressive moves by Throal threaten Dream Spire's precarious hold on its nervous hinterland markets.

Circle Path Company

The Circle Path Company was founded by a family of elves who settled in Throal before the Scourge. Though all Name-givers are welcome to purchase shares in the company, its leadership and staff are mostly elves. Circle Path's *j'havim* cycle through various jobs in the company, mimicking the mystical paths trodden by elven nobles. The head of the company, a soft-spoken woman Named Alfaliel, claims that this system makes Circle Path more efficient because everyone understands everyone else's job. Most other traders think this is foolish, and a fearful few see some kind of mystical elven threat in it. The fact that Circle Path does a small amount of business with the royal court of the Blood Wood, which is widely feared in Throal, only adds to some people's apprehension. Most of Circle Path's business, however, lies in importing food to Throal. Circle Path's success is founded on good relationships between individual farmers and its traders in the field. Alfaliel keeps her company out of political debates as much as possible, and gets nervous whenever conflict with Thera looms. She knows as well as anyone just how much Throal can be hurt by disruptions in its supply lines.

On the Banned Houses

After the so-called Death Rebellion in 1484 TH, King Varulus stripped five old-guard noble houses—Heovrat (HAY-ov-rat), Erud (AY-rude), Pay'ar (PIE-ar), Endour (EN-DOW-er) and Turlough (TUR-low)—of their rights and privileges, and condemned their leaders to death (see **On Throal's History**, p. 13). These houses, officially declared non-existent, are remembered as the Banned Houses, and their one-time family members remain in Throal as commoners. Some have accepted the ban and attempted to blend into the rank and file of Throalic society. Other families covertly maintain their ancient rites and customs, dreaming of a day when House Avalus will be expunged and they will regain their former glory. The Eye of Throal (see **Threads of Unity**, p. 92) keeps careful watch on the more outspoken members of the Banned Houses. Some of the more under-

Adventure Hook

For two months in a row, strange hauntings disrupt the proceedings of His Majesty's Trading Commission. The ghosts claim to be the founding members of the various trading houses, who are now enduring gruesome torments in Death's kingdom. The spirits groan that they are as heavily taxed there as are their living descendants in Throal. They have run out of money, and Death has sent them to demand taxes from their living kin. Unless they are paid, they will forever haunt the current heads of the houses they created.

The steward of the building where the commission meets hires the adventurers to exorcise the restless spirits. He tells them that some of the traders left gems behind them after the last manifestation, and those gems vanished in the middle of the night. The "spirits" are in fact a pair of swindlers, an Illusionist and a Thief, paid by Grindo of House Neumani to play a prank on his fellow traders. When the adventurers uncover the truth, Grindo happily returns the gems (plus interest), mocking the members of the old guard for their gullibility.

handed old-guard houses, such as House Ueraven, maintain covert ties to the Banned Houses, and supporters of the king are constantly on guard against their machinations.

Of the five, Houses Heovrat and Erud are the most tenacious. Members of House Heovrat pretend to be humble tradesmen while secretly hiring out as assassins, poisoners, and practitioners of dread magics. House Ueraven has allegedly employed them in various acts of skullduggery, though concrete proof is hard to come by. Like the members of most other Banned Houses, House Heovrat is no longer allied with Thera; the pragmatic Empire was quick to discard them when the coup attempt failed. The remnants of House Erud retain fragmentary Theran connections and live in self-imposed exile in Vivane. From there they act as none-too-reliable experts on Throalic affairs for the benefit of the Overgovernor, attempting to establish themselves as puppet rulers-in-waiting should Thera ever conquer Throal.

On His Majesty's Trading Commission

Once a month, the members of Throal's major trading houses meet under the auspices of His Majesty's Trading Commission. Though established by Varulus III and still bearing his seal, the organization is not an arm of the government. The late king created it as an independent body ten years ago, when he found himself swamped with petitions to intervene in various intricate business disputes between houses. The commission has not eliminated feuding between traders, but it has allowed them to resolve many issues before they become serious enough to attract the king's impatient attention.

At meetings of the commission, members debate politics and ethics, discuss business trends, and coordinate the expansion of trade routes. More often than not, they gossip and try to wheedle information from one another. Real business gets done in the commission's lounge after the formal meeting has closed. The servants on call in the lounge are the best paid in Barsaive, and members tip them heavily to eavesdrop on their rivals. Rumor has it that several of these servants are actually agents of the Eye of Throal, who keep King Neden advised of the goings-on in the commission.

of Private Armies

All the trading houses maintain forces of armed Namegivers to guard their assets in Throal, and to protect their caravans out on the trade routes. Many of these forces are private armies in all but Name, a matter of grave concern to the king. In the event of a war of succession or another coup attempt, many of Neden's enemies can mobilize highly trained, well-equipped fighters at a moment's notice. Varulus III had attempted to regulate these forces on more than one occasion, but gained no support for these efforts even from his usual allies among the houses. The private armies have legitimate functions, and no house leader wants to give them up.

Even minor houses have sufficiently large budgets to offer experienced adepts attractive fees, and some of them number adepts among their permanent staff. Others place existing bands of adventurers on retainer, summoning them when their services are needed. If you want your player characters to put down roots in Throal, you might have a representative of a big trading house offer them a deal of this sort. Adventurers on retainer with trading houses are known as *b'jados* (buh-JHZAHD-ohs), which roughly translates as "trading house heroes."

Becoming a *b'jados* can be a springboard to all kinds of adventures. In Throal, the adventurers might get involved in domestic political intrigue or covert scheming between the trading houses. Their employers may dispatch them to all corners of Barsaive to defend various house interests. If characters are especially interested in the details of commerce, they can become traders themselves and try to open up new markets, pocketing a healthy commission for every successful venture. Some players might even enjoy having their characters rise through the ranks of a trading firm until they are offered an arranged marriage that allows them to join Throal's nobility.

Average pay for a *b'jados* is 200 silver pieces per month



per Circle. Multi-Disciplined characters are paid according to their highest Circle. *B'jados* get a discount from traders of their house, and can purchase most items listed in the **New Goods and Services** chapter, p. 288, and the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium**, at 10 percent off. This discount also applies to magical equipment such as healing aids and blood charms, as well as common magic items.

On the Royal Guilds

Though the trading houses are the most influential economic organizations in Throal, they represent only a small percentage of the kingdom's workers. Most artisans, laborers and providers of services belong to various professional guilds. Guild leaders speak for the interests of their members, either in petitions to the king or through the process known as *chav'ao'ros* (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 62). They enforce traditional standards and rules of conduct on their members, and negotiate deals when one profession needs to make regular arrangements with another. For example, the Royal Guild of Laborers enters into annual negotiations with the Royal Guild of Architects to arrange standard compensation scales and work rules for construction projects.

Hundreds of different guilds exist in Throal, both large and small. In keeping with the typical dwarf mania for organization, King Jothan IV created the guild system in 870 TH. During this time, business was booming in Throal, and Jothan was bombarded with petitions requesting his intercession in minor contract disputes. Hoping to free himself from these responsibilities, he created professional organizations for every different occupation he and his advisers could think of. He then enacted statutes requiring members of all the Named occupations to join the appropriate guilds. Reflecting this royal origin, each guild is called the "Royal Guild of [Name of Occupation]"—the Royal Guild of Map Makers, Royal Guild of Merchants, Royal Guild of Moneychangers, Royal Guild of Musicians, and so on. Workers can belong to more than one guild at once; for example, a dwarf who sells carpets and changes money in the Grand Bazaar must join the Royal Guild of Merchants and the Royal Guild of Moneychangers.

The guilds once enjoyed great power over their professions. They could bar individuals from legally doing business in their chosen vocations, and could charge unlimited dues. Some charged exorbitant rates; others became corrupt, taking bribes from other guilds in exchange for contract concessions.

Reforms contained in the *Council Compact* brought the guild system back into line with its original intent. Modern Throalic law includes serious penalties for corruption among guild leaders and members, as well as regulations limiting the fees the guilds can charge. Individuals wishing to join a guild are allowed to openly compete for available positions, which in most cases means submitting to an examination by guild officials. The examination may be written or oral, and might also involve a demonstration of the applicant's skills. The examinations are held in public, and officials of the Chancellery (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 62) can scrutinize the results whenever they wish. Some examinations, like those of the Royal Guild of Archivists, are of little interest to outsiders. Others, like those for the Royal Guild of Musicians or Royal Guild of Beggars, are treated as entertainment; they are held in the Royal Auditorium, and Throalites of all stripes can attend these examinations.

Lacking automatic access to the king, the guilds do not have nearly the influence on political life that the trading houses do. However, guilds representing professions vital to everyday life in Throal have a mighty bargaining chip: they can stop working. No one much cares if the beggars' guild calls for a work stoppage, but the administration would quickly take notice if builders' guild members put down their picks and hammers and stopped building the Inner Cities. Though the builders negotiate with the architects, the government has intervened in several work stoppages over the past decade, pressuring the architects to give in to the laborers' demands. The fear of a muckers' guild work stoppage, of course, is every Throalic citizen's nightmare.

Player characters with professional skills must join the appropriate guilds in order to legally make money using those skills inside Throal's borders. The annual fee for guild membership equals the average proceeds from a day's labor at the profession in question. To do business without a guild charter is an infraction punishable by a heavy fine, typically

Adventure Hook

Every three years the Royal Guild of Armorers and Weaponsmiths elects a new guildmaster. As election time approaches, many influential traders from the reformist and old-guard factions decide to take action to defeat Gokvune. Unable to stomach allying with each other (even if the notion occurred to them), each group covertly sponsors a candidate for Gokvune's position. The guild members are roughly equally divided between passionate supporters of Gokvune and opponents worried that her attacks on the trading houses are losing them business. The guild's elections are notoriously rough affairs; taverns frequented by their members have been demolished in the past.

The player characters can enter this situation in a number of ways. If they have trading house connections, supporters of one of the challengers will approach them. If they have royal guard connections, they are deputized to keep the election violence to a minimum. If a player character is already a member of the armorers' guild, he might owe Gokvune a favor. The adventurers may even be hired by local tavern owners to make sure that the inevitable fights occur off their premises.

Depending on the gamemaster's needs, the Armorers and Weaponsmiths' election could be a comical interlude, a test of the players' interactive skills, or a grim and deadly conflict.



ten times the annual membership fee.

The **Guild Membership Table** lists a number of guilds to which player characters might conceivably belong, along with the annual membership fee in silver pieces. Use these fees as a benchmark for guilds not listed.

Player characters may wish to join guilds for a number of reasons. First and foremost, guild membership provides an adventurer with useful friends and contacts. Characters may also join to pose as ordinary workmen rather than adepts. Investigative adventures might require a player character to infiltrate a guild under a false identity. Finally, adventurers with lucrative skills might join up to make extra silver between assignments.

The gamemaster decides how hard it is to join a given guild. Most guilds governing menial occupations accept all applicants. A few, like the Royal Guild of Beggars, must keep their numbers small by royal decree; membership among them is rare and coveted, hence the surprisingly high membership fee for the beggars' guild. Guilds governing occupations requiring a great deal of training have tough examinations; for example, an applicant to the Royal Guild of Healers might be asked to cure a patient with a terrible illness.

In an effort to increase their political clout, the various guilds created a master organization in 1497 TH. Called the Guild of Guildmasters, it was designed to allow the many workers of Throal to speak with one voice. It is not yet clear how successful this venture will be. Many individual guilds see each other as rivals, and efforts to create solidarity among all workers will have to overcome vast differences in basic interests. The Guild of Guildmasters is currently split into three factions: the Mogs, the Coalitionists, and the Defiants.

The Mogs, Named after a notorious former leader of the Royal Guild of Millers, want to see the guild reforms of the *Compact* repealed. They represent guilds whose leaders are nostalgic for the old days, when a guild leader had almost unlimited power to enrich himself. The Mogs hide their sell-serving positions behind the principle that guild members should be able to make their own rules, independent of the king's wishes. The Mogs' unofficial leader is Brolonicus, head of the Royal Guild of Carters, an aged and wily male dwarf who has amassed a fortune in shady dealings with various other guilds. If he ever chose to give it, his testimony could convict more than a dozen different guild heads on corruption charges; Brolonicus is thought to have ordered several murders to protect his position, and the heads of the other factions within the Guild of Guildmasters are afraid of him. As an opponent of the *Compact*, Brolonicus has interests in common with the old guard trading houses. Members of Houses Ueraven and Chaozun are believed to call upon Brolonicus when dirty deeds need doing.

The Coalitionists see the guilds as a part of a three-way partnership with the trading houses and the government, and their aim is the overall good of all Throalic citizens. They periodically agitate for a greater say in policy-making, but are generally loyal supporters of King Neden and the *Compact*. Their leader, also the current Master of the Guild of Guildmasters, is Solira the Green, an energetic and cheerful dwarf woman who heads the Royal Guild of Archivists. She is also a member of the reformist House Elcomi. Coalitionist guild leaders prosper by making profitable connections to the administration and business community, inspired by Solira's personal motto: "If you build a bridge, you can carry gold over it."

The Defiants are the guilds known for their tense relationships with the trading houses. Many craftsmen and

GUILD MEMBERSHIP TABLE

Guild	Fee
Armorers and Weaponsmiths	50
Archivists (Sages)	50
Beast Handlers	5
Beggars	100
Blacksmiths	25
Builders	2
Guardsmen	10
Healers	100
Muckers	150
Musicians	5
Scribes	50
Stage Performers	2
Tailors	8

artisans privately sympathize with the Defiants, though they use the connections of the Coalitionists in public. The Defiants believe that the trading houses are taking advantage of them, and want the king to enact regulations to compensate for the traders' superior bargaining power. This faction's more passionate members would love to see a number of trading houses collapse outright. Some Defiants get along well with the free traders; others see them simply as tomorrow's oppressors. The leader of the Defiants is an ork woman Named Gokvune, the head of the Royal Guild of Armorers and Weaponsmiths. Known for rhetoric as hot as her forge, Gokvune is sincere in her crusade against the trading houses, but has attracted many malcontents and troublemakers. Player characters joining the armorers' guild can count on getting a lecture on the evils of the trading houses from Gokvune or one of her sycophants.

On Coins and Currency

Throal produces many of the coins used in Barsaive. Minting coins is expensive, because many circulate out of Throal and most never return. Throalic coins stay in the city-states or the hinterland, where they and Theran coins are considered the only reliable currency. The costs of operating the royal mint, however, are more than justified by the trade advantages of maintaining a reliable currency in Barsaive. There is also a certain propaganda value in having images of Throal in every Barsaivian's pocket.

All Throalic coins are hexagonal, which makes them difficult to shave. As one might expect from a culture that places so much stock in craftsmanship, the coins are extremely well minted by ancient standards. The level of detail is greater than that of Theran coins, though only an expert would consider the difference obvious.

The Throalic copper piece weighs one-third of an ounce and bears a pick and hammer design on both sides. The tools are wreathed in a scroll containing the slogan "Together we rebuild Barsaive." This coin is the source of the folk saying, "The peasant's luck is always the same," because the identical sides make it useless for gambling, and peasants and workers commonly use it. In Throalic slang, coppers are also called "hammers," "tool kits," or "builders."

A silver piece weighs one-quarter of an ounce, and on its face is a heroic portrait of Throalic founder, Tav Korelsed. On the reverse side is an image of the *Council Compact*, open to its famous anti-slavery passage. Slang terms for these coins are "Tavs," "founders," and "books."

Throal's rarely used gold pieces weigh one-fifth of an ounce. Their faces display an image of the legendary merchant king Braza surveying the Throal Mountains. The reverse side shows a dwarf slave throwing off his shackles, surrounded by a halo of light. Because of the disparity between the images—a rich king on one side and a slave on the other—the gold coin is considered a symbol of fate in Barsaive. One superstition has it that a gold coin can be used for divination, but only within an hour of first acquiring it. The diviner asks a yes or no question and flips the coin: Braza means yes and the slave means no. Slang terms for gold pieces include "Brazas," "fates," and "two-siders."

On Culture

Dearest Mother,

You can tell Father that the money you invested in my education has not gone to waste! I have learned so much here, in so short a time!

I know how much you and Father like life in the village, but Throal is so exciting! There is so much to tell, I hardly know where to begin! I have spent much time in the Royal Auditorium since my arrival.

Our tutors at the Hall of Learning tell us that too many lectures in the Auditorium will confuse us, but they only say this because they do not want us learning too much, too quickly. They want us to remain unwise, all the better to fill our heads with their own pet theories. Tell Father that I've taken his words to heart—I've not lost that old farmer's common sense among my copious notes and scrolls! Our tutors do teach us many valuable things, but one must (as Father said) sort the pearls of wisdom from the cow's leavings in their words. Many a pearl have I found at the Auditorium—and all beyond price!

Debates are held in the Auditorium, and from the words of the speakers one can learn all kinds of things. (The Auditorium is also host to ceremonies, festivals, processions and various revelries; but rest assured, dearest Mother, that unlike many of my rich classmates I am not using this valuable time as a mere excuse for ale-tasting and song-singing!) In the Debates, the finest and sharpest minds of Throal duel for the approbation of the audience, much as orks fight for supremacy in their scorcher bands. Speakers are judged on the richness of their ideas and on their style. I have seen my destiny, Mother; I must become as cutting and clever a philosopher as these debaters! (Tell Father not to worry; I know that this is a vocation, not a profession. I am certain that a thinker as ambitious and motivated as I can easily acquire a well-paid position in the king's administration, or in one of the countless trading houses. All the most popular debaters are highly sought after as advisers or tutors or... all manner of things!)

The Debates are sponsored by several different debating societies, the most prestigious of which is His Majesty's Royal Society of Philosophers. Just last night I witnessed an epic confrontation between the esteemed Lagustan and the ferocious Holomica.

The master of ceremonies was the famous scholar Jerriv Forrim, who is only now recovering from a terrible illness. As is customary, the scheduled debaters did not know the topic on which they would be required to expound—it is considered much more of a challenge that way! But Forrim, knowing his debaters well, selected his resolution with cunning. There he stood, leaning on a walking stick in the center of the vast, empty stage, flanked on either side by Lagustan and Holomica. The entire auditorium sat silent, breathless, awaiting Forrim's pronouncement. Forrim looked out upon the quiet crowd, straightened his stooped shoulders and said in a ringing voice, "Resolved: that the moral worth of a Name-giver is irrelevant to his fate in this

world, or in the next." A gasp of anticipation rang out—for the past few weeks all of Throal has been a-chatter about Holomica's new epic poem, "The Good Are Punished and the Bad Are Rewarded"*. Lagustan has been particularly forceful in his attacks against it. The poem's subtleties would doubtless be beyond you, but in essence it is an allegory of the history of Thera—and it claims that they gained greater power and influence as they grew more brutal. Even in the land of Death, the epic's villains get no comeuppance—instead, the dead honor them for their victories. Some consider Holomica's poem a call to arms to Throal, urging it to forget its qualms of conscience and conquer Barsaive. Others read it as a justification for immorality. Still others say it is a cry for justice in an unjust world. Holomica himself had refused to further explain the meaning of his work—but now, in the debating hall, facing the stern Lagustan, he would be forced to reveal his intended meaning. And he did.*

I am late for my class in the Scythan language, so I cannot repeat the pithy statements, cutting insults and delightful moments of levity that punctuated this great confrontation. Lagustan, of course, easily slapped down Holomica's passionate but thoughtless arguments. Others cheered for Holomica's iconoclasm, or his martial fervor, or his mysterious artfulness, depending on how they interpreted his enigmatic words. I found it so suspenseful that I spent the hours perched on the edge of my bench; I could not lounge about, eating roasted squash seeds, as I saw a few empty-headed young nobles doing. (In my opinion, people who cannot pay attention to the argument ought not to take up seating room; they might as well go and be seen somewhere else, rather than deprive interested people of a place.) In the end, no winner was declared; there were too many partisans of each thinker in the audience to decide the victor by cheers alone. I cannot wait for the scheduled rematch. I have heard that some people offered to pay Scholar Forrim hundreds of silvers to know the subject of the next debate in advance!

I have spent too much parchment describing this event, and so the rest must wait for another letter—the dueling schools of music, the great controversy concerning the architecture of the Inner Cities, the pageants of the great Passions... Even the list is too long to finish writing, and the trader is here to claim all messages bound for the northern reaches. I shall close by wishing you and Father and Ellistan the best of my love. I do not know when I shall next see you...but you are always in my thoughts.

Post Script: Wish Ellistan a happy birthday for me, and tell her I have found her a book of Kalassa's early poetry. I will send it by the next post.

—A Letter from Pagion Pallaz of Umril to Her Mother, 1507 TH

Dwarf culture values learning and thinking. Throal was founded as the ultimate expression of dwarf values, and its most revered kings have all been philosophers as well as politicians. In fact, many Throalites are philosophers in their spare time. To them, the discussion of weighty issues is second nature.

An adventurer staying in Throal to research a recently acquired magical treasure will experience this phenomenon first-hand in all sorts of unexpected ways. When he goes to the bakery to buy the day's bread, he may be held up in his purchase because the baker is busy arguing with a street-sweeper over the artistic merits of a new song. On his way to the Great Library, he finds his way blocked by a knot of shopkeepers, servants, traders, nobles and common workmen who have stopped to conduct an impromptu argument on the ethics of money-lending. The approach of a Royal Guard patrol at first fills him with relief; surely they will break up the assemblage and allow the adventurer to pass. But the guardsmen join the huddle and offer their own opinions, as loudly enthusiastic as everyone else. When the adventurer finally reaches the library (after several detours), he sees a group of children assembled on the steps, arguing about the moral of a famous legend. The children ask him to help them decide the true answer, but whatever he says, one child or another makes some challenging response. The hapless adventurer finally steps through the door almost an hour later, heaving a sigh of relief—debating is forbidden in the Great Library. If not for that edict, the place would be too noisy for anyone to concentrate on anything else.

The life of the mind is the life of Throal.

On the Great Library

The Great Library is a vast stone complex located near the center of the Halls of Throal. Because of its location and the vast and varied information it contains, the Great Library is often called the heart of the kingdom. Its motto, emblazoned over the elaborately carved archway that opens on its main reading room, is: "To Preserve Knowledge Is To Preserve Our Souls"



Though Throalites believe that gathering and preserving knowledge is an inherently virtuous act, they do not feel that all information should be made available to the public indiscriminately. As an example, the royal commission to produce a book on the Horrors prompted a major controversy among the library staff, many of whom felt that information on the Horrors was so innately dangerous that it ought not to be made available. Because most Throalites see the Great Library as the center of their civic life, any question concerning it inevitably spills into public debate. Only the direct intervention of the king forced the Horrors book ahead, and even then only under stringent precautions. Even Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, had misgivings about the project from the beginning.

Anyone can use the books and scrolls on display in the Main Reading Room at no charge. Access to the Great Library's general collection of research material, which includes anything of use to adventurers, costs 20 silvers per day. Because researchers must place their requests with the staff tending the retrieval desk and then wait for someone to find the book or scroll in question and return with it to the reading room, certain unscrupulous apprentices make a fair living accepting bribes for all sorts of services, from filling requests more quickly to helping patrons determine exactly what volume or scroll they should request to performing unauthorized research themselves. Though they generally wait for the patrons to suggest appropriate compensation for these favors, they will do this work for as little as 10 silver pieces. A description and map of the Great Library appear in **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p. 115.

Library Staff

Leading members of the library staff are accorded the kind of respect usually reserved for members of the royal family, heads of popular and prosperous noble trading houses, and the kingdom's greatest artists. A permanent posting to the library staff is among the highest honors to which a Throalic scholar can aspire.

The head of the library is the Master of the Hall of Records, a position currently held by the dwarf Merrox. Reporting to him are six functionaries, each bearing the title Scribe and Archivist of the Hall of Records. Each Scribe and Archivist maintains a staff of six to twelve apprentice archivists. Archivists fulfill various administrative duties and perform research on the king's behalf; they often assign the latter duty to their apprentices. Apprentices also work in the portions of the library that are open to the public. They collect fees for library access, assist patrons, return books and scrolls to their proper places and perform general maintenance. When player characters go to the Great Library, they will most likely interact with apprentices, as higher-placed officials are far too busy to be bothered with adventurers.

The library staff also includes many scholars who do not work directly for Merrox, but have been honored with the title of Associate Archivist. Associates receive access to staff-only areas of the Great Library, in return for which they must share the fruits of their research with the Library.

Merrox

"But, Your Highness... do you truly think this is wise, under the circumstances?"

The Master of the Hall of Records is one of Barsaive's most learned scholars and close confidant of King Neden. Prompted by personal loyalty to the monarch's father he first came to know and love as a fellow scholar, he supports the king's reformist policies without reservation despite his own deeply conservative disposition. Merrox believes that all worthwhile truths have long been discovered, and that many of the ideas popular among current philosophers are nonsensical or even dangerous. He tends to promote the careers of librarians and archivists who share his outlook. Scholars too prone to questions often find that permanent staff positions elude them. Consequently, though Merrox's connections to the king make him untouchable, many of his colleagues are anxiously awaiting the day when he retires or a new king appoints someone to take his place.

Merrox is unlikely to interact directly with adventurers who come to the Great Library looking for information; his assistants deal with members of the public. Since Varulus III has died, Merrox spends even less time performing his official duties. When he pays attention, he is an excellent administrator. His recent neglect, however, has allowed rivalries between his underlings to fester. Some of his archivists have resorted to hiding books from their rivals, a practice that would outrage Merrox if he knew about it.

Adventurers who wish to speak to Merrox can attract his attention with newly discovered artifacts or documents concerning his specialty, the early history of Throal. If they please him with valuable information, he can ensure that they get privileged access to any research materials they seek. He can also reward them by conveying a message to the king on their behalf.

Merrox is a Thirteenth Circle dwarf Traveled Scholar (see p. 232 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 4/D6
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (18): 7/D12
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 26 (104)*
Recovery Tests: 4
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 17 (82)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 12
Full Movement: 24

Karma Points: 50
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Astral Sight (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Avoid Blow (13): 17/D20+D10
Bardic Voice[D] (13): 18/D20+D12
Book Memory[D] (13): 18/D20+D12

Book Recall [D] (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Creature Analysis (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Detect Falsehood [D] (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Diplomacy (13): 18/D20+D12
Durability (6/5) (13): 13
Engaging Banter [D] (13): 18/D20+D12
Evidence Analysis (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Graceful Exit [D] (13): 18/D20+D12
Item History [D] (14): 21/D20+D10+D6
Karma Ritual (13): 13
Lasting Impression [D] (9): 14/D20+D4
Leadership (8): 13/D12+D10
Lion Heart (13): 18/D20+D12
Lion Spirit (13): 13
Lip Reading [D] (13): 18/D20+D12
Melee Weapons (13): 17/D20+D10
Read and Write Language [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
—Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Research [D] (14): 21/D20+D10+D6
Resist Taunt (13): 18/D20+D12
Ritual of the Ghost Master (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Safe Thought [D] (3): 8/2D6
Search [D] (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Speak Language [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
—Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Thread Weaving (Lore Weaving) [D] (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
True Sight [D] (13): 13
Truth Skit [D] (14): 21/D20+D10+D6 (History Skit)

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Embroidery (9): 14/D20+D4

Knowledge:
Legends and Heroes (9): 16/D20+D8
Library Administration (10): 17/D20+D10
Throal Law (8): 15/D20+D6
Throal History (10): 17/D20+D10
Throal Politics (9): 16/D20+D8

General:
Conversation (9): 14/D20+D4
Etiquette (9): 14/D20+D4
First Impression (9): 14/D20+D4
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Read and Write Magic (5): 12/2D10
Rhetoric (6): 13/2D12
Speak Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Quarterstaff (Damage 6/D10)

Thread Hall of Records Stone (Core Pattern Item; Rank 13; +13 to the Death Rating and Armor Rating of doors in the Great Library; +13 to the Lock Picking Difficulty of locks in the Great Library; +13 to the Spellcasting and spell Effect step of the Snuff spells contained in crystal spell boxes in the Great Library)

Arcane Tomes
Belt Pouch
Bookbinding Tools



Embroidery Tools
Mapmaking Tools
Quiet Pouch
Scrolls
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

30 gold pieces, orichalcum pledge coin (3 Damage Points; worth 10,000 silver pieces)

Legend Points

12,445 Legend Points

Notes

Merrox possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Restore (1 Damage Point)
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; +1 Physical Defense
Tenth Circle: +1 Recovery Test/day; +1 Social Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Recovery Test/day; +1 Spell Defense
Twelfth Circle: +1 Initiative step; +1 Physical Defense
Thirteenth Circle: +25 Maximum Karma; +1 Initiative step; +1 Social Defense

Jerriv Forrim

"Hmmph. I see standards of scholarship have continued to decline during my absence."

The most senior Scribe and Archivist is Jerriv Forrim, a picky and demanding dwarf who strikes fear into the heart of apprentices throughout the Library. Though Forrim's scholarly credentials are impeccable, he finds it difficult to get along with others. Younger staff members pray nightly to the Passion Mynbruje that Forrim will not succeed Merrox as Master of the Hall of Records.

Forrim long suffered from a mysterious, debilitating illness. In fact Thom Edrull (see p. 40) poisoned Forrim to improve his own position. Forrim does not suspect Edrull's villainy, as he has a strong sense of fairness and would find it inconceivable that anyone would deliberately incapacitate a fellow scholar in order to land a plum research project.

Jerriv Forrim goes out of his way to avoid meeting adventurers and other library patrons. If he happens to bump into a group of player characters while they are misbehaving or abusing library privileges, however, he will loudly, publicly and eloquently bawl them out.

Jerriv Forrim is a Seventh Circle dwarf Traveled Scholar (see p. 232 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (7): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 33 (75)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 25 (60)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents

Astral Sight (7): 14/D20+D4
Avoid Blow (7): 11/D10+D8
Book Memory [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Book Recall [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Evidence Analysis (7): 14/2D20+D4
Graceful Exit [D] (7): 11/D10+D8
Item History [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Lion Heart (7): 13/D12+D10
Melee Weapons (8): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
—Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Research [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Search [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Speak Language [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
—Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Thread Weaving (Lore Weaving) [D] (7): 14/D20+D4

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Wood Carving (5): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Barsaive History (5): 12/2D10
Library Administration (6): 13/D12+D10
Races of Barsaive (8): 15/D20+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Wilderness Survival (5): 12/2D10

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Quarterstaff (Damage 6/D10)

Thread Backpack (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight of items carried in it)

Adventurer's Kit
Arcane Tomes
Belt Pouch

Bookbinding Tools
Wood Carving Tools
Mapmaking Tools
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Scrolls
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Points

670 Legend Points

Notes

Jerriv possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Restore (1 Damage Point)

Thom Edrull

"Your request is highly irregular... but perhaps something could be arranged, in exchange for certain... considerations."

While other Scribes and Archivists spend their spare moments dreaming of new scholarly discoveries, the grasping and greedy Thom Edrull dreams of gold and status. This silky voiced, clever dwarf was pushed into a career as a scholar by his domineering grandfather, who was Merrox's mentor at the Great Library. Edrull would have preferred a career as a swashbuckling trader, or so he tells himself. More likely he would have ended up a bandit, as he is irresistibly drawn to underhanded ways of doing things. Even when it yields him no tangible benefit, Edrull delights in bad behavior.

His greatest exploit, the poisoning of the renowned scholar Jerriv Forrim, had far-reaching consequences for Edrull. The two scholars had been assigned to complete several volumes of the work *Denizens of Barsaive*, with Forrim in charge. Edrull, exasperated with his senior colleague's exacting standards and wanting the prestige of sole authorship, contacted one of his many friends among thieves and traveling peddlers of dubious reputation. They procured him a rare poison, which he slipped into Forrim's cider. Forrim fell ill, as Edrull had planned, and Edrull took over the project. His work on the *Denizens of Barsaive* volumes so impressed Merrox and the court that Edrull received a promotion.

Thom Edrull has managed to accumulate power at the library by taking on the administrative tasks other Archivists find bothersome or distasteful. He assigns apprentices to various library staff jobs, and has handpicked his own personal staff from among them. Not surprisingly, most of Edrull's personal apprentices are as venal as, or even more so than, Edrull himself. Edrull makes sure that his own people are on duty during peak hours, offering to assist patrons with research in exchange for an additional fee above the standard 20 silvers. These fees break library regulations; the apprentices are supposed to be working on research for the king, not for paying customers. Needless to say, a large portion of the proceeds ends up in Edrull's purse.

Thom Edrull has an instinctive sense for dirty dealings. If player characters are involved with anything remotely dishonorable at the Great Library, Edrull will nose them out and use whatever information he has to his best advantage. He may help the adventurers or turn them in to his superiors, depending on which course he finds more personally profitable. The only things to which Edrull won't stoop in his pursuit of wealth are bloodshed and betrayal of Throal to the Therans.

Thom Edrull is a Sixth Circle dwarf Thief.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (15): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 33 (63)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 25 (49)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Avoid Blow[D] (6): 12/2D10
Climbing (6): 12/2D10
Detect Trap (6): 12/2D10
Disguise Self (6): 12/2D10
Durability (5/4) (6): 6
Fast Hand[D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Fence[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Lock Picking[D] (6): 12/2D10
Melee Weapons (7): 13/D12+D10
Silent Walk[D] (7): 13/D12+D10 (Shadow Hide)
Surprise Strike[D] (6): 11/D10+D8
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)[D] (6): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (5): 12/2D10
Mapmaking (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Academic Politics (5): 11/D10+D8
Barsaive History (5): 11/D10+D8
Library Administration (8): 14/D20+D4
Races of Barsaive (8): 14/D20+D4

General:
Bribery (5): 12/2D10
Conversation (5): 12/2D10
Navigation (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (8): 14/D20+D4
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Research (6): 12/2D10
Speak Language (8): 14/D20+D4
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Streetwise (5): 11/D10+D8
Wilderness Survival (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18; w/sheath)
Quarterstaff (Damage 7/D12)

Thread Quiet Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight of items carried in it)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Mapmaking Tools
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

190 silver pieces

Legend Points

470 Legend Points

Notes

Thom possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: Thieves' Tongue (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Ela Pono

"That will be twenty silvers, sir. I see you are researching the Skull of Maarberg. I vaguely remember something about that item's key knowledges... but the memory is cloudy. I wonder what could possibly jog it?"

Ela Pono is one of Thom Edrull's corrupt apprentices, a young ork scholar thoroughly accustomed to skimming silver from library patrons. She specializes in research concerning magical treasures, lost kaers, and other information for which adventurers are likely to pay, and is often on duty when adventurers first come to the Great Library.

Without ever asking for money in so many words, she makes it clear that she can help them if they give her the proper motivation. The quality of her information is up to the gamemaster; if clues are needed to move the plot along, Ela's research can be correct (if overpriced). If you want your player characters to work harder for their information, Ela Pono's information should be vague and possibly misleading. Ela Pono is a Third Circle ork Thief.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Strength (11): 5/D8
Perception (15): 6/D10
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 39 (59)
Wound Threshold: 11
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (47)

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 15
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow[D] (2): 8/2D6
Climbing (2): 8/2D6
Durability (4/3) (4): 4
Fence[D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Karma Ritual (3): 3
Lock Picking[D] (3): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8+D6
Silent Walk[D] (3): 9/D8+D6
Surprise Strike[D] (3): 8/2D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Mapmaking (2): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Horror Lore (1): 7/D12
Lost Kaers (1): 7/D12
Magical Lore (2): 8/2D6
Subterranean Throal (3): 9/D8+D6

General:
Bribery (2): 7/D12
Forgery (2): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (5): 11/D10+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, T'skrang (Pale Ones)
Research (4): 10/D10+D6
Speak Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*, T'skrang (Pale Ones)
Streetwise (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19)
Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18; w/sheath)
Knife (Damage 6/D10; Range 6–10–12; w/sheath)
Short Sword (Damage 9/D8+D6; w/scabbard)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Felt Hat
Mapmaking Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

Gold bracelet (worth 60 silver pieces), gold ring (worth 30 silver pieces)

Legend Points

145 Legend Points

Notes

Ela possesses the ork racial abilities of Low-Light Vision and *Gahad*.

Zamirica One-Knee

"That will be t-t-tt-tt-t-tt-t-twenty silvers. You—you are researching the Sk-sk-skull of Ma-muh-muh-muh-Maarberg? I—I—cascading, flowing, the blood, the blood! Sorry, that will be twenty silvers, please."

Zamirica One-Knee, an apprentice archivist, highlights another of the Great Library's recent staffing problems. Like many library apprentices, this quiet, unassuming dwarf was assigned to prepare documents for a tome on Horrors. Some of them are experiencing terrible mental side effects from this work, and poor Zamirica has fared the worst. Though able to present himself as sane and normal when he really concentrates—for example, when in the presence of his superiors—he tends to drool and babble when his attention wanders. He sees intense visions of the last days of Parlainth, the subject of a document he was assigned to translate.

If Zamirica is on duty when adventurers ask for any document that might be Horror-related, the poor wretch begins to tremble and shake. He poses no danger to himself or anyone else, and is still capable of carrying out his duties. However, the player characters might think him a dangerous lunatic or a mystic weathervane. (He can be either of these things, if it suits the gamemaster's purposes.) Zamirica does not work for Thom Edrull and wouldn't dream of asking for a bribe.

Zamirica One-Knee has two fully functioning legs. His nickname comes from his youthful days as a player of the ball game *hach'var*, when he habitually dropped to one knee after scoring goals.

Zamirica One-Knee is a non-adept dwarf scribe.

Attributes

Dexterity (9): 4/D6
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (3): 2/D4–1
Charisma (7): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 5
Mystic Armor: 0
Death Rating: 34
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 4/D6*
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

* Zamirica knows the Wound Balance skill.

Combat Movement: 14
Full Movement: 28

Skills

Artisan:
Calligraphy (3): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Hach'var Strategy (3): 9/D8+D6
Horror Lore (5): 11/D10+D8
Parlainth History (3): 9/D8+D6

General:
Arcane Mutterings (2): 6/D10
Avoid Blow (2): 6/D10
Maneuver (5): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Theran
Research (4): 10/D10+D6
Speak Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Theran
Unarmed Combat (2): 6/D10
Wound Balance (2): 6/D10

Equipment

Arcane Tomes
Belt Pouch
Scrolls
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

70 silver pieces

Legend Points

60 Legend Points

Notes

Zamirica possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

On the Fine Arts

Throalites see the arts not as a luxury, but as a necessity. Reverence for the arts goes hand-in-hand with Throal's devotion to intellectual pursuits. The ancient Throalic philosopher Teso Cratia first expressed the viewpoint that art should strive to create beauty and to sharpen the minds of its audience. According to her doctrine, experiences of beauty are soothing and restorative, like sleep; to see and hear beautiful things regularly is just as necessary as sleep to a Name-giver's well-being. However, just as too much sleep can make a Name-giver listless and dull, so can too much loveliness. Art should therefore also test its audience, forcing the viewer or listener or reader to reconsider cherished beliefs and ponder great moral questions. In Cratia's view, the great civilizations of legend all began to decline when they stopped taking art seriously and began to regard it as a mere diversion.

Most debates about art in Throal center around which of Cratia's two principles is more important: beauty or challenge. Some, especially those influenced by elven culture, argue that beauty is far more valuable than confrontational art, which can turn harsh or even ugly. Others, especially those who use their poems or statues to influence political affairs, look down their noses at artists whose work they consider "merely decorative."

Depending on your tastes and those of your players, the arts in Throal may be a mere background detail in your campaign. For example, if your player characters are trying to eavesdrop on conversations in a tavern, the nineteen out of twenty Throalites who aren't saying anything relevant to the plot might be arguing fervently about the latest mosaic, play, or style of clothing.

If player characters are involved in political intrigue in Throal, however, involvement with the art scene becomes unavoidable. Because so many Throalites care so passionately about new works of art, prominent artists become extremely influential in public debate. The arts play the same role in Throalic society that the news media does in the modern world; art is the means by which people learn about issues and form opinions. If the player characters want to make or prevent some change in Throal, they will need to have prominent artists on their side.

Prominent Artists

The following gamemaster characters are prominent artists in Throal with whom politically minded adventurers might interact. Most politically involved artists belong to the "challenge the audience" school; artists who produce works of pure beauty tend to remain aloof from matters that would interest the typical band of adepts. Like Throalic philosophers, many artists, especially those with a political bent, have other professions by which they earn a living. Some artists consider amateur status a mark of true dedication; others happily grow rich selling their wares to an eager public.

JAVEN

"You think me contemptuous of you because you are a potbellied, kelp-chewing, decomposing pile of insect-attracting offal. To the contrary: these defects you cannot help, and it would be churlish to hold them against you. It is your stupidity, your self-puffery, your use of words you do not understand, your ignorance, your baseness and your utter lack of acquaintance with morals and ethics that make you a fair target for ridicule."

Javen is the pseudonym of a middle-aged male elf who is the acknowledged master of a uniquely Throalic art form: satirical pottery. Like his competitors, Javen creates pots featuring scurrilous caricatures of noted public figures. The quality of his drawings is matched only by the ruthlessness of his wit. His sympathies are reformist, and the heads of the old-guard trading houses are his favorite targets. However, he does not spare the royal family when he feels they are moving too slowly.

Javen runs a large studio and employs more than a hundred apprentices to reproduce his drawings on pot after pot. A new and particularly savage drawing might sell hundreds or even thousands of pots, plates and vases. Javen is one of the wealthiest artists in Throal, but his work is of little interest to the rest of Barsaive. Grouchy and intolerant, Javen responds consistently to people who offer him money to promote their political views: he has a quartet of burly troll apprentices throw them out.

Javen is a non-adept elf artist.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (7): 4/D6
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 27
Recovery Tests: 1
Wound Threshold: 6
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Skills

Artisan:
Painting (7): 11/D10+D8
Pottery (7): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Business Administration (8): 15/D20+D6
Political Satire (7): 14/D20+D4
Throal Politics (5): 12/2D10

General:
Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Painting Tools
Pottery Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

150 Legend Points

Notes

Javen possesses the elf racial ability of Low-Light Vision.

HOLOMICA

"Y-yes, it is true. My work stinks—of blood, of fear, of passion, of the capriciousness of fate, and of our own helplessness in the face of it. My poems stink of life, and

th-th-thus I accept your damning of them as the highest praise."

The half-mad poet Holomica makes everyone nervous; Throalites of all stripes find his vast narrative poems profoundly disturbing. In these bloody epics, dozens of characters outdo one another in depravity and corruption. Good characters appear, only to be slaughtered or humiliated. Legendary heroes or Passions are portrayed as twisted or foolish. Holomica's work shocks most Throalites as much because of its undeniable power as for its unsettling ideas. Holomica's supporters argue that his poems are simply an extreme example of challenging the audience; the poet himself resolutely refuses to explain the meaning of his work.

Tall for a dwarf, Holomica would be taller still if he ever straightened his hunched back. His hair is an unruly mane, and he is known to drool when excited. In conversation, he uses large words and throws around arcane ideas, but often sounds barely coherent. He is notorious for his frequent drunken sprees in Throal and Bartertown.

Holomica is a non-adept dwarf poet.

Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (7): 4/D6
Willpower (5): 3/D4
Charisma (4): 3/D4

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20

Skills

Artisan:
Poetry (5): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Legends and Heroes (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Arcane Mutterings (5): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Points

55 Legend Points

Notes

Holomica possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

D'Abrunia Koriaj

"Once we had kings. Now we have bureaucrats."

The archconservative D'Abrunia Koriaj is known for her grand mosaics depicting great moments in the history of Throal. Great deeds by King Varulus III and his ancestors are notably absent from her work. The kings she chooses as subjects are depicted as strong, aggressive leaders who smite enemies and evoke awe in their subjects. The implicit message behind her images is that today's leaders are inadequate compared to those of old. For the past year, D'Abrunia has been working on a series of vast mosaics covering the walls of a new complex of warehouses owned by House Garsun in the city of Bethabal. They depict the founders of Garsun in the same heroic style as her portrayals of the ancient kings, clearly implying that House Garsun should be the royal family. The Builders' Guild, which strongly supports King Neden, has refused to work on the warehouses, claiming that Koriaj's mosaics are seditious. House Garsun



recently hired builders from outside Throal to complete the project, resulting in skirmishes between the outsiders and Builders' Guild members. Reformers and conservatives each blame the other for the labor unrest. The controversy has spread throughout Throal, and has become a topic of debate so intense that Koriaj was pelted with eggs during a recent speech at the Royal Auditorium.

Koriaj is not a subtle political thinker. She wants her kings to be heroic figures unmoved by the petty concerns of average Name-givers. Had King Varulus III executed more of his foes after the Death Rebellion, Koriaj would have admired his "heroic" ruthlessness instead of despising him for the "weakness" of mercy. King Neden, however, seems to possess the mighty indifference of legendary kings, although he has yet to prove his worth as far as Koriaj is concerned.

Koriaj is a non-adept dwarf artist.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (8): 4/D6
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Mason (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Mosaics (5): 9/D8+D6
Throal History (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Craftsman Tools
Traveler's Garb

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Points

65 Legend Points

Notes

Koriaj possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Adventure Hook

Holomica writes his poems under the inspiration of a Horror that marked him during a trip to the countryside nearly 15 years ago. The Horror wants to slowly drive all of Throal mad by exploiting one of the kingdom's virtues, its devotion to literature and the arts. Each poem that Holomica writes is more disquieting than the last. The epic Holomica is currently composing, Death Cries of the Virtuous, will be powerful enough to drive already troubled souls over the brink into madness; they will commit murders resembling those described in Holomica's poems. The player characters must figure out what is going on and permanently end Holomica's catastrophic career one way or another.

Trevas and Gesan

***Trevas**: Now Ilwan picks up the knife and moves towards Ozzet—*

***Gesan**: Ilwan most certainly does not! What an absurd, unmotivated—*

***Trevas**: Just who is directing this play?! Hmmmmm?*

***Gesan**: Certainly not you, you muck-headed fool!*

This husband and wife team heads the King's Players, the largest and most popular theatrical company in Throal and well-known for its brilliant interpretations of works by the classic Throalic playwrights Donalicus, Bazrata, and Oloron. Though vastly different in style, all three writers specialized in plays depicting the triumphs, sacrifices and other great acts of the old Throalic kings. Performances of these works, which are held in the Royal Auditorium twice a month, remind Throalites of the glory of the throne. The treasury underwrites much of the budget for the King's Players. Trevas is an aging idol, constantly surrounded by adoring female fans. Despite his love for his much younger wife, Gesan, Trevas often succumbs to temptation. Gesan's public confrontations with Trevas are as famous as their on-stage performances together. Their public adores them for their wild lifestyle and charismatic stage presences, though some scholars complain that their productions fail to bring out the true depth of the great texts.

One of their longtime apprentices is a frustrated playwright Named Thorapin. He wants to take over the company and mount productions of his own plays, most of which are

cruel satires of King Neden. Thorapin hates the old guard as much as he does any authority figure, but is willing to curry their favor for the opportunity to replace Trevas and Gesan.

Trevas and Gesan are non-adept dwarf actors.

Trevas

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (7): 4/D6
Willpower (4): 3/D4
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 34
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (5): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Throal History (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Flirting (2): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Seduction (2): 9/D8+D6
Speak Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Points

70 Legend Points

Notes

Trevas possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Gesan

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (5): 10/D10+D6

Knowledge:
Theater Administration (5): 11/D10+D8
Throal History (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Points

65 Legend Points

Adventure Hook

In the middle of a preview performance of Donalicus' famous play, "The Founders," (see **On Throal's History**, p.13), during Tav Korelsed's death scene, Trevas and Gesan break into a fierce marital spat. This piece of public foolishness is the last straw for members of several old-guard houses attending the show; soon afterward, they lobby the king to replace the couple with artists "more suited to the dignity of their high position in the theatrical profession." Chancellor Wishten, preoccupied with matters he sees as more important, gives in to their complaints. When passionate fans of Trevas and Gesan find out about the replacement, they stage a riot. Frantic to placate them, Wishten decides to reverse his decision, but Trevas and Gesan have left the kingdom in search of new audiences.

The adventurers must find the pair and bring them back. Unfortunately, the quarrelsome duo picked the wrong village to entertain, and have been taken prisoner by cadaver men, who want a permanent source of diversion in their haunted kaer.

Notes

Gesan possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

On Education

Throalites take education seriously. Indeed, ever since the last days before the Scourge, Throal has viewed the education of Barsaive as its mission. The dwarfs take immense pride in having taught their fellow Barsaivians the Throalic language and the practices of trade. The *Book of Tomorrow* was a vast educational project, designed to allow each kaer to teach its children the rudiments of civilized life as well as to remind Barsaive's people of their ancestors' world. This pride often leads other Barsaivians to accuse Throalites of arrogance, a charge that has some merit; many Throalites cannot help flaunting their pride in their achievements. An entire series of old jokes, wildly popular in the dwarf kingdom, involves encounters between a sage of Urupa and an idiot of Throal. In each of these jokes, the idiot proves wiser than the sage. Needless to say, these jokes are not popular in Urupa.

According to one of the conclusions reached in the preamble of the *Council Compact*, Throal's grand ambitions would only succeed if the people of Throal understood the principles of reasoning, learned the lessons of history, and knew how to trade shrewdly. The *Compact* therefore made it an offense to raise ignorant or poorly educated children. Despite the weight given to education, however, the *Compact* did not set up a public education system. Educational institutions in Throal are privately owned, with generous tax breaks given to families with school-age children so that they can afford to hire tutors.

Dozens of small schools are scattered throughout Throal. Students may enter a school at any age, though few enter before age four. Each student must write an examination set by the Great Library staff at three points in his school career: at age seven, at eleven, and finally at age sixteen. The following subjects are critical to a Throalic education: mathematics, the principles of trade, Throalic history, the Throalic language and the principles of reasoning. Students are also required to master an additional language, either that of another Name-giver race or one of the ancient root languages of Throalic. They are also expected to become proficient in an Artisan skill and a specialized subject of their choice, such as geography, legends, or magical theory. If a student fails any of the three library-sponsored tests, his family and tutors are fined. Failing a test also brings great shame upon the student's family. The penalty for failure applies only to residents of Throal, who must abide by the laws of the *Council Compact*.

Only rarely do dwarf, human, or elf students fail these tests, though no one knows precisely why. The tests are less congenial to troll and ork students, whose cultures place less value on formal study. Education has always been a major source of contention between the dwarf rulers of Throal and its ork residents, the second most numerous racial group in the kingdom. Orks balk not only at the emphasis on dwarf languages and history, but at the length of time they are expected to remain students. At age sixteen, an ork has already lived more than a third of his likely lifespan. In addition, ork culture is hostile to book learning; most orks believe that the only truly valuable lessons are those gained through experience. However, the orks of the Inner Cities are divided on how to resolve this clash of cultures. Some argue that orks should be tested according to different standards and should be excused from study at an earlier age. Others claim that such preferential treatment will shame the orks in the eyes of other Throalites, viewing changed standards as an intolerable admission of failure. As it stands, unrest sometimes breaks out in ork- and troll-dominated neighborhoods when test scores are announced. Most orks attend their final years of schooling while working full time, another factor contributing to their consistently lower test scores. The gap between ork students and dwarfs, humans and elves provides a reliable source of ammunition for dwarf traditionalists who resist attempts to cede more power to the orks and other racial minorities.

The experience of students in Throal varies widely. The court makes no rules on how schools should be organized, and as long as students can pass the library's exams, anything goes. Many young dwarfs skip formal schooling altogether in favor of tutoring by members of their extended families. Grandparents in particular take an active role in the typical dwarf's education. Every member of a family is expected to be able to tutor youngsters in his area of expertise, and some families supplement their pool of knowledge by hiring outside tutors to school their children in specialized subjects. Dwarfs educated this way tend to score high in exams.

Adventure Hook

A gang of young ork ne'er-do-wells are caught red-handed with stolen copies of this year's examination for sixteen-year-old students. Throalic society considers cheating on tests a terrible crime usually punished by permanent exile from the kingdom. The youngsters claim they were framed, but no one believes them except for their families, who scrape together enough coin to hire the adventurers to prove their children's innocence.

The real culprits are a group of rich dwarf layabouts, heirs to various noble trading houses. They bribed a library official for a copy of the test, and when it became apparent that their tutor was about to catch them in possession of the evidence of their cheating, they slipped the scroll into a passing ork student's bag. They then informed the nearest guard patrol, hoping that their unnaturally high test scores would go unnoticed in the controversy.

Throalites of other cultures rarely use tutors; those who have not been taught this way themselves tend to have a hard time tutoring others. Dwarfs who lack extended families also cannot take advantage of family tutoring, and so formal education has become a lucrative business in Throal.

Schools in the dwarf kingdom cater to dwarfs without extended families, non-dwarf citizens and youngsters who come to Throal to study from other parts of Barsaive. The more expensive schools place their students in small study groups, assigning a tutor to personally supervise each pupil's progress. Most Throalites cannot afford such attention, and their children are placed in large institutions where they learn the answers to likely exam questions by rote. The worst of these schools suffer from serious discipline problems, as bored and poorly motivated students rebel against the stifling environment. Unfortunately, young orks and other students who already face an uphill battle to get a good education are the most likely to attend these schools. Truly wretched schools go out of business quickly because the fines for failed exams are higher than a student's annual tuition; however, mediocre schools can thrive by preparing their students to squeak by at examination time.

Of Throal's Many Philosophers

Throal displays a contradictory attitude toward its philosophers. The great thinkers of the past are credited with many advances in Throalic civilization, including enormous influence on the *Council Compact*. Living philosophers, on the other hand, are often labeled troublemakers. They are always dreaming up new systems of thinking and living, thereby disrupting comfortable old traditions. They specialize in criticizing the government and the status quo. They tend to think in extreme terms, and are often unwilling to compromise. The more extreme a philosopher's views, the more likely he is to attract a following among impressionable, headstrong youth. Philosophers' speeches in the Halls of Throal and the Royal Auditorium breed controversy and unrest; in short, they constantly test the limits of Throal's freedom of thought and expression.

The Scourge dramatically changed the dwarf kingdom's philosophical traditions. Old schools were forgotten and new ones sprang up. During those days, people desperately sought an explanation for the horrific events that were overtaking the world. Old theories of what the world was all about and how Name-givers ought to behave seemed suddenly inadequate. Throal's thinkers tried to come to terms with the Scourge in various ways. They came up with many bizarre theories, some of which proved seductive enough to attract followers. Some followers of this or that philosophy even fought with those who accepted other theories. Nowadays, the followers of certain philosophers may pose an occasional threat to public order, but no longer to the survival of the nation.

A few philosophers make a living as speakers and teachers. Many more are thinkers in their spare time. Throal has no philosophers' guild; anyone who wants to call himself a philosopher can do so. However, the public only takes seriously those who accumulate large numbers of followers. A thinker with a hundred hard-core followers and a thousand or so occasionally interested audience members is worth talking about.

Many Throalites spend their evenings listening to various philosophers, hopping from speech to speech as others might travel from tavern to tavern. On any given night speakers can be found in the Grand Bazaar, giving impromptu speeches in the passageways of the Halls of Throal, or expounding their theories in drinking establishments. Once a week, the Royal Auditorium hosts a program of speeches by philosophers of competing schools.

Only truly spellbinding orators can hold an audience in silence. Throalites who follow the philosophy wars are quick to heckle, shout questions and throw spoiled food when they disagree with a speaker. Those who agree with the speaker then angrily confront the hecklers. More brawls are fought over philosophy in Throal than any other matter. The Royal Guards appear in force at the Auditorium's weekly Philosophy Night in anticipation of trouble.

A few of Throal's most prominent and troublesome philosophers are described below.

Belyawain

"The world is unclean. Exposure to the world stains us. For years, we have avoided unclean influences. Perhaps it is now time to destroy the sources of unclean energies."

Belyawain is the current leader of the Ja'kotton Movement, a male separatist group founded during the last century of the Scourge by a philosopher Named Ja'kotto. Ja'kotto argued that Name-givers had only themselves to blame for the Scourge. The Horrors, he reasoned, were attracted to this world by the intense emotions people carelessly allow themselves to feel. To feel intense love, hatred, desire or any other emotion is to wallow in the unclean energies of an imperfect world. Ja'kotto believed that nothing happens without a purpose, and so some higher force must have prompted the Scourge. This force or being wanted people to stop feeling things intensely, and sent the Horrors to teach Name-givers a lesson. Recognizing that desire between men and women is a primary source of intense feelings, Ja'kotto ordered his followers to separate themselves from women and live apart from the various other unclean influences of daily life in Throal.

The Ja'kottons set up a hermitage, where they engaged in various exercises designed to escape passion and desire. Many of these were intensely physical, designed to induce a state of exhaustion that would allow its practitioners to see clearly without emotion. Out of these exercises eventually grew the acrobatic sport called *un'hayedah*, described later in this section. This sport supposedly exemplifies Ja'kotto's ideals of total calm and purity, though those who do not subscribe to his views often find it emotionally involving to watch. Displays of *un'hayedah* are one of two ways in which a Ja'kotton may interact with the outside world. The other is speechmaking. The Ja'kotton Movement continually seeks male converts, wanting all of the world—or all the world's men, at least—to adopt its ways. By this sect's reasoning, the end of intense emotions among Name-givers—especially the end of love and desire between the sexes—will please the force that sent the Scourge and keep it from sending another

one. The Ja'kottons reject the notion that Scourges come in cycles and believe a new one may begin at any time. They believe that their own actions brought about the premature end of the Scourge, and that if they falter the Horrors will return.

Belyawain, like many disciples, is even more extreme than the thinker he follows. Ja'kotto died before the Scourge ended, passing the torch to his earliest student, who has since passed the torch on to Belyawain. Belyawain runs a tightly disciplined organization, allowing no one to question the words of the late master—or rather, Belyawain's interpretation of those words. During the past decade, the Ja'kottons have come to feel increasingly besieged. Members are drifting away from the organization now that fears of the Scourge are receding. Groups who do not share Ja'kotton beliefs have adopted the holy sport of *un'hayedah* for mere entertainment. These developments have made Belyawain increasingly angry and frustrated. His master often said that violence in pursuit of a laudable goal was justifiable, and Belyawain is beginning to think it necessary. If the Horrors are no longer supplying the fear necessary to turn people toward the true way, perhaps the followers of Ja'kotto should do so. Belyawain has recently begun to plan a secret campaign of terror which would target prominent Throalites for assassination. Those who inspire great shows of emotion in the people, such as sports heroes, artists, questors, adventurers, and other philosophers, are his intended targets. If the adventurers win fame and popularity in Throal, they could come to Belyawain's sinister attention.

Belyawain is a non-adept dwarf philosopher.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 38
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Skills

Artisan:
Dancing (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Ja'kotton Philosophy (5): 10/D10+D6
Scourge History (5): 10/D10+D6

General:
Acrobatic Strike (5): 11/D10+D8
Maneuver (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Sprint (5): 11/D10+D8
Speak Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Peasant's Garb

Loot

None

Legend Points

110 Legend Points

Notes

Belyawain possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

HYONDAK

"Most of what you see and hear and feel every day is an illusion. We must seek out the tiny kernels of truth hidden in that illusion."

The windling Hyondak is the most popular current advocate of a philosophical tradition called the Mirage, a school of thought that explained away the Scourge by saying it wasn't really happening. The Scourge, as well as most other experiences of life, was a mere illusion. Name-givers do not really exist, except for their souls. Their homes, the tools they use, their bodies, and the food they eat are all unreal. Souls float about in an immaterial realm, dreaming that the world exists. At one point, souls knew that they were real and that their dreams were not. But over time, they came to live in their dreams and began to think the dreams real. Eventually, souls described this dream world to one another and became trapped in the illusion that they had created together. This brought Name-giver souls into a world of pain. Until they made the dream world "real" by their own belief in it, they had never suffered hunger or exhaustion, never known conflict or danger. Trapped in their collective illusion, sealed into the absurd bodies of Name-givers, the souls suffered all these unpleasant things. Faced with the struggle to survive, they soon forgot that they were once pure souls and thought of themselves only as bodies. The more time the souls spent in this false world, the more painful it became. The ultimate expression of this pain was the Scourge, a terrible nightmare brought about by the falseness of the dream world.

The Mirage spawned several offshoots during the Scourge. One school tried to return to the world of souls through rituals and meditation. Another became fatalistic, deciding that nothing could be done to break the illusion. Yet another divided experiences according to their degree of reality: some things were more real than others; and followers of this philosophy strove to avoid unreal experiences and seek out real ones. Once the Scourge ended and Throal reopened, these groups gradually fell apart. The Mirage became a matter for scholarly argument rather than a way of life.

Hyondak is a recent immigrant to Throal, and has revived the cosmology behind the old philosophies of the Mirage with a new, self-indulgent twist. Hyondak argues that because the world is just an illusion, no act against

anyone or anything in the world can be truly evil. The souls of Name-givers are already trapped in the unimaginable torment of a false physical body; therefore, the pursuit of selfish pleasure is perfectly understandable and acceptable as compensation. No one can truly injure another Name-giver; whatever happens in the dream world is just a nightmare, and no one can be blamed for doing bad things in someone else's nightmare.

Hyondak's followers do whatever pleases them, the more outrageous the better. Mirage celebrations are occasions for excess of all sorts. Followers of the Mirage discount all notions of duty and social responsibility as part and parcel of the illusory world. Many youthful ne'er-do-wells flirt with the Mirage in order to annoy their parents and justify selfish actions. The Mirage has attracted many casual followers who do not believe Hyondak's words deep down, but nevertheless use them as license to misbehave.

Many observers suspect that Hyondak's Mirage is simply a front for a crime network. Several Mirage followers have been convicted of crimes in Throal, ranging from burglary to murder. So far, the Royal Guards have failed to connect Hyondak to the criminal actions of any of her followers. Prominent citizens have repeatedly called for her expulsion from Throal, but the *Council Compact* explicitly forbids the punishment of philosophers for their words alone. Hyondak's speeches and meetings are excellent places to meet thieves and other professional criminals. As for the philosopher herself, the gamemaster may choose either of the following options.

Option One

Hyondak is sincere in her beliefs and does not care how her followers behave. It makes no difference to her whether they are committed to the Mirage, young twits being rude to their parents, or professional killers. She truly believes that morality is an illusion and that others should know this regrettable truth. She accepts donations from her followers to maintain a modest lifestyle while she works on a manifesto describing her philosophy.

In private, Hyondak is a silly, easily distracted creature. She enjoys flattery, fine foods, and the attentions of attractive male windlings. She is truly amoral; she has absolutely no conscience, but also bears no malice toward others.

Hyondak is a non-adept windling philosopher.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (4): 3/D4
Toughness (5): 3/D4
Perception (18): 7/D12
Willpower (7): 4/D6
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 8/2D6
Spell Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 24
Recovery Tests: 1
Wound Threshold: 5
Knockdown: 3/D4
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Combat Movement: 22/43[+]
Full Movement: 44/86[+]

[+] The second value is the character's flying Movement rate.

Skills

Artisan:
Calligraphy (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Mirage Philosophy (5): 12/2D10

General:
Flirting (2): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Seduction (2): 8/2D6
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Windling

Equipment

Belt Pouch
Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

5 silver pieces

Legend Points

85 Legend Points



Notes

Hyondak possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense.

Option Two

Hyondak runs the Mirage as cover for a crime ring specializing in burglary and smuggling. She does not believe in the Mirage and sees Throal's reverence for philosophy as a loophole in the *Council Compact* that she aims to exploit to the fullest.

In private, Hyondak is wily and insatiably greedy. She loves money and power, and revels in her ability to trick people. If crossed, she is an implacable enemy. She will seek the death of anyone who threatens her criminal empire, no matter how remotely.

Hyondak is a Fifth Circle windling Illusionist.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (4): 3/D4
Toughness (5): 3/D4
Perception (18): 7/D12
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 24 (48)*
Recovery Tests: 1
Wound Threshold: 5
Knockdown: 3/D4
Unconsciousness Rating: 14 (32)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 22/43✦
Full Movement: 44/86✦

✦ The second value is the character's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 29
Karma Step: 6/D10

Talents (Knacks)

Dead Fall[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Disguise Self[D] (5): 12/2D10
Durability (4/3) (6): 6
False Sight[D] (5): 5
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Read and Write Language (5): 12/2D10
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, Windling
Read and Write Magic[D] (5): 12/2D10
Slough Blame[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Speak Language (4): 11/D10+D8
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll
Spellcasting[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Thread Weaving (Illusionism)[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Willforce (5): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Adventure Hook

Vazilia, Grand Commander of the Royal Guards (see **The Halls of Power**, p. 83), approaches the adventurers. Vazilia believes that the Self-Reliants are in cahoots with a gang of anti-Throal bandits who have been raiding trade caravans. Agents of the Eye of Throal recently broke up a bandit cell and captured some of its members. In exchange for lenient treatment, one of the bandits—a human Named Avanil—has become a double agent.

Vazilia wants the characters to pose as members of Avanil's gang when she meets with Smilyada, who Vazilia assumes will incriminate herself during the meeting. If Smilyada is too sneaky to do so, the characters are to plant evidence incriminating the philosopher in acts of treason. As the adventurers get to know Smilyada, they discover that she has no interest in rebellion. Avanil does, however, and begins recruiting a gang of rebels from among Smilyada's more naive followers.

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (3): 9/D8+D6
Robe Embroidery (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Mirage Philosophy (1): 8/2D6
Throalic Law (3): 10/D10+D6

General:
Fence (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Streetwise (5): 12/2D10
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Windling

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Adventurer's Kit
Belt Pouch
Booster Potion
Cloaksense Brooch
Embroidery Kit
Grimoire
Healing Potion

Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Spells

Alarm, Bond of Silence, Catseyes, Clarion Call [M], Crafty Thought, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Enter and Exit, Ephemeral Bolt [M], False Floor, Fun With Doors, Improved Alarm, Innocent Activity [M], Light, Memory Blank, Mind Fog, Noble Manner [M], Nobody Here, Rope Guide, Send Message, True Ephemeral Bolt, Unseen Voices

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

760 Legend Points

Notes

Hyondak possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense.

Adventure Hook

The player characters owe a favor to a trading house; perhaps they have a debt to repay, or a misdeed for which they need to atone. On the night before a decisive *hach'var* game against a hated rival, members of the house's team suffer food poisoning. The adventurers become last-minute stand-ins, hoping that their talents as adepts can make up for their lack of experience at the game.

Members of the opposing team all have high *Hach'var* skill step number. This skill allows team members to execute such maneuvers as capturing and hitting the ball. For each of these maneuvers, the player character's step number in the *Hach'var* skill is based on his Dexterity step. The average *Hach'var* step of the opposing team is Step 12/2D10. Characters use Melee Weapons to knock down opponents with their sticks, or Unarmed Combat to trip or check them. Characters also use Avoid Blow to evade Knockdown attempts. Scoring a goal has a base Difficulty Number of 10, which increases when opponents are standing in the way or the scorer is off-balance.

If you and your players enjoy tactical play, you can devise more elaborate rules and run the game with miniatures as the main entertainment for a gaming session. Alternatively, you can resolve crucial moments of the game with appropriate Skill Tests and quickly describe the rest.

Fourth Circle: Glamour (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Smilyada

"This vast empire we are building makes us weak. It tempts us to corruption. We must turn our backs on it, or it will devour us."

Smilyada is another thorn in the side of Throalic authorities. A practical philosopher with clear political interests, she has no use for the mystical questions that drive many of her rivals. Her school of thought, which she calls Self-Reliance, does not seek to find deep meaning in the Scourge. Smilyada believes that the Scourge, though terrible, had a good effect because it forced Throal to rely on its own resources and people. It also cut Throal off from the rest of Barsaive, which Smilyada believes was a good thing. According to Self-Reliance, communities should exist apart from one another and support themselves. When a nation expands, whether through immigration, trade, or military conquest, its people inevitably fall prey to moral weakness and start making their livelihoods off the backs of others. As an example of a community that started out trying to protect the world and ended up thoroughly corrupt, Smilyada points to the Theran Empire.

In some areas Smilyada supports King Neden's regime; for example, she is an outspoken opponent of slavery. However, she simultaneously denounced Varulus III for his attempts to bring the *Council Compact* to the rest of Barsaive and for allowing vast numbers of immigrants into the kingdom. She does not say that the immigrants are bad people, merely that Throal will not be able to support them in times of crisis. In addition, she also rails against the trading houses; trade is bad because it makes people rely on outside goods instead of making things for themselves. Smilyada opposes war with Thera as a pointless exercise that will only destroy the dwarf kingdom.

Like many popular philosophers, Smilyada is charismatic, stubborn and contemptuous of those who disagree with her. She has about two thousand followers, all of whom she teaches to craft their own goods. When necessary, the Self-Reliants trade with one another on a limited scale. Now and then Smilyada makes noises about leaving Throal and setting up an ideal community in Barsaive's wild lands; more than a few Throalites would be happy to show her the door.

Smilyada is a non-adept dwarf philosopher.

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 34 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Combat Movement: 16 **Full Movement**: 32

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Baker (5): 10/D10+D6

Knowledge:
Self-Reliance Philosophy (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Craftsman Tools
Peasant's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

None

Legend Points

75 Legend Points

Notes

Smilyada possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

On Athletics

Throalites may revel in the life of the mind, but they also celebrate the body, and sporting events are as popular in Throal as debates, plays and other public performances. During the Scourge, Throalites developed indoor sports to keep themselves active and healthy, as they could not go outdoors. Many of these sports remain popular in Throal but largely unknown outside the dwarf kingdom. Immigrants have brought their own sports with them, giving rise to new athletic events in the past few decades.

Professional athletes do not exist in Throal, but dedicated, gifted amateurs are widely admired for their prowess at a variety of sports. Some trading houses employ popular athletes as *j'havim* and give them flexible schedules and generous personal time to train. Teams sponsored by the trading houses dominate some sports, such as *hach'var*.

Gambling is legal in Throal, and many sports are the subject of heavy betting. Some of the trading houses whose fortunes withered during the Scourge trace their downfall to gambling. It is illegal to cheat at gambling, rig a sporting event, or use force or threats to collect a gambling debt. Like any other liability, gambling debts can be collected through legal petitions.

Some of Throal's most popular sports are described below.

Adventure Hook

The followers of Ja'kotto become violently offended if they discover that spectators are betting on one of their events, and brawls have broken out more than once between staunch Ja'kottons and members of the Royal Guild of Bookmakers. Of course, this just makes betting on Ja'kotton *un'hayedah* more popular; in Throal as in other places, forbidden fruit is the sweetest.

The elf Yonlediel, a prosperous member of the bookmakers' guild, approaches the adventurers for a delicate mission. She has been engaged in a betting conspiracy with a disaffected pupil of Belyawain Named Hedwenicus. Hedwenicus is one of the judges at *un'hayedah* events; he has been fixing the results in exchange for payoffs from Yonlediel. Because the Ja'kottons are cloistered, Yonlediel has to sneak someone into their hermitage to give Hedwenicus his money. She has been sending her nephew, Ragaliel. Unfortunately, Ragaliel did not return from his last foray into the hermitage. Yonlediel assumes (rightly) that the Ja'kottons are holding and torturing Ragaliel, and she wants the adventurers to rescue the boy.

Hach'var

Hach'var is a team sport played on a rectangular indoor court. The court is seven feet wide by sixty feet long, and the long side walls are lined with several rows of stone bleachers. The short walls at either end are called the goal walls; they contain seven holes, each eight inches in diameter, arranged in a circular pattern. The object of the game is to score goals by getting a five-inch diameter ball through one of the holes in the goal wall controlled by the opposing team. *Hach'var* balls are tightly rolled spheres of animal hide. Players hit the ball with long sticks tipped with six-inch diameter paddles. They may hit the ball with the paddle or with their head or feet, but not with their hands.

Teams have seven members each, and team members may not be substituted after play begins. The game is divided into three intervals. The first interval is thirty minutes long; during this time, one ball is in play. During the second interval, which lasts fifteen minutes, two balls are on the court. The final interval is six minutes long and is played with six balls.

Hach'var is a very physical game; players may slam into and trip opponents, or whack them with the sides of their sticks and paddles. Players wear padding designed to pro-

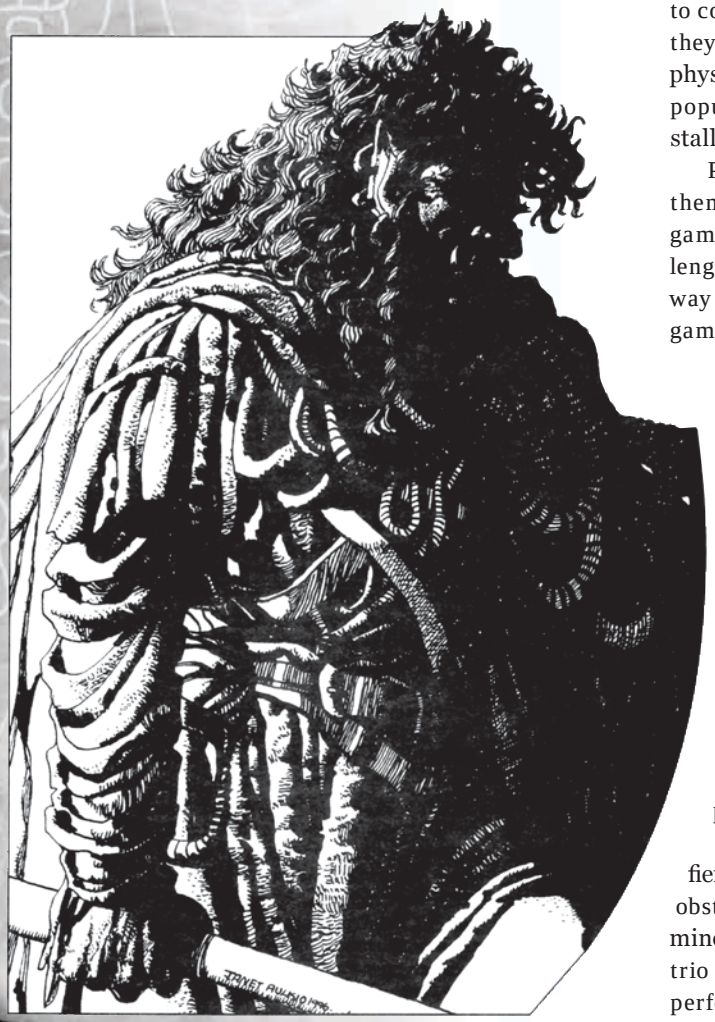
tect vital organs with as little impediment to movement as possible. Players may not poke opposing players with the end of a stick.

People unfamiliar with *hach'var* expect to see orks and trolls dominate the game, but the average troll's or ork's strength and size are as much liabilities as assets. They make good defensive players, but they cannot navigate the narrow court as skillfully as experienced dwarf players. Humans and elves make good all-around players, big enough to knock over dwarfs and agile enough to avoid being knocked over by orks and trolls. Windlings and obsidimen are banned from play. The sole t'skrang player in Throal, T'venyoh of the House Elcomi team, has caused quite a controversy among fans; she uses her tail to trip other players, which some believe gives her an unfair advantage.

A good *hach'var* player must be physically strong and resilient. Even so, many teams celebrate the end of a match by downing booster and healing potions.

Personal Combat

Two evenings a week, the Royal Auditorium hosts competitions of martial skill run by the Royal Guild of Trainers, an organization of professional combat instructors. Fights are popular spectator events, and the trainers' guild makes more money from admission fees than it does from membership dues. Combatants fight in the auditorium for many reasons. The trainers, as well as adventurers for hire, compete with one another to show off their abilities and attract clients. Some people also use personal combat in the Royal Auditorium to settle grudges and arguments. The *Council Compact* labels dueling as an offense unless it occurs in public under the supervision of the trainers' guild. Sometimes famed adepts fight one another in the auditorium in order to enhance their legendary status. If a player character faces a gamemaster character of great repute and wins, he is awarded half the Legend Points the character would have received for defeating the same opponent in a genuine fight. The gamemaster determines the Legend Point award for each gamemaster character opponent.



The trainers' guild forbids matches to the death. Most armed matches are fought to first blood. Fights between particularly durable adepts last until one party surrenders, or until the trainer acting as referee calls the match. The trainers have keen instincts for the amount of punishment a combatant can take, and so accidental deaths in the ring remain rare. The last such death occurred six years ago, in a case where the victim claimed to be of a higher Circle than she had actually reached. The trainers keep a supply of healing potions and last-chance salves on hand to reduce the chances of permanent injury. A healing potion is supplied at no charge to each combatant at the end of a fight. Unarmed combat is also popular. Like armed fights, these bouts are conducted with a referee in attendance.

Whether armed or unarmed, combatants may use magical talents, treasures or spells during a match. The audience is there to witness wonders and the fighters are expected to cope with their opponents' unexpected abilities, just as they would in a real battle. Though much less common than physical fights, duels between spellcasters are extremely popular. If such an event is publicized ahead of time, the stalls of the Auditorium fill up hours before the event.

Player characters wishing to quickly make a Name for themselves can do so on a fight night. They can challenge gamemaster characters, or show off their abilities by challenging one another. Fight nights also provide a non-lethal way for player characters to resolve lingering disputes with gamemaster characters.

Un'hayedah

Un'hayedah (OON-ha-yee-dah) is a combination of dance and athletics that most Barsaivians outside Throal consider bizarre. The philosopher Ja'kotto, a male separatist who encouraged his followers to live a cloistered existence apart from women, developed the sport during the Scourge as a way of achieving a "pure" state free from emotion. Ja'kotto's leading disciple and current leader of the Ja'kotto Movement, Belyawain, has popularized the sport as a way to keep men in good physical condition. Until organizations other than the Ja'kotto Movement sponsored *un'hayedah* matches, women were banned from participating.

Un'hayedah consists of choreographed movements to fiercely rhythmic drumming. The participants each run an obstacle course, during which they must execute a predetermined series of fiendishly difficult acrobatic maneuvers. A trio of adjudicators judges each participant, evaluating the performance on technical and aesthetic grounds.

Un'hayedah attracts a smaller audience than personal combat or *hach'var,* but its fans are devoted to it. When not attending events, they discuss the intricacies of the sport at taverns frequented by other devotees. The audience is mostly dwarfs; there are very few non-dwarf competitors. Intense rivalry exists between adherents of Ja'kotton, who view *un'hayedah* as central to their philosophy, and those who view it merely as a sport.



On the Passions and Their Followers

⅄ ⅄ ⅄

"My gut was roiling with gahad. *I had swallowed one insult too many. Throal is no place for a free ork like me. It belongs to bowing, scraping, stupid orks who are one breath away from being* turgma. *Or so I thought as I stomped down the passageway from the Bazaar toward the Royal Auditorium. The merchants there looked down on me like I was dirt! I could feel them smirking at me behind their masks of false friendship. And these were orks, mind you—treating me, Elvak Questorsmasher, as some stinking slave. I am a hero to orks everywhere—but not in Throal. Here it meant nothing that I had single-handedly slain an entire coven of Vestrial's reeking lackeys! Here it meant nothing that I had personally spit in the face of Ilbix Byzox, hated questor of Raggok! No, here all that mattered was wearing the simpering silks of a parrot-colored dwarf, or speaking with a perfumed voice.*

"As these dark thoughts clouded my head, I heard a commotion ahead of me. Banging drums. Shouts. Swords beating against shields. For a moment, I thought war had broken out in the corridors of Throal. But as I turned the corner, I saw that it was a procession. Three to four score dwarfs, orks and humans were marching in battle gear, brandishing their weapons and making a great clamor that lifted my heart and softened my gahad. They were dressed in robes of white, spattered with red pigment made to look like fresh-shed blood. Children, similarly attired, accompanied them. They bore wooden standards, topped with whittled figures of a terrible warrior. The warrior was Thystonius, shown as a dwarf, an elf, a human... he even appeared in his aspect as Tranko, the battling ork.

"Among these stout men and women, a cry went up: 'Death to Thera! Death to Thera!' Though I have met many who honor Tranko, I had never seen such fervor before. These people truly had the blood of a Passion flowing through their veins. Before I knew it, I was swept up in their procession. I drew my blade, and began to bang it against my shield.

"I have never had a quarrel with Thera, though I have often struggled against Theran questors of Dis. Suddenly, I found myself thinking that crushing the Therans in Barsaive would be a good way to destroy many of Dis' spawn. I joined the chant: 'Death to Thera! Death to Thera!'

"We turned another corner and found ourselves facing a unit of the Royal Guards. As I was at the head of the procession, I braced for battle with them. But to my surprise, they joined us too! As we continued, many others fell in behind us, and our shouts were doubled and redoubled.

"Then I saw a vision of the future. In my mind's eye I saw Barsaive as a vast battlefield, littered with corpses and soaked red in the blood of the enemy. I saw Tranko, *Thystonius himself, looking down upon us, his children, and smiling with pride."*

—Sworn Testimony of Elvak Questorsmasher, 1508 TH, Taken by Apprentice Archivist Tonicurst the Younger, for a Work in Progress Entitled *The Questor's Way*

⅄ ⅄ ⅄

Devotion to the Passions is as structured and organized as every other activity among the dwarfs of Throal. Followers of the Passions join groups, known as *olzim* (OLE-zeem), that express their spiritual allegiances. *Olzim* resemble social clubs much more than churches or congregations; each meets infrequently, perhaps once a month, to discuss means of bringing their chosen Passion to the attention of other Throalites. *Olzim* members debate the truth behind legends concerning their favored Passion, often paying a Troubadour to perform the legend in question. They also supervise any ceremonies devoted to their Passion, and meet more often when the time for a ceremony or pageant approaches. If a prominent questor of an *olzim*'s Passion visits Throal, the *olzim* will convene to hear the questor speak.

Olzim are one of the primary means by which Throalites from different walks of life get to know one another. An

olzim is a place to make new friends, and also to forge business and social connections. Roughly two-thirds of Throal's citizens are members of an *olzim*, and about one in every four Throalites is heavily involved in more than one *olzim*. The typical *olzim* has five hundred to a thousand members, and two to three hundred people turn out for an average meeting. Unlike some other Throalic organizations, *olzim* are easy to join; new members are always welcome. Officers of one *olzim*, however, rarely belong to another.

Though all members of an *olzim* are dedicated to a particular Passion, an *olzim* cannot dictate doctrine to its participants or order them to think and behave in a certain way. Officers of an *olzim* are elected each year; they tend to perform purely ceremonial duties, and it is not unusual for an *olzim* to have several dozen officers. The chief officer of an *olzim* is the Elder.

Several *olzim* throughout Throal and its Inner Cities serve each of the sane Passions. There are currently 146 active *olzim* in the kingdom, a number that will no doubt increase along with Throal's population. Some Passions have many more *olzim* than others, and ensuring cooperation between a given Passion's various *olzim* in Throal falls to an organization known as a *j'ha-olzim* (juh-ya-OLE-zeem). The functions of a *j'ha-olzim* are mostly honorary; in practice, its duties are limited to arranging processions and pageants. A *j'ha-olzim* cannot issue commands to the members of the *olzim* under it. *J'ha-olzim* are structured and run in the same way as *olzim*, under a chief officer known as the Grand Elder.

Officers make decisions only with the consent of the *olzim*'s members; issues of procedure are resolved with a show of hands at a general meeting. Large disputes tend to arise over petty personal matters, such as which potter receives the honor of making this year's ceremonial urn or some other triviality. Dissatisfied members can easily start up *olzim* of their own if enough interested people are willing to join them. Conflict between *olzim* of different Passions is limited to friendly rivalry or mild mutual disapproval.

The relationship between *olzim* and questors can be uneasy. Questors unused to the ways of Throal may view the devotion of the typical *olzim* member as weak or even frivolous. Other questors recognize the value of the *olzim*, and appreciate the financial support and favors they can gain from *olzim* members.

The Mad Passions have a few adherents in Throal, who must pay homage to them in secret. Instead of *olzim*, the followers of the Mad Passions form secret societies (described on p. 59). The *olzim* of the sane Passions are briefly described below.

Astendar

Astendar's nineteen *olzim* serve as vehicles for the promotion of the arts, and count many artists as well as patrons among their members. More ceremonies, pageants and processions are devoted to Astendar than to any other Passion, and the general public in Throal considers these events the most enjoyable of all such celebrations inspired by the Passions. Events sponsored by Astendar's *olzim* range from poetry competitions to wild celebrations, well lubricated with food and drink. More strait-laced residents of Throal de-emphasize Astendar's romantic and erotic aspects, but many a young citizen has been initiated into the ways of love during one of Astendar's ceremonies. Performances are a staple of *olzim* gatherings, as are discussions of various new works by prominent artists.

Player characters who join an *olzim* of Astendar will meet many artists and people who love luxurious things, including rich traders and merchants who may hire adventurers to find lost art treasures.

Chorrolis

Traders, merchants, moneylenders and other Namegivers who seek success in business join *olzim* dedicated to Chorrolis, the Passion of trade. Judging by the thirty-five *olzim* that honor his Name, Chorrolis is the second most popular Passion in Throal. Members of these *olzim* meet more often than most, some as often as once a week. The building of professional connections is a feature of all *olzim* in business-minded Throal, but those who follow Chorrolis make this the focus of their devotion. A standard topic at meetings is the trade climate in Barsaive, and attentive listeners may hear about lucrative opportunities. Members and *j'havim* of reformist, old guard, and free trading houses all serve as officials of the various *olzim* of Chorrolis; the *olzim* provide neutral ground for hammering out differences and forging uncomfortable but sometimes necessary allegiances between the factions.

Player characters may wish to join an *olzim* of Chorrolis in order to develop valuable contacts and gain information about business opportunities and trading house politics. Characters who want work as *b'jados* or on one-shot assignments along Barsaive's trade routes will find membership in one of these groups invaluable.

Floranuus

Floranuus is a somewhat neglected Passion in Throal; his flighty nature and lack of concrete goals make him less than popular among practical-minded Throalites. A mere four *olzim* are dedicated to the fiery Passion of revelry, victory and motion, and many Throalic citizens see their members as misfits, oddballs and eccentrics. However, they are happy misfits and oddballs. Members of *olzim* dedicated to Floranuus are mostly orks and elves, an odd social mix that leads to many amusing anecdotes. Meetings of the *olzim* are meandering but interesting affairs, never stopping long on a single topic but reaching many surprising destinations along the way.

Player characters joining Floranuus' *olzim* can make connections with Throal's elven and ork communities and can meet a wide range of eccentric characters. Some of these people harbor wild schemes that might just come to fruition with the help of a group of adepts willing to take a crazy risk or two.

Garlen

Like others throughout Barsaive, the common folk of Throal show particular reverence for Garlen, the Passion of hearth and home. Throal has more *olzim* dedicated to her than to any other Passion, thirty-seven and counting as the Inner Cities fill up with immigrants. Though most questors

of Garlen are women, both men and women join this Passion's *olzim*. Meetings are simple affairs, in which members share their prayers for the health and prosperity of their homes. Garlen's *olzim* also function as self-help organizations for Throalites of humble means. Officers arrange for families to share hand-me-down clothing and economize on supplies by purchasing in quantity, and provide volunteer healers to aid those most in need of medical care.

Player characters wishing to earn the loyalty of Throal's poor can do so by becoming active in an *olzim* of Garlen. This loyalty could prove helpful in a political crisis.

Jaspree

Few Throalites follow Barsaive's agricultural Passion, who has only three *olzim* dedicated to him. These *olzim* are almost indistinguishable from the Royal Guild of Farmers, the workers who run the crystal greenhouses (see **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p.124). Jaspree's adherents have recently become seriously concerned about Throal's reliance on imported food, fearing that the kingdom might starve if it should suddenly become cut off from the rest of Barsaive. *Olzim* members have begun to use the ill-attended festivals of Jaspree to argue for expansion of the crystal greenhouses. Though the greenhouses might not be strictly economical during peacetime, the farmers are correct in saying that the greenhouses would become vital in a crisis. Player characters who see trouble ahead for Throal might join an *olzim* of Jaspree in order to advance the worthy cause of Throalic self-sufficiency.

Lochost

Not surprisingly, the *olzim* of the Passion of rebellion, change and freedom are much more politically active than the devotees of other Passions. Determined agitators, they want to see dramatic changes in Throal and in Barsaive at large. Members of *olzim* dedicated to Lochost come from many walks of life, but they all share a burning desire for equality and freedom. Their meetings are strategy sessions devoted to converting more Throalites to their way of thinking. The *olzim* of Lochost are more coordinated than others; Lochost's *j'ha-olzim* even issues policy directives that are closely followed by the Passion's servants. Questors of Lochost also play a larger role in the *olzim* than their counterparts who follow other Passions, by running the *j'ha-olzim* and directing the entire group's agenda. The leadership of the *j'ha-olzim* wants to use the *olzim* system to bring about change in Throal. Their main focus at the moment is Thera; specifically, they want Throal to take a harder line against the Theran practice of slavery. As part of that effort, the *j'ha-olzim* are building ties to the questors of Thystonius. Though few of them are foolish enough to say so openly, they want Throal to launch a military campaign against the Theran forces stationed at Ayodhya, Sky Point and Vivane. Their belief in their cause blinds them to the devastating consequences such a battle might hold for Throal. Knowing that Lochost is on their side, they are confident of a decisive, if difficult, victory.

The current Grand Elder of Lochost is Jorkan Foe-of-Chains, an ork Warrior, Liberator, and questor. She is widely admired by Lochost's followers and among Throalic orks in general, who see her as a bold hero of ork culture in a sea of cautious dwarfs. Jorkan embraces Name-givers of all races who oppose slavery and hate Thera. Her outspoken nature and fanatical views make the trading houses uneasy. If King Neden's leadership falls into question, Jorkan can mobilize thousands of angry, armed citizens on either side of any fray. Player characters who can ensure Jorkan's support of their political patrons in such a crisis will have done them a major favor, for which the characters can potentially exact a steep price. Unfortunately, the cost of Jorkan's aid will be equally high; she will expect nothing less than a full-scale war against Thera.

Player characters with a grudge against Thera are likely to seek allies in the *olzim* of Lochost. Orks and liberators will find these groups especially congenial. Adventurers loyal to the crown may want to infiltrate Jorkan's organization in order to keep a close watch on her. Her charisma and unpredictable behavior make her a potential threat to the stability of the kingdom.

Throal houses fifteen *olzim* dedicated to Lochost, and representatives of all Name-giver races appear in their ranks. There are more orks in Lochost's *olzim* than any other race.

Mynbruje

The Passion of justice and truth has only five *olzim*, most of whose members are thinkers, scholars and admin-

Adventure Hook

During a procession in honor of Thystonius that degenerates into the usual brawl, a young visiting merchant is stabbed. She survives the attack, but cannot identify her assailant. A public outcry against the irresponsibility of Thystonius' *olzim* members forces the king to outlaw future processions. The merchant hires the adventurers to find her attacker, whom she suspects is a paid agent of her estranged husband.

Her husband has sworn to track her to the ends of Barsaive and kill her. In fact, the attacker is a member of the Royal Guards, ordered by the local magistrate to bring disrepute on the *olzim* of Thystonius. The magistrate, a follower of Mynbruje, is trying to discredit Thystonius' *olzim* in order to quench Throal's growing thirst for war with Thera.

If the adventurers reveal the magistrate's misdeeds, they bring a corrupt official to justice. However, they will also make the cause of Thystonius' *olzim* more popular and bring the kingdom closer to the brink of war. Do they choose justice, or the greater good of the people?

istrators. Because these *olzim* include many prominent Throalites—among them Master Merrox of the Hall of Records, Chancellor Wishten, and the courtier Tholon—their influence is far greater than their numbers might suggest. Meetings often turn into rigorous debates on the nature of justice as expressed in the *Council Compact*.

Player characters anxious to make connections with powerful figures behind the throne might wish to join the *olzim* of Mynbruje. In order to impress these people, they must show eloquence in debate and a solid grasp of serious philosophical issues. Followers of Mynbruje are traditionalists when it comes to the involvement of *olzim* in politics; they view it as a dangerous trend, even in support of a just cause. If they were paying closer attention, they might well be concerned about the growing sway that the *j'ha-olzim* of Lochost and Thystonius hold over Throal's common people.

Thystonius

Guards, soldiers, mercenaries and amateur fighters make up the eight *olzim* of Thystonius, the Passion of valor and physical conflict. These *olzim* sponsor fighting competitions, train youngsters in the arts of war and speak up for the interests of the military. Lately, in concert with the followers of Lochost, they have begun to lobby for a rousing good fight against the contemptible Theran Empire. Many in the military are members of these *olzim*, and would dearly love to see such a battle take place. Soldiers less interested in dying for the glory of Thystonius take a dim view of such saber-rattling.

Celebrations and festivals sponsored by the *olzim* of Thystonius tend to degenerate into brawls, and sensible citizens who want to avoid getting bruised stay home during these events. If any other group in Throal caused as much public disorder as the followers of Thystonius, their activities would be banned. The king turns a blind eye to their antics, however, because so many of them are Royal Guards. So far, no one has been seriously hurt in these spiritually inspired altercations, and the guardsmen try their best to keep it that way. Should catastrophe happen, the authorities' grudging tolerance would surely evaporate.

Questors of Thystonius do not take a direct hand in running *olzim* affairs, but call upon *olzim* Elders for aid whenever they need it. The Grand Elder of Thystonius is a dwarf Warrior, Air Sailor, and Swordmaster Named Derrisk. An immigrant to Throal, Derrisk has become one of the dwarf kingdom's most prominent and controversial citizens. A skilled debater, she is one of Throal's foremost advocates of all-out war with the Theran Empire. Her legendary deeds, many of which involve fights against the Therans, have won her the admiration of Throalites from all walks of life. Those in power, however, see her as all too willing to spill Throalic blood to pay tribute to Thystonius. Derrisk is also a storyteller of some repute; her stirring account of a mission to the heart of Thera is particularly popular, and has already been immortalized in several ballads. According to Derrisk's story, she confronted and defied the First Governor himself. None of her companions survived the return journey to Throal, so no one can confirm the truth of her tale. However, her exploits inspire martial fervor in the most cautious Throalic citizen.

Though not a questor, Derrisk should outclass the highest-Circle player character in any player group by several Circles. With regard to her motivation, the gamemaster may choose between the following options.

Option One

Derrisk is utterly sincere in her hatred of Thera and her love for Thystonius. Like any good debater, she chooses the facts that suit her argument and so makes a convincing case that Throal could win a battle against Thera. However, Throal's actual chances of victory mean little to her. She is dangerous because she believes that there is nothing wrong with incurring massive casualties in pursuit of a worthy cause.

Option Two

Derrisk is a fraud, an agent of a foreign power that stands to benefit from a mutually destructive conflict between Thera and Throal. Depending on the gamemaster's choice, this power may be Iopos, the Blood Wood, or even the Mad Passion Vestrial, who personifies manipulation and deceit.

Upandal

The former king was a questor of Upandal, and his royal rank brought prestige to the twenty *olzim* that serve the Passion of building and planning. These *olzim* attract architects, builders and laborers. Through the *olzim*, wealthy construction bosses can drink and chat with their workers and learn about their concerns. Many officers of the Chancellery and the administrations of the Inner Cities are members of these *olzim* because they see the continuing construction of Throal as an act of homage to Upandal. Others, somewhat more cynical, see Upandal's *olzim* as a means of making connections with powerful government officials. Some Throalites grumble that an insular network of officials who grew up together in Upandal's *olzim* runs the kingdom. Rivalry exists between the adherents of Upandal, who generally support the king's initiatives, and many followers of Chorrolis who support the old-guard traders. However, many traders and officials of the Chancellery also belong to *olzim* of both Passions.

Members of Upandal's *olzim* are enthusiastic about architecture and construction. Their meetings are often given over to examination of new plans, speeches by prominent architects, and visits to construction sites. Many members are fervent builders of models. Each *olzim* sponsors an annual model contest, and the *j'ha-olzim* of Upandal also awards an annual prize of 10,000 silver pieces to the architect who designs Throal's most impressive new building. This award is highly coveted; no architect is considered first-rank until he has won it.

Player characters who join an *olzim* of Upandal can benefit by making connections to government officials. Many *olzim* members spend time in the Great Library researching construction techniques of the past, and can provide valuable information about the layout of lost kaers and the forgotten passageways of Throal.

The Mad Passions

The servants of the Mad Passions dream of crushing Throal by any means necessary. The dwarf kingdom represents hope, achievement and bravery—everything the Mad Passions despise. Thus far, none of the Mad Passions have gained a major foothold in the dwarf kingdom. Their followers work through secret groups, each small enough for a band of player characters to tackle on their own.

Dis

The servants of Dis are the most pathetic of the Mad Passions' minions in Throal. Most of them were minor figures in the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH, too insignificant (and in some cases, too devious) to be prosecuted in its wake. Without the patronage of the trading houses who led the rebellion, these skulkers, killers and spies sought another master. One of them, a Thief and questor of Dis Named Deorah, introduced them to the service of her chosen Passion. Promised the wealth and privilege they had hoped to squeeze from the Death Rebellion, most of them joined Deorah in a secret society. Calling themselves the Heirs of the Rope, they have long since slipped into the despair and boredom characteristic of followers of Dis. They meet infrequently and rarely recruit new members. Deorah died of a stomach ailment three years ago; since then, a retired schoolmaster Named Xodath has led the group. Xodath is a fastidious, frightened old dwarf so worried about maintaining the respect of his fellow conspirators that he is afraid to initiate any of Deorah's many plots against Throal. The Heirs of the Rope no longer includes any genuine questors.

Servants of the Mad Passions Raggok and Vestrial know of the Heirs of the Rope and plan to use them to cover their own tracks if an investigation ever gets too close to their own nefarious activities. Though the Heirs have no dastardly plans in progress, some of them are skilled and subtle enough to pose a threat to player characters if they believe their group's existence may be exposed.

Raggok

The Passion of vengeance and jealousy takes a personal interest in the destruction of the dwarf kingdom. He sometimes visits Throal in the guise of Crarites, a traveling peddler who sells amulets and charms. As Crarites, he manifests as a large male troll with pock-marked, flaky skin and oversized, ram-like horns. Crarites appears once every year or so in the Grand Bazaar and meets with Uilmaz, a dwarf curio merchant. Uilmaz is the leader of the Hive of Ashes, a secret society dedicated to destroying Throal from within. Crarites first met Uilmaz in 1430 TH, when the dwarf was dying of a wasting disease. In exchange for a pledge of eternal loyalty, Crarites offered Uilmaz a cure for her otherwise fatal condition. The "cure" was in fact an elixir derived from the astral essence of a dormant Horror. Uilmaz seems to be nothing more than an impossibly old dwarf woman who walks with a stoop, but in fact she has become a minor Horror.

Following the instructions of her new master, Uilmaz kept an eye out for others in a position similar to hers. In the eighty years since her initiation into the Hive of Ashes, she has extended Raggok's dark bargain to more than four dozen dying Throalites. Those so horrified by the offer that they threatened to expose her did not live to make good on their threats. Uilmaz arranged for their deaths, which were attributed to their illnesses.

The members of the Hive of Ashes include professionals, workers and *j'havim* of various trading houses. Most of them are other merchants in the Grand Bazaar, and so player characters will find it nearly impossible to conduct business in the Bazaar without being noticed by a Hive member. Crarites/Raggok has given his followers one primary mission: to corrupt or destroy any heroes who pass through the gates of Throal, from young adepts who can be turned toward vengeance and destruction to heroes of legendary status. Any player characters who attract attention in the Bazaar may become targets of the Hive. Hive members have slain more than a dozen adepts over the past ten years, and have also recruited a number of still-respected adepts to Raggok's cause.

The infusion of Horror essence received by each Hive member upon initiation allows them to physically transform into deadly creatures similar to bloatforms (see p. 457 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). In this form, the Hive members' game statistics are the same as those of bloatforms, except that they have the Damage Shift power (see p. 442 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) instead of the Horror Mark power. They retain a vaguely humanoid shape, covered with shifting tentacles and pieces of rotting flesh, and they sport insect-like claws and wings. Members of the Hive can no longer use Artisan skills they may have learned in the past. Though slow corruption has driven them completely insane, they are clever enough to pass in Throalic society as eccentric but otherwise normal Name-givers.

Raggok realizes that his campaign to destroy heroes is just a way of marking time. He is building the Hive and sharpening the abilities of his minions as he waits for the moment when the dwarf kingdom is most vulnerable to a devastating blow. The thought of a war with Thera pleases him, and he has instructed the Hive to support the growing pro-war forces in Throal.

Crarites has no interest in personally battling Name-givers, as such one-sided victories do not quench his thirst for vengeance. Raggok's avatar can dematerialize at will, and will do so if attacked. However, he may take a couple of deadly swipes at the adventurers just to teach them a lesson before he goes. If by some bizarre chance a group of player characters manages to slay Raggok's manifestation, they do not kill the Passion; they merely prevent him from returning to Barsaive as Crarites.

Crarites

DEX: 30 **STR**: 30 **TOU**: 30
PER: 28 **WIL**: 40 **CHA**: 25

Initiative: 30
Number of Actions: 6
Attack (10): 40
Damage:
Horns (10): 40

Physical Defense: 39
Spell Defense: 40
Social Defense: 32
Physical Armor: 40
Mystic Armor: 40

Death Rating: 132 (267) **Recovery Tests**: 15
Wound Threshold: 32 **Knockdown**: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 126 (246)

Combat Movement: 424 **Full Movement**: 848

Karma Points: 50 **Karma Step**: 20

Powers: Raggok's Powers (see p. 467 of the **Player's Compendium**), Cause Pain (15): 40, Durability (15), Inspire Rage (15): 40, Raise Undead (15): 40, Spellcasting (15): 43, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)^{T} (15): 43

Spells: Nethermancy (Fifteenth Circle). Crarites can cast any and all Nethermancer spells known to exist in Barsaive. He does not use spell matrices, but suffers none of the effects of using raw magic.

Legend Points (7): 2,205,000. All of Raggok's servants will forever seek vengeance against any Name-giver known to have defeated one of the Mad Passion's manifestations, and Raggok will personally direct this campaign. (Did we mention that it's generally a bad idea to attack an avatar of a Passion?)

Equipment: None. All of Crarites' accoutrements are illusory.

Loot: None

Vestrial

The Passion Vestrial has ten times more followers in Throal than any other Mad Passion. Through these secret devotees, the Passion of deceit and manipulation weaves elaborate plans for the destiny of Barsaive, and Throal lies at the center of this web. Appearing to his minions in dreams, Vestrial has created a number of secret societies in Throal, all of which operate ignorant of each other and of the true cause they serve. As a Passion, Vestrial has a different sense of time than the ordinary Name-giver; his plans may be brilliant and destined to bear terrible fruit after centuries of scheming. Or Vestrial may be deceiving himself, just as he used to back in the days when he was a lovable trickster. The Passion's plots may even cancel one another out, forming a pattern of utter nonsense. Whichever of these is true, Vestrial has several hundred Throalites unknowingly dancing to his strange tune.

A few of Vestrial's followers in Throal are described below. The gamemaster should feel free to invent additional ones to suit the needs of his campaign. Unintentional servants of Vestrial make good adversaries for beginning characters; these mysterious groups create problems for Throal, but are not powerful enough to easily destroy even novice adepts.

Ghinez and Apprentices

The architect Ghinez is one of the elder statesmen of the construction industry in Throal. His designs have long been praised for their simplicity and beauty. He is a fixture in the *olzim* of Upandal, and popular among his workers and customers. He is also a questor of Vestrial.

For the past three decades, Ghinez has been placing magical incantations of deception in the masonry of the homes and businesses he has built. At this time, only he and his three apprentices, who also happen to be his sons-in-law, are aware of this plot.



Anyone who spends more than forty hours in a building marked with one of these incantations risks falling under a curse. The gamemaster should make a Step 15/D20+D6 Curse Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim suffers a penalty to his Perception Tests when attempting to distinguish truth from falsehood. He also suffers a penalty to his Social Defense against illusory magic, including Interaction Tests, resisting skills such as Acting and Disguise, and resisting Illusionism spells. The severity of the penalty is based on the Curse Test result. An Average result causes a –1 penalty; for each result level above Average, the penalty increases by –1. For example, an Excellent result causes a –3 penalty. Gamemaster characters exposed to this effect are generally gullible and unable to

think critically. They may, for example, be easily convinced that war against Thera is a good idea.

When viewed astrally with the Divine Aura spell or other similar abilities, a victim of this incantation appears to have a clouded aura. A Dispel Magic spell severs the link between the victim and the incantation. It does not automatically cause the victim to reject false beliefs acquired while under the incantation's influence, though victims can easily be persuaded of the folly of such notions once the effect is dispelled. Dispelling the incantation's effect does not prevent victims from falling prey to it again if they spend another forty-plus hours in one of Ghinez's buildings.

The incantations woven into the buildings have an astral presence only during the moment when the Curse Test is made. Several Wizards of Throal are aware of the effect, having lifted the curse from numerous victims; however, none of them have yet discovered what generates it or how widespread it is.

Adventure Hook

While aboard a Throalic airship, one of the characters walks through the wrong door and barges in on the strange and bloody initiation ceremony of the Sons of the Air. The members of the group know that they must either recruit the player character or destroy him. Vestrial, sensing that his unwitting followers are in trouble, aids them by deceiving the ship's navigational equipment and sending it into a terrible storm above the Wastes. The adventurers must survive the storm, as well as the deadly attentions of the Sons of the Air.

Sons of the Air

About thirty Air Sailors in the Throalic navy belong to a living legend cult called the Sons of the Air. They believe that a Great Form elemental air spirit (see p. 368 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) Named Kwai-Ru is their patron. The Sons of the Air have been active since the ill-fated flight of the *Earthdawn*, when Kwai-Ru came to their founder claiming to owe a debt to the lost sailors of that legendary vessel. Since that day, a select few Air Sailors have been inducted into the cult, which operates in secret.

None of them have yet realized that the Name Kwai-Ru is an anagram for *wurika*, the ancient Scythan word for trickery. Belief in Kwai-Ru inspires the members of this cult to foolhardy acts of bravery; they think their patron elemental air spirit will magically aid them in attempting impossible stunts. Not surprisingly, the cult's adherents frequently don't live long.

As with much that Vestrial does, the Passion's plans for this group are unclear. He may one day call on the Sons of the Air to betray the Throalic navy, or he may simply enjoy seeing Air Sailors die in idiotic accidents.

The Watchers

The magistrates and Chancellery officers in this secret society believe they serve the interests of the dragon Mountainshadow. Some of the group's several dozen members are more involved than others—especially its leader, an Officer of the Court Named Lorinel. This elderly elven woman has been a fixture in government since the days of King Varulus II. Over the course of his reign, Varulus III had slowly eased her out of her official duties; nowadays, she is mainly responsible for relations with the Chancelleries of the Inner Cities. This leaves Lorinel quite a lot of spare time, in which she follows cryptic instructions she receives by messenger once or twice a month.

She thinks these messages come from Mountainshadow or one of his servants. In fact, they come from a mad ork in Bartertown Named Harchong. Though most of Harchong's hallucinations are random expressions of his madness, some of them are inspired by Vestrial, who visits him in dreams as a dragon and claims to be Mountainshadow.

Harchong writes bad verse inspired by his visions, which he passes along to a troll Messenger Named Randova Brokensong. Brokensong, a onetime Troubadour rendered mute in a battle, is the only Name-giver involved with the Watchers who knowingly follows Vestrial. The Passion has tricked her into believing that he will restore her voice if she serves him loyally for a decade and a day. Brokensong delivers Harchong's messages to a minor official of the Chancellery, who passes them along to Lorinel without looking at them.

A typical message might read as follows:

The two hach'var *players fall in love.*
The titan punches his mother on the mountain.
The soldier reveals the time candle.
The wax has melted down the mine shaft.

Lorinel puzzles out her instructions from the verses, interpreting the strange words to match her assumptions concerning Mountainshadow's wishes. She thinks Mountainshadow is sympathetic to Throal but opposed to sudden changes, and so she orders the other Watchers to keep a close eye on those activities of the king and others that she thinks might culminate in surprising results.

Lorinel has placed Watchers in the *olzim* of Lochost, Mynbruje, and Thystonius, and also in the free trading houses. All members issue weekly reports to Lorinel, which she condenses into an account of her own and passes via Brokensong to Harchong. Without perusing the reports, Harchong buries them in the basement of his hovel along with the mummified skeletons of the rats and birds that he regularly captures.

On three occasions, Lorinel decided that Mountainshadow wanted particular troublemakers killed. She ordered them murdered, and other Watchers carried out the killings. If player characters become too involved in Throalic politics and appear to be bringing about rapid change of some kind, Lorinel might interpret Harchong's verses as their death warrant.

Adventurers may also come into conflict with the Watchers if they somehow arouse the personal wrath of Vestrial. In this case, the Passion will appear to Harchong and dictate a verse ordering Lorinel to kill them.

The Halls of Power

A weak king rules hoping his subjects will remain powerless. A great king becomes so only through the strength of his people.

• King Varulus III •



These days are sorrowful indeed. I am torn by doubts that I cannot share with any living soul. The only gesture I can make toward my troubled conscience is to record events here, in this journal, so that the scholars of future generations shall have a true account of them.

I am a party to a grim and necessary hoax. The victims of the fraud are the good people of Throal. My rational mind tells me that this sham is necessary and serves the ultimate good of the people. My emotions gnaw at me, demand that my allegiance be to the truth and the truth alone. As Master of the Hall of Records, my duty is to sort rumor from falsehood, to make truth available to all. Yet I have become a deceiver, and the good of my cause does nothing to change that fact.

It is widely known that the king spends many hours in conference with me each day. That we are friends, confidants, enthusiastic fellow scholars. We while away hours on minutiae, our ramblings touching matters ranging from the trite nature of astral space to the distribution of poisonous mushrooms in the Servos jungle. It is a habit we have had for many years. Anyone who follows the ways of the court knows that King Varulus is a most excellent amateur scholar; he is preparing a weighty tome concerning legends of the Passion he quests for, Upandal. If His Majesty is less often seen in public, shortens his sessions at court, delegates more authority to his chancellor, it is because he is nearing completion of this great text. Courtiers and nobles who demand access to the king are told that he is busy, with me, carefully editing and annotating this mammoth tome. Not to worry, we tell them; soon the book will be finished, and the king will once more devote his full attention to matters of state.

It is true that His Highness is occupied with a great work, but it is not paper he writes upon. The parchment of this text is the mind of his son, Prince Neden. Varulus is dying. The wasting disease that he once so easily concealed now makes grim progress against his ravaged body. The kingdom's finest healers, questors and magicians have marshaled all their abilities to attempt a cure; the best they can do is increase his strength for short periods. When we must present him to public view, we fill him full of medicines and prop him up in his throne. His absences have aroused the suspicions of hostile courtiers, most particularly Selenda of House Ueraven, but without proof our foes cannot act. Thus far, only the lack of proof has saved us; and I cannot help but wonder every day how long our luck can possibly hold out.

Selenda and her ilk have ever been His Majesty's enemies. They hunger to devour the young prince's authority before he is even crowned. We must therefore prepare Prince Neden to ascend the throne with the full authority of Throal's greatest kings. Day after day we review the Precedents with him; we speak of strategy, of diplomacy, of the petty flatteries and subtle rebukes that are the indispensable tools of a leader. Prince Neden is a willing and attentive student, but I worry that the urgency of our lessons may be undermining his confidence. Fear has etched itself into Neden's features, and the shadows in his face deepen as his father slips further and further from life.

I have done my best to conceal this bitter truth from friend and enemy alike. The people of Throal feel safe, comfortable, cushioned from disaster by the wisdom and strength of their beloved sovereign. Little do they know that Throal's stability hangs by an ever-weakening thread…

—From the Private Journals of Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records; Undated, Assumed to be ca. 1508 TH

No one is more painfully aware of the contradiction underlying Throal's government than King Neden. Throal

is an absolute, hereditary monarchy ruled by a monarch who believes in neither hereditary rule nor in absolutism. In the long run, Neden wishes to see the government of Throal recast into some new form that will allow all citizens to have a say in decisions that affect them. He has yet to define how such a system might work, or even put a Name to it. Neden knows that his father and his grandfather had already pushed the people of Throal a great distance from the traditional beliefs of the past, and that the implications of the *Council Compact* have already created tensions within Throalic society.

Before his death, Varulus III was biding his time, allowing the various powerful forces in the kingdom to adjust to the rapid pace of change. He knew that his son Neden would have to implement his final reforms, just as the task of actually putting the *Compact* into practice came down to Varulus from his father. He had begun sharing his broad aims with Neden, hoping to instill in him the same zeal for just government that Varulus II passed on to him. At the same time, Varulus III warned Neden to expect much more immediate worries than political theory—when he ascended the throne, Varulus warned, Neden had to immediately establish himself as a benevolent ruler, sympathetic to the desires of the governed. Neden found this task difficult, as attacks on his assumption of power from sincere traditionalists and the merely power-hungry were as certain as the fall of night after a long day.

On the Rule of the Crown

Technically, the word of the King of Throal is law. Though he annually swears to uphold the principles of the *Council Compact*, Neden could amend that document on a whim if he chose to. Its interpretation lies entirely in his hands. He has the right to countermand the orders of any royal functionary or administrator, and also has absolute command over the various royal families who rule the new underground cities built in the aftermath of the Scourge. The heads of all branches of Throalic government—the military, the diplomatic corps, the intelligence network, even the scholars and librarians—ultimately answer to the king. All officers of the Throalic government serve at Neden's whim. All these rights of kingship have come down to Neden from the dwarf kingdom's most ancient traditions.

These traditions also state that the closest blood relative of the monarch shall take the throne upon the monarch's death. Children are considered the closest relatives, followed by siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, and first cousins, in that order. Any relative more distant than these has no claim to the throne. Though Throal happens to have been ruled by males for generations, the system of succession gives equal preference to candidates of either gender. If King Varulus III's closest blood relative had been a daughter rather than a son, a queen instead of a king would now rule Throal. Relatives by marriage, such as Varulus' wife Dollas, cannot claim the throne.

As a sire of potential kings, Varulus III had been less than prolific; there was only his son Neden to replace him. As of 1510 TH, King Neden is 36 years old—young by dwarf standards—and unmarried, with no children of his own. Should King Neden die or become incapacitated before producing an heir, Throal will be thrown into a crisis of succession.

Such crises are not unprecedented in the long history of the dwarf kingdom. When they occur, the officially recognized courtiers of the late king convene and select a new king from the leaders of Throal's most venerable families. As described further on in this section, the king does not select his own courtiers; they occupy hereditary positions. The various representatives of Throal's great families have different interests and fight for various agendas. Of the crises of succession recorded in Throalic history, some were resolved peacefully; others led to bloody civil war, with the forces of would-be monarchs battling one another for political legitimacy.

Even with legitimacy unchallenged, a weak monarch will have difficulty enforcing his decrees. The leaders of the noble trading houses control large private armies that they can use as leverage against a king they wish to undermine. Powerful guilds can bring the nation to a standstill with work stoppages, and the common folk can riot if an unpopular king tries to enforce his will or fails to enact policies they want. In an attempt to circumvent this potential threat, Varulus III had created a system to take into account the wishes of the common citizens. He had always carefully balanced these concerns with the interests of Throal's richest and most influential families, even though it has sometimes galled him to do so. He taught Neden the importance of building strong ties to the wealthy nobles, but urged him at the same time to remain open to the desires of the common people.

On the Chav'ao'ros

King Varulus III, always in his element when dealing with ordinary citizens, had expended a great deal of effort in finding ways to learn what his people expected from him. The culmination of these efforts was the *chav'ao'ros* (CHAV-yow-ross), a term drawn from an archaic root language of Throalic that means "forums within forums." Instituted shortly before the reopening of Throal, the *chav'ao'ros* is a series of community meetings, each chaired by a speaker and attended by a recorder. The speaker elicits concerns about government from the local people, often asking them to address issues currently before the king in order to help His Majesty judge the public mood. Attendees may also bring up their own matters of concern. The recorder takes notes and carefully represents the consensus, if any, expressed by those who speak at the meeting. Throalic law forbids a recorder to speak or direct the discussion at such a meeting; he must remain neutral in order to accurately recount what is said.

The first set of meetings takes place in the neighborhoods of Throal. The royal administrators maintain careful records of each neighborhood's population, and use these to assign people to *chav'ao'ros* of fifty or so extended fami-

lies. All adult citizens of Throal are assigned a *chav'ao'ros* every year, though they have no legal obligation to attend any of the meetings. Each neighborhood *chav'ao'ros* elects its own speaker and recorder by secret ballot, and may move to replace either or both at any of their meetings, which occur once every two months.

A week after these meetings comes a second round of so-called "city meetings" attended by the recorders of all the neighborhood meetings. At these gatherings, the recorders express the opinions of the people they represent to another speaker and recorder. City meetings take place for the Halls of Throal and each of the inhabited Inner Cities (see **A Tour of the Kingdom**, p. 120). At the end of these meetings, the eight recorders separately distill the opinions expressed by the people's delegates.

These representatives then convey the opinions of the people to the king. This final meeting occurs in the presence of the king's advisers and courtiers, who may interrogate the recorders, argue for or against opinions expressed, and generally insert their personal agendas into the mixture of ideas. The king then contemplates the results of the *chav'ao'ros* and makes his decisions accordingly. He is not bound to obey the peoples' wishes, but tends to do so out of preference. When he must make an unpopular decision, he generally tries to persuade the people of its wisdom.

The *chav'ao'ros* is not democracy, but it may be the root of democratic government if Varulus' plans ever bear fruit. His death has prevented him from taking full advantage of the system. King Neden is still attempting to understand the obligations of a ruler to the desires of the common people.

On the Royal Family

Several families have ruled Throal during its 1,500-year history. The current ruler, King Neden, is the last scion of House Avalus. House Avalus has been dwindling since the early days of the Scourge; after King Neden, there are no other heirs. The kingdom is two heartbeats away from dynastic change, and in Throal such changes are rarely peaceful.

King Neden

"*I am ready for the burden put upon me. I am ready for the burden put upon me. I* am *ready for the burden put upon me.*"

Varulus' son, King Neden, is 36 years old and so a callow youth by dwarf standards. His Name, the Throalic word for "crossroads" represents a startling break from tradition; everyone had expected King Varulus III to Name his son Varulus IV. The symbolism of Neden's Name and his new role as King of Throal are proving difficult burdens for him, especially since his father's death.

Though he tries not to think about it, much of Neden's character was shaped by a traumatic series of events that befell him at the age of ten. In 1484 TH, during the Death Rebellion, Neden was kidnapped by a megalomaniacal Theran Wizard Named Mordom, whose compatriots attempted to assassinate King Varulus III. Mordom per-

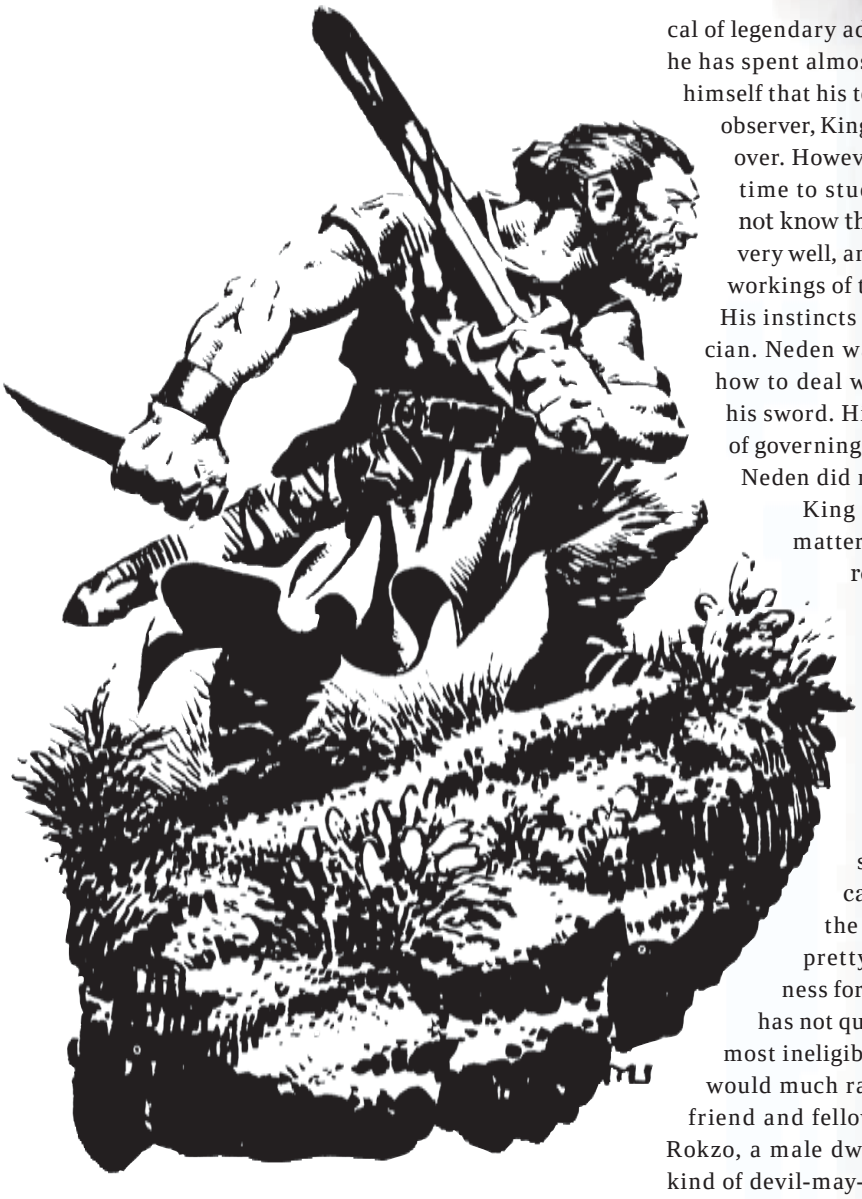
Adventure Hook

A band of adventurers that includes an ork, or a group known to have experience with orks, is approached by Oyalica, a unit commander in the Royal Guards, the police force of Throal (see p. 83). In a regrettable incident at a neighborhood *chav'ao'ros* in the new city of Valvira, the speaker was stabbed and seriously wounded. The neighborhood in question is almost entirely ork, and everyone attending the meeting was an ork. Oyalica has tried to learn the assailant's identity, but no one will talk—not even the victim. Oyalica admits to the adventurers that her experience with orks is limited, but she knew her questions were only making the orks angry. Oyalica asks the adventurers to quietly find out what happened without making the problem worse.

If the adventurers know how to act around plain-spoken, passionate orks, they can piece the incident together and learn that the recorder of the meeting stabbed the speaker. The recorder, Jarkna, was elected to her post as cruel joke; local orks know that Jarkna's *gahad* prevents her from holding her tongue during an argument. Unable to remain silent, she lost control and stabbed the speaker, who also happens to be Jarkna's rival for the love of the local brewer.

The orks are extremely embarrassed by the incident and the unkind jest behind it. They fear that if the details become public, they will lose the right to participate in future *chav'ao'ros*. Orks are highly sensitive to slights and hate to be thought of as second-class citizens in dwarf-dominated Throal.

If the adventurers aren't careful, they may be attacked by orks anxious to maintain the cover-up. Once they find out what happened, they face another problem: prominent dwarf nobles who want dwarfs to have higher status in Throal than other Name-giver races. The stabbing incident plays right into their hands, giving them an excuse to whip up conservative dwarf opinion against the orks and other newcomers. If the adventurers succeed in settling the orks down and stopping the hatemongers, they will earn Oyalica's gratitude. In addition, King Neden and his supporters will mark them as useful allies who have earned a royal favor.



formed several rituals designed to turn young Neden into a puppet of Thera; in the most horrifying of these, Neden was literally dissected and kept magically alive. The dragon Mountainshadow, with the aid of a human Thief Named J'Role, eventually healed the terrible injuries done to Neden's soul. Neden remembers this experience only dimly, but cannot help thinking about it as the stresses on him increase.

King Neden knows that Throal's enemies would profit from another attempt on his life. He is the last of his family on the throne, and there is no successor to take his place if he dies before fathering a child. Neden is intimately familiar with Throalic history, and knows that transitions from one royal family to another have almost always led to bloodshed.

He also knows that his skill as a statesman falls far short of his father's accomplishments in that area. In an attempt, whether consciously or unconsciously, to put the awful events of his childhood behind him, Neden became a Warrior adept, rising to the rank of commander in the Throalic navy. Over the protests of his family, he has regularly risked his life in the service of Throal, undertaking missions typical of legendary adventurers. Whether he realizes it or not, he has spent almost two decades defying death to prove to himself that his torture left no lasting scars. To an outside observer, King Neden has proven himself a dozen times over. However, his heroic exploits have left him little time to study weighty affairs of state. Neden does not know the influential players of Throalic politics very well, and has given little thought to the practical workings of the ideals for which he has risked his life. His instincts are those of a military man, not a politician. Neden wants easy solutions, and does not know how to deal with enemies that he cannot smite with his sword. His father had many years to study the art of governing under Varulus II before he became king. Neden did not have that luxury.

King Neden must also deal with the delicate matter of continuing the royal line. Though he realizes that the state depends on his finding a wife and bringing up a family, he has yet to find a noble dwarf maiden who appeals to him. His mother, Dollas, is diligently working to find him a suitable wife from among Throal's nobles. Neden understands the necessity of siring an heir, but resents his own lack of choice in the matter, and so cannot stop himself from systematically snubbing every qualified maiden in the kingdom. Luckily for the royal line, a few pretty young dwarfs have mistaken his rudeness for signs of a great romantic soul, so Neden has not quite succeeded in making himself Throal's most ineligible bachelor. Given a choice, King Neden would much rather spend his time with his childhood friend and fellow navy commander, Rokzo the Unruly. Rokzo, a male dwarf raised by ork Scorchers, is just the kind of devil-may-care, charismatic free spirit that Neden secretly wishes to be.

King Neden is a Ninth Circle dwarf Warrior.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 **Strength** (15): 6/D10
Toughness (18): 7/D12 **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8 **Charisma** (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 (17)[P] **Initiative**: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7 (16)[P] **Physical Armor**: 11
Social Defense: 7 (16)[P] **Mystic Armor**: 6 (15)[P]

Death Rating: 42 (132) **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 (19)[P] **Knockdown**: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (104)

[P] Enhanced by +9 through thread magic (see Notes, below).

Combat Movement: 22 **Full Movement**: 44

Karma Points: 25 **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (9): 15/D20+D6
Air Dance (9): 14/D20+D4*

Anticipate Blow[D] (9): 14/D20+D4
Avoid Blow[D] (9): 15/D20+D6 (Bounce)
Down Strike[D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Durability (9/7) (10): 10
Earth Skin (10): 17/D20+D10
Gliding Stride (9): 15/D20+D6
Karma Ritual (9): 9
Leadership (8): 14/D20+D4
Life Check[D] (11): 18/D20+D12
Melee Weapons[D] (9): 15/D20+D6 (Deflect Blow)
Missile Twister (9): 14/D20+D4
Missile Weapons (9): 15/D20+D6
Second Attack (9): 15/D20+D6
Second Weapon[D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Spirit Strike[D] (9): 14/D20+D4
Swift Kick[D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Thread Weaving (War Weaving)[D] (9): 14/D20+D4
Throwing Weapons (9): 15/D20+D6
Tiger Spring (9): 9
Unarmed Combat[D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Wood Skin[D] (10): 17/D20+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by –1 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Mason (8): 14/D20+D4
Craftsman; Woodworker (8): 14/D20+D4
Poetry (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Airships (7): 12/2D10
Government Administration (3): 8/2D6
Throalic Law (4): 9/D8+D6
Throal History (5): 10/D10+D6
Throal Military Organization (6): 11/D10+D8
Throal Politics (3): 8/2D6

General:
Air Sailing (7): 12/2D10
Conversation (4): 10/D10+D6
Etiquette (4): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*
Tactics (4): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Thread Buckler bearing the Throal seal (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1)
Thread Leather Armor bearing the Throal seal (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/Cloaksense Brooch)

Broadsword bearing the Throal seal (Best Quality; Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/Best Quality scabbard)
Dwarf Sword bearing the Throal seal (Best Quality; Forged +2; Damage 11/D10+D8; w/Best Quality scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48)
Medium Crossbow (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts)

Thread Royal Chamber Marble Stone (Core Pattern Item; Rank 9; +9 to Neden's Physical, Spell, and Social Defense, as well as his Mystic Armor and Wound Threshold, when he is in the Royal Chambers)

Adventurer's Kit
2 × Craftsman Tools
Quiet Pouch
Royal Crown of the King of Throal
Royal Scepter of the King of Throal
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Wooden Statuette of Varulus III

Loot

200 gold pieces

Legend Points

7,100 Legend Points

Notes

Neden possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight. King Neden has a Rank 9 thread attached to the True pattern of the Royal Chambers adding +9 to his Physical, Spell, and Social Defense, as well as his Mystic Armor and Wound Threshold.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: Karma on unarmed combat Damage Tests
Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Dollas

"Yes, it is in Thalasica's interests to support the scheme. But you must remember that he is Mishwal, and so the memory of the defeat at Jalasa in 634 TH gnaws at him just as it did his father before him, and his father's father before that. Yes, even after all this time."

Varulus' marriage to Dollas of House Moberl began as a political arrangement but soon became a mutual love match. House Moberl, a powerful noble family in Throal, has always been known for its conservatism. At the time of Dollas' betrothal to then-Prince Varulus, Moberl was openly opposed to the reforms of King Varulus II. In an effort to turn an adversary into an ally, Varulus II proposed that his son marry the daughter of House Moberl's leader. The Moberl agreed, hoping that Dollas would gradually turn the prince against what they saw as his father's excesses. Dollas, however, was smitten with the dashing prince and had no intention of trying to change his political opinions.

The two had been deeply in love since their long-ago betrothal, and Dollas became one of her late husband's most valuable advisers. She is more interested in people than policies, which her advice reflects. Varulus lived in his mind,

and tended to think that others do as well. If a plan seemed logical and moral to him, he had a hard time understanding why others disagreed with it. Dollas realizes that many Name-givers employ logic only to convince themselves that what they want to do is right, and her insights made up for Varulus' one blind spot. To this day, she continues to advise her son.

Dollas is the social center of the royal court, organizing the countless functions that the ruling class of Throal is expected to attend. Neden would sooner spend an evening on the training grounds than attending a ball or feast, and is visibly bored at these events. Dollas, on the other hand, sees them as a way to keep in touch with the kingdom's nobles and powerful merchants. A charming hostess, she shows the friendly face that Neden is often too aloof to project. Dollas knows that a moment of flattery, a child's Name remembered, or the gift of a trinket can sway more political opinions than a dozen lofty speeches. She has a prodigious memory when it comes to relationships between noble families; she recalls all the secret affairs, soured business deals and ancient feuds that determine where allegiances really lie. For example, many intellectual dwarfs, including the late Varulus III, deny the importance of tribal rivalries in modern Throalic life. Dollas understands that many Throalic dwarfs still take such matters very seriously. Many of Neden's most vocal opponents happen to be Huari, a tribe with an age-old grudge against the Mishwal from whom Neden is descended. Neden refuses to comprehend that some of these people fight his sensible policies simply because his ancestors belonged to a different tribe than their ancestors. Without Dollas' advice and behind-the-scenes smoothing of ruffled feathers, he would face twice as much opposition.

Throalic tradition did not allow Dollas to succeed her husband. She is a member of House Avalus by marriage, and was therefore not an heir to the throne.

Dollas wants nothing more at the moment than to find a suitable mate for Neden, hoping that the comforts of married life will focus his mind on his responsibilities. She has found several worthy candidates, but Neden has rebuffed them all, and Dollas is growing increasingly impatient with her son.

Dollas is a dwarf non-adept noblewoman.

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 35
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 16
Full Movement: 32

Skills

Artisan:
Dancing (6): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Court Administration (7): 14/D20+D4
Court Dancing (7): 14/D20+D4
Throal Economics (7): 14/D20+D4
Throal History (8): 15/D20+D6
Throal Politics (9): 16/D20+D8

General:
Bribery (5): 11/D10+D8
Conversation (8): 14/D20+D4
Etiquette (7): 13/D12+D10
First Impression (5): 11/D10+D8
Flirting (6): 12/2D10/
Heartening Laugh (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (3): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Sperethiel*

Equipment

Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

90 gold pieces

Legend Points

250 Legend Points

Note

Dollas possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

VEROXA

"You come to me for the favors of the king, or the king-to-be? What foolery! I am but a humble old woman, my senses dulled by age. You overestimate my influence, you do, yes. But perhaps I will ask a favor from you all the same…"

A dwarf's greatest joy is his extended family. Most Throalic citizens consider it a great sorrow that the royal family is so small; aside from Dollas and Neden, the sole surviving member of the royal family is Dollas' mother, Veroxa.

Observers familiar with dwarf traditions consider Veroxa extremely influential, especially with King Neden. The relationship between grandchild and grandparent is considered the most important bond within a dwarf family, and so those seeking favors from or influence with Neden approach his grandmother first. Depending on the favor and who is doing the asking, Veroxa may laugh in the petitioner's face or promise to put in a good word in exchange for a favor in return. Her requests are usually obscure or mysterious. Opinion is divided as to whether Veroxa is a powerful figure secretly pulling strings, or simply a batty old woman.

Veroxa has no confidants and keeps her own counsel. No one knows what sort of advice she has been feeding

Neden since his childhood. Neden is fiercely loyal to his eccentric grandmother; though he is occasionally openly disrespectful to his mother, he is quick to chastise anyone who mentions Veroxa's supposed flaws in his presence.

Veroxa is tiny even for a dwarf, and her nut-brown face is creased with wrinkles. She has lost all her teeth except for the top two in the front. Her deep-set eyes gleam with a wily intelligence. She displays none of the vanity typical of the Throalic ruling class; the easily scandalized whisper that more than a year has passed since she last combed her hair. Her clothing, twenty years behind the fashion, is often worn and tattered. Veroxa walks with the help of a gnarled wooden cane encrusted with emeralds and rubies.

Veroxa is a non-adept dwarf noblewoman.

Attributes

Dexterity (5): 3/D4
Strength (6): 3/D4
Toughness (7): 4/D6
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (7): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 4
Initiative: 3/D4
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 27
Recovery Tests: 1
Wound Threshold: 6
Knockdown: 3/D4
Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Combat Movement: 6
Full Movement: 12

Skills

Artisan:
Wood Carving (4): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Throal Politics (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*

Equipment

Club encrusted with gems (Damage 6/D10; worth 250 silver pieces)
Carving Tools
Peasant's Garb

Loot

None

Legend Points

85 Legend Points

Note

Veroxa possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Of Advisers and Courtiers

The court of Throal includes the king's large circle of advisers and courtiers. Advisers, paid by the royal treasury to give the king their counsel, serve at the king's pleasure and may be dismissed at will. They may have particular areas of expertise, or the king may seek their general wisdom. King Neden's advisers include members of several races, and certain advisors also help to administer various arms of the Throalic government. Not all advisers attend every meeting; many of them are specialists whose opinion the king consults only when he needs it.

In contrast, all courtiers are dwarfs. By tradition, these members of Throal's noble families are accorded the privilege of attending the king at all public appearances, including court sessions during which the king makes decrees or entertains petitions from the public. Courtiers are selected by their houses rather than by the king. Most houses may send only one courtier to attend the king at any given time, though a few have the right to send a second attendant.

Each house selects its courtier as it wishes, and members of a noble family may replace the chosen courtier at any time. Disputes occasionally arise over the selection, but resolving them is a matter for each individual house to settle. Thirty-one courtiers attend upon the king, but few of them attend each and every official audience. Unfortunately



for Neden, the most useless of the lot are the ones who have the most time to devote to their court "duties."

All of the current court positions existed long before Neden assumed the throne; in fact, no new family has been granted the right to attend the king since the reign of Varulus I. If Varulus III had his way, he would have abolished the courtier system entirely. He valued the advice of some of them, but considered the rest idiots, pests, or worse. The courtier system gives privileges to the rich and well-born that other Throalites cannot have, which Varulus deemed unfair. The late king had always felt forced to waste entirely too much time concealing his impatience at various courtiers' inane mutterings. King Neden puts up with the system only because he has to, and grudgingly agrees with his mother's assessment that the nobles would see the end of their court privileges as an unforgivable slap in the face.

The king need not allow courtiers to attend him unless he intends to announce some decision or policy, and he often circumvents "court toadies" by holding small conferences with his inner circle of advisers. King Neden almost always makes his decisions in private before announcing them publicly, rendering the objections of courtiers moot. This has led some courtiers to complain that Neden holds too many private conferences, thereby flouting the spirit of the system.

A few noteworthy advisers and courtiers are described below. Others, such as the noted scholar Merrox, the Ambassador General, and the Supreme General of the Throal military, are described in the appropriate sections.

Ajmar the Admirable

"You have shown sagacity in approaching me with this matter, my friends. I am fully cognizant of all the mystic correspondences related to your dilemma, and therefore I am best positioned to give you the guidance you seek."

Ajmar, an ork Wizard of considerable ability, is the Court Spellcaster of Throal, and advises the king in matters pertaining to magic. As an experienced adventurer, Ajmar also frequently offers counsel related to court-sponsored exploration of kaers and ruins. He speaks in a florid manner, refusing to use a simple word when he can find a four-syllable alternative. Though pompous and more than a little pleased with himself, Ajmar is not a fool. Unlike other so-called experts, he is more than willing to admit it when he does not know something. He conducts careful research before giving an opinion, and constantly flips through a collection of scrolls and digests he carries with him in a large pack. These texts contain the basic correspondences of symbols and ideas that many Wizards see as the basis for their craft. When presented with a question, Ajmar consults these texts to see what symbols are involved. Though his methods and manner of speaking may seem comical, his advice is generally sound.

Much to the chagrin of several courtiers, Ajmar was selected for the post of Court Spellcaster soon after his arrival in Throal. Neden values Ajmar's advice because the Wizard is completely apolitical; his only agenda is to support himself while he completes a text on magical theory. Ajmar has no vested interest in Throalic politics. Consequently, the king has increasingly come to draw on Ajmar's knowledge of mystical correspondences for insight into mundane domestic problems. King Neden has grown fond of the eccentric ork Wizard, and loves to listen to gripping stories of his adventuring career.

Preoccupied with his work, Ajmar has not noticed the hostility cast his way by several of the wealthier courtiers. To them, he symbolizes everything wrong with Neden's rule. They find it intolerable that the king listens to a non-dwarf—and a disreputable adventurer at that—more than he does to them.

Ajmar has olive skin, bushy white eyebrows, and a long, snowy beard combed into two points. He often wears a colorful hide cap with a curled peak.

Ajmar the Admirable is a Tenth Circle ork Wizard.

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (21): 8/2D6
Willpower (19): 8/2D6
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 11
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 2
Social Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 36 (76)*
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 28 (58)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Karma Points: 40
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings [D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Armored Matrix (10): 10
Astral Sight [D] (10): 18/D20+D12 (Diagnose)
Book Memory [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Book Recall [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Durability (4/3) (10): 10
Enhanced Matrix (10): 10
Enhanced Matrix (10): 10
Evidence Analysis [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Hold Thread [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Karma Ritual (10): 10
Life Check (10): 16/D20+D8
Lifesight [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Matrix Strike [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Range Pattern [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Read and Write Language [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
—Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zat**, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Read and Write Magic [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Resist Taunt (10): 18/D20+D12
Speak Language [D] (7): 15/D20+D6
—Human, Obsidiman, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Spellcasting [D] (11): 21/D20+D10+D6
Spell Matrix (10): 10
Spell Matrix (10): 10

Spell Matrix (10): 10
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) [D] (11): 19/D20+2D6 (Create Spell Matrix Object, Create Thread Item)
Willforce (10): 18/D20+D12

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* *Or'zat* is the ancient language of the orks, shorter and more guttural than the modern *Or'zet* (see p. 297 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Skills

Artisan:
Robe Embroidery (7): 13/D12+D10

Knowledge:
Horror Lore (5): 13/D12+D10
Kaer Lore (7): 15/D20+D6
Magical Theory (8): 16/D20+D8
Scourge History (6): 14/D20+D4
Trap Lore (5): 13/D12+D10

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Research (8): 16/D20+D8
Speak Language (2): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*

Equipment

Thread Cloak (Rank 4; Phys 2; +1 SpellDef; +2 SocDef; w/Cloaksense Brooch)

Quarterstaff (Damage 7/D12)

Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)
Thread Flint and Steel Spell Matrix Object (Rank 1; contains the Ignite spell, triggered by sparks when the flint strikes the steel)
Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Arcane Tomes
Embroidered Robes
Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
Hide Cap
Scrolls
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Spells

Absorbing Sphere [E], Astral Sense, Aura Strike, Ball of String, Bedazzling Display of Logical Analysis [M], Compression Bubble [A], Confusing Weave [E], Counterspell [M], Dispel Magic, Flame Flash [M], Hold Pattern, Identify Magic, Identify Spell, Ignite, Inventory, Kaer Knocking, Kaer Pictographs, Mental Library, Mind Dagger, Safe Opening, Sanctuary, Seal, Shatter Lock, Study Thread, Wall Walker

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.
[A] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Armored Matrix.

Loot

140 gold pieces

Legend Points

17,175 Legend Points

Notes

Ajmar possesses the ork racial abilities of Low-Light Vision and *Gahad*.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Adventure Hook

Ajmar returns from a personal meeting with the king to find that his apartment has been burgled. The robbers smashed all the furnishings and scrawled orkish obscenities across the walls in hog's blood. Though irritating, these actions are of little consequence to Ajmar next to the real catastrophe—the thieves have taken his only set of notes for the text he has been laboring over for months. Ajmar cannot track down the villains himself because he must attend a small symposium of Wizards in Bartertown, and so he hires the player characters to help him.

If they follow Ajmar to Bartertown, the adventurers may begin to suspect one of the ork's rival Wizards. In fact, the robbery was financed by the courtier Selenda (see p. 75), who wishes to drive Ajmar away from Throal by making it impossible for him to complete his work. The ork ruffians who actually perpetrated the theft are spending their money in the pubs of Bartertown. They saved Ajmar's notes, because even they know that Wizards' texts are worth good money to the right buyer. After some detective work and a brawl or two in Bartertown's seediest drinking establishments, the adventurers can recover Ajmar's manuscript. Unfortunately, they will find it nearly impossible to make allegations stick to Selenda; in any contest between the word of a dwarf noble and a gang of ork criminals, Selenda wins. If the player characters try to expose her, they gain a powerful enemy.

Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: Matrix Split (2 Damage Points)

DRUMILICA

"If I might but have a moment of your precious time, my liege. Please, please, sire, I really and truly must be heard. Only a moment, I understand how important—ah, yes. Well. The matter at hand. Ah. Er… heh-heh-heh… dear oh dear, how terribly silly! How foolish of me! I have forgotten the matter of which I wished to speak. How very comical. Let me just compose my—your Majesty? Your Majesty!"

Drumilica is the archetypal fawning fool, currently serving at court for House Pa'vas. This once-proud noble family fell on hard times when the Scourge disrupted trade; the dwarfs of Pa'vas, unrivaled at opening new trade routes, were unable to manage the money and assets they already had. By the time the gates of Throal re-opened, House Pa'vas had become a small and impoverished family living in a vast, crumbling underground hall. Any source of income was precious to them, and when a newly wealthy merchant offered to pay them for their court post, the family listened attentively. The merchant was Osbaldo, Drumilica's father, who wanted to buy himself prestige and find a post for his idiot son that would keep him well away from important business dealings. In exchange for an annual allowance, House Pa'vas formally adopted Osbaldo's family, thereby qualifying Drumilica to serve as courtier to the king.

Drumilica is enormously proud of his role as courtier. He attends every session without fail, no matter how inconsequential it might be. Indeed, he has a gift for making any meeting much less consequential simply by opening his mouth. His opinions are never less than completely asinine. His manner of speech does not help matters; he loves to use large words that he does not really understand, rarely finishes sentences, and often contradicts himself within the same speech.

No self-enamored courtier is complete without a mindless devotion to fashion, and Drumilica fits this stereotype to the letter. Dressing in an extreme manner among the color-loving dwarfs is difficult, but Drumilica repeatedly and dramatically rises to the challenge. The clashing patterns and colors of his clothing seem custom-designed to induce headaches, and he has a distracting fondness for bells. Bells hang from every available garment, from his shoes and from his hat. On festival days, he even ties a handful of bells on ribbons into his beard.

Drumilica personifies everything Neden despises about the courtier system. Now and then, the king awakens with a smile on his face from dreams in which he has throttled this irritating fop. The subject of Drumilica's odiousness is one of the few on which King Neden and Dollas are completely in agreement.

Drumilica is a non-adept dwarf courtier.

Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (9): 4/D6
Perception (7): 4/D6
Willpower (5): 3/D4
Charisma (4): 3/D4

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20

Skills

Artisan:
Dancing (2): 5/D8

Knowledge:
Court Dancing (2): 6/D10
Throal History (3): 7/D12
Throal Politics (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)

ADVENTURE HOOK

While pursuing a pickpocket through the Grand Bazaar, one or more of the adventurers collides with Drumilica as he exits a tailor's shop, knocking him and his expensive new outfit into the mud. Drumilica throws a tantrum, threatening to charge the player characters with assault. When the city guards come, the tailor and a passing noble corroborate Drumilica's wildly exaggerated version of the incident, and Drumilica presses charges against the adventurers. His advocate, however, offers a settlement: he will spare them the bother and embarrassment of a trial in exchange for twice the usual fine.

If the adventurers bother to investigate, they will discover that the greedy advocate is another member of the threadbare House of Pa'vas, and that he hired the pickpocket to instigate the whole affair. Once confronted with these facts, Drumilica denies all knowledge of the plot. He even threatens to charge the adventurers with slander if they spread the story around.

This incident allows the gamemaster to demonstrate the workings of the Throalic legal system (see p. 79). It also sets the adventurers up for a rude surprise should they ever become involved in matters at the royal court: the comical but irritating Drumilica is waiting for a chance to thwart whatever petitions they bring before the king.

Speak Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment
Bells
Belt Pouch
Ribbons
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot
20 silver pieces

Legend Points
35 Legend Points

Note
Drumilica possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.



Isam Derr

"The Therans have stepped up their activities south of the Blood Wood? What of it? You'd be far better off devoting those resources to cleansing Parlainth or the Badlands of Horror taint!"

One of the few obsidimen living in Throal, Isam Derr resides in the city of Wishon. How he manages to live in the underground kingdom without going into hibernation is a secret he does not share (there are rumors he belongs to a secret society; to date no-one has been able to prove this to be true). Isam Derr has sworn to do whatever he can to rid the world of Horrors. He no longer actively adventures, but still acts in an advisory capacity to King Neden. As the threat of Horrors has waned, so has Isam Derr's influence with the king. He is no longer a member of the king's inner circle, though the king still calls on him whenever something concerning Horrors comes up.

Derr is currently attempting to curry favor with Neden, but the king sees him as somewhat pushy. Isam Derr fears that House Avalus is headed for disaster, and wants to do whatever he can to ward it off. No one knows better than he how many major Horrors still walk in Barsaive, and how many loathe Throal as a beacon of peace and enlightenment. Through his network of contacts throughout the province, Isam Derr keeps his ears open for Horror activity directed against the dwarf kingdom. Diminished influence or not, Isam Derr can still be certain of an audience with the king if he bears concrete evidence of such a threat.

How he manages to live in the underground kingdom without going into hibernation is a secret he does not share. Isam Derr has sworn to do whatever he can to rid the world of Horrors. He no longer actively adventures, but still acts in an advisory capacity to King Neden.

Isam Derr is a Tenth Circle obsidiman Warrior.

Attributes
Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (21): 8/2D6
Toughness (20): 8/2D6
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics
Physical Defense: 10 **Initiative**: 2/D4-1
Spell Defense: 10 **Physical Armor**: 12
Social Defense: 6 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 44 (134) **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 16 **Knockdown**: 8/2D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 36 (106)

Combat Movement: 20 **Full Movement**: 40

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 3/D4

Talents (Knacks)
Acrobatic Strike (10): 16/D20+D8
Air Dance (10): 12/2D10*
Anticipate Blow[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Avoid Blow[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Body Blade[D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Cat's Paw (10): 16/D20+D8

Cobra Strike[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Down Strike[D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Durability (9/7) (10): 10
Earth Skin (10): 18/D20+D12
Gliding Stride (10): 16/D20+D8
Karma Ritual (10): 10
Leadership (8): 13/D12+D10
Life Check[D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Matrix Strike (10): 16/D20+D8
Melee Weapons[D] (11): 17/D20+D10 (Armor Beater, Improvised Weapons)
Missile Twister (10): 16/D20+D8
Missile Weapons (10): 16/D20+D8
Second Attack (10): 16/D20+D8
Second Weapon[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Spirit Strike[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Swift Kick[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Thread Weaving (War Weaving)[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Throwing Weapons (10): 16/D20+D8
Tiger Spring (10): 10
Unarmed Combat[D] (11): 17/D20+D10 (Pin Down, Head Butt, Mighty Throw)
Wood Skin[D] (10): 18/D20+D12

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by –4 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Craft Armor (5): 11/D10+D8
Craft Weapon (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Horror Lore (8): 14/D20+D4
Lightbearer Lore (9): 15/D20+D6
Scourge History (7): 13/D12+D10
Swords of Light Lore (10): 16/D20+D8

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Obsidiman
Streetwise (8): 14/D20+D4
Tactics (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/Cloaksense Brooch)
Stone Disk Armor (Phys 6; Init 3; w/horned stone helmet)

Stone Troll Two-Handed Sword (Forged +6; Damage 22/D20+D10+D8; w/huge scabbard)
Thread Stone Broadsword (Rank 3; Damage 18/D20+D12; w/scabbard)
Thread Stone Dagger (Rank 4; Damage 15/D20+D6; Range 15–25–30; w/scabbard)
2 × Troll Spears (Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 18–30–36)
Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 15/D20+D6; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)
Adventurer's Kit
Belt Pouch
2 × Craftsman Tools
2 × Healing Potions
Traveler's Garb

Loot

900 silver pieces

Legend Points

11,220 Legend Points

Notes

Isam Derr possesses the obsidiman racial abilities of Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: Karma on unarmed combat Damage Tests
Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; +1 Recovery Test

KELASSA

"Let Selenda stew in her rancid juices. The people are behind you, my king, and that is all that matters."

Kelassa is Neden's closest ally among the courtiers. Unlike the rest of them, she is frequently invited to meetings of the king's inner circle. Kelassa represents House Bvril'ah, a noble house noted for the large number of significant artists and scholars it has turned out over the years. Members of House Byril'ah were instrumental in drafting the *Council Compact*, and as the courtier for her house Kelassa is an eloquent champion of the *Compact's* aims.

Kelassa was chosen as Byril'ah's courtier for her artistic accomplishments. She is widely considered Throal's foremost living poet, and slightly inebriated gatherings of sentimental dwarfs frequently recite her epic verses. Most other races find dwarfish poetry sadly lacking in elegance, and consider Kelassa's quatrains leaden and maudlin. Many dwarfs, especially those dedicated to the spirit of the *Council Compact*, would violently disagree.

Whatever the quality of Kelassa's poetry, she has acute political insight, she regularly moves among the common folk of Throal, and is an excellent judge of their mood. More often than any other courtier or adviser, Kelassa urges the king to take the results of a *chav'ao'ros* into account even when other advisers are busily watering down the people's demands.

Few people know that Kelassa is an adept; during her younger years, she embarked on a series of wild adventures in order to have a life interesting enough to write about. Though she ended up writing about the ancient heroes of early Throal, the realistic details of combat and danger in her poems and stories are drawn from her own experiences. Kelassa has not actively used her magical talents for a long

time, but remains a Fourth Circle Troubadour and Third Circle Swordmaster.

Though Kelassa is approaching middle age as dwarfs reckon it, she still appears youthful and vibrant. She often wears robes of a particularly brilliant orange, her favorite color. She is a passionate individual politically and personally; a list of her former lovers would make even more compelling reading than her epic poems, as that list includes the Names of famed dwarfs of humble and noble birth. Some whisper that she was once Varulus III's lover, before or after his marriage to Dollas. Gamemasters interested in exploring this relationship may choose between the options given below.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (18): 7/D12
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 12
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 42 (72)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 12
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (69)

* Kelassa knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Karma Points: 21
Karma Step: 4/D6

Swordmaster Talents

Avoid Blow[D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Heartening Laugh (3): 11/D10+D8
Maneuver[D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Riposte[D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Throwing Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6
Wound Balance (3): 9/D8+D6

Troubadour Talents

Durability (6/5) (5): 5
Emotion Song[D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Empathic Sense[D] (4): 12/2D10
First Impression (4): 12/2D10
Item History (4): 10/D10+D6
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Melee Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Mimic Voice[D] (4): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language[D] (4): 10/D10+D6
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, T'skrang
Speak Language[D] (4): 10/D10+D6
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, T'skrang
Taunt (5): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Story Weaving)[D] (4): 10/D10+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Poetry (6): 14/D20+D4
Storytelling (5): 13/D12+D10

Knowledge:
Ancient Throal History (6): 12/2D10
Throal Politics (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Conversation (5): 13/D12+D10
Etiquette (4): 12/2D10
Flirting (5): 13/D12+D10
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Seduction (4): 12/2D10
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Windling
Streetwise (4): 10/D10+D6

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/Cloaksense Brooch)

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Bolas (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 12–20–24)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)

Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; Charisma-only Tests +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Embroidered Robe
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

50 silver pieces

Legend Points

265 Legend Points

Note

Kelassa possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests.

Option One

Kelassa was Varulus' first love. Varulus wanted to marry her, but his father and grandmother considered her too wild and unpredictable for a royal consort. Though the royal family pressured Varulus to break his ties to Kelassa, the two of them secretly conceived a child together. Kelassa left Throal to have the baby, sending word to Varulus that she had suffered a miscarriage during a kaer adventure. Though she loved Varulus, she did not want to be a member of the royal family, and chose to hide her child's existence because she knew a royal bastard would only cause problems for Varulus later on. In a letter, Varulus broke off the relationship, blaming Kelassa's reckless ways for the loss of his child. Kelassa arranged for the child, a healthy baby boy Named Yacus (YAY-cuss), to be raised by distant relatives in an outlying settlement. She also saved the letter from Varulus, just in case.

The intervening years before Varulus' death had healed the once-bitter rift between them. They did not discuss per-

sonal matters, and made good political allies. Kelassa has become a close friend of Dollas, but has not told her the full story of her relationship to Varulus. If Neden's rule ever threatens to wound Throal, or he turns into a monarch hostile to the *Council Compact*, Kelassa is ready to pluck the first-born son of Varulus from obscurity and fight to crown him king.

Option Two

Varulus and Kelassa grew up together as playmates; they shared no relationship deeper than adolescent puppy-love. Rivals of the king who wish to portray him in a bad light sometimes spread rumors of a more serious illicit relationship, with or without the addition of an illegitimate heir to the throne. Some misguided devotees of Kelassa's works also tell this tale, finding supposed "clues" to her royal affair in her poems.

SELENDA

"Point of privilege, Your Highness! Point of privilege!"

Anyone wondering why the king dislikes the courtier tradition need only look to Selenda for an answer. Selenda is the matriarch of House Ueraven, a wealthy family of Huari tribal ancestry. Just as her forebears opposed Varulus' grandfather and father, Selenda of Ueraven voiced loud objections to Varulus and his policies, and continues to do so with King Neden.

The dispute between House Ueraven and the royal family goes back centuries, to the time when the last king of House Korelsed died without an heir. In accordance with tradition, the noble families met to choose a new king. House Ueraven claims that they were given the throne, and that other nobles reneged. Official history maintains that support for House Ueraven's claim was based largely on coercion. Members of House Avalus exposed these machinations, and that house was then selected to lead Throal. Despite bitter censure from the other noble families, Ueraven vowed to fight on for the throne. The new king nipped the Ueraven rebellion in the bud with a successful military assault on House Ueraven's troops, who were headquartered in the mountain city of Jalasa. After a brief skirmish, the defeated Ueraven family was forced to swear fealty to the new monarch. Most of Throal's citizens regard this incident as a dusty footnote in history, if they think of it at all. The children of House Ueraven, by contrast, have grown up on tales of the perfidy of House Avalus in every generation since. Now that House Avalus has been reduced to a mere handful of dwarfs, Selenda is laying the foundation for House Ueraven's succession to the throne. Selenda has secured support among old-guard nobles, who feel that Varulus' *Council Compact* deprives them of the natural benefits of high birth. With this support, Selenda might well succeed in a bid for the throne if something happens to Neden.

Because their sworn enemies proposed it, the Ueraven bitterly fought the *Council Compact*. Since its inception, they have become the focus of conservative elements in the dwarf nobility who see the *Compact* as a threat to their power. In order to strengthen the loyalty of these allies, Selenda must be seen as a strong opponent of the *Compact*, and so she regularly rails against it at court. She is especially tenacious when Neden attempts to introduce measures that threaten the status of the rich and well-bred in Throal. Selenda takes a special interest in civil and criminal court cases where nobles are pitted against common citizens, and excels at exerting pressure on the king. When she has no major issues with which to involve herself, she ties the court up in procedural matters. Though her post as courtier is purely ceremonial by law, her influential allies make her an adversary to be reckoned with. On more than one occasion, Selenda's efforts alone have frustrated the king and his advisers in their efforts to pursue a specific goal.

Though she does not make a regular practice of it, Selenda is even willing to engage in petty crimes to harass the regime. However, she is smart enough to avoid supporting major conspiracies that could backfire and permanently disqualify House Ueraven from the next struggle for succession. If the Denairastas had presented Selenda with their plan to assassinate King Varulus III, she would have turned the conspirators over to the authorities immediately; the appearance of ultimate loyalty would bring her the maximum political advantage. Selenda considers herself a loyal servant of Throal, if not of King Neden, and refuses to conspire with the kingdom's external enemies. She opposed House Ueraven's still-unproved involvement in the coup attempt of 1484 TH, arguing that the risks of open rebellion were too high. In the aftermath of the Death Rebellion, Ueraven's leaders lost their positions in the house and Selenda



took over. House Ueraven made quite a bit of silver before the Scourge through business partnerships with Thera, but Selenda has no particular love for the Empire. She opposed Varulus' anti-slavery campaign partly out of habit and partly because she sees no value in it—she sees only the great cost of a war with Thera over the issue. To keep the chances of such a war at a minimum, Selenda fights any efforts to step up pressure on the Therans in Barsaive.

Forceful to a fault, Selenda dominates other members of her family, and expects other people to agree with her if she makes a point strongly enough. In the eyes of the weak-willed and insecure, she has a certain charisma. More strong-minded people consider her abrupt and arrogant. Like many who are sure of themselves, Selenda tends to ignore information that does not fit her preconceived notions. For example, she does not realize that many other conservative nobles dislike her and would be unlikely to support her, or a Ueraven member under her thumb, for the throne. The old guard considers Selenda a useful handful of sand to throw in the king's eyes, but do not see her as their future queen. Like his father before, King Neden despises Selenda; she intimidates him, though he would never admit it.

Selenda has a flat, broad face and large, frog-like lips. She wears too much make-up, applying absurd amounts of rouge to her sunken cheeks. In a manner now out of fashion, she powders her face and hair, which gives her a ghoulish appearance. She wears a strong perfume, also hopelessly out of date, that arrives in a room several paces ahead of her and refuses to depart when she leaves.

Selenda is a non-adept dwarf courtier.

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 4/D6 **Strength** (9): 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8 **Perception** (13): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12 **Charisma** (10): 5/D8*

* Add +3 to Selenda's Charisma step when dealing with characters of Charisma step 4 or lower.

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5 **Initiative**: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor**: 0
Social Defense: 6 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 34 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Combat Movement: 12 **Full Movement**: 24

Skills

Artisan:
Wardrobe and Style (3): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Ancient Throal History (4): 10/D10+D6
Intrigue (5): 11/D10+D8
Throal Economics (4): 10/D10+D6
Throalic Law (5): 11/D10+D8
Throal Politics (7): 13/D12+D10

General:
Bribery (5): 10/D10+D6
Conversation (5): 10/D10+D6
Etiquette (6): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*
Streetwise (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Courtier Hat
Makeup Kit
Mirror
Quiet Pouch
Perfume Vial
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

70 silver pieces, Gold Earrings (worth 100 silver pieces)

Legend Points

100 Legend Points

Note

Selenda possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Tholon

"A true follower of the traditional ways supports his king unconditionally."

Tholon is the eldest courtier currently attending the king. His dignified manner, his familiarity with the precedents of Throalic history, and his personal experience in politics are all highly valued by his fellow courtiers. He speaks sparingly at court, but when he does, people listen. A conciliator by nature, Tholon often defuses confrontations instigated by Selenda or other troublesome courtiers. A genuine traditionalist, he believes that the word of the king is beyond question. To Tholon, King Neden deserves the loyalty of all Throalites simply because he sits upon the throne; the specific policies he chooses to adopt are beside the point. If Neden were to announce Throal's submission to the Therans tomorrow, Tholon would continue to support him unwaveringly. Privately, Neden is troubled by this unquestioning loyalty, though he does not stop Tholon from eloquently defending him in public.

Tholon is the head of House Elcomi, a family that became rich during the Therans' rule over Barsaive. House Elcomi has not aggressively pursued the available business opportunities in the new Barsaive, seemingly content to draw revenues from its properties in Throal and from investments in the business initiatives of more active houses. Tholon could shake up more than a few houses by calling in these loans, which makes several house leaders reluctant to support Selenda or other opposition forces; Tholon's wrath would be very bad for their business. If the royal line dies out, Tholon would become a wild card; without a legitimate sovereign on the throne, his loyalties would be anybody's guess. Tholon wants to avoid a struggle for succession at all costs, and on several occasions has privately harrumphed to



Dollas that Neden should get himself married and start producing offspring without further delay. King Neden regards Tholon as a surrogate grandfather, and is closer to him than he was to his father.

Tall for a dwarf, Tholon stands four feet, six inches high. He is also unusually thin and frail, and walks with the aid of a cane. His large, bony nose resembles a parrot's beak.

Tholon is an n0n-adept dwarf courtier.

Attributes

Dexterity (9): 4/D6
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (15): 6/D10
Willpower (16): 7/D12
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 31
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 14
Full Movement: 28

Skills

Artisan:
Storytelling (3): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Throal Economics (5): 11/D10+D8
Throal History (7): 13/D12+D10
Throal Politics (6): 12/2D10

General:
Etiquette (5): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)

Equipment

Quarterstaff (Damage 6/D10)

Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

70 silver pieces

Legend Points

100 Legend Points

Note

Tholon possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

WISHTEN

"Cheer up, Dalubian! Certainly the muckers are a difficult bunch. Rut you can charm them if you put your mind to it! I know you can!"

The current Chancellor and foremost advisor to the king is Wishten, a likable male dwarf widely hailed as one of the greatest players of *hach'var* who ever lived (*Hach'var* is a team sport popular in Throal; for details, see **Hach'var**, p. 53). Wishten no longer plays the game; knee injuries make it difficult for him to walk, much less engage in sports. A member of the royalist House Elcomi, he was appointed chancellor as a stopgap measure more than ten years ago. Varulus III hoped to convince Kelassa to take the post, but she was busy writing an epic poem and turned down the job. Wishten has performed surprisingly well as chancellor, and Neden would not dream of replacing him now. A natural leader, Wishten has a casual, cheerful manner much different from the usual dour, deliberative dwarf official. He has a good memory for details, an optimistic attitude and plenty of common sense. Like, the coach of a *hach'var* team, he gets good results from his subordinates by making them feel confident of their abilities.

The number one target of his confidence-instilling skills is King Neden. Wishten is aware that Neden depends heavily on him, especially in these first few years of the young king's rule. Wishten is doing his best to ensure that the king learns to trust himself, so that he can survive the storm that has broken upon him. Though good at carrying out orders, Wishten is not a great political thinker. He sees both sides of any thorny issue, including the question of stepping up hostilities against Thera.

Wishten is a non-adept dwarf advisor.

Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

* Wishten knows the Wound Balance skill.

Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20

Skills

Artisan:
Storytelling (3): 10/D10+D6

Knowledge:
Hach'var Strategy (5): 10/D10+D6
Throal History (5): 10/D10+D6
Throal Politics (3): 8/2D6

General:
Avoid Blow (3): 7/D12
Heartening Laugh (5): 12/2D10
Maneuver (3): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (3): 7/D12
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*
Unarmed Combat (3): 7/D12
Wound Balance (3): 7/D12

Equipment

Quarterstaff (Damage 8/2D6)

Belt Pouch
Traveler's Garb

Loot

25 silver pieces

Legend Points

75 Legend Points

Note

Wishten possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.



On the Administration

The Chancellery, a small civil service commanded by the king's chancellor, carries out the king's decrees. As the one responsible for the practical running of affairs in the dwarf kingdom, the chancellor holds a vital position. As the scholar Merrox once observed, "No great kings were ever served by incompetent chancellors, but brilliant chancellors made several mediocre kings seem great." Each king appoints his own chancellor; courtiers and *chav'ao'ros* delegates might voice their opinions on a candidate, but the monarch alone decides who fills the position.

Officers of the Court, of which there are currently five, serve the chancellor. They in turn delegate royal orders to be carried out by the rank-and-file Officers of the King. Many officers have young assistants, who begin as apprentice officers and are promoted to the position of deputy officer before attaining their full authority. Each Officer of the Court is assigned certain responsibilities on a more-or-less permanent basis. For example, Officer of the Court Dalubian takes care of waste disposal issues, while Officer of the Court Azakis keeps an eye on relations between the races in Throal.

The Chancellery oversees the smallest details of life in the Halls of Throal, from repairing buildings and roads to licensing businesses. People who need things fixed or who seek redress in disputes with neighbors must first approach an Officer of the King. If unsatisfied, they may petition an Officer of the Court, then the Chancellor, and finally the king himself. The Chancellery devotes most of its resources first to the assessment and collection of taxes, second to public works.

In the Inner Cities, administrative arrangements are made by the various noble families chartered to run each city. The Chancellery communicates the king's wishes to these families, each of whom maintains its own Chancellery; there is a Chancellery of Yistane, a Chancellery of Bethabal, and so on. When Throalites speak simply of "the Chancel-

lery," they mean the Chancellery of Throal, which is also sometimes referred to as the Royal Chancellery.

Of Citizenship

No one in Barsaive has an automatic right to live in Throal, or even necessarily to enter it. Permanent citizenship and legal residence in the dwarf kingdom are under the jurisdiction of the Royal Chancellery.

Throalic citizenship belongs to anyone born in Throal, and any child born to a Throalic citizen is automatically eligible for citizenship upon registration with the Chancellery. Because the Throalic government wants people to move to Throal, any Name-giver who wishes to may apply for citizenship, and the process for obtaining legal rights of residence is simple and friendly. The applicant (and his family, if any) attends an interview with a Deputy Officer of the Royal Court, during which the applicant will be asked about his family background, place of birth, and occupation. In addition, the officer asks the applicant why he wants to move to Throal. Finally, all applicants must prove that they have reasonable prospects for supporting themselves. The interviewing officer has the right to summarily reject an application, but does so only in extreme cases. Those few applicants rejected tend to be suspected or known criminals.

Certain types of applicants are favored over others, especially Theran exiles and adepts. Throal welcomes Theran exiles for propaganda reasons, especially if they are willing to provide useful information or speak out against their former homeland. King Neden knows that this policy risks letting double agents into the dwarf kingdom, but he considers the risk worth the benefit. Varulus III wanted Throal to be a home to mighty heroes who would fight for it in time of need, and so adepts and adventurers are welcomed and encouraged to swear fealty to the king.

A Name-giver need not become a citizen in order to live in Throal. However, citizenship brings several benefits with it. Anyone living in Throal for more than two months is subject to taxation, and citizens are taxed at a lower rate than non-citizens. Citizens may participate in the *chav'ao'ros* and so influence the king's decisions. Finally, the Throalic government may intervene on behalf of its citizens when they get into trouble outside the kingdom, though this latter benefit is not guaranteed. Such aid depends on how well known or well connected the citizen in question is, and whether or not he can get word of his plight back to Throal.

Anyone who commits an illegal act may be stripped of citizenship rights, temporarily or permanently. Royal Guards stationed at the entrance to the kingdom, as well as the entrances to the Halls of Throal in the Grand Bazaar, keep a list of exiles on hand and briefly interview the people passing through the gates to make certain no one under a sentence of banishment gets inside the kingdom. The system is less than foolproof; the Scroll of Exile, as it is called, contains Names and descriptions, but no portraits. Smooth-talking exiles can usually get past the guards, but they tend to run into trouble inside the gates, when people who know them spot and report them. Exiles caught by the gate guards are subject to severe flogging. Those apprehended in Throal are usually executed.

If your player characters are prone to trouble with authority figures but want to spend time in Throal, present a scene in which they witness the capture or execution of an illegally returned exile. This scene should reinforce the idea that the characters cannot easily return to Throal if they get themselves expelled.

On Law and Justice

The rule of law is central to the lives of dwarfs in general and Throalites in particular. As the noted scholar Derron Killat has pointed out, the dwarfs' own Name for themselves can be translated as "People of the Law."

It is a common belief among the people of Throal that the way to create an ideal society is to first create an ideal set of laws. Therefore it is not surprising that King Varulus II, when seeking to reform both Throal and all of Barsaive, decided to accomplish his reforms through that extraordinary legal document, the *Council Compact*.

On the Council Compact

Though most Throalites claim some degree of familiarity with the *Council Compact*, very few have read it in its entirety. Weighing in at over 200,000 words, it is a massive text, especially by the standards of the world of **Earthdawn**, where books are laboriously copied by hand. Few complete versions of the *Council Compact* exist, as only advocates (Throal's equivalent of lawyers) bother to have unabridged versions made. A much-consulted complete version is available for the perusal of citizens visiting the Great Library; the book is the centerpiece of the library's main reading room.

The drafting of the *Compact* took nearly twenty years. Much of this time was given over to spirited debate between the king, his courtiers and advisers, other nobles, philosophers, military officials, questors, merchants, businessmen and scholars. This symposium of the great minds of Throal was restricted to the elite, but the result could hardly have been better for the average citizen; the document ended up affirming the essential equality of all Name-givers. In its new definitions of personal rights, it logically developed the idea that no individual, regardless of wealth or status, should have greater rights than another.

The *Council Compact* was completed in 1270 TH, during the Scourge, though minor amendments have been made to it regularly since then. The king may exercise his right to alter the *Compact* at any time, but Varulus III had always been extremely reluctant to do this. In fact, he had spent a great deal of his reign fending off petitions from conservative-minded noble houses to soften the *Compact's* reforms. The more the economic power of the noble trading houses grows, the more they resent the limits the *Compact* imposes on them.

One of Varulus' unfulfilled objectives was to limit the ability of future kings—or anyone else—to easily amend the *Compact*. He wanted to elevate it from the status of law

book to a genuine constitution, but he was unable to do much more than dream about accomplishing this. Before his death, Varulus devoted a great deal of time to this issue in his briefing sessions with his son. He believed Neden would be deluged with demands to nullify major portions of the *Compact* before his corpse had cooled, and did his best to fortify his son against the onslaught.

The *Council Compact* consists of the following sections:

Preamble

Supposedly a mere introduction to the volume of laws to follow, this rigorous philosophical argument is in fact the longest portion of the book. Here the reader finds the stirring language that inspires Throal's allies and arouses unease in the hearts of Therans. The Preamble begins by describing various systems of law known to the drafters of the *Compact*. Each is in turn described, its flaws and strengths examined. The final system of laws described is one adopted during the early years of the now-vanished dwarf kingdom of Scytha. The Preamble judges it superior to the existing systems, and a worthy starting point for Throalic law. In a long tangent, the downfall of Scytha is traced to its abandonment of this first legal code. The drafters then examine the fundamental precepts underlying that code. From there they postulate a series of possible precepts for the ideal set of laws. What should be the basis of all law? Adherence to tradition? The words of the Passions, as interpreted by questors? Or should laws be based on a concept of "common sense," apart from high-flown principles and complicated philosophical questions? This section summarizes the various arguments of the participants in the Council of 1270 TH. Finally, a particularly stirring passage states that the basis of any set of laws must be the rights accorded to the citizens who will live by them. The Preamble then seeks to establish what, if anything, should divide classes of citizens with regard to the rights they are granted by law. In this section appears the famous passage stating that all Name-givers must be granted the same rights, and condemning slavery as an affront to logic and decency. The Preamble concludes by discussing the practicality of laws, and how seemingly small decisions in a law book can profoundly shape the society for which the laws are made.

The Tales

The *Compact* next makes what seems like a strange detour. It recounts a number of legends: the Cabinet of Dragons, the Parliament of Mermaids, the One-Armed Dwarf, and the One-Legged Ork, among others. Slowly, a theme develops; all the stories deal with the responsibilities of rulers and the rights of those they govern. The first few stories concern tyranny and oppression; later stories are optimistic tales of heroes who build things, increase knowledge, and create social harmony.

The Precedents

This section is similar to the one that precedes it, except that its stories concern the actions of past kings of Throal. These legends have been carefully selected to prove that the reforms of the *Compact* are not a departure from Throalic history, but a logical culmination of it. It tells of kings faced with difficult decisions who reach just conclusions that favor the common person. Its stirring stories of war and conquest show kings who create harmony through rule based on a respect for peace rather than mere military or personal might. The stories are arranged in chronological order. The early ones are written in ringing, mythic language; the later, more down-to-earth stories read more like history.

The Transcripts

The Transcripts is a dialogue between participants at the drafting of the *Council Compact*, in which they analyze the practical effects of certain laws. This entire section revolves around a single, vital question; now that the principles of the new society have been established, how can they be put into effect with the least disruption to established ways? The apparent opinions of Varulus II are put into the mouth of his Chancellor, a woman Named Takilla. The primary dissenter is the merchant Philibus of House Ueraven; as the Transcripts continue, Philibus forces Takilla to strengthen her arguments and think more carefully about the consequences of the king's plans. The section ends with Philibus claiming to have played a dissenter's role simply to improve the end result. Given House Ueraven's traditional opposition to reform, however, it is likely that this bit of harmony was added in the editing process.

The Code

The largest section of the *Compact*, aside from the Preamble, contains the laws by which Throalites now live. Each entry begins with an Edict, a bare statement of a law. The Edict is followed by a Justification, a sometimes brief, sometimes wordy explanation of the intent behind the law. The final section of each entry is the Penalty, a recommended range of punishments to be meted out to those who disobey the Edict in question.

The Code organizes the hodgepodge of pre-existing Throalic laws, along with those developed during and after the drafting of the *Compact*, into three sections according to the seriousness of the penalties for disobedience. Violations of Throalic laws fall into three classes: infractions, offenses and crimes. Infractions are violations of the civil laws and regulations that set out the everyday rules of life in Throal: qualifications for citizenship, how much noise one may make at night, how much refuse each household may produce without paying additional costs, and so on. Offenses cover minor misbehaviors such as cheating a customer or engaging in a brawl (provided the brawl does no permanent harm). Crimes are major transgressions against Throal and its citizens, including murder, housebreaking, and engaging in slavery.

Within these three classes, the laws are organized according to the Throalic alphabet by the first letter of the first sentence of each law's Edict. This unhelpful arrangement keeps the kingdom's advocates busy. The Great Library periodically announces—and then delays—plans to issue an annotated version of the *Compact* with an index, but for the time being the format of the volume makes Throalic law inaccessible except to legal professionals.

The *Council Compact* limits the types of punishments

that the king and his magistrates—referred to as "delegates" in the legal text—may mete out to offenders. If a punishment is not mentioned in a given entry, neither king nor magistrate can impose it on an offender who breaks the law unless the king first officially amends that law.

The most common punishment is a fine; depending on the transgression, the silver pieces go either to the treasury or to the wronged individual(s). Infractions can only be punished by fines, each with a specific limit. Offenses and crimes may also involve fines, in addition to more serious punishments.

A passage in the Preamble specifically outlaws the permanent maiming of offenders, a common practice that continued until the day on which the *Compact* was proclaimed. The Code allows public flogging, but provides that a healer must be on hand to repair any otherwise permanent injuries caused by the beating. Many traditionalists who oppose the *Compact* want to see maiming brought back, a position that garners them some support among the common folk who are most likely to be victimized by criminals. Rarely imposed on anyone since the end of the Scourge, the death penalty may be assessed as punishment for the most heinous crimes. Execution is most often done by spell, though more traditional methods such as hanging and beheading may also be used.

Though the *Compact* says nothing about the matter, Throalic law has no tradition of imprisoning offenders for long periods of time. The Royal Guards may take individuals into custody until their cases are adjudicated. They may also be subjected to humiliating public display in the Cage, a large metal crate suspended near one of the entrances to the Grand Bazaar. Passersby frequently jeer at inhabitants of the Cage and pelt them with stones and rotting food. Most people sentenced to the Cage are transients and other noncitizens, and those sentenced to this punishment sometimes must share the Cage's limited space with an offender even less savory than themselves. The maximum sentence in the Cage allowed under the *Compact* is one month; transgressions that require the criminal to be separated from society are punished by temporary or permanent exile rather than imprisonment.

The least of the punishments for lawbreaking is censure, in which public criers announce the details of the transgressor's act throughout the halls and cities of Throal. Throalic citizens take meticulous records of their legal proceedings, and people who have been censured in the past are likely to receive stiffer penalties if they are judged guilty of further offenses or crimes.

Forced labor is another popular punishment. The Preamble states that work undertaken for the greater good has a cleansing effect on the soul, and allows a lawbreaker to compensate for his actions through public service. Transgressors sentenced to forced labor must usually work for a set number of hours on specific public works projects. Able-bodied lawbreakers are put on excavation detail; infirm ones join cleaning units. If the transgressor has a useful profession or skill, he may be forced to use it for the benefit of the kingdom. Adepts who break Throalic law may be assigned to carry out missions that serve the king's purposes.

Another principle of the *Compact* that traditionalists despise is its insistence that rich and influential citizens be punished more harshly than ordinary folk when they break the law. Accordingly, most convictions permit the king to strip public offices from those who hold them. The only way that a king can remove a courtier from his position is to convict that courtier of a serious crime. Theoretically, a king convicted of such a crime may be deposed.

Refusing to cooperate with authorities carrying out a sentence is also an offense under Throalic law, one that permits escalating penalties. For example, a convicted offender who refuses to pay a fine may be sentenced to a higher fine or to forced labor. Theoretically, a recalcitrant offender could end up with a death sentence if he is stupid enough to refuse to submit to a minor penalty.

The most famous law in the *Council Compact* appears below as an example of the Code.

> ***Edict**: All Name-givers are masters of their own souls, and none may be enslaved to the will of another.*
>
> ***Justification**: As proven in the Preamble, no Name-giver is fundamentally more worthy than another. Therefore it is an affront to basic principles for one Name-giver to claim ownership over another. No Name-giver can become property. The equality of all Name-giver souls is a fundamental right that cannot be forfeited, either willingly or through coercion. Name-givers may enter into contractual relationships with one another and perform services for one another in exchange for payment or for other services. But they may not own one another. It is an offense against the people and throne of Throal to claim ownership over another Name-giver, to sell another Name-giver as property, or to knowingly aid and abet the practice of slavery in any manner.*
>
> ***Penalty**: These crimes are among the gravest possible, and therefore carry the gravest possible punishments. Those judged guilty of claiming ownership over other Name-givers shall be stripped of all proceeds from their illegal claims of ownership, and shall forever forfeit all claims to public office within Throal. They may also, at the discretion of the king and his delegates, face some or all of the following penalties: the forfeiture of all property and of Throalic citizenship, a sentence in the Cage not to exceed one month, or public flogging.*
>
> *Those judged guilty of selling Name-givers into slavery shall forever forfeit all property, all claims to public office within Throal, and Throalic citizenship. They may, at the discretion of the king, be put to death.*
>
> *Those judged guilty of knowingly aiding and abetting the practice of slavery face penalties at the discretion of the king and his delegates. These penalties may include censure, forced labor, fines, or forfeiture of rights within Throal. Such penalties may be combined.*

On Taxes and Taxation

One of the most important parts of the Code, Throal's tax laws, is tucked away in the section dealing with infractions. Wealthy citizens must pay a much higher percentage of their income than citizens of modest means, and are much more heavily penalized should they be judged guilty of evading taxes. Tax law is the portion of the *Compact* that Neden's political rivals in Throal hate the most. Throal has high taxes, mostly because of the amount it spends on guards and other security measures. The nobles like being safe, but dislike having to pay for that privilege. Like most bitter political fights, the struggle between the reformers and traditionalists comes down to silver and gold.

Like any resident of Throal, player characters who live there must pay taxes. Tax collectors from the Chancellery visit each Throalic residence once a year in the month of Rua and make a tax assessment for each adult individual. Throal's tax code is no less convoluted and loaded with qualifiers than any other dwarf-written legal document, and so tax assessments can vary widely from person to person. Throalic citizens have the right to appeal their assessments to the king, but Neden is widely known to reject most such petitions without a second look.

On Paying Taxes

Few gamemasters or player characters consider filling out elaborate tax forms an important part of an action-adventure story. The **Tax Table**, below, lets the gamemaster easily determine the percentage of a character's declared income which he must pay to the government each month.

First, decide whether the character's income qualifies the person in question as poor, average, or rich. Adventurers are usually counted as rich unless they work for the Throalic government. The number given in the table is the base tax rate for each category, representing the minimum percentage of income claimed as tax revenue by the Chancellery. Once you determine the base tax rate, make a Step 4/D6 Tax Test and add the result to the base rate to determine the actual percentage at which the character will be taxed.

TAX TABLE

Status	Citizen	Resident Non-Citizen
Poor	5%	7%
Average	20%	25%
Rich	45%	55%

# of Justice in Action

Throal's Royal Guards investigate infractions, offenses and crimes. They patrol regularly throughout Throal, and pursue and detain anyone they see breaking the law. Citizens may also report infractions, offenses, or crimes by going to their local guard station.

In the case of infractions, every unit commander of the Royal Guards may assess guilt or innocence on the spot and levy appropriate fines up to the limits specified in the *Compact*. The guards do not collect the fines; instead, each commander notes each fine on a scroll, which is later handed over to the Chancellery for collection. Tax collectors demand the actual coin. Once a demand is made, anyone who believes he has been unfairly convicted may lodge an appeal with a magistrate. These officials act as overseers of all Royal Guard patrols in a given neighborhood. If a magistrate strikes down a conviction, the guard commander who levied the fine must pay the amount of the fine to the treasury. This provision discourages guard commanders from making snap decisions, and creates a certain amount of tension between patrollers and their superiors. If the magistrate upholds a conviction, the guilty party must pay the fine or face further penalties. Magistrates are accountable to the Chancellery, which regularly audits each guard station. The *Compact* imposes stiff penalties for official corruption, which has so far held the system's potential for abuse in check.

Guard commanders investigate and charge parties suspected of offenses and crimes, but do not assess guilt. For these types of transgressions, the Royal Guards refer the cases to the local magistrate. A defendant accused of an offense is told when to appear before the magistrate. If charged with a crime, the defendant is taken into custody and held in the central jail in the Hall of Justice. In either case, the magistrate holds a hearing at which the evidence against the defendant is presented, and the defendant is permitted to give his side of the story. The magistrate may interrogate both the guard commander presenting the evidence and the defendant. No other witnesses speak at the hearing; the guard sums up any eyewitness testimony.

In the case of an offense, the magistrate judges the defendant's guilt or innocence and then assesses a penalty or penalties from the choices provided in the *Compact*. The defendant may appeal either the verdict or the punishment by seeking an audience with the king. If the king agrees to hear the appeal, the audience is held before the full court, with courtiers and advisers present. The risk of seeking such an audience is that the king may increase the penalty if he affirms the defendant's guilt. Magistrates often levy less than the maximum penalty for offenses in order to give defendants something to lose should they launch a frivolous appeal.

In the case of a crime, the magistrate does not pass ultimate judgment on the accused. Instead, he prepares a report to present to the king at court. The report outlines the case and concludes with a recommended verdict and punishment. The king may accept the recommendation without comment, or may ask the magistrate questions about the case. The king then renders a verdict and assesses a penalty if the verdict is guilty. The defendant may appeal either the verdict or the sentence by requesting an audience with the king. By tradition the king may not turn down such a request, though the *Council Compact* says nothing on the matter. (In fact, the *Compact* contains nothing at all about the actual administration of justice; it merely sets out the laws and the reasoning behind them.)

Defendants in any of the three categories may choose to be represented by advocates, professional pleaders with an intimate knowledge of the law and the people who administer it. Hiring an advocate for an infraction is generally a bad idea; it slows down the process and irritates guards

and magistrates, who may then retaliate with guilty verdicts and harsher sentences. Good advocates can have a major impact on offense and crime cases, however. They can put a friendly face on a defendant who may be defiant, frightened, or confused. They can employ their specialized knowledge of the Preamble and Precedents of the *Compact* to argue for lighter sentences. Most of them can talk rings around the typical gruff, no-nonsense guard commander. Advocates may also appear before the king in appeals or in crime cases on behalf of their clients.

Throalic law does not permit citizens to press civil charges against one another. However, the tradition of intervention allows citizens who accuse others of violating the law to petition for receipt of any fines levied once the cases have been judged. They can also petition for the benefits of any forced labor sentence—forcing an enemy to re-tile the front of one's home, for example, has a certain entertainment value for the injured party. If the accuser's case is considered just, the defendant frequently must pay a stiffer fine than the usual. Accusers whose cases are grossly unjust may be fined themselves for the infraction of false prosecution, with the proceeds going to the defendant. Varulus' distaste for sticky cases was legendary; he had been known to sentence everyone involved in a vexing case to street-sweeping duties. Most Throalites still consider it risky to launch an intervention without a good advocate.

Good advocates cost money, an aspect of the Throalic justice system that still favors the wealthy. King Neden dislikes advocates on principle, but likes many of them personally. A small but clever group, the advocates know that King Neden is inclined to restrict their influence where possible, and they therefore take pains to publicly support his other policies. By making themselves the king's invaluable allies, they protect their own position.

Advocates charge by the day, their rates ranging from 30 to 100 silver pieces. Trials are short in Throal, rarely lasting more than a few days to a week.

On the Royal Guards

The Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guards is a humorless, determined dwarf woman Named Vazilia. Born into the influential Garsun noble house, Vazilia rebelled against her conservative family by becoming an adventurer. Her parents disowned her out of spite. Though they later came to regret their actions and tried to reconcile with their daughter, Vazilia refused to speak with them. She has yet to formally rejoin house Garsun, and seems unlikely to do so. During the Death Rebellion of 1484 TH, she fought for King Varulus, and was afterward offered a post in the Royal Guards. She has served the king's interests unwaveringly since that day and was rewarded seven years ago with the top post in the Guards. Vazilia oversees a staff of seventeen magistrates, each of whom is in charge of an area in Throal or the Inner Cities with a population of about 10,000 people. Though the number of guards varies for each area depending on the need, each magistrate oversees a staff of about 40 Name-givers. Neighborhoods in the Inner Cities that are prone to racial fights have 60 to 70 guards per magistrate. Wealthy neighborhoods have even more guards, up to 120 per magistrate. The guards are divided into patrols of four Name-givers apiece, one of whom acts as commander.

Most members of the Royal Guards are dwarfs, which often worsens the racial squabbles that plague some of the Inner Cities. Dwarfs who grow up wanting to be guards tend to be traditionally minded. The whole notion of racial disharmony is new to them, and they are often at a loss to understand it. Longtime residents of Throal tend to see the Royal Guards as their friends and protectors, a role the guards cherish. When dealing with citizens disposed to like and trust them, they uphold public order in a firm but cheerful manner. Most longtime residents consider questioning by a Royal Guard a reassuring experience rather than a threatening one. In the new cities, the guards frequently take a harder approach, sometimes even coming to regard the people they are protecting as their enemies. So far the conflicts have been minor irritations, but unless someone does something soon about the attitude of many rank-and-file guards toward immigrant Name-givers (dwarfs included), Throal may find itself with a problem it will take generations to resolve.

Few guards are adepts, a distinction generally limited to commanders and magistrates. Of the adepts in the Royal Guards, adept magistrates tend to be retired adventurers who do not get personally involved in fights. All Royal Guards have a much higher level of combat training than the average Name-giver, and are well prepared for struggles with opponents of all abilities.

Average Royal Guard

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (18): 7/D12
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 9
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 42
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 12
Knockdown: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Skills

Artisan:
Weapon Runic Carving (6): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Throalic Law (6): 11/D10+D8
Throal Military Organization (6): 11/D10+D8

General:
Acrobatic Strike (6): 13/D12+D10
Avoid Blow (6): 13/D12+D10
Conversation (6): 11/D10+D8
Detect Weapon (6): 13/D12+D10
Disarm (6): 13/D12+D10
Evidence Analysis (6): 11/D10+D8
Maneuver (6): 13/D12+D10



Melee Weapons (6): 13/D12+D10
Missile Weapons (6): 13/D12+D10
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Resist Taunt (6): 12/2D10
Riposte (6): 13/D12+D10
Search (6): 11/D10+D8
Streetwise (6): 11/D10+D8
Speak Language (4): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, Troll
Tactics (6): 11/D10+D8
Taunt (6): 11/D10+D8
Throwing Weapons (6): 13/D12+D10
Unarmed Combat (6): 13/D12+D10

Equipment

Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1)
Ring Mail (Phys 6; Init 2)

Broadsword w/etched Throal seal
(Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; w/scabbard)
Club (Damage 10/D10+D6)
Sap (Damage 8/2D6)
2 × Bolas (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12–20–24)
Light Crossbow (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 50–100–200)
Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)
Belt Pouch
Carving Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 silver pieces, D12 copper pieces

Legend Points

500 Legend Points

Note

Royal Guards possess the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

On Justice and Adventurers

Some players may have no trouble with their characters abiding by the law in Throal. They will want their characters to use Throal as a home base because it is so safe compared to the rest of Barsaive; they can study, rest and gather information without worrying about being attacked by bandits or ferocious creatures. The threat of having their loot stolen, which should be omnipresent everywhere else, is virtually nonexistent in Throal because the *Compact* mandates that the government reimburse anyone whose property is stolen inside Throal's borders. The prominent role that the Royal Guards play in Throalic life makes this adventurer-friendly level of safety possible.

On the other hand, many players enjoy portraying characters who do not have to play by the rules. What's the fun of being a powerful adept if you still have to mind your manners and knuckle under to authority? Though player characters in **Earthdawn** are assumed to be at least somewhat heroic, they also tend to be outlaw heroes who make mistakes, cause trouble and generally wreak havoc with the social order.

A campaign set in order-loving Throal can quickly stop being fun for the players if the gamemaster emphasizes the authoritarian side of Throal's justice system. Getting arrested for petty offenses is not the stuff of legend. Luckily, the gamemaster can easily get around this potential problem. King Neden wants Throal to be a gathering place for adventurers, and so his official policy instructs guards to give visiting adepts the benefit of the doubt. Adventurers provide the king with vital information about Barsaive through the Great Library's journal purchases; also, if large numbers of adepts come to depend upon the amenities Throal offers them, they will come to its defense in times of need. Individual guardsmen also have personal reasons to treat known adepts with caution; if a fight breaks out, the guards are likely to get the worst of it.

This policy should not let player characters get away with serious crimes, however. A gamemaster who takes it that far risks damaging the credibility of the adventure's

background. Experienced adept characters can defeat a typical Royal Guard unit with little difficulty; however, many other adepts live in Throal who will come to the guards' aid in short order. If a fight breaks out between guards and player characters, assume that adept reinforcements will arrive within a minute or two.

It should be difficult for the player characters to evade capture under these circumstances, so choose the races and Disciplines of the reinforcements accordingly. You may want to use gamemaster characters who have already appeared in the story line. If you know your players well enough to assume that they will eventually end up in a brawl with the Royal Guards, you can prepare game statistics for the reinforcements in advance.

As a pointless fight with the law can easily derail your plans for an extensive Throal campaign, you may want to warn off the players if their characters are on the verge of such a brawl. Alternatively, you may want the characters to become defendants in the Throalic justice system as part of the adventure. Perhaps they have been framed and need to clear their Names, a classic plot line in adventure fiction. The experience may also be useful for shocking them into behaving more like heroes.

On Advocates

If player characters end up facing prosecution in Throal, they would be well advised to seek out skilled advocates. Following are some gamemaster characters who might fit the bill; their Names appear in boldface type. As dwarfs dominate the legal profession in Throal, these advocates are dwarfs unless otherwise noted.

Zomof the Unlucky is not a prosperous advocate. He earned his unfortunate nickname through spectacular failures in a string of high-profile cases, and most people do not know that his record in minor cases is fairly good. A few years, ago, Zomof acted on behalf of the accuser in an intervention fraud case and won a large purse of silver for his client. Unfortunately, and unbeknownst to all parties involved, the defendant was a powerful questor of Raggok, who proceeded to lay a curse upon the unfortunate advocate. The curse lowers Zomof's Charisma step by -1 when pleading a case before a magistrate, and by -2 when before the king. Zomof's price has gone down as his reputation has faded; at 30 silver pieces per day, he is the cheapest advocate in Throal.

Felerius is the favorite advocate of Throal's anti-reform faction. Gray-haired and venerable, he speaks with the cadence of authority. His manner before the court is calm and cool. He lays out the cases for his clients with clarity and humor. Members of the Royal Guard hate speaking in cases involving the great Felerius; he is notorious for his barbed wit and is quick to make verbal sport of a poorly educated guard. Though Felerius professes great respect for the *Council Compact*, he would lead the charge to dismantle it if the throne ever fell into conservative hands. Before his death, Varulus warned Neden to be extremely wary of Felerius.

Felerius usually takes tax cases for merchants and nobles, but excels at criminal cases involving the sons and daughters of the nobility. He will not defend player characters who reek of outlawry or rebellion, but would be pleased to work for those with a spotlessly heroic reputation. His fee ranges from 70 to 80 silver pieces per day, depending on a case's complexity.

Buna Wordmaker, an ork, is famed in Throal for her flamboyant manner and her dedication to justice for Throal's orks. When racial tensions flare up in the Inner Cities, the orks usually get the blame—or so Buna argues. Her overwhelming volume, apparent disrespect for authority and outrageous rhetoric ought to be a big impediment for an advocate in conservative Throal; however, Buna has a peculiar underdog charisma that even King Neden seems to find charming. Buna's personal magnetism allows her to get away with stunts that no other advocate would dream of. When she does go too far, her clients suffer for it, but her skill with words and her willingness to do anything for her clients keeps her purse full nonetheless. She charges 80 silver pieces per day for ork clients, 90 silver pieces for others.

Allinia is one of King Neden's most articulate defenders in public debate. Her political allegiance and reputation for honesty make her a powerful voice before king and magistrate alike. Though born into a family of wealthy traders, she is a devoted fighter for the downtrodden. She often accepts cases for defendants of modest means, balancing those smaller profits by charging her more well-to-do clients hefty fees. Allinia will only work for clients she believes to be innocent, and she will not quit in the middle of a trial, even if she suddenly becomes convinced of her client's guilt. Allinia will not offer her special low fees to adepts, even if they happen to be temporarily down on their luck. She knows that silver flows like water through the fingers of adventurers, and at best may be persuaded to take a percentage of future earnings from an adventurer who is in desperate financial straits. Her usual fee is 100 silver pieces per day.

The Threads of Unity

Personal Notes on the Official Diplomatic Ceremonies Attending the Anniversary of the Birth of His Highness, Crown Prince Neden. Not for Dissemination.

The ceremonies were held in the king's audience chamber. Present at the reception were Queen Dollas, the prince's grandmother Veroxa, Chancellor Wishten, and yours truly, Ambassador General Tramon. The prince arrived late. His Majesty the King was unable to attend.

Among those paying their respects to the prince were Geverian Half-Smile, emissary of Alachia, Queen of the Blood Wood; Bazana Gems-Dripping, delegate of the Magistrates' Council of Travar; Diona the Swift, Senior Slasher (such a title!) to Garlthik of Kratas; Dequaria Alandos, Representative of Urupa; and Ilio Shipwright, Designated Tradesmaster of Jerris.

Geverian Half-Smile arrived with His Highness the prince, both late. Both also appeared extremely cheerful, given the time of day. They had no doubt been celebrating

His Highness' birthday in a private manner. Prince Neden took his seat and asked that Geverian be ceded the floor in order to begin the official birthday greetings. Geverian proceeded to recite a piece of doggerel regarding the prince and an unfortunate romantic entanglement. I am not a literary critic, but it must be said that Geverian's so-called poem was in deliberately poor taste.

Diona the Swift, also known for unseemly familiarity between an ambassador and the heir to the throne, interjected with a similarly ribald commentary. Fearing that this simple formal event was about to bring disrespect upon the Crown Prince's position, I stepped forward and did my best to steer matters back toward official protocol. Thankfully, the queen was also aware of the potential for embarrassment and exercised her usual sensitivity. She nodded to her particular friend among the ambassadors, Dequaria Alandos of Urupa. Dequaria took the floor and spoke at some length in praise of Throal, the unique friendship between Urupa and Throal, and the qualities of statesmanship and propriety required in a leader of Name-givers.

It soon became clear that Dequaria was extemporizing, adding considerable length to her address. As her tribute expanded, Prince Neden managed to regain his composure and adopt the appropriate attitude of regal distance. I must remember to send Dequaria that bottle of pre-Scourge sparklewine as a token of thanks for her timely and effective intervention.

After Dequaria had finished, Ilio Shipwright of Jerris began to speak. Ilio's address, putatively a ceremonial paying of respects, included a subtext directed at me. Ilio wants Throal to discreetly make its voice heard in an internal dispute in Jerris. The traders wish to restrict the airship makers' production in order to maintain their monopoly on trade transport. Ilio, whose family Name speaks of his allegiance, wishes to see Throal weigh in against the traders. I now face the challenge of devising a response so thoroughly ambiguous that both factions consider it a sign of support. An Ambassador General's work is never done...

Bazana Gems-Dripping similarly larded her otherwise empty words with troublesome content. The council of Travar is presently straddling a river that is growing increasingly swift and treacherous. They wish to continue their lucrative association with Throal and also to maintain their dominance over their own often wretchedly poor people. If is a matter of no small discomfort to Travar's council that the downtrodden of Travar are increasingly drawn to the philosophy of equality underlying the Council Compact. *The common folk wish to push the rulers of Travar closer to the governing laws of Throal than Travar's rulers wish to be pushed. This leaves Throal on the horns of a truly difficult dilemma.*

It is indisputably in Throal's interest to keep Travar stable and prosperous, and it is just as indisputably in Throal's interest to extend the enlightened laws of the Compact *throughout Barsaive. The king wishes neither to repudiate the ideals of the* Compact *nor to encourage the agitators. How shall we manage this interesting balancing act? Prince Neden, though not quite expert in such delicate matters, noted the meaning in Bazana's words. From the fire in his eyes, it is clear that his sympathies lie with the agitators—a typically rash position, one from which I must work to move him.*

Open revolt in Travar would greatly disrupt trade for more than a few noble houses already disposed to think ill of the royal family, and the last thing we need is to add fuel to our own conflicts.

Fortunately, the rest of the proceedings went smoothly. Diona the Swift did not touch upon the punitive counter strikes recently launched by the Eye of Throal against the caravan raiders of Kratas—an interesting omission. Were the raiders sanctioned by Garlthik, or not? Hopefully, the truth of this matter will remain... indeterminate.

At length, thankfully, the audience meandered to a conclusion. Prince Neden left in the company of Geverian and Diona. With her eyes, the queen urged Neden to remain behind in order to receive instruction on the artful discharge of his responsibilities. Sadly, the prince chose to ignore her silent entreaties. It is as if he intentionally feeds the worries of those who imagine him upon King Varulus' throne. If only Neden's confidence were not so salted with willfulness... the transition from father to son will be a difficult one, I fear.

—From the Personal Diary of Tramon, Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, 1508 TH

Economically, culturally, and politically, the influence of Throal extends far beyond its borders. Among the important political institutions that shape Throal's relationship with the rest of Barsaive are its diplomats, intelligence officers and army.

Of Throal's Diplomatic Relations

Before addressing the specific organizations that help Throal shape its relations with other powers in Barsaive, it is important to look at the current state of diplomatic relations between the kingdom and some of the more prominent powers in Barsaive. This section discusses the official relationships between Throal and other power centers of Barsaive, including the representatives these powers have sent to Throal, and the ambassadors who represent Throal to them.

The Blood Wood

Relations between Throal and the Blood Wood are tense. Though elves and dwarfs live side by side throughout Barsaive in relative harmony, relations between elf and dwarf governments have been uneasy since the time of legends. Like many Barsaivians, the dwarfs were appalled by the corruption that the blood elves brought upon themselves in order to survive the Scourge. Throalic students of history learn that the elves were too haughty to accept Theran aid, and the fate of the Blood Wood is taught as an example of disaster brought about by foolish pride. Though the dwarfs of Throal had to swallow some of their scruples in order to ally with the Therans, their practicality proved superior to



the elves' intransigence—at least in the dwarfs' view.

As dwarfs are not shy about volunteering their advice, the blood elves are well aware of Throal's uncharitable judgment, and consider the dwarfs to be arrogant and naive. Queen Alachia had her own reasons for refusing to deal with the Therans, none of them as trivial as mere pride. Alachia believes that the Throalites will bend if the Therans make a serious push into Barsaive. Young blood elves are taught that the cynical dwarfs will eventually abandon their high ideals and once again become Theran lackeys, just as they did before the Scourge. Blood elves also learn early on that the Therans are dangerous beyond measure.

These mutually harsh perceptions are responsible for the strained relations between the two governments. Despite

their distrust, however, each wants to exert influence on the other. Neden wants Alachia to proclaim her opposition to slavery, or to make some other declaration indicating her support for the broad ideals of the *Council Compact*. Queen Alachia is hoping to ensure that Neden continues or even intensifies the conflict with Thera now that he has taken the throne.

Alachia's emissary in Throal is Geverian Half-Smile, an uncorrupted elf adventurer who has sworn allegiance to Alachia. Intelligent and sardonic, he has a fatalistic air that King Neden finds appealing. The two of them met on one of Neden's clandestine adventures into the hinterland, and saved each other's lives. Upon learning of Geverian's friendship with Neden, Alachia appointed him emissary to Throal. Relations between Throal and the Blood Wood are so strained that it is unusual for an emissary to maintain permanent quarters in the kingdom, but an exception has been made for Geverian because he is a comrade of the king. Geverian's orders are to cultivate his friendship with Neden and encourage him to harden his stance against Thera.

Alachia does not allow ambassadors to take up permanent residence within her domain. This is fine with the members of Throal's Diplomatic Corps, who have no wish to live within the Blood Wood's grim embrace. When a mission must be sent to the Elven Queen, Throal's Ambassador General usually saddles his son or daughter, both highly skilled and grudgingly respected diplomats in the corps, with the distasteful but important responsibility.

Iopos

The city-state of Iopos, ruled by the sorcerous Denairastas clan, is the sworn enemy of Throal and Thera. The Holders of Trust—the Iopan network of spies, bullies and enforcers—has proven quite skillful in its efforts to undermine Throal's attempts to unite Barsaive. Iopan agents repeatedly attempt to assassinate Throalic diplomats and other Barsaivians in negotiation with them, and often succeed. The Holders of Trust are known for cleverness, and they often disguise strikes at their enemies to look like the work of others. Rumor has it that many Holders reside in Throal; some people also suspect that many of Barsaive's living legend cults are fronts for the Holders of Trust. King Varulus III considered the Iopans a minor threat because they are far away from Throal and far less powerful militarily than the Theran Empire—a mistake he paid for with his life. Needless to say, Iopos turned into an enemy when their involvement in Varulus' assassination was revealed. Throal frequently sends spies to Iopos, but with limited success; anyone caught gathering intelligence in Iopos is subject to summary execution by the Holders of Trust.

Throal does not bar Iopan citizens from the dwarf kingdom, but keeps them under close surveillance. A small community of Iopan refugees living in Throal oppose the Denairastas clan and wish to reclaim their city from its corrupt overlords. These refugees claim what others have long suspected, that the Denairastas rule through sorcerous mind control. The refugees say that they escaped the city only because they have a higher than normal immunity to the effects of magic. Styling themselves the Iopan government in exile, the refugees are led by Chuhk Alabamarian, an aged human male. Alabamarian claims to be the rightful ruler of Iopos, tracing his lineage back to a pre-Scourge ruler. He treats his small knot of supporters as if he is a real ruler, ordering them around with an exacting devotion to discipline.

The refugees exist on the fringe of Throalic political life. Varulus III had persuaded them to adopt the laws of the *Council Compact* if they ever became the rulers of Iopos. However, Neden has not given them significant support because he believes that any aid short of an all-out effort to topple the Denairastas would be wasted. The Eye of Throal keeps a close eye on Alabamarian, for it would be entirely in character for the Denairastas to plant a colony of fake rebels in their enemy's midst.

Jerris

The grim city of Jerris considers itself one of Throal's important trade partners. Its downtrodden people subject themselves to the depressing, soul-eroding atmosphere of the nearby Wastes in order to get rich. Though Jerris looks geographically isolated, it is crucial to the movement of goods across Barsaive because it is located just beneath a swift air current that allows speedy transport of goods via airship. As in Throal, politics in Jerris are dominated by influential trading houses. According to contracts between the various trading houses of Jerris and Throal, Throal supplies the goods and Jerris the transport. These contracts have made fortunes for parties on both sides, and so Throal and Jerris seek to preserve good mutual relations.

The trading houses that run the city government from behind the scenes appoint the ambassador representing Jerris to Throal, drawn from among the several Tradesmasters General. The current Tradesmaster General to Throal is Ilio Shipwright, a corpulent human who wears expensive Throalic-style clothing. Once a shrewd and successful businessman, Ilio has dulled his senses for years on wine and other sensual pleasures. His appointment as Tradesmaster General to Throal was a maneuver to ease him out of an important position in a major airship manufacturing firm, allowing younger and hungrier relatives to take over. Ilio is quite pleased with his retirement post; he likes nothing better than spending city money on lavish parties in honor of Throal's trading magnates. He is quite popular with the nobility of Throal, particularly the old guard. King Varulus III considered him a blowhard and an idiot, an opinion shared by King Neden. Dollas, on the other hand, realizes that the old man has a little cleverness left in him, and has warned her son not to underestimate Ilio.

The Throalic ambassador to Jerris is Obakavim, a troll and, until recently, a prominent officer in the Dream Spire Trading Company. Obakavim's primary mission is to coordinate efforts between the Throalic trading houses so that they do not overbid one another when making transport contracts with Jerris' airship firms. The airship firms consider this an unfair trading practice. The trading houses of Jerris, who increasingly see the airship firms as rivals, are happy to see Throal driving a hard bargain.

Kratas

Surprisingly, Throal is on apparent good terms with Garlthik One-Eye, ruler of Barsaive's notorious city of thieves. Despite the fact that Throal represents law and order while the residents of Kratas symbolize banditry and chaos, recent history has made strange bedfellows of the cantankerous king of thieves and the noble king of dwarfs. Garlthik, an avowed foe of the Therans, rose to power by assembling an army of thieves and driving the imperialists from the ruined citadels of Kratas. His chief enemy, the gang leader Vistrosh, has from time to time allied himself with the Therans, who have not forgiven Garlthik for the humiliating defeat he dealt them. During the Death Rebellion, Garlthik played a pivotal role in thwarting an attempt by Throalic rebels to assassinate King Varulus III; the rebels had aid from the Therans and Vistrosh's gang.

Though they have a shared history, neither king is quite sincere toward the other. Garlthik helps Throal when it suits him, but also allows his bandits to attack Throalic caravans. He disavows knowledge of such assaults, of course, but neither Neden nor Ambassador General Tramon is naive enough to accept these protestations at face value. If the Therans are finally driven from Barsaive, Throal might well turn on Kratas, but that moment seems far distant. Until that day arrives (if ever), the pretense of friendship is mutually beneficial. Garlthik wins balm for his ego; the greatest king of the region treats him as an equal. Neden and his advisers keep a troublesome ally in plain view; it is better to have Kratas at your side than behind your back.

Kratas' ambassador to Throal is Diona the Swift. Her official title is Senior Slasher to Garlthik of Kratas; a more painful but accurate title might be "Troublesome Former Lover Who Has Been Sent Far, Far Away." Diona is a feisty ork woman with a penchant for brawling. When not attending official court functions, she spends her time breaking furniture in taverns throughout the kingdom. A Thief and Warrior, Diona has befriended King Neden and promised to take him on an incognito tour of Kratas' most colorful sights. Tramon considers Diona a bad influence on the king, and is hoping she will soon commit a crime serious enough to justify her expulsion from Throal.

The Throalic ambassador to Kratas is a young dwarf woman Named Liltom. She received this less-than-coveted post after vocally criticizing Tramon, who happened to be eavesdropping in the next room. Her primary job is to petition Garlthik for the return of stolen Throalic goods, and for the punishment of those who stole them. Needless to say, her petitions are rarely successful, and Garlthik's henchmen sometimes rough her up for her trouble. Like most ambassadors to Kratas, Liltom is considering quitting His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps for a safer line of work.

Adventure Hook

Player groups who enjoy a darkly comical tone in their fantasy campaigns can play personal guards to Liltom and representatives of Throal in the city of thieves. Such characters must make their own justice in a place where the law is topsy-turvy. They would quickly accumulate enemies in Kratas, but would also have a degree of immunity that would let them deal with the city's many different gangs and factions. After all, no one wants to arouse the full fury of Throal by killing members of a diplomatic delegation. An adventure or campaign of this kind allows for plenty of down-and-dirty intrigue in a place where politics is practiced at sword point.

Thera and Vivane

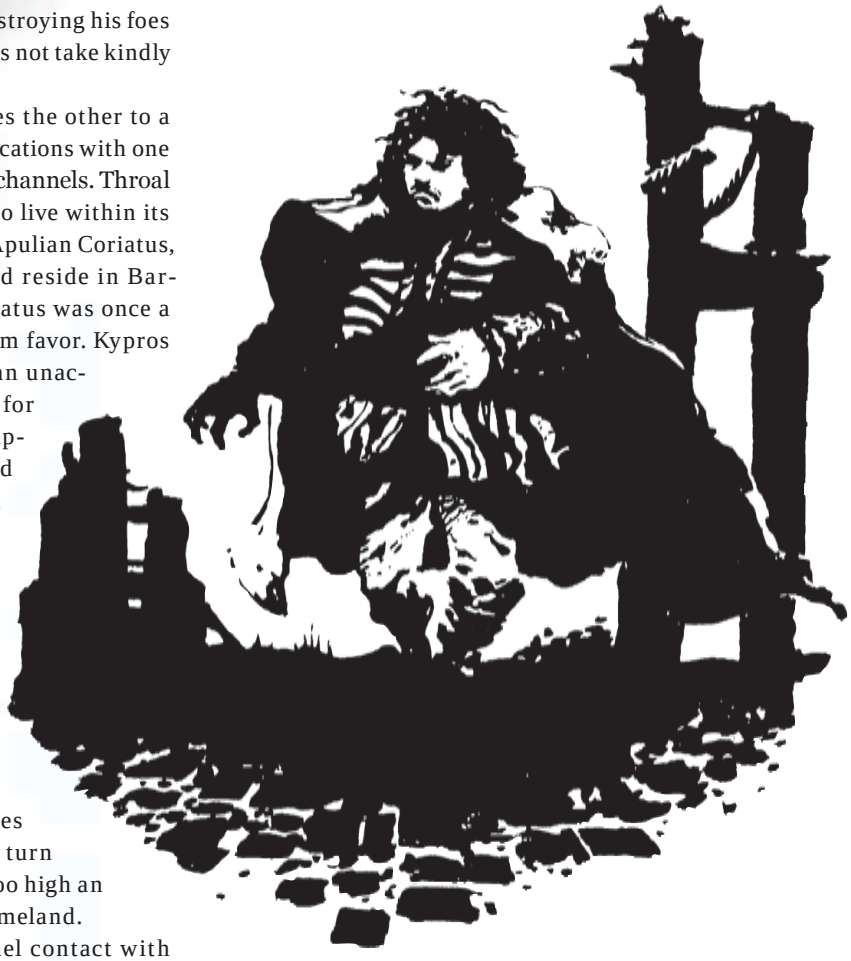
Sworn enemies devoted to each other's downfall, Throal and the Theran Empire are not yet at war simply because neither side is ready to pay the cost of an all-out conflict. Throal maintains that the Theran presence in Barsaive is illegal and the Imperials are invaders. The Therans regard themselves as the rightful rulers of Barsaive, and maintain that Throal's defiance of their sovereignty is a violation of Imperial law. Neither recognizes the other as a legitimate government.

Since the Theran navy's failed attack on Throal in 1449 TH, Throal and Thera had been locked in a military stalemate that cool heads saw as beneficial to both sides. Throal continued its economic and cultural expansion without paying the enormous costs of open battle with the mighty Theran war machine, which satisfied King Varulus III. He believed that trade ties and cultural loyalty would ultimately win the day for Throal. If the dwarf kingdom could avoid all-out war with the Therans, it would win. King Neden, by contrast, sees the contest with Thera through the eyes of a hot-blooded young warrior. Intellectually, he understands his father's strategy. Emotionally, he longs to vanquish the corrupt imperialists on the field of battle—despite the humiliation he faced with the Battle of Prajjor's Field.

Ironically, the Therans at Triumph also feel humiliated by the battle's outcome. They reason that if Barsaive is truly a Theran province, Throal should face massive retaliation for attacking a Theran target. The battle prompted General Nikar to send word to Thera requesting a force capable of such retaliation. In reply, Nikar received a sharp rebuke. First Governor Kanidris reminded Nikar that waging war is not part of his assignment. The bulk of the Theran navy is busy turning cities to slag in the province of Marac and can spare no forces on a backwater like Barsaive. Kanidris made clear that Nikar will have to fulfill his assignment with the troops he has on hand. Kanidris ordered Nikar to put economic pressure on Throal by attacking its trade caravans and suggested the creation of a network of informers and agitators within Throal; a network he can use to nudge the dwarf kingdom toward capitulation. Finally, Kanidris ordered Nikar to gather intelligence on Iopos and the Denairastas clan, about whom Thera knows next to nothing. Nikar is none too happy with the First Governor's instructions, especially since he does not dare disregard them. Like

all Theran generals, he is accustomed to destroying his foes with overwhelming military might, and does not take kindly to being deprived of his due.

Until either Throal or Thera challenges the other to a decisive showdown, any required communications with one another must take place through unofficial channels. Throal does not permit a Theran representative to live within its borders. Thera's representative in Throal, Apulian Coriatus, is forced to pose as a mere merchant and reside in Bartertown. A 35-year-old male human, Coriatus was once a protégé of Kypros, but has since fallen from favor. Kypros appointed him to the humiliating post of an unacknowledged ambassador as punishment for the collapse of a slaving network he was supposed to build in the area around the Blood Wood. Bitter and vengeful as well as vain, Coriatus hates Kypros and everything about his assignment. He despises Bartertown, Throal, and King Neden, and doesn't care who knows it. A snarling, hissing bundle of resentment, the portly Coriatus is the world's worst ambassador. His status is also Bartertown's worst-kept secret; as he stalks down the town's chalky streets, children and adults alike openly make fun of him. Neden hopes that Coriatus' resentment might eventually turn him to Throal's cause, but Coriatus holds too high an opinion of himself to turn traitor to his homeland.



When Throal must make back-channel contact with Theran officials, the kingdom sends a diplomatic expedition. Chardthom Mole-Spattered leads most of these ventures, an aged male troll recognized as the Diplomatic Corps' greatest expert on matters Theran. Unusually mild-tempered for a troll, Chardthom is as kind-hearted as he is ugly. His nickname comes from the hundreds of moles that cover his skin; in his old age, many of these have sprouted white whiskers. Chardthom believes wholeheartedly in the *Council Compact*, and would cheerfully die to uphold it or to further his king's interests. He has studied Theran ways for decades, and is expert at interpreting intelligence reports provided by the Eye of Throal. Chardthom is a strong supporter of Varulus' standoff strategy, and King Neden, whom he considers impulsive and thoughtless, does not impress him. Neden, for his part, sees Chardthom as a doddering old fool overly sympathetic toward the Therans after studying them for so long.

For more information on Triumph, see the **A Tour of the Serpent** chapter on p. 235.

Travar

The bustling merchant city of Travar maintains close ties with Throal. Its leaders are wealthy businessmen whose prosperity depends largely on the trade routes that Throal built and continues to defend. If Throal succeeds, Travar succeeds. Though the rulers of Travar want to see the province dominated by Throalic trade interests, they also wish to maintain their independence from the dwarf kingdom. Travar's ruling magistrates see the *Council Compact* as an effective piece of propaganda, but do not especially want to live under its rules. They like their lives of luxury, and feel no responsibility toward their less-prosperous fellow citizens. The common folk of Travar once agitated for the dwarf kingdom to make Travar a Throalic protectorate, and in response, the magistrate did its best to undermine the reformists without offending Throal. The recent events, however, have left Travar struggling to remain neutral in the brewing conflict between Throal and Thera.

Bazana Gems-Dripping is Travar's representative to King Neden's court, officially known as Delegate of the Magistrates' Council of Travar. A well-heeled ork woman with a sharp eye for business, Bazana enriched herself considerably at her last post as Delegate to Jerris. As she did in Jerris, she spends most of her time in Throal forging trade connections, especially with the old-guard and free trading houses. Bazana sees little distinction between diplomatic and commercial negotiations, or between official duties and personal business. Ultimately, she wants to become a member of Travar's council of magistrates; in order to do so, she must get rich enough to pay for adept champions to win the city's annual Founding tournament. Always on the lookout for a lucrative business deal, Bazana could become a patron of an adventuring party with an eye for treasure and a need for investors, especially if they appear competent enough to return her favors one day as her hired champions.

Throal's ambassador in Travar is Nurnborg, a loud, boisterous male ork with an infectious enthusiasm for the *Council Compact*. In addition to smoothing trade contacts between Throalic trading houses and their counterparts

in Travar, he holds regular study sessions in which residents of the city can learn about the *Compact*. Many of the stalwarts in the protectorate movement learned about Throalic law from Nurnborg. Officially, of course, Throal does not seek direct control over any independent political entity; however, it actively encourages all governments in Barsaive to use the *Compact* as the basis of their laws. Occasionally King Varulus III made an official display of discouraging Nurnborg's popularity with the protectorate agitators, but few Travarians on either side of the conflict believed that Throal truly disapproves of its ambassador's actions. Travar's ruling magistrates turn a blind eye to Nurnborg's activities, hoping that the agitators will remain little more than annoyances. If the protectorate movement ever gains momentum again, however, relations between Travar and Throal could cool considerably.

For more information on Travar, see the **A Tour of the Serpent** chapter on p. 256.

Adventure Hook

The player characters are sent to Travar to investigate the disappearance of Ambassador Nurnborg. As part of their initial briefing, they learn that extremists in the government may have wanted to silence Nurnborg for his contacts with the protectorate movement. However, this lead proves to be false. Nurnborg has actually been kidnapped by protectorate extremists, who were on the verge of staging a coup and declaring Travar a vassal state of Throal. Nurnborg refused to help them; he loves the Compact too much to see violence done in its Name. The extremists have not harmed him, they are merely keeping him prisoner so that he cannot warn the council. The adventurers must find Nurnborg and then stop the coup.

Urupa

Throal and Urupa enjoy a warm relationship based on compatible philosophies. Both realms govern according to the wishes of their people, have an interest in open trade, and stand for hope and cooperation in a world still bound by fear and mistrust. Urupa has its own code of laws, but has adapted many of the principles of the *Council Compact* since the Scourge. Though no formal defense pact exists between the dwarf kingdom and the city-state, it is understood between them that if one is attacked, the other will come to its aid.

Dequaria Alandos, Representative of Urupa, is the city's ambassador to Throal. A beautiful human woman with a regal presence, Dequaria is a popular fixture of Throal's social scene. She hosts regular banquets in her luxurious quarters; invitations to these events are coveted among Throal's nobles, artists, and philosophers. Dequaria has become a close friend and confidante of Dollas, and King Neden regards her as a sort of honorary aunt. With Dequaria as Representative, continuing close relations between Urupa and Throal are assured.

Throal's ambassador to Urupa is Reesha, the middle-aged daughter of Selenda of House Ueraven. Varulus appointed Reesha to this unchallenging position in order to appease Selenda, who wanted to get her daughter out of Throal because the girl was pregnant by an ork *b'jados*. Selenda believed, wrongly, that Varulus III did not know her true reasons for demanding her daughter's diplomatic posting.

Reesha, the child, and the child's father live discreetly in Urupa, where Reesha does her job quietly and efficiently. She is uninterested in the constant scheming of House Ueraven; she just wants to live comfortably with her lover and child.

For more information on Urupa, see the **A Tour of the Serpent** chapter on p. 231.

The T'skrang Aropagoi

Though Throal has maintained relations with three of the Serpent River *aropagoi*, its strongest ties are with House V'strimon, whose central foundation is the Floating City in Lake Ban.

The representative from the Floating City to Throal is K'senkt Aberius V'strimon, an elderly t'skrang sailor who lost his left arm in the Theran War. Most Throalites wonder how an old boatman born and bred on the river managed to adjust so readily to underground life in Throal. For those who voice their amazement, K'senkt has a favorite response: "Underground or underwater, what's the difference? It's not where you are that matters, it's the people you're with!"

Though officially he has the same stature in Throal's court as the leaders of the various free trade houses, he is treated with the respect normally given to foreign ambassadors. K'senkt commands respect partly because of his bearing and manner, but also because he makes annual recommendations to the Trade Council of V'strimon concerning the placement of Throalic trading companies on the Protocol List. A company on the Protocol List can demand service from any riverboat of the V'strimon *aropagoi* and expect priority treatment.

One might expect that someone in K'senkt's position would parlay his influence into a healthy extra income, but K'senkt has proven incorruptible for more than two decades. Those who have sought to bribe him, companies tied to Houses Garsun and Ueraven in particular, have found themselves excluded from the Protocol List for a dozen years or more. Those who have tried to eliminate him in the hopes of finding a more biddable replacement soon discovered what the Therans recognized thirty years ago: K'senkt is difficult to kill and almost impossible to outfox.

For more information on the t'skrang *aropagoi*, see the **The T'skrang Aropagoi** chapter on p. 175.

Barsaive at Large

Beyond its relations with other significant powers in Barsaive, Throal also has diplomatic ties with thousands of small settlements throughout the province. It maintains these relations mainly through coordinating its activities and messages with the trading houses as they forge new trade routes. His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps makes sure that the trading houses act in a way that will bring honor

and profit to Throal. The Diplomatic Corps has the power to launch investigations when it hears reports of activities likely to bring Throal into disrepute, and the corps has already threatened some of the smaller houses with decommissioning for pursuing shady trade practices.

On His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps

Formal relationships between Throal and other governments are managed by His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, an organization created by King Varulus III. All members of this small association serve at the king's pleasure. Because the rules governing the corps are not enshrined in the *Council Compact*, they are a matter of custom rather than law. This arrangement allows the king to change the corps' structure or its members without challenge.

In addition to its diplomatic role, the corps also recommends foreign policy to the king and interprets reports provided to it by the Eye of Throal, the King's intelligence-gathering organization (see p. 92).

The head of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador General, is one of the king's advisers. The Ambassador General counsels the king on matters concerning relations with other governments, conveys the king's wishes to the diplomats under his command, and sees that informal arrangements and treaties are negotiated to the king's satisfaction. The Ambassador General also supervises the operations of the Eye of Throal. He may dismiss any member of the corps who fails to perform adequately. Dismissed diplomats may petition the king for reinstatement, but the king need not give them a hearing.

The current Ambassador General is a middle-aged dwarf scholar Named Tramon, a brilliant thinker who has devoted his life to the study of post-Scourge Barsaive and its governments. Few people in Barsaive know more about these matters than he does. Cool and rational by nature, Tramon inspires respect but rarely affection. He is a realist in a court full of idealists, driven by the desire to win rather than by dedication to the *Council Compact*. He believes that sometimes it is necessary to do ruthless things for the good of Throal.

Tramon does not want an empire; he recognizes that such immense power would corrupt Throal, just as it has Thera. He does, however, want Throal to have the upper hand in all treaties and especially in trade matters.

Tramon heads a large family, all of whose members regard him with almost fanatical adoration. His two eldest children, his daughter Mirial and his son Eyorgicus, work closely with him and serve as his primary confidants. More often than anyone else in the corps, these two negotiate important treaties and sort out tricky conflicts with other states. This favoritism arouses resentment among other long-time members of the corps, especially because Mirial and Eyorgicus are every bit as brilliant as their father. They are also every bit as hard-headed when it comes to gaining the advantage for Throal. Though many speak of them as cold-blooded and calculating, few argue with the results they achieve.

If your group of players particularly enjoys travel and political intrigue, consider a campaign in which the adepts are employed by the Diplomatic Corps, either as members or as escorts for diplomatic envoys to certain areas of Barsaive. Alternatively, if the characters impress King Neden or Tramon with their political savvy, the king or the Ambassador General may commission them as a special delegation of troubleshooters within the corps. Such a position would allow them to meet officially with representatives of other governments throughout Barsaive, and they would be given delicate tasks that might require the use of magical talents as well as negotiation skills. The adventure hook on this page is an example of the kind of situation that might befall player characters hired as diplomatic troubleshooters.

Adventure Hook

While traveling through the hinterlands, the adventurers are approached by a representative of the Diplomatic Corps. Local villagers are attacking traders visiting the region for the first time, apparently in revenge for having been bilked in the past by the Fair Dealers' Association, a small free-trading company. The adventurers are hired to investigate these claims and present evidence to the corps. If the evidence is against the Fair Dealers, the corps will ask for the revocation of their license to trade.

The Fair Dealers are worse than fraud artists—they have been marked by Horrors. The contracts they offer to village headmen mask a ritual that carries the Horror mark to those who sign the documents. Once the adventurers find out what is really going on, they must eradicate the Fair Dealers and the Horrors working through them.

On the Eye of Throal

The Eye of Throal is King Neden's intelligence organization. Officially, it exists to inform him about the activities of foreign governments and other potential external threats to the safety of Throal. Unofficially, it also monitors internal threats to the king and his government. The extent of the Eye's activities is an open secret, which keeps the king's enemies wary of infiltration.

The Eye of Throal is a relatively new institution, created in response to the Death Rebellion in 1484 TH. Looking at that near-disaster in hindsight, Varulus III realized that his position was much more vulnerable than he had thought; had he known which foreign and domestic enemies were ranged against him, he could have snuffed out the rebellion before it had a chance to flare up. In order to dramatically reduce the risk of his foes surprising him again, he established the Eye of Throal.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Traders from several houses report that villagers in the area to the north of Urupa have suddenly turned hostile to Throal and its citizens. Communities that previously welcomed Throalic merchants with open arms have refused them entry, and some village leaders have confiscated goods from them as "reparations" for unspecified crimes. Tramon orders the player characters to investigate, recover the confiscated property, and mollify the villagers. If possible, the characters must repair the damage to Throal's image and get the merchants' property back by peaceful means. If peaceful resolution is impossible, then the characters are to demonstrate that no one trifles with Throal's traders. As Tramon sees it, those who cannot be made to love the dwarf kingdom will be made to fear it.

When the characters arrive on the scene, they discover that the villages have been repeatedly raided by members of Terath's Chargers, the ork mercenaries who serve as auxiliary troops for the Kingdom of Throal. If the characters accuse any of the ork band's leaders of executing the raids, they can get into serious trouble, because the raids are actually the work of impostors: a small gang of orks wearing faked and misappropriated Chargers insignia.

The culprits are actually members of a living legend cult called New Cara Fahd; they want to disrupt all relations between prominent orks and other governments so that the orks will rise up and form a great nation of their own. (Conveniently, they ignore the fact that the ork nation of Cara Fahd does now exist—they fervently believe that *their* nation is the *real* Cara Fahd.) In their efforts to unmask and punish these agitators, the player characters must be careful not to turn the impostors into martyrs and thereby arouse the sympathies of other orks in the area.

Leadership

The Eye of Throal serves two masters; its leader reports to the Supreme General of the Arm of Throal and to the Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps. All three are expected to work together to keep the king well informed of the activities of Throal's enemies and allies. Though both the Supreme General and the Ambassador General must approve any actions by the Eye of Throal, the Supreme General is expected to pay special attention to active intervention by the Eye in Barsaive: attacks on enemies, break-ins, and other dangerous measures (the sorts of missions that make good adventures). The Ambassador General chooses the targets of investigations and interprets all reports filed in the wake of intelligence-gathering or active missions.

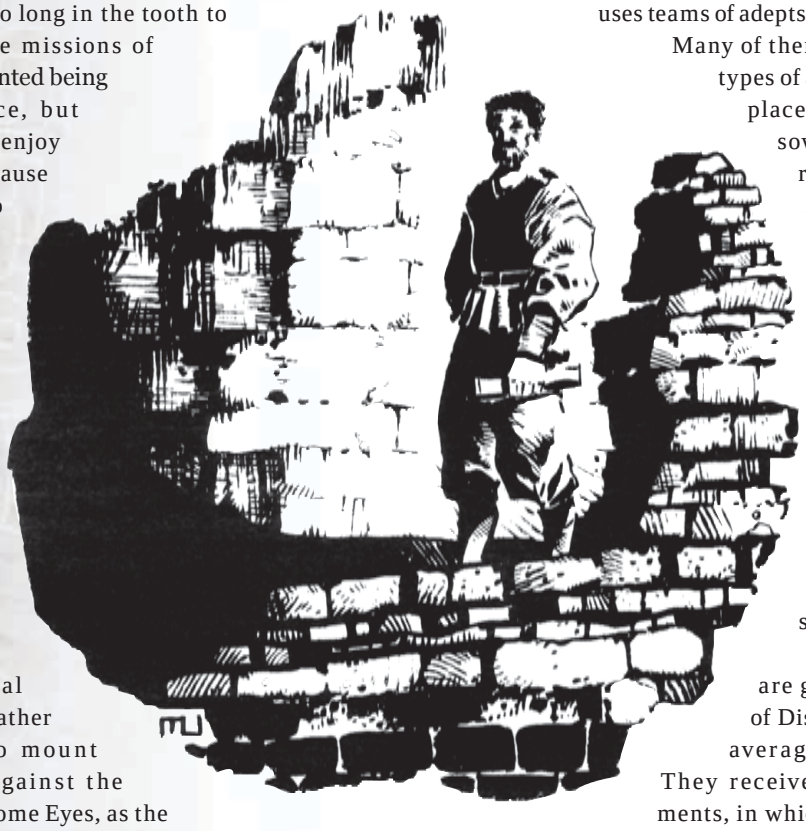


Fortunately for Throal, the Ambassador General and the Supreme General get along well personally; otherwise, this dual structure would be a recipe for conflict. King Varulus III made it clear that he would not tolerate selfish jockeying for power in this crucial area, and made both officials equally responsible if a mission fails. In part, Varulus divided responsibility within the Eye of Throal in order to prevent the organization from turning on him. He was well aware that the Theran Empire's intelligence-gathering forces wield vast political power, and he wanted to keep that pattern from recurring in Throal. As the Preamble to the *Council Compact* states, "Nothing is more corrupting than secret power." The Senior Gatherer manages the Eye of Throal's day-to-day operations. This official's identity is secret, so that no one will attempt to bribe or threaten him. The Senior Gatherer reports directly to the Ambassador General and Supreme General, but is most often left to manage the Eye as he sees fit. The Senior Gatherer uses an elaborate network of operatives to deliver orders to agents, hire adepts for freelance work, and take care of necessary administrative tasks. Among these operatives, only those known ominously as the Five have direct contact with the Senior Gatherer. Aside from the king, the Ambassador General, and the Supreme General, the Five are the only people in Throal

who know the Gatherer's true identity.

The present Senior Gatherer is a human Named J'Role, known (among other things) as the Honorable Thief. Once a feared and profoundly troubled man, J'Role found inner peace in his later years and is now supposedly retired. Years ago he befriended King Neden and his late father, earning a place in their hearts partly through his talent as a jester and entertainer. J'Role's past as a legendary adventurer caught up with him again when the last Senior Gatherer passed away of natural causes. Because J'Role had met and often struggled against many of Barsaive's most powerful figures, from Queen Alachia to Garlthik of Kratas to the dragon Mountainshadow, King Varulus III considered him the most suitable candidate for the post.

Though too old to take an active part in adventures, J'Role is not too long in the tooth to effectively direct the missions of others. At first he resented being pressed into service, but J'Role soon came to enjoy his job, especially because it gives him a chance to make up for many of the terrible wrongs he committed in his past. He finds it amusing that most Throalites think of him as a pleasant, humorous old man, not suspecting the vital role he still plays in the affairs of Barsaive.



Structure

The Eye of Throal uses loyal agents to gather information and to mount secret operations against the kingdom's enemies. Some Eyes, as the agents are known, go on long-term missions; these agents are nicknamed "kaer dwellers" or "dwellers." They adopt false identities and live as residents of the places they are studying, usually working individually rather than in teams. Kaer dwellers file regular reports, secretly passing them along to messengers who carry their observations back to Throal. Several trading houses with connections to the king allow their *j'havim* to act as go-betweens for this purpose. The transmission of information to Throal is a dweller's top priority. A dweller may also engage in limited-scale acts of subversion or sabotage, but only if the action carries no risk of capture. Kaer dwellers often pay informants to supply them with facts they cannot gather themselves. Though kaer dwellers are exceptionally skilled at what they do, few of them are adepts; they are supposed to maintain a low profile, and so do not need amazing magical abilities.

The Eye of Throal has scattered roughly two dozen kaer dwellers throughout the Vivane region, with at least two stationed in the city of Vivane. No Throalic agents live in Sky Point, but a few of their informants do. At least one dweller is said to live in Vrontok, the slaver town that lies in the shadow of Sky Point. A handful of kaer dwellers live in Kratas, and a pair of blood elves who have sworn secret allegiance to Throal send regular dispatches from the Blood Wood. A merchant Named Cleotha Splayfoot, living in Haven, is a kaer dweller who keeps the Throalic government informed about goings-on in Parlainth. Most of Barsaive's best-known mercenary and scorcher bands contain kaer dwellers, and a few kaer dwellers live in Jerris, Urupa, and Travar. J'Role would dearly love to get dwellers into Iopos, but all the agents who have attempted to infiltrate the city so far have been discovered and slain.

In addition to kaer dwellers, the Eye of Throal also uses teams of adepts for short-term missions. Many of them specialize in certain types of activities: sneaking into places and stealing things, sowing rumors to stir up rebellions, conducting lightning raids on enemy forces, and so on. The Eye of Throal even includes a team of assassins under J'Role's command, though King Neden is not proud of this fact. These specialist teams are called *cirivados*, a Name derived from the top tile in a popular Barsaivian board game.

Other adept teams are generalists, with a mix of Disciplines much like the average adventuring party. They receive open-ended assignments, in which the Senior Gatherer needs someone to find out exactly what is going on and deal with whatever comes up. Generalists are expected to solve mysteries, get along with the locals, and (if necessary) apply force to villains and Horrors. On occasion, the Arm of Throal (see p. 95) employs adept teams as elite units or advance scouts.

If the player characters impress Throalic authorities with their service to the nation, they may be invited to become Eyes. Adept members of the Eyes are paid a generous daily wage while on active duty, and are often allowed to keep loot and magical treasure captured from Throal's enemies as long as they accomplish their primary missions. Eyes are expected to pose as simple adventurers, and must not reveal their affiliation with the Eye of Throal. In order to build believable cover identities, team members may undertake personal missions, but the Eye does not pay them for serving on these missions unless they happen to turn up information of use to Throal or defeat major foes of the dwarf kingdom. The Eye encourages missions that allow

adepts to improve their abilities, such as quests to learn the key knowledges of magical treasures.

Player Characters and the Eye of Throal

For purposes of game play, player characters can join the Eye of Throal without feeling that they have lost their freedom of action. A campaign in which the adventurers are Eyes makes it easy for gamemasters to get player characters involved in story lines with major impact simply by giving them assignments from the Senior Gatherer.

Some especially anti-authoritarian player groups may run screaming from the prospect of working permanently for the government. However, the gamemaster can still send them on missions for the Eye of Throal from time to time. J'Role frequently hires freelance adventurers if his other adepts are injured or already out on missions. Likewise, he may hire a group of player characters if one member has a particularly useful ability or some prior connection to the mission at hand. Player characters hired in this manner will be approached by one of J'Role's operatives, and are highly unlikely to meet with the Senior Gatherer himself.

On His Majesty's Exploratory Force

His Majesty's Exploratory Force is well known in Throal, its exploits celebrated in song and story. Some of its members even appear in the bright murals that decorate the Halls of Throal. Most Throalites do not know, however, that this very public institution is in fact a branch of the secretive Eye of Throal. Though His Majesty's Exploratory Force was commissioned long before Varulus III created the Eye of Throal, the leaders of this once-independent organization have reported to the Senior Gatherer since the crushing of the Death Rebellion. The Eye of Throal received command of the Exploratory Force because its kaer explorations often yield valuable intelligence, and also to simplify the king's administrative duties.

The primary purpose of the Exploratory Force is to investigate unopened kaers, welcoming the inhabitants (if any) into the new era and recovering what they can from the kaers' depths. Its duties include mapping the kaers, eradicating Horrors or other dangerous creatures that dwell within, and recovering documents, valuable antiquities, and magical treasures. The organization's secondary function is to explore and map all of Barsaive. To this end, large and small Exploratory Force expeditions regularly leave Throal for the wild, uncharted regions of Barsaive where no one has set foot since before the Scourge. As part of this job, the Exploratory Force maintains the distance markers located all across Barsaive (see p. 43 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) and installs new markers as needed.

The current head of His Majesty's Exploratory Force is a charming, restless dwarf archer Named Oergesol. Oergesol's career as an active adventurer came to an end when an infection acquired in a dank kaer cost him the use of his left eye. No longer able to aim properly, he kicked around Bartertown in search of a replacement career until J'Role selected him to replace a retiring Exploratory Force chief. Once depressed by his disability, Oergesol has thrown himself wholeheartedly into his new work, hatching new plans for the Exploratory Force almost every day.

Oergesol is particularly interested in the Forgotten City of Parlainth, where many of his greatest exploits occurred. He is attempting to convince J'Role and his superiors to fund a systematic exploration of the entire city. J'Role, whose own memories of Parlainth are less enthusiastic, sees such a project as a waste of resources; he is more concerned with Barsaive's increasingly tense politics than with buried treasures and slavering monsters.

Player Characters and His Majesty's Exploratory Force

If a player group shows a fondness for classic treasure-hunting and creature-slaying adventures, encourage their characters to join His Majesty's Exploratory Force. Explorers receive the same pay and benefits as agents of the Eye of Throal. In times of political crisis, Exploratory Force adventurers may be given sensitive missions otherwise reserved for the Eye of Throal.

On the Arm of Throal

The Arm of Throal is the dwarf kingdom's military, commanded by Supreme General Foellerian. The Supreme General reports directly to the king and is a member of his inner circle. In addition to her duties as overseer of the Eye of Throal, the Supreme General commands Throal's infantry and navy.

Supreme General Foellerian, a zealous and demanding dwarf woman, insists on strict discipline and obedience to protocol. Those who serve under her fear her legendary wrath, evidenced by telltale pockmarks in the mosaics on her office walls that chronicle the many times she has thrown things at them in a rage. Much of her fiery rhetoric and quick anger come from sheer frustration that her colleagues among the king's advisers do not take the Theran threat as seriously as she does.

Foellerian is convinced that Throal's final battle with Thera will occur very soon. She does not hunger for this war, but fears it, knowing that the full might of the Empire could easily level Throal. Foellerian argues constantly that the kingdom must spend more public money on increasing its military strength and views such projects as the construction of the Inner Cities as sheer folly.

Foellerian also believes that the rich traders should be heavily taxed in order to increase her budget, which makes her deeply unpopular with all of them. Her uneasy relationship with the traders is problematic because the infantry is expected to defend trading caravans against bandits, ork scorchers, and dangerous creatures. Foellerian proposes that the traders use their precious private armies for these small skirmishes and leave Throal's infantry to fulfill its primary duty of practicing and refining large-scale fighting tactics that they can use against the Therans. Infantry units often sustain casualties in battles along trade routes,

and the traders show little gratitude for the pain the soldiers suffer.

Many of King Neden's courtiers lobbied continually for Foellerian's removal from her post before the Therans returned. His father rebuffed all of those requests; and King Neden respects Foellerian's fire and determination. Privately, however, Foellerian fears the king's impetuous nature.

Foellerian is an Archer of at least Ninth Circle.

Infantry

General Quaavami Rockbreaker, a stern and self-controlled troll woman, commands the infantry. Quaavami is Foellerian's protégé and shares the Supreme General's concerns about Throal's military vulnerability. She resents the traders' demands for her aid even more fiercely than Foellerian, but holds her anger inside. Even at her most furious, Quaavami keeps her voice quiet and her words measured; only a twitch in her left cheek gives away her rage. Though her officers and enlisted ranks fear her anger, they also show Quaavami intense loyalty because they know that she fights for their safety when few others will.

Quaavami finds it difficult to conceal her contempt for Ilmorian, her counterpart in the Throalic navy. The glamour that surrounds the navy disgusts her, because she knows the infantry have shed the most blood in the service of Throal. The king and his advisers seem more willing to sink money into airships than into the far less romantic ranks of the foot soldiers, and Quaavami wonders if her forces would get the resources they need if she could match Ilmorian's personal popularity. Every time she sees him cheered in the Royal Auditorium or celebrated by a Troubadour, she feels like punching someone. Quaavami is a Warrior and Scout adept.

The infantry consists of approximately 3,000 soldiers. Six generals, each of whom commands five troops, report to Quaavami Rockbreaker. Each troop, a hundred soldiers strong, is commanded by a war consul. Troops are divided into units of 20 men, each commanded by a sergeant who reports to the war consul. All the war consuls are adepts, as are roughly 30 percent of the sergeants. Most sergeant adepts are of Fourth Circle or lower; few enlisted soldiers are adepts. Five of the troops are cavalry, known collectively as the King's Lancers.

Quaavami's strategies rely on swift strikes and equally swift withdrawals. Speed is paramount, so Throalic soldiers are lightly armored. Stockpiles of heavier armor are available if necessary for use against Theran heavy cavalry. Quaavami also wants her troops to be able to respond quickly and effectively to a variety of situations. Often called upon to fight raiders and bandits, Throal's infantry must react spontaneously to surprise conditions, and so foot soldiers are expected to be proficient with both melee and missile weapons. Quaavami recently hired another ten troops as reserve units and trains them in the tactics required to successfully fight Theran forces.

Throal's army is well armed, its weapons provided by a staff of Weaponsmith adepts supported by the Royal Treasury. Because the Weaponsmiths use their talents to improve these weapons magically, the blades inflict more than the usual damage. The infantry's use of magically enhanced weapons gives them a psychological advantage against bandits and scorchers, who fear their blades based on reputation alone.



Average Soldier

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 — **Strength** (16): 7/D12
Toughness (18): 7/D12 — **Perception** (8): 4/D6
Willpower (13): 6/D10 — **Charisma** (8): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 — **Initiative**: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 5 — **Physical Armor**: 8
Social Defense: 5 — **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 42 — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 — **Knockdown**: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Combat Movement: 28 — **Full Movement**: 56

Skills

Artisan:
Armor Runic Carving (5): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Throal Military Organization (5): 9/D8+D6
Throal Military Procedures (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Avoid Blow (5): 12/2D10
Melee Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Missile Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Resist Taunt (5): 11/D10+D8
Riposte (5): 12/2D10
Speak Language (4): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, Troll
Tactics (5): 9/D8+D6
Tracking (5): 9/D8+D6
Unarmed Combat (5): 12/2D10
Wilderness Survival (5): 12/2D10

Equipment

Footman's Shield w/etched Arm of Throal seal
(Phys 3; Init 1)
Hardened Leather w/etched Arm of Throal seal
(Phys 5; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; w/scabbard)
Medium Crossbow (Damage 12/2D10; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts)
Sling (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 30–60–120)
Belt Pouch (w/15 sling stones)

Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tool
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin

Loot

D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces

Legend Points

290 Legend Points

Note

Soldiers possess the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

On Magicians in the Infantry

Currently, the infantry does not regularly field magicians. Of the 30 infantry troops, only three have small detachments of magicians at their disposal; five magicians per troop, most either Elementalists or Wizards. When special circumstances warrant it, adept teams from the Eye of Throal may perform certain operations with the infantry (and the navy, if necessary). The army almost always relies on the Eye of Throal for the services of Illusionists or Nethermancers.

The Arm of Throal can immediately draft up to 40 or 50 magicians that it keeps on retainer. These reserves make up a truly awesome force, for few armies could withstand the onslaught of so many magicians constantly hurling fireball and lightning cloud spells across the battlefield.

Navy

Much to the chagrin of the infantry, the navy gets the glory in Throal. The romance and wonder of airships have captured the kingdom's imagination, as has the General of the Navy, the flamboyant Air Sailor Ilmorian. As personally popular with the average citizen of Throal as with the sailors under his command, Ilmorian is as effective a politician as he is a general. In fact, his detractors say he is better at politics than war. Largely because of Ilmorian's skill at winning friends and influencing people, most of the new money devoted to Throal's defenses is going to its airship fleet.

A graceful elf with luxuriant blond hair, Ilmorian is brave, good-looking, and more than a little conceited. He has also been extraordinarily lucky; in numerous clashes with crystal raiders and other sky pirates, he has triumphed over extraordinary odds again and again. Ilmorian has come to believe the songs and stories that celebrate these great deeds, and has no doubt that he will defeat even the vaunted Theran navy when the time comes.

Ilmorian encourages his officers to think independently and find unexpected solutions to problems. His stock response to an officer with a problem has become legendary: "Improvise, man, improvise!" His men adore him. Even Neden, who served under him as a navy commander before he ascended to the throne, is not immune to this spell.

The navy fields 18 galleys, four of which are lightly outfitted scout ships. Four more are under construction, two in Travar and the other two in Jerris.

The 14 fully equipped galleys each require a crew of 140: a hundred oarsmen, with the remaining 40 composed of commanders, navigators, and fighters. This latter group defends against boarding attempts by enemy ships. A war galley's crew usually includes 15 or so adepts, averaging Fifth Circle. Unlike the infantry, the navy crews commonly include magicians, particularly Wizards and Elementalists, whose long-range spells are extremely effective in ship-to-ship combat. Non-adept auxiliary fighters have the same game statistics as the average infantry soldier given above.

In addition to its galleys, the Throalic navy also has a small fleet of eight drakkars, most often used for short scouting excursions in the immediate vicinity of the dwarf kingdom. The Eye of Throal and members of His Majesty's Exploratory Force frequently use these ships for missions as well. Though the navy currently does not count any galleons in its fleet, Ilmorian has petitioned the king on several occasions to commission a small fleet of these massive vessels. Thus far the king has refused Ilmorian's requests, preferring instead to commission more galleys.

Fortunately for the Royal Treasury, two galleons of the pre-Scourge Throalic fleet were recently recovered and put back into service. These ships were stranded in the peaks of the Throal Mountains when the Scourge descended on Barsaive. Counting four ships in total, two of the galleons were destroyed when they crashed in the mountains, but the other two survived.

Mercenary Units

In addition to its infantry and navy, the Arm of Throal employs several ork cavalry units as mercenary troops. "Send an ork to fight an ork" is Neden's unstated policy, and so the ork cavalries battle scorcher bands and other bandits who threaten trade routes and Throal's outlying communities. Their principal antagonists are the dreaded Skull Wharg tribes.

The most famous of the mercenary units is Terath's Chargers. This nomadic tribe of 1,600 orks supports 400 cavalry fighters, roughly 40 of whom are Cavalryman adepts. At any given time, only half the Chargers' fighting force is stationed near the Throal Mountains. The other half fulfills short-term contracts with other employers. The band's overall leader, Terath the Contemplative, has split command of the Chargers between his two children. Terath's son, Earal Bloodstroke, commands the half that remains in Throal. Terath's daughter, Zarass Icethought, commands the other half of the force—and has recently left to join forces with the newly-founded nation of Cara Fahd.

The pensive Terath admires King Neden immensely and has read the *Council Compact* carefully in order to better understand his employer. Though he thinks that the king has little chance of accomplishing his aims, he admires those aims nonetheless. Terath is getting on in years, and spends more and more of his time managing various business enterprises in the city of Bethabal. He has left the prosecution of war to his son and daughter, and now acts as little more than a figurehead to his followers. Though he knows that rivalry existed between Earal and Zarass before she left, his increasing detachment from the day-to-day affairs of the Chargers has prevented Terath from noticing the true seriousness of the rift. Zarass always criticized Earal for being too close to Throal, arguing that Earal's intermittent love affair with Dajag Treaty-Keeper, the Baroness of Bethabal, is clear evidence of his divided loyalties. Terath finds it hard to quarrel with his son because he, too, identifies with Throal. He dismissed Zarass' complaints, not understanding how low her opinion of Earal had fallen.

Earal has become a popular figure in the outlying communities of Throal. He sees himself as more than a mercenary; he regards Throal's citizens as his people to protect. Unlike his father, he is not an intellectual and does not care a fig for the *Council Compact*. Earal believes in personal loyalty, to his Chargers first and to the people of Throal's outlying settlements second. Bold, decisive and lusty, Earal likes to think of himself as a hero rather than a mere sell-sword.

Over two years ago Earal survived two attempts on his life by infiltrators in his camp. In public, he proclaimed them servants of the Hand of Corruption. The results of his interrogation, however, revealed an enemy closer to home; his sister Zarass sent the assassins. Though Earal acts publicly as if she had not tipped her hand, he has doubled his personal guard. He knows that he will one day have to face his flesh and blood on the field of battle, but hopes that day will be slow in coming.

As her Name suggests, Zarass Icethought is cold-blooded and heartless. Her jealousy of Earal has grown so intense that it borders on insanity, and observers believe that if she could not obsess over his loyalty to Throal, she would have found some other pretext to hate him. After her failed assassination attempts, Zarass received word of another famed mercenary captain, Titanstroke Greybeard of the Thunderers, sounding her out about a grand alliance of scorcher and raider tribes. Intrigued by this prospect, Zarass temporarily put her vendetta against Earal on hold and left to join Titanstroke for Cara Fahd.

The loss of Titanstroke's services forced Throal to hire six less-accomplished ork cavalries to augment its forces: Death's Lingering Kiss, the Elf Eaters, the Golden Flashes, the Grinning Wounds, the Mud Beasts and the Stinking Renders. Their captains report to Earal, who takes his orders from Terath, who in turn deals with General Quaavami Rockbreaker. Each of the six cavalries supports roughly 100 mounted warriors, of which one in ten are Cavalryman adepts. Many of these mercenaries are personally unsavory and professionally unreliable, and Earal is hoping to attract a better class of mercenary to Throal's service in the future. Statistics for a typical member of these lesser cavalry units appear below.

The sadistically poetic Jeslar, who creates disturbing sculptures from the bones of her slain foes, commands Death's Lingering Kiss. A young ork Warrior Named Sandahg commands the Elf Eaters. Sandahg is unusually beautiful even by the standards of non-orks, with delicate features (for an ork) and flowing blond hair. As the Name of her band suggests, Sandahg harbors a despicable prejudice against elves. After the unsolved murders of an elven family in the outlying community of Coalspout, her unit was suspended from guard detail. The Golden Flashes are under the command of Walsha, a greedy fellow with a strange, high-pitched voice. He is probably the cleverest of the six mercenary leaders, but devotes most of his mental energy to gaining the highest possible pay for the lowest possible risk. Beverun, a dark-skinned ork known for his radically shifting moods, heads the Grinning Wounds. He can go from infectious cheer to violent rage in seconds, often with no apparent cause. Captain Schraerak, a manipulative drunkard and glutton devoted to testing the limits of his liver, commands the cavalry known as the Mud Beasts. Finally, the Stinking Renders are captained by the imperious Agak Plankhead, an elderly female Cavalryman with the air of an outraged grandmother.

Average Ork Mercenary

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10 — **Strength** (18): 7/D12
Toughness (19): 8/2D6 — **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (7): 4/D6 — **Charisma** (8): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 — **Initiative**: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 7 — **Physical Armor**: 8
Social Defense: 5 — **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 43 — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 — **Knockdown**: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

* Mercenaries know the Sure Mount skill.

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Skills

Artisan:
Tattooing (5): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Caravan Trade Routes (5): 10/D10+D6
Ork Scorcher Tactics (5): 10/D10+D6

General:
Animal Bond (4): 8/2D6
Animal Handling (4): 8/2D6
Animal Training (4): 8/2D6
Charge (5): 12/2D10
Hunting (5): 11/D10+D8
Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Missile Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (4): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, Troll
Sure Mount (5): 12/2D10
Tactics (5): 10/D10+D6
Tracking (5): 10/D10+D6
Trick Riding (5): 11/D10+D8
Unarmed Combat (5): 11/D10+D8
Wheeling Attack (5): 11/D10+D8
Wheeling Defense (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)
Rider's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1)

Charge Sword (Forged +1; Damage 13/D12+D10; Damage step +1 when mounted; Attack step –2 when dismounted; w/scabbard)
Lance (Damage 13/D12+D10)
Longbow (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 60–120–240)
Quiver (w/40 longbow arrows)

Adventurer's Kit
Tattooing Tool
Trail Rations (2 weeks)
Traveler's Garb
2 × Waterskins

Thundra Beast:
Bit, Bridle, and Harness
2 × Large Saddlebags
Saddle, Stirrups, and Blankets

Loot

Coins, jewelry, and semi-precious stones (worth 5D10 silver pieces)



Legend Points

190 Legend Points

Note

Mercenaries possess the ork racial abilities of Low-Light Vision and *Gahad*.

A Tour of the Kingdom

How big is the Kingdom of Throal? That's a good question. Big enough for me!

• Kandor Lithcal, Dwarf Citizen of Throal •



The curious incident began at Uvimir's sausage stall, which stands in the Hall of Tav, seven doors down from Elproni's bakery; the bakery is several hours in and decorated with a mosaic depicting Garaham's pact with the mountains. I had stopped for a brief chat to inquire after Uvimir's daughter's health. A month earlier, the young lady had been poisoned, and I was able to identify the miscreant, a jilted suitor. As Uvimir happily described his daughter's recovery, I felt a sharp pain in my temple. I turned with cat-like speed, a throwing dagger already in my hand. I saw a young child, possibly ork, running away from me, heading north. Peals of laughter bounced from wall to wall. Dazed, I reached down to the tiled floor, where I found a hand-sized chunk of granite. Its edges were sharp, and I touched the side of my head to see if I was bleeding. To my good fortune, the rock had bruised the skin without piercing it. However, it could easily have done me permanent harm. I had no wish to harm a child, but this young ruffian required some immediate discipline.

I pursued the boy down the hallway. He ran quickly, more quickly than his little legs should have allowed. Though he easily outdistanced me, his odd, keening laughter kept me on his trail. The child knew well the twists and turns of the Halls of Throal. He easily wove through the crowds, who paid him little heed. I was not so lucky: I had to slow my pace to avoid careening headlong into passers-by. They reproached me with looks, as if they found my behavior completely unacceptable. I had no time to explain why I was chasing the boy; if I stopped to do so, he would elude me.

I pursued him past the Great Library and into a weaver's establishment. He darted through the looms, and I followed as best I could. One of the weavers sought to block my way, but I shouted at him and he stepped aside, confused. The boy popped through a back doorway in the weaver's large work room. The door slammed shut behind him. I had to fumble to open it. Once through the door, I found myself in the Thandos Hall, south of the entrance to the Elcomi estate. A demonstration of the moneylender's guild was in progress in front of the estate, and the hall was choked with dwarfs. Elcomi guards shoved the moneylenders about; the moneylenders shoved them in return. Royal Guards were in the middle of the fray, trying to separate the two sides. In the chaos, I feared that I had lost the child.

Then another rock landed at my feet. The boy—yes, definitely an ork, and a weedy little fellow at that—stood unnoticed in the midst of the scuffle. He grinned and gave me the buunda, *that rude ork gesture of contempt. Then he turned and scooted through the guards and moneylenders, laughing as he went.*

The chase went on for hours, from Thandos Hall to the streets of Oshane. From Oshane, to Wishon. Through Wishon, to the northern reaches of Bazrata Hall. From Bazrata to the crystal greenhouses. Through the greenhouses to the Mines. Whenever I got too close to the boy, some obstacle placed itself in my way. Whenever I grew too distant, he stopped long enough to mock me, keeping my anger at a boil. A less stubborn dwarf than I would have abandoned the chase long before I did. All through the night I followed the boy. Despite my exhaustion I continued on, too tired to question the boy's peculiar stamina.

Then I saw the boy's hand. The rocks had fallen on him. Forgetting my fatigue, I clawed at the stones, ripping them from his body. To no avail; breath had long since been crushed from him. He had been dead for many hours, perhaps days. It was only then that I realized the truth.

I had been chasing the boy's spirit. By some ghostly means, he knew of my abilities as a solver of mysteries. From his temporary grave, he had hired me to find his killer—hired me with a stone.

—From the Journals of Neyo Neyonicus,
Solver of Mysteries, 1507 TH

This chapter presents a detailed overview of Throal, including the Grand Bazaar, the Halls of Throal, the chambers of the Inner Kingdom (the Great Library, Royal Auditorium, and the Royal Chambers), the Inner Cities, the crystal greenhouses, and the mines. Each area of the kingdom described includes a sample map.

Several areas are presented in a format containing the following subsections: **Standard Activities**, **Security Measures**, and **Encounters**.

Standard Activities describes the types of activities player characters might witness in the area. **Security Measures** provides an overview of the area's security, including the Royal Guards and private security forces such as those of the noble houses and trading companies. **Encounters** depicts several possible encounters the gamemaster may use to make the area in question come alive for the players.

The Grand Bazaar

The Grand Bazaar is the bustling, welcoming face of the Kingdom of Throal. Many who come to Throal go no further into the kingdom than the Bazaar, paying for lodging in Bartertown rather than venturing into the Halls. During business hours, the Bazaar is a riot of colors, smells, and sounds. At night it is ghostly and quiet, inhabited only by patrolling guards and travelers heading into the Halls of Throal.

Entering the Bazaar

A traveler will encounter three landmarks upon entering the Bazaar and the Kingdom of Throal: the Royal Road, the Gates of Throal, and the gates to the Halls of Throal.

Royal Road

The Royal Road to Throal is a man-made embankment of crushed stone that gradually slopes up from Bartertown to the mountain kingdom's entrance. The famed arches of Throal, three vast structures of carved granite, straddle this sloping embankment midway between Bartertown and the gates to the Halls of Throal. The Royal Road runs all the way through Bartertown, and is the central thoroughfare from which all the crossroads of the trading town run. For more about the Royal Road and Bartertown, see **Bartertown**, p.128.

Gates of Throal

During the long centuries of the Scourge, the Gates of Throal kept the Horrors out of the dwarf kingdom. In each of the three massive archways that mark the entrance to the kingdom stands a set of double doors, each door 50 yards wide and 100 yards high. Vast blocks of granite, each 50 yards wide and 30 yards deep, stand between the archways. The gates are a marvel of construction that required Throal's finest magicians, engineers, and smiths a generation of effort to create. They are made of magically reinforced stone and wooden planks laced with kernels of elemental earth and wood, set in a framework of iron and orichalcum. Though no longer active as they were during the Scourge, orichalcum-lined wards cover the surface of the doors. The doors are 3 yards thick, and the threshold that separates the Bazaar from the outside world is 30 yards deep.

The gates have not been closed since the reopening of Throal in 1420 TH. The gates even remained open during the Theran siege in 1458 TH, a point of pride for King Neden and his people. The gates can only be opened or closed in two ways, neither of which can be accomplished at a moment's notice. The creators of the gates designed a special spell to open and close them that is known only by the court magician, currently Ajmar the Admirable (see **Advisers and Courtiers**, p. 68 in **The Halls of Power**), and a few other completely trustworthy magicians. The gates can also be opened or closed by chaining dozens of thundra beasts and other beasts of burden to pegs on the doors and making them pull the massive slabs.

Thirty-six guards are always on duty at the gates of Throal, twelve at each archway. The gates of Throal represent easy duty for Royal Guardsmen, as they are not responsible for challenging entrants to the kingdom or patrolling the Bazaar, which lies just inside the gates. The gate guards need only look strong and vigorous as symbols of Throal's determination to defend itself against any enemies.

Hall Gates

At the gateway to each of the nine great Halls of Throal, two units of the Royal Guard challenge the people entering the kingdom. Politely but firmly, the guards ask every passer-by if he is a resident or a visitor, the nature of his business, and the proposed length of his stay.

The guards can refuse entry at will, but they only bar entrance to those who pose an obvious danger to Throal's citizens. Prospective visitors to Throal are turned back at the gates if they are drooling mad, clearly infected with a contagious disease, or bear some obvious mark of a magical curse or Horror influence. The guards will also apprehend known exiles attempting to return to the kingdom (for more information, see **Citizenship**, p. 79 in **The Halls of Power**).

Goods for Sale

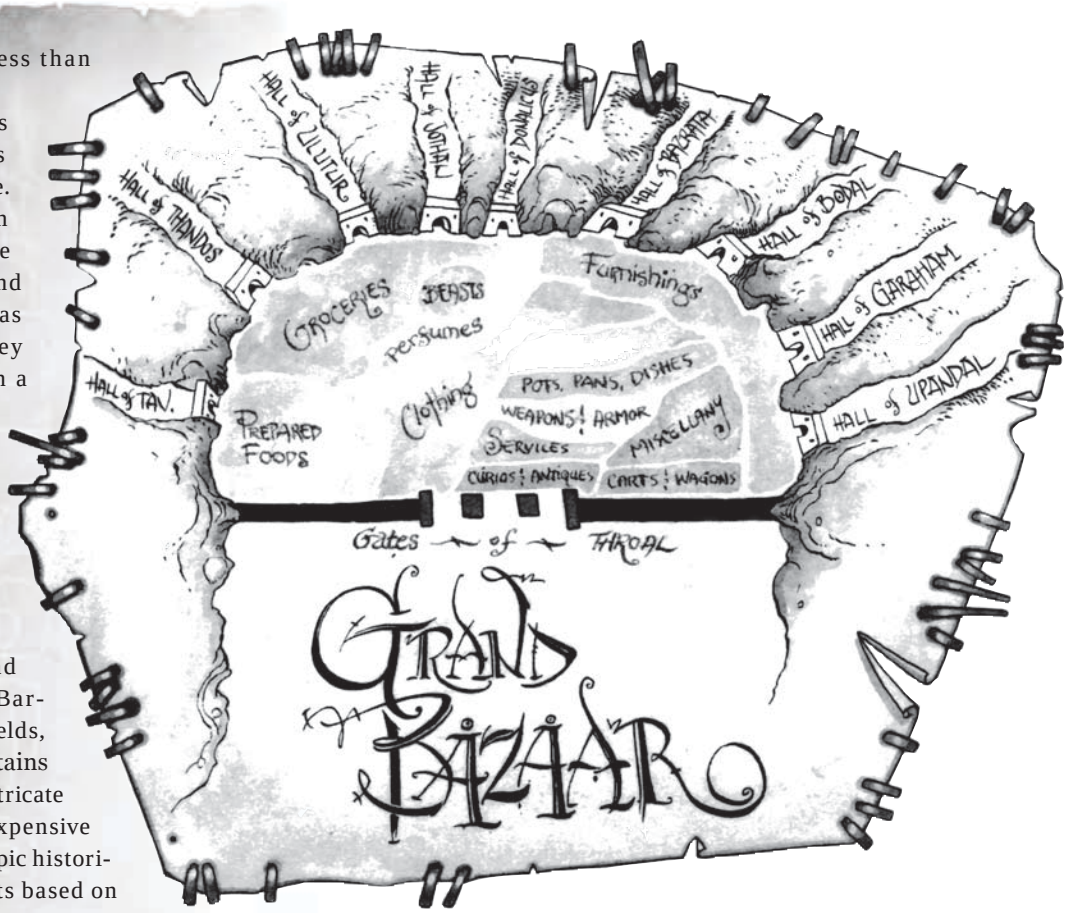
Throal being Throal, even the seeming chaos of the Grand Bazaar is regulated and organized. Chancellery officials license the merchants who sell their wares in the Bazaar, and licensed merchants must set up their stalls in areas set aside for the types of goods they sell. Carpet sellers are grouped together in one area, armorers in another, and so on. This arrangement makes it possible for shoppers to find things in the Bazaar, and also encourages competition between purveyors of the same sort of merchandise. The major areas of the Grand Bazaar are described below.

Beasts

Various animals and creatures are sold in this area—some as pets, some as beasts of burden, most destined to end up on a dinner plate. Chickens, pigs, goats, and cattle are the most common eating animals, and can be butchered on the spot at the customer's request. The floor in this area is caked with dried blood and sometimes slick with fresh

blood. The smell is less than appetizing.

Outside business hours, burden beasts are rarely stabled here. The beast dealers own or lease stables outside the gates of Throal, and bring to market only as many animals as they think they can sell in a day.



Carpets

Throalic craftsmen are famed for pictorial rugs and carpets. Popular subject matter includes animals (fabulous and otherwise), maps of Barsaive, swords and shields, flowers, and the mountains of Throal. The more intricate the scene, the more expensive the rug; some depict epic historical or legendary events based on famous paintings or murals, and these go for a hefty price.

A small rug with a simple design can cost as little as 40 silver pieces, while the most remarkable pieces command thousands of silvers.

Carts and Wagons

In this area, customers can buy ground vehicles of various designs, from assembled carts and wagons to kits containing all the necessary pieces. Other traveling gear, such as reins, saddles, and stirrups, can also be purchased here.

Clothing

In the clothing area, interested customers can find fashionable Throalic garments, bolts of cloth, bedding, footwear, hats, belts, sacks, and so on.

Curiosities and Antiques

Adventurers wishing to sell souvenirs of their kaer expeditions can do so in this area. This is also the place to buy magical charms and potions.

Most of the "exotic wonders" hawked here are pieces of junk passed off on the unsuspecting, but the discerning buyer can sometimes find a rare treasure among the dross. New works of art are also for sale, from small figurines to massive statues and paintings.

Furnishings and Household Goods

The mostly wooden furniture sold here includes beds, chairs, tables, dresser drawers, trunks, scroll racks, and so on. Customers can also purchase dishes and cookware of all sorts, made of clay, wood, or metal.

Groceries

This area of the market sells food intended for preparation elsewhere, including grain-based breads, fruits, vegetables, ale, and wine. Foods such as corn, potatoes, coffee, and chocolate are unknown in Throal.

Jewelry

Jewelry merchants sell everything from cheap baubles to rare gems in this area. As it is a favorite target for thieves, Royal Guards patrol this area more frequently than any other.

Miscellany

Any item not sold in its own area can be found in the section devoted to miscellany, including such vital pieces of adventuring gear as lamps, candles, rope, oil, and imported tools.

Prepared Foods

Stall upon stall offers cooked and preserved foods to shoppers, to eat on the spot or take away. Customers can find something tasty to suit any palate, from the sugared flower petals beloved by windlings to a steaming, stinking bowl of quaalz beans for a hungry ork. This area is the source of most of the good smells that drift through the Bazaar. Here, adventurers can also purchase trail rations and dwarf mine rations.

Perfumes

Perfume manufacturing is one of Throal's major industries, and a large contingent of dealers is on hand to sell their

Adventure Hook

The business rivalry between perfume merchants Budicett Ermine-Robes and Jihni Avacus has turned personal. Each of them runs a large display of stalls right across from the other's. They both cater to the same working class folk who want subtle, inexpensive fragrances. A few months ago, Jihni initiated a price war against Budicett. The two have now dropped their prices to the point where they are selling their wares below cost. Recently, each merchant has suffered from vandalism, losing hundreds of silvers' worth of goods in a night-time attack.

Stawyri approaches the adventurers for help; she is sure that some of her men are looking the other way while Budicett and Jihni destroy each other's businesses. Both merchants are unpopular with rank-and-file guards because they are forever demanding special favors. Stawyri wants both merchants caught red-handed so that she can punish them with a stiff enough fine to drive them out of business. She also wants the insubordinate guards weeded out, and she wants the adventurers to accomplish both tasks.

Stawyri does not know that the attacks on both merchants are being orchestrated by the corrupt head of the Royal Guild of Merchants, Morri of Bazrata. Morri fears that Jihni will run against her in the next election for guildmaster; Jihni's trade war with Budicett makes good cover for Morri's plot to run her out of business. Morri is not bribing guards to look the other way; she has simply hired a clever band of Thieves to do her dirty work. If Morri discovers that the adventurers are on her trail, she will dig into her deep pockets and hire adepts to assassinate them.

wares. Many of the transactions conducted in this area are substantial, as traders from other parts of Barsaive make deals for large quantities to sell in their home regions.

Services

The service area is given over to stalls that provide services of various sorts. Fortunetellers of all Name-giver races predict their customers' futures using cards, thrown bones, and palm reading. Tattooists decorate their patrons with intricate and colorful designs. Moneychangers convert antique or foreign currency into Throalic coins and assess the value of precious metals and gems.

Low-rent sages offer dubious opinions on treasure maps, ancient legends, and ancestral curses. Threadbare philosophers provide personal counseling for a handful of coppers. For a few silver pieces, a customer can wrestle with a muscle-bound ork or troll; if the customer wins, he gets double his money back. Jacks-of-all-trades repair broken items. Jugglers, musicians, and jesters caper around in hopes of being thrown a coin or two. Scribes compose or read messages for illiterate clients. Storytellers compose extemporaneous epics on a theme and subject matter of the customer's choosing. Gamblers offer passers-by the opportunity to lose the contents of their purses on games of chance.

Professional gossips peddle secrets and rumors about the business dealings, political affairs, and personal peccadilloes of Throal's prominent citizens. A few prominent messenger services, both dwarf and non-dwarf alike, have their headquarters in the Grand Bazaar itself, as well as a number of conglomerates of free-lancers. Lastly, one can book their trip out from the very gates of Throal via caravan or airship from this area.

Weapons and Armor

Another of Throal's most lucrative industries is the manufacture of armaments. Fighters throughout Barsaive depend on the solid Throalic workmanship of their swords and armor to help them triumph over adversaries. Magical weapons, both forged and threaded, are also sold here by a few expensive specialists. In addition to purchasing weapons and armor, adventurers can also hire the services of the Weaponsmiths in this area to research magical weapons or to forge weapons and armor. The Weaponsmiths who work in the Grand Bazaar belong to a number of different Forges (see p.154 of the **Player's Compendium**) located in the Halls of Throal.

Security Measures

In addition to the 36 guards at the Gates of Throal and the 72 guards at the nine entrances to the Halls of Throal, another dozen guard units patrol the Bazaar day and night. Dealers whose merchandise is particularly attractive to thieves also hire private guards, some of whom may be adepts. Adepts loyal to Throal frequently intervene in robbery attempts, whether paid to do so or not. If a group of player characters decides to steal magical weapons, equipment, or similar treasures from the Bazaar, make their attempt to do so as dangerous and difficult as such a task would be during any other adventure. Throal is a safe place for honest folk, not for bandits.

The Bazaar has its own magistrate, a dwarf woman Named Stawyri, known for her tough, uncompromising manner. She deals with fewer cases than Throal's other magistrates, but a case in the Bazaar is more likely to be complicated than cases elsewhere. Many of her cases involve interventions by merchants attempting to win the fines levied on convicted criminals. Stawyri inspires tight discipline in the guards under her command. They don't like her very much, but they respect her and fear her occasional bursts of temper. According to rumor, she has had a series of affairs with men under her command who were subse-

quently transferred out of her area when the affairs went sour. Stawyri rubs many merchants the wrong way; they want her to act as if she works for them, but she defers to no one. It is entirely possible that the rumors about her love life are simply part of a campaign to discredit her.

The Halls of Throal

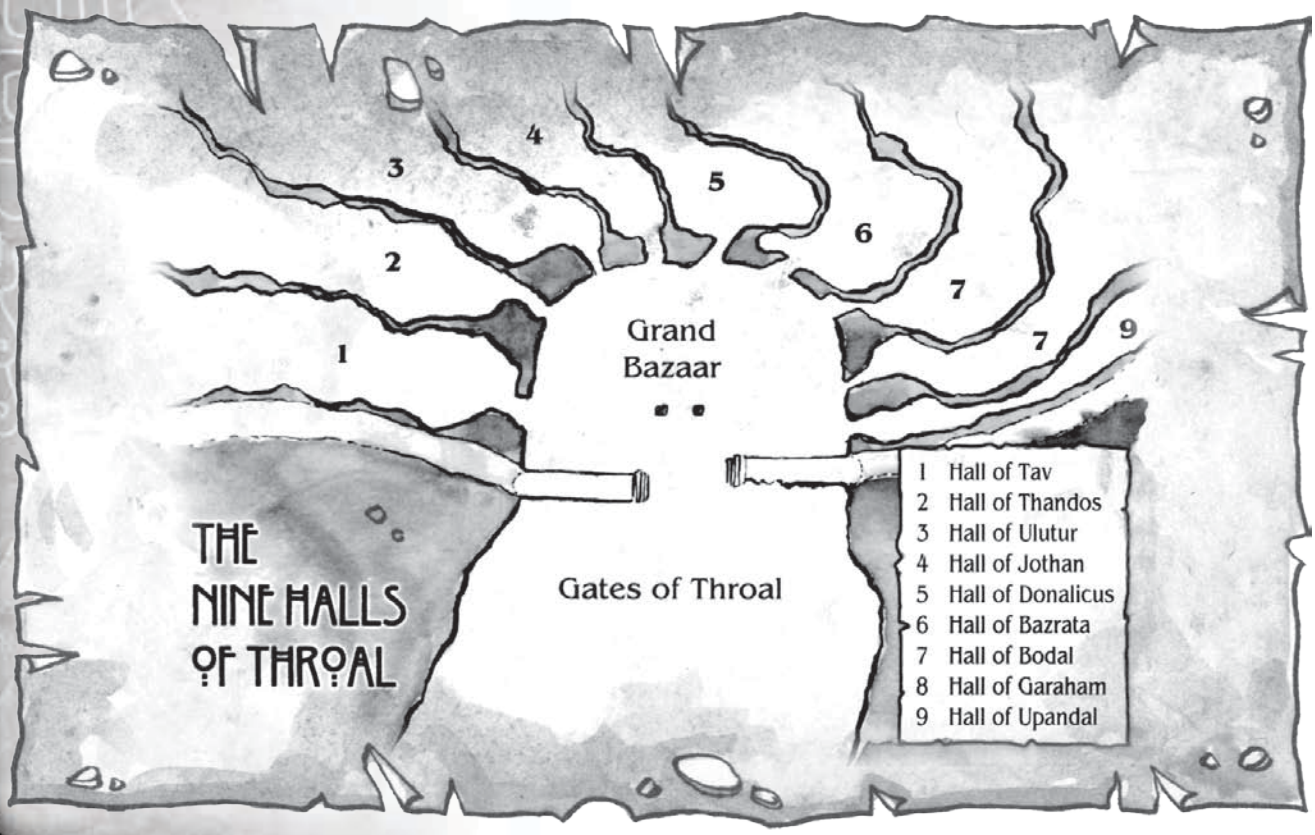
The term "the Halls of Throal" refers to the part of the kingdom built from 910 to 1050 TH, before Throal was sealed. Its construction differs considerably from those parts of Throal built since the kingdom's reopening. The Halls of Throal were constructed according to the architectural tastes of dwarfs, while the Inner Cities are designed to appeal to other Name-givers as well.

The nine Halls of Throal radiate out like wheel spokes from the Grand Bazaar, the mammoth foyer at the entrance to the kingdom. Three of the Halls are Named after past monarchs of Throal, three after heroic founders of the kingdom, two after great playwrights, and one for Upandal, the Passion of building and construction. In order from left to right as they branch off the Grand Bazaar, the nine Halls are Tav, Thandos, Ulutur, Jothan, Donalicus, Bazrata, Bodal, Garaham, and Upandal.

The Halls of Throal are not literally halls, but specific networks of tunnels and chambers in the kingdom. Between each of these vast areas are several cross tunnels that connect the passageways of each Hall to another. Consisting of little more than glorified tunnels, the Halls alternately narrow and widen as they twist their way through the mountain. The average width of a passageway is 10 yards, the average height 5 yards. The walls, which are also the outer walls of dwellings and businesses, are often decorated with colorful mosaics, or painted murals in the poorer sections. The murals are less long-lived than the mosaics and must be restored every decade or so. Throalites who allow chipped or peeling paint on their outer walls are either poverty-stricken or miserly.

Light crystals illuminate the entire length of the Halls of Throal, glowing in sconces every 6 yards or so. The light is brighter than that of the average kaer, but a person used to living above ground will find the Halls shadowy by comparison. The floors are tiled with granite slabs. In front of wealthy homes, the granite gives way to marble tiles purchased by the inhabitants of the wealthy estates. Some ostentatious-minded people have paid for floor mosaics as well.

Each of Throal's winding Halls is dozens of miles long, and it would take several days to travel the entire length of any one of them. They twist and turn and are periodically intersected by un-Named cross-tunnels. These cross-tunnels, which connect the Halls with one another, enable Throalites to travel from Hall to Hall without having to go all the way to the Grand Bazaar. Not all of the Halls are on the same elevation; extensive portions of Halls Jothan, Bazrata and Upandal lie 30 yards below the "ground level" of the rest of the kingdom. Travelers navigate each change of elevation via a huge, elaborate marble staircase, complete with a miniature grass-filled park where travelers can rest or quench their thirst in numerous fountains. The waters can even help travelers resist the effects of fatigue, to a point. These staircases are a popular lingering place for street salesmen and buskers. Royal Guards assigned to patrol the staircases of Throal wage a constant, losing campaign to keep them clear of loiterers.





Strangers to Throal often have difficulty finding their way to specific locations, as homes and businesses are not numbered. Instead, they are described by the approximate time it takes to get to the spot from the Grand Bazaar, and also by landmarks. For an example, see the description of the location of Uvimir's sausage stall in this section's opening journal entry. People who know Throal well easily adjust to this less-than-precise system, but outsiders find it exasperating. For example, many visitors mistake the tunnels that connect the Halls for the Halls themselves. Connecting tunnels and the Halls are both lined with shops and homes, and so a perplexed wayfarer can easily spend hours tramping down one Hall while believing he is in another. The Halls are also remarkably similar in appearance; the subject matter of various mosaics and murals is the only real distinguishing feature between most locations, and even these may be repeated. The Halls of Throal are filled with depictions of the Battle of Jalasa, the Betrayal of Tav Korelsed, Braza's Finding of the Routes, and the Defeat of the Therans at the Gates of Throal. Visitors to the kingdom often complain that the dwarfs must have deliberately made Throal difficult to navigate, and it is true that the confusing layout makes it easy for Royal Guards to spot strangers. Strangers, after all, are most often the ones wandering around with puzzled expressions on their faces. The maze of the Halls also separates the citizens of the Inner Cities, which are more rationally laid out and easier to travel through, from residents of the Halls proper (who are most likely to come from families that have lived in Throal for generations). Many denizens of the Cities venture into the Halls of Throal only reluctantly.

The Halls of Throal are a crowded place to live. Dwarf society is based on the extended family, and living in close quarters with one's relatives is considered right and proper. Only dwarfs of the richest families have private sleeping quarters, and dwarfs of humble origins maintain that this is why "rich kids" are soft in the head.

As in many large settlements across Barsaive, people in Throal arrange themselves by economic status. When Throal was being built before the Scourge, King Varulus I allowed citizens to bid for their choice of housing in the giant kaer. The highest bids netted not only the largest estates, but also free choice of location. Because people thought that the Horrors would enter through the Grand Bazaar and work their way back (should Throal actually be breached), the favored locations were those furthest from the gates. By this reckoning, the people at the far ends of the Halls had at least a chance of mobilizing to fight the monsters off if catastrophe struck. Since Throal reopened, the distance between the estates of the rich and the outside world has become inconvenient, but tradition is a powerful thing where symbols of status are concerned. Therefore, the furthest reaches (in distance and depth) are still the most desirable properties in the kingdom. In Throalic parlance, to be "in" is to be wealthy and well-connected, as in, "After I get the trade franchise from Queen Alachia, I'll be well and truly in." "Out" means the opposite: "Of course, if Alachia refuses, my investments will fail, and I'll be out—completely out."

In general, the Halls of Throal contain three types of areas: the *dahnat*, which translates roughly to "the slums," home to Throal's least well-off; the Estates, home to the nobles; and the other neighborhoods, known as *wedshel*, home to Throal's equivalent of the middle class.

THE DAHNAT

The poorest, most run-down areas of the Halls are the first things a visitor sees after leaving the Grand Bazaar. These southerly areas of the kingdom, known as the *dahnat*, are a haven for beggars and others who have fallen on hard times. Though the poorest citizen of Throal is better off than many in Barsaive's other large cities, everyone in Throal agrees that the *dahnat* are a shameful blight. As usual, however, reformers and the old guard disagree about the solution. Reformers want to spend public money to spruce up the *dahnat*. Old-guard conservatives want to make it a fining offense to have a shabby home or business—a tax of sorts on the poor that would encourage them to move somewhere less immediately visible, such as the Inner Cities. The reformers oppose this measure because it punishes the poor, contrary to the spirit of the *Council Compact*.

Throal has a smaller proportion of destitute people than other cities in Barsaive; fewer than 5,000 Name-givers live in the *dahnat*. The average dwelling in this area is a 5-yard-by-13-yard rectangle adjoined to one of the Halls at a narrow end. These one-room dwellings may house 20 or more members of an extended family. Furniture is rudimentary: a wooden table, a few rickety chairs, a stove, and a few storage chests for dishes and clothing. At night, *dahnat* dwellers move the furniture to one side so they can sleep on mats.

Businesses also operate in the *dahnat*, many of them

threadbare shops where local people spend their hard-earned coppers. Others are larger enterprises dependent on cheap labor, such as weavers' workshops, tanneries, and the like. Most employees of such establishments are women; men from the *dahnat* leave the neighborhood each morning to work elsewhere in Throal as builders or miners.

Few Throalic dwarfs remain poor for more than a few generations. Children who work hard even at mediocre schools can almost always get better jobs than their parents, lifting the family out of poverty. Most residents of the *dahnat* are relative newcomers to the kingdom, as those who lived in the *dahnat* during the Scourge have long since moved on to better circumstances. Legions of poor dwarfs have given way to humble souls from the rest of Barsaive who have come to Throal in search of a better life. The *dahnat* are more racially mixed than other areas of the Halls of Throal, and orks have become more numerous than dwarfs. The *dahnat* are also home to a few humans and trolls.

Though long-time Throalites look down on them, residents of the *dahnat*—known as "southenders" or "southers" in Throalic slang—are proud and self-reliant. They have hope for their children's future, if not their own. They work hard, and expect that hard work to pay off. They bear no love for the rich, but hope that their descendants might one day join their ranks. Children of the *dahnat* tend to be high-spirited and have a healthy disrespect for their so-called social betters, but few of them are criminals. The *dahnat* of Throal are safer and quieter than many areas of Bartertown.

Men, women, and even some children leave their homes to work during the day, leaving the *dahnat* quiet and empty. During the evening, residents flock to the taverns to forget their troubles. Most of these drinking establishments look bad and smell worse. Brawls break out frequently, though few people get badly hurt. Taverns offer cheap drinks, the companionship of hardworking southers, and little else. Popular taverns in the area include the Broken Nose, the Granite Hands, the Golden Tankard, Olen's Place, the Smirking Imp, the Tattooed Human, and the Winged Dwarf. As many southers are illiterate, the taverns are marked not by printed signs, but by the crude, colorful murals that adorn their outer walls.

Player characters will have to overcome a bad first impression if they enter a southender bar. The poor folk of the area are suspicious of outsiders, and have learned to act invisible in the presence of richer people. Also, like humble people in Barsaive's hinterlands, many southers display a superstitious dread of adepts. As far as they are concerned, even honest and well-meaning adventurers usually bring trouble. Legends, after all, tell of mighty adepts who have great adventures in which common folk more often than not get slaughtered.

In addition to tavern crawling, southers make their entertainment in other ways. Lacking much money for concerts, plays, and such, they tell stories and sing. Though less interested in debate or in the arts than the average Throalite, they are aficionados of personal combat and *hach'var*.

Most of the homes in the *dahnat* are owned by the kingdom. Originally purchased by their occupants, most of whom have since moved into better areas (see **Wedshel**, p.107) or to one of the Inner Cities (see **Inner Cities**, p.120), the houses fell into the government's possession by default. After assuming ownership, the kingdom offered them for rent and sale. A few of the wealthier noble trading houses also own *dahnat* houses, from which they make a tidy profit in rent.

The Chancellery oversees the homes owned by the kingdom, and is also responsible for ensuring that private landlords follow the laws governing ownership of rental property. The most significant rent law concerns pricing; the Chancellery has placed restrictions on the prices owners can charge for rent in the *dahnat*. Rents average around 25-30 silver pieces per month, and vary according to location. Homes in some of the Halls of Throal cost more, especially those farthest from the Bazaar; rent for these runs about 35-40 silver pieces a month.

To rent or purchase a home in the *dahnat*, one must be a resident of Throal—and, of course, find a landlord willing to rent. Unfortunately, the Chancellery has imposed no restrictions on landlords regarding whom they must rent to or whom they can deny. Orks and trolls have been the target of discrimination in the past when trying to rent or buy homes owned by members of the noble houses. Thus far, no one of any race has run into trouble renting or buying a kingdom-owned home.

Security Measures

The magistrate in charge of the *dahnat* is a friendly, kind-hearted dwarf Named Skerrin, who was born in the *dahnat* and worked his way through the ranks of the Royal Guards to his current position. He relates well to poor dwarfs, and has a reputation for fairness and compassion.



Skerrin believes that hard work can solve all problems. Though he does not understand orks and trolls as well as he does dwarfs, he nonetheless manages to keep a lid on tensions in the *dahnat*. As part of his efforts to keep criminals and exiles from moving into the cheap housing in the area, Skerrin launches periodic sweeps to check up on new residents. The honest workers of the *dahnat* cooperate with these raids, because the last thing they want is crooked or dangerous people living in their midst.

The Royal Guard units under Skerrin's command take their cue from him, and make an effort to fit in with the community. Few of them were brought up in the *dahnat*, but they spend time in local taverns and generally get to know people. Therefore, most southers see the Royal Guards as allies instead of adversaries.

During the work day, guard patrols are light; a guard unit takes anywhere from 1 to 10 minutes to respond to a disturbance. In the evening, patrols are more frequent in case fights break out in the taverns; a guard patrol will appear within 10 rounds of any trouble starting. Late at night, patrols are so infrequent that it takes anywhere from 3 to 15 minutes for a unit to respond.

Accommodations

Numerous establishments offering cheap lodging exist in the *dahnat*, but few advertise with signs, thus forcing prospective customers to ask the locals for directions or recommendations. If newcomers to the *dahnat* strike local residents as dangerous or troublesome, the locals may deliberately mislead them in the hope that they will move on.

Sleeping space in these cheap lodgings costs 1 copper piece a night. This fee entitles the customer to a mat in a communal sleeping area, but does not include meals or drinks; patrons must buy these from nearby taverns. Typical lodging houses are referred to by their owners' Names; four of the better-known appear below.

Hardstick's

This lodging house is run by Iaiah Hardstick, a middle-aged dwarf with a sour disposition. Easily insulted, he regularly gets into fights in the local taverns. His customers often have to bandage him up after a night out.

Johuricus'

This lodging house belongs to Johurrus Johuricus, a thin, wizened old dwarf with a weakness for alcohol. He is cranky in the mornings but garrulous when drunk.

Siggo's

The owner of Siggo's is a grim, tough human woman who takes guff from no one. Her blanket refusal to talk about her past has given rise to all kinds of wild rumors about her. Siggo is completely bald, and some say she lost her hair after a terrible encounter with a ghost or a Horror.

Stathina's

This place belongs to Stathina Goldheart, a humble dwarf woman who has dedicated her life to Garlen. She often helps down-and-out patrons find jobs and make a fresh start. She has a low tolerance for adventurers, whom she regards as little better than criminals.

Encounters

Typical brief encounters in the *dahnat* can include:

- A mangy dwarf child escaping punishment from his parents.
- A party of exhausted miners heading into a tavern after a long day's work.
- A madwoman babbling about a disaster that will soon befall Throal.
- A guard unit asking a shady-looking character a few questions.
- A mural artist touching up a tavern sign, with a paintbrush in one hand and a jug of ale in the other.
- A legless beggar complaining to an armless beggar that visitors to the Bazaar are getting more miserly every day.
- Members of the Miners' Guild intimidating a new arrival who has been working in the mines without joining the guild.
- A construction boss looking for Builders' Guild members willing to do some hard work on short notice.
- A young woman sweeping dirt from her home into the hallway.
- A stray puppy that tags along after the adventurers, begging for food.

THE WEDSHEL

Though Throalites do not use the term "middle class," the bulk of Throal's population would fit that modern definition. In Throal, people too prosperous for the *dahnat* but of too low an income level to be rich are considered ordinary, average citizens. The poor and the rich are different, and tend to live in their own enclaves; the areas inhabited by average Throalites are neither *dahnat* nor wealthy estates, but simply the "other neighborhoods," the *wedshel*, full of ordinary people, their homes, and their places of business.

A Typical Home

The average Throalic home is hewn from the mountain. Built fairly quickly at around the same time, all these homes are roughly similar in construction. Each home has a single entrance, with large doors of heavy oak that open onto one of the Halls of Throal. Luckily for the people of Throal, fire is not a major hazard; since so much is made of stone, there are few structures that will burn. Most average homes are occupied by their owners. A select few homes in each of the Halls belong to members of the wealthier trading houses, who rent them at prices ranging from 100 to 150 silver pieces per month. As in the *dahnat*, only citizens of Throal may rent or purchase a home in these moderately prosperous neighborhoods. The typical home contains a reception room, dining hall, family room, sleeping area, and storage space.

Adventure Hook

A group of young rowdies decides to have a night of fun slumming, dressing in rags and heading to the Broken Nose tavern. They provoke the local miners until someone throws a punch and a fight breaks out. One of the young provocateurs is thrown off-balance, hits his head on a table and dies. The guard unit investigating the incident declines to charge any of the miners; even the accounts of the dead man's friends make it clear that his demise was accidental. However, this explanation does not satisfy the dead man's parents. Wealthy traders from Travar used to purchasing justice, they assume that the guards are favoring poor Throalites because they killed a foreigner. The traders hire a group of adepts to kidnap the miner who knocked the hapless victim down and take him to Travar for trial. This act outrages even those Throalites who normally would side against a poor miner. The Throalic government hires the player characters to intercept the kidnappers and return the miner to Throal unharmed. This adventure works especially well if the characters have previously worked for His Majesty's Exploratory Force, the Eye of Throal, or the Arm of Throal (see **The Threads of Unity**, p. 85).

Reception Room

An enlarged foyer, the reception room is the place to entertain acquaintances for business or pleasure. Furniture and trappings are meant to subtly impress guests, and so most Throalites decorate the reception room with items crafted by family members. This practice fits in with the Throalic proverb, "Know my family through the fruit of our hands." Placing an expensive work of art or precious antique in the reception room is ostentatious, a social misstep committed only by the ignorant.

The first time player characters are invited to a Throalic home, they will only see the reception room.

Dining Hall

Dwarfs love food almost as much as the company of their kin, and so the dining hall is the heart of a Throalic home. Gigantic wooden tables, usually rectangular and ringed with chairs, are almost always the most impressive and expensive pieces of furniture in Throalic homes. Their owners regard them as family heirlooms and take excellent care of them. Each table is custom-made by the best woodworkers a family can afford to hire (or the most talented woodworkers in the family); important events in a family's history are often carved into the tabletop, the table legs, and the legs and backs of the chairs. For example, a family of actors might have masks and scrolls carved into its table. The dining table is so treasured a symbol of Throalic life that the *Council Compact* prescribes a specific penalty for stealing or destroying one; the penalty is much higher than that for stealing or damaging other sorts of property.

Items that illustrate family status, such as portraits, tapestries, and trophies, are displayed in the dining hall, and some of these items may be quite valuable. The eating room reminds a family of its identity, and guests entertained here are entering the family's heart. An invitation to dine with a Throalite's family is a great honor, and to betray it through bad behavior is a slight not only to one's host, but to all his kindred. Many legendary blood feuds began with slights or arguments in a family dining hall.

Family Room

The family retires to this casual, comfortably furnished room to spend time together after a meal. (In Throal, "comfortable" means that the stout wooden seats and backs of chairs are adorned with thin cushions.) Musical instruments, scrolls and books, craft materials, and other things a Throalite might use to while away an hour or two are stored here, propped in corners or scattered across tabletops. Only a Throalite's most intimate friends will be invited into a family room. Though not revered in the same way as a dining hall, the typical family room is too informal a space to entertain mere acquaintances or business contacts.

Sleeping Area

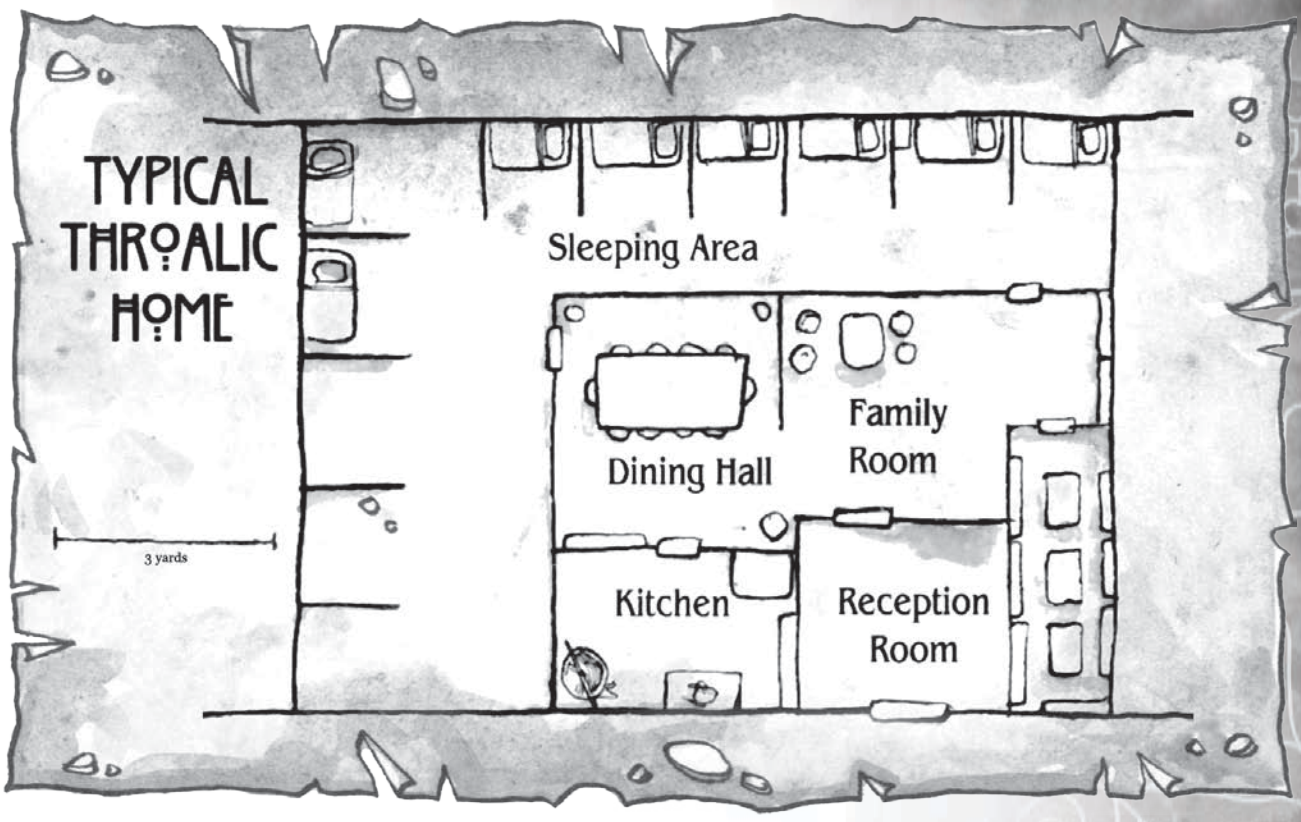
A treasured verse of Throalic poetry says, "To hear the snores of one's grandparents is the most perfect bliss." (Dwarfs snore more loudly than any other Name-giver race, even drowning out trolls.) Throalic families sleep in communal areas, with the limited privacy of wooden partitions. The partitions can be moved around as the number of people in a family changes. Partitions are intricately decorated, either carved or covered in needle work. Family members keep personal property in chests and drawers in their own portion of the sleeping area. Strangers are never invited into a family's sleeping area; most Throalites would consider it bizarre to put up a house guest.

Storage

Storage rooms contain the family's silver and gold, as well as possessions that no one is currently using. These chambers often have reinforced doors, and some families have even installed mechanical traps in their storage areas to deter thieves. Still others keep large dogs trained to attack intruders.

Security Measures

Most areas in the bustling Halls of Throal are well patrolled, and adventurers traveling through the *wedshel* areas will spot numerous guard units. Often, guards are on the scene when a disturbance begins; if not, they will arrive within 3 to 4 minutes (18 to 24 rounds). Average Throalic citizens do not stand idly by when trouble starts;



able-bodied folk who see crimes being committed are likely to intervene unless the people causing the disturbance are adepts. In that case the average Throalite will give them a wide berth and wait for the professionals to arrive.

Three magistrates oversee affairs in the Halls of Throal. The magistrate of Tav, Thandos, and Ulutur Halls is Jomikale, a Warrior adept and reformed roughneck who began his career as a lowly guardsman. Once a bribe-taking drunkard who luckily managed not to get caught by his superiors, he turned over a new leaf after accidentally killing a young elf boy during an interrogation. His newfound moral righteousness made him one of the most famous guards in the kingdom, with an impressive record of arrests that ultimately propelled him into the magistrate's chair. Jomikale has a reputation as the toughest magistrate in the kingdom; in the face of every defendant he sees the image of the former self he has come to loathe. Only a few of his closest associates know his dark secret, and none of them dares speak a word about it.

The magistrate of Halls Jothan, Donalicus, and Bazrata is a stolid, unemotional dwarf woman Named Philippa. A former advocate, Philippa is a wise judge but not a great leader. The guards under her command are lazy and uninspired; they keep the peace well enough, but have a terrible record when it comes to solving crimes.

The magistrate Pijian commands the guards of Halls Bodal, Garaham, and Upandal. The youngest magistrate in Throal, she is a member of House Ueraven appointed to her post by King Varulus III in order to appease the influential courtier Selenda. Her promotion aroused resentment among the Royal Guards and assistant magistrates, many of whom felt they deserved the job more. However, Pijian has surprised her critics by running a smooth operation, winning the respect of her men, and making solid judgments on the bench. She has even ruled against her own house on several occasions. Though Selenda has pressured her to criticize the *Council Compact*, Pijian consistently defends it. Her family has recently begun pressuring Pijian to resign and take her place in the family business, but she has so far ignored their wishes. Where she would stand if House Ueraven makes another bid for the throne is anyone's guess.

Accommodations

Since the reopening of Throal, various inns have sprung up to cater to visitors. Most of these inns are converted shops or houses with less than luxurious accommodations. They offer private sleeping quarters and serve meals at prices ranging from 1 to 3 silvers a night, depending on the quality of the food and the size of the rooms.

The Halls of Throal also contain hundreds of taverns, mostly neighborhood establishments frequented by Throalites of all sorts who happen to live nearby. Many of these establishments have such odd and whimsical Names as Astendar's Cup, the Ax and Saddle, the Burning Tree, the Chirping Bat, the Delinquent Serving Boy, the Eye in the Swirl, the Feathered Mage, the Horse of Garaham, the Howling Pup, the Iron Ball, the Kneeling Warrior, Ninety Caverns, the Robe of Purple, the Trap Door, the Unending Poem, the Unforgiving Bee, the Vane of Rubies, and the White Owl. Gamemasters can use any of these Names, or make up some of their own.

A few of the better-known inns in the Halls of Throal are described below.

The Sand Behemoth

The mural on this inn's outside wall depicts a Theran warship made of sand, falling apart under the withering attack of Throalic airships. The inn's proprietor is Holli

Ilfara, an expatriate human and former political prisoner from Thera. She believes that Thera's present rulers have corrupted the noble vision of the Empire's great founders, and her sympathies have made the Sand Behemoth a favored meeting place for Throalic agitators who want war with Thera. Radical members of the *olzim* of Thystonius and Lochost can be found in the inn's common room most evenings, cursing Thera and plotting their next moves. The inn is clean, though not elegant, and Holli personally serves up the exotic Theran dishes she learned to cook as a child. A room and meals at the Sand Behemoth costs 2 silvers a night.

The Fur-Covered Elephant

Bilmo the Braggart, a middle-aged male dwarf, runs a rough establishment that attracts adventurers, mercenaries, peddlers and other fringe characters. Bilmo claims to have once been a mighty adept and happily regales anyone who will listen with wild tales of his exploits. He says he eventually grew bored with adventuring and underwent a re-Naming ritual to escape his many foes. Individual gamemasters may decide if Bilmo's tales are true and/or useful, or simply absurd fabrications. The Elephant is none too clean and the food is mediocre at best, but the price is just 1 silver a night.

The Tasty Thundra

Run by the talkative ork, Dwalis, this establishment is known for its delicious meats and foul vegetable dishes. Dwalis loves to talk about other people's business as much as any dwarf. He is a bad person with whom to share a confidence, but an excellent vehicle for spreading rumors. A room and dinner at the Tasty Thundra costs 2 silvers per night.

The Vine of Grapes

Many a man in Throal dreams secretly about Kathieri, the beautiful elf maiden who runs this inn. Shy but kind, Kathieri recently took over the inn from her elderly parents. She dotes on her parents, and has turned down suitor after suitor in order to continue caring for them. The inn is clean and well run, and offers the finest in elven cuisine. A favorite stop for visiting elves, the Vine of Grapes costs 4 silvers a night. Despite the high price, the inn is often full.

Specialty Taverns

Some taverns appeal to a specialized clientele, reflected in their Names. Most guilds have one or more taverns at which their members regularly gather, and at least one tavern caters to *j'havim* of each of the major trading houses. Others are centered around their patrons' interests and hobbies. The **Tavern Table** lists some of the specialized taverns in Throal.

TAVERN TABLE

Tavern Name	Clientele
Ancient Memories	*J'havim* of House Ueraven
The Blue Sun	Chancellery officials
The Crystal Shield	Weaponsmiths and makers of armaments
The Frozen Windling	Trolls
The Hidden Gem	Muckers
The Inscrutable Sentinel	Royal Guards
The Living Canvas	Tattooists and tattoo wearers
The Lost Thread	Magicians and scholars of magic
The Nectar Petal	Windlings
The Painted Mask	Actors and theatergoers
The Platinum Cockroach	Insect collectors
The Ready Stamen	Workers at crystal greenhouses
River of Tongues	Philosophers
Sea of Fire	Morticians
The Seven Sutures	Healers
The Spent Scarab	Mercenaries and warriors
The Spider's Web	Widows

Encounters

The details of everyday life described in **On Everyday Life** (p. 8) are typical occurrences throughout most of the Halls of Throal. The Halls are active during the work day, full of customers and workers at the shops and businesses standing alongside family homes. Sellers of goods stand in the passageways hawking their wares. Householders buy from them and chat with one another on the way to market. Impromptu debates flare up at the least opportunity. Children play games. Old folks sit in chairs in the passageways, waving to friends and striking up conversations with strangers.

Adventurers are likely to meet Throalic citizens from all walks of life in these moderately prosperous neighborhoods, and may have any type of encounter that the gamemaster can dream up.

The Estates

When Throalites talk about the wealthiest among them, they speak of those who live "in the Estates." The Estates are less a geographical neighborhood than a state of mind. Throal's rich inhabit manors located at the farthest-in ends of all the Halls of Throal. Geographically, a manor at the end of one Hall actually stands closer to *wedshel* abodes in the same Hall than to manors in other Halls.

A Typical Estate

The great estates of Throal are designed to house families, but also to impress other Throalites with those families' wealth and power. The most fashionable estates are the oldest ones, built in the tenth century; their owners have been rich for a long time and it shows. Most newer manors are painstaking duplications of older ones.

Manors in the Estates are not available for rent at any price, and are rarely sold. The cost of a manor put up for sale would likely be at least 100,000 silver pieces, putting it far beyond the reach of most people (and certainly beyond the reach of adventurers).

ADVENTURE HOOK

Merchants and residents near the Nectar Petal tavern are in an uproar over a band of windling Cavalrymen who have made the tavern the site of nightly zoak races. Zoaks are the half-bat, half-bird flying mounts favored by some windling Cavalrymen (game information for these creatures appears on p. 357 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). The zoak races take place in the passage outside the tavern, impeding traffic and scaring the old folk. During the evening, the hallway is choked with gawkers and gamblers betting on the races. The local Royal Guard unit has asked the racers to move along, but so far they have refused. As the zoak racers are adepts of great prowess, local authorities ask the player characters to persuade them to cease their activities.

The zoak racers are actually members of a windling living legend cult, the Furious Laughers, devoted to curing the Passion Vestrial of his madness by performing bizarre acts throughout Barsaive. They believe that bringing bizarre behavior to sane and stable Throal will make their metaphorical magic all the stronger. Like many cultists, the windlings are dedicated to the point of fanaticism and will gladly turn to violence if necessary to advance their cause.

The following description of a typical estate assumes that the resident family is still wealthy. Estates owned by noble families that have fallen on hard times generally show signs of encroaching poverty. Expensive furnishings and pieces of art have been sold off; the family no longer throws parties or invites guests in; they have few, if any, servants or guards; large areas go unused, accumulating dust.

Armory

The armory houses weapons, armor, uniforms, and other gear belonging to the family's armed guards. Some armories contain enough equipment to outfit more than a hundred guards and supporters. Should civil war break out in Throal, the nobles are prepared to fight it.

Artisan Room

Family members polish their artisan skills in this communal chamber. Throal's rich citizens prefer to buy their works of art from famous artists because such purchases give them status. After all, anyone can make a work of art; it takes serious money to buy one. However, active traders know they must keep their artisan skills sharp in case they need to prove to customers out in the hinterlands that they are not Horror-tainted. Depending on the skills practiced in these areas, artisan rooms can contain entire smith's workshops, pottery kilns, and so on.

Ballroom

Every noble estate worthy of the title has a vast ballroom in which to entertain and impress other rich Throalites. The typical ballroom is covered in marble and decked out with ornamental support columns. Huge mosaic or canvas portraits of ancestors bedeck the walls. The "ballroom painting" has become a distinct sub-genre of Throalic art; these enormous paintings are full of figures and usually depict great feats performed by heroic traders. Every ballroom also contains a gigantic, elaborate chandelier made of precious metals and countless tiny shards of light crystal. Connecting the ballroom to upper regions of the manor house is a mammoth staircase, with guards stationed at its bottom to prevent outsiders from ascending into the family's private rooms.

Barracks

The guards sleep in these austere chambers; each guard's space contains a sleeping mat, a chamber pot, and a small chest in which to store his personal items. Barracks are rarely inhabited for any length of time, as most guards prefer to live with their families elsewhere in the kingdom. Only in the event of a prolonged civil disturbance would the barracks see full use.

Dining Hall

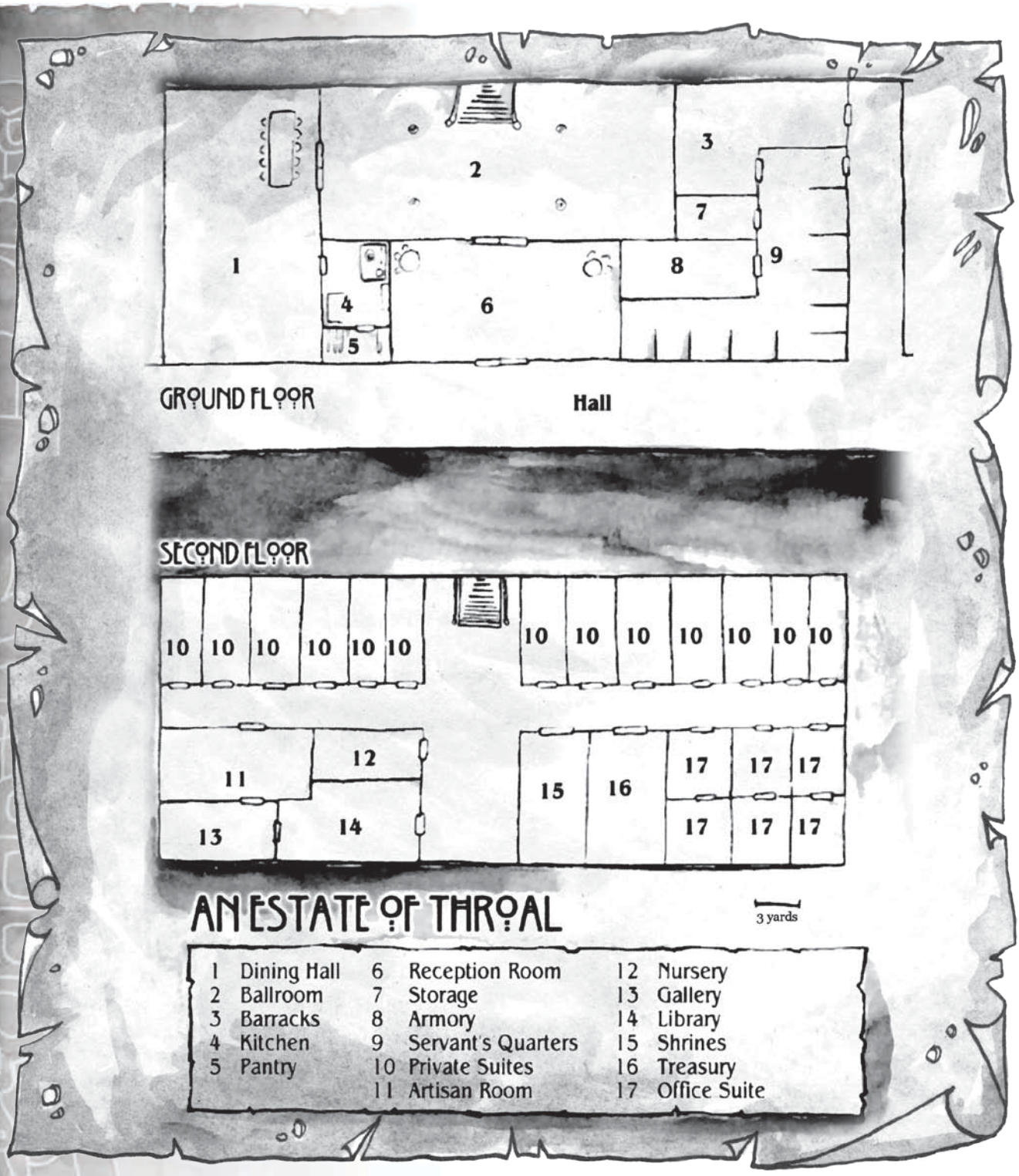
Rich Throalites entertain in massive dining halls dominated by absurdly long dining tables. Some of these tables can seat more than a hundred guests. As with the typical ballroom, the walls are covered with huge canvas paintings of heroic ancestors. In a "dining-hall painting," family ancestors appear in portrait groupings, gazing grimly down on guests. Figures in these paintings are typically three times life size.

Gallery

Nobles are expected to be art connoisseurs, and have galleries full of paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and other art objects. It is considered bad taste to display commissioned works in the gallery; the point is to impress visitors with the age, rarity, and fame of artworks one has "just happened" to collect. A successful trading house invariably owns extremely valuable items, and the typical manor gallery is an extension of its treasury. Pieces on display can be sold off whenever the house needs large amounts of silver. The contents of a rich family's gallery are a much more compact source of wealth than a reserve of precious metal. Two to four armed guards are on constant duty in each gallery to prevent theft.

Kitchen and Pantry

An estate kitchen must be large and equipped well enough to serve an entire feast, even though most of the time it serves food for no more than 20 dwarfs. Most kitchens have vents designed to spread delectable cooking odors



throughout the rest of the manor. Food is stored in an adjoining pantry.

Library

A dwarf noble is expected to be well educated and capable of discussing matters ranging from natural history to philosophy, and so every noble manor has a sizable library. Some are rarely touched; other nobles are genuine amateur scholars with impressive collections of works on their chosen subjects. Trading house libraries are particularly strong in geography, as so much of their success depends on the establishment of new trade routes. The walls of the typical manor library are often adorned with painted maps of Barsaive, which are updated as new routes are created and old ones abandoned. The library is also the usual site of meetings to discuss family business. An old traders' superstition keeps ancestral portraits out of the library; a trader doesn't mind his predecessors staring at him when he's eating, but he prefers not to have them staring over his shoulder when he makes important business decisions.

Office Suite

In these small rooms, day-to-day business is conducted. These offices are set aside for the use of high-ranking family members or inhabited by several *j'havim*.

Private Suites

Bedrooms for family members, these suites contain personal luxuries from jewelry to expensive clothing. Unlike average dwarf families, rich dwarfs sleep apart from one another. Most Throalites consider this practice decadent and believe that it represents one reason why the rich often seem heartless and selfish.

Servants' Quarters

The 20 to 30 servants who serve the typical noble house live in these smallish chambers, located near the nobles' private rooms so that they can be at the family's beck and call at all hours. Servants of different noble houses are often related to one another, and the same families of retainers have served many of the ancient noble houses for centuries. Though not overly large, the typical servant's quarters are as clean and decently furnished as the living quarters of most average Throalites.

Shrines

Most nobles propitiate the Passions, or at least make a show of doing so. Noble families erect household shrines to all the sane Passions, though Chorrolis usually has the largest and most impressive one.

Treasury

A noble house keeps its cash in this large chamber, usually in gold and silver bars. Manor house treasuries are heavily guarded, and the chests full of precious metal are rigged with mechanical and magical traps. The most prosperous noble houses may have as much as 100,000 silver pieces on hand at any given time. On paper the noble families are worth more than that, but most of their money is usually tied up in investments or circulating around Barsaive in the purses of caravan masters.

Standard Activities

Because Throal's aristocracy gets most of its money from trade rather than from rent on inherited property, Throal has few truly idle rich. Men and women of Throal's noble families work during the day, balancing accounts, arranging expeditions, and buying commodities to sell in the hinterlands. Often, more than half of the family is away from Throal making business deals. Even socializing is work for the wealthy; everyone wants to seem richer, smarter and more successful than everyone else. Those who create this impression get more business and earn more money.

The rich throw parties and attend parties thrown by other rich people. They patronize arts and sporting events, appearing in special boxes at the Royal Auditorium. They attend these events primarily to be seen; observing whatever is going on is secondary. Business deals are made as often at parties and public events as in offices.

Security Measures

The Estates are heavily protected by Royal Guard units and by hirelings of the noble families who live in them. Guards are always on the scene, even before trouble starts. If adventurers cause trouble near a noble estate, they can expect twice as many reinforcements to arrive twice as quickly as they would anywhere else in Throal. Adept reinforcements will arrive 6 to 12 rounds after an altercation starts because they frequently visit rich neighborhoods in order to seal agreements to guard caravans or undertake special missions, and to improve their social standing.

The Estates are so widely spread out that no single magistrate oversees their affairs. Instead, the Estates fall under the jurisdiction of the magistrates of the Halls in which they are located (see p. 104). For example, noble estates in Hall Bazrata are under the jurisdiction of Magistrate Philippa.

Adventure Hook

The estates of two very different noble houses stand across from one another at the end of the Hall of Bazrata; on one side is the conservative, dour House Chaozun, and on the other is the swaggering, swashbuckling House Neumani. Aside from making money, the Neumani like nothing more than scandalizing the Chaozun. This time, however, they may have gone too far.

Grindo, the leader of House Neumani, has hired a trio of ogres as members of his private guard and stationed these hulking louts at his main gate during business hours. Though he will not admit it, he has clearly done this extraordinary thing to upset House Chaozun; sure enough, Chaozun's courtier is soon demanding an audience with the king; those ogres are bound to cause trouble, and Chaozun wants them gone!

The situation presents the Chancellery with a twofold problem. First, House Neumani is a staunch ally of the king, and even though ogres in Throal makes them nervous, Chancellery officials do not want to alienate one of Neden's most dependable backers. Second, the issue of nobles' freedom to hire whatever private guards they will is a touchy one. Even those nobles who hate Grindo would be enraged at the king's interference with such decisions. They know the king would like to see their private armies disbanded, and will rebel at the slightest hint of such a move. The player characters must find a way to make the ogres want to leave without attracting the attention of Grindo or his rivals.

Encounters

Likely encounters near an Estate include:

- Suspicious private guards urging the player characters to move along.
- Spoiled rich dwarf children running amok.
- Servants chatting with one another during their time off.
- Royal Guards shooing away beggars.
- Construction crews adding an expensive new facade to the front of a house.
- Well-dressed adolescents dangerously showing off the results of their fencing lessons.
- *Olzim* members importuning a wealthy patron to sponsor a procession.
- A grubby character collecting a large gambling debt from an embarrassed trader.

The Inner Kingdom

Just beyond the northern edges of the Halls of Jothan and Donalicus lies the Inner Kingdom of Throal. This portion of the kingdom contains the Royal Auditorium, the Great Library, the offices of various government departments such as the Chancellery and His Majesty's Exploratory Force, and the private chambers of the royal family. Each of these is described in detail below. Several areas of the Inner Kingdom, in particular the Royal Chambers, the Central Chambers, and the Great Library, are connected by a network of secret passageways known only to the king and his most trusted advisors.

The Royal Auditorium

The Royal Auditorium is the heart of public life in Throal. The Auditorium seats approximately 4,000 Namegivers, mostly in bleachers that climb along the walls on all sides of its 300-foot round stage. The bleachers are accessible via long aisles that rake steeply downward in this vast, bowl-shaped room. Boxes for the wealthy also ring the stage. Performers enter the stage area via entrances under the aisles connected to a series of dressing and rehearsal rooms underneath the auditorium.

Standard Activities

The Royal Auditorium hosts displays of personal combat, professional and amateur dramatic performances, poetry readings, lectures and educational presentations, guild elections, *un'hayedah* competitions, pageants in honor of the Passions, debates, displays of exotic beasts, demonstrations of magic, and festival celebrations. Some of these events are free to the public; others cost admission, the amount of which is determined by the gamemaster.

Security Measures

Guard units are posted to the Royal Auditorium according to the expected turnout for scheduled events. The Auditorium is rarely filled to capacity; an event that attracts 2,000 people is considered extremely popular. For most events, one guard unit is on hand for every 200 people. If the event in question is likely to be rowdy—for example, a hotly contested guild election or a pageant in honor of Thystonius—twice or even three times the usual number of guards may be assigned. If an above-average number of guards are on duty in the Auditorium, the number of patrols elsewhere in Throal may be reduced accordingly. Player characters wishing to do something without being seen by the Royal Guards might want to select the night of a big event for their illicit activities.

Encounters

Typical encounters that player characters might face in the Royal Auditorium depend on the nature of the event in progress. Possibilities include:

Adventure Hook

Every year the king sponsors a spell research competition, open to all magicians in Barsaive. A panel of judges assembled by the court spellcaster examines the spells on paper for originality, technical merit and utility. Finally, the competing spellcasters demonstrate their spells at a public performance in the Royal Auditorium. One of the competitors this year is a mysterious Nethermancer and Horror Stalker known only as the Crimson Face; she appears to be an elf, but her features are hidden by a mask of red agate that she never removes.

During the private examinations, the Crimson Face presents a spell that makes an area unattractive to ghosts. During the public performance, however, she surprises the judges by casting a spell that summons a multi-tentacled creature that smells of rotting organic matter. Skittering through the stands, the monster leaps on and devours a visitor from Urupa who has come to town to see the performance. The Crimson Face runs away and the summoned creature melts through the walls of the auditorium. Horrified that a contestant would summon what looks like a Horror during this event, Ajmar the Admirable enlists the player characters to find and slay the Horror and bring the Crimson Face to justice. In fact, the seeming Horror is a magical Horror hunter created by the Crimson Face to destroy other Horrors. The devoured Urupan had been marked by the Horror Ristul; the victim's family, also pawns of Ristul, come to Throal for vengeance and are slain by the Face. Can the adventurers figure out what is really going on?

- Drunken students celebrating the completion of their examinations.
- Vendors selling ale, wine, bread, fruit, or rotten food (the latter item to be thrown at subpar performers).
- Political agitators chanting slogans for their cause.
- Slack-jawed visitors from the hinterland, astonished by the event in progress.
- Mischievous windlings flying above the crowd and spilling beverages on people.
- A crazed philosopher screaming that the end is near.
- Confused trolls who came to see personal combat bouts but found a poetry reading.
- Young urchins carrying signs advertising a business.
- A trader impressing clients from another city with the sights of Throal.
- Hecklers jeering performers.

The Great Library of Throal

The Great Library of Throal is a huge complex situated between the Royal Auditorium and the administrative areas of the Inner Kingdom. This center for knowledge and study is the largest library in Barsaive, the depth and breadth of its collection rivaled only by the Eternal Library of Thera.

Main Entrance (A)

These massive brass doors fill the Library's huge entrance arch, and stand open during the hours that the library is open to the public. A Royal Guard unit is on duty here day and night.

Staff Entrance (B)

This modest wooden door is reserved for the use of the library staff.

Reading Room (C)

The Library's public area, this spacious room is lined with benches and tables. A large display copy of the *Council Compact* sits on an elaborate, gilt-edged wooden stand in the center of the chamber. Members of the public may not leave this room for other areas of the library unless accompanied by a staff member.

Among the texts available in the Reading Room are *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*, the *Denizens of Barsaive* collection, *The Adept's Way*, and the *Book of Exploration*. Master Merrox has chosen to keep two other volumes of general knowledge, *Horrors* and *Creatures of Barsaive*, out of the Reading Room collection.

Retrieval Desk (D)

At the retrieval desk, library patrons request research material from the apprentice archivists on duty. The general collection is extensively cross-referenced and indexed, though these indices are not available to the general public. No catalogue yet exists for visitors to browse; work has recently begun on such a tool, but it is many months from completion. Player characters using the library must name the subject of their research, which allows the archivists to then search the indices for appropriate books and scrolls. If the subject of a character's research is deemed dangerous or questionable, the archivist asks the researcher to submit a letter of application to the Master of the Hall of Records. Merrox personally examines the application and approves or rejects the request. In some cases, he may report researchers to the Royal Guards or the Eye of Throal.

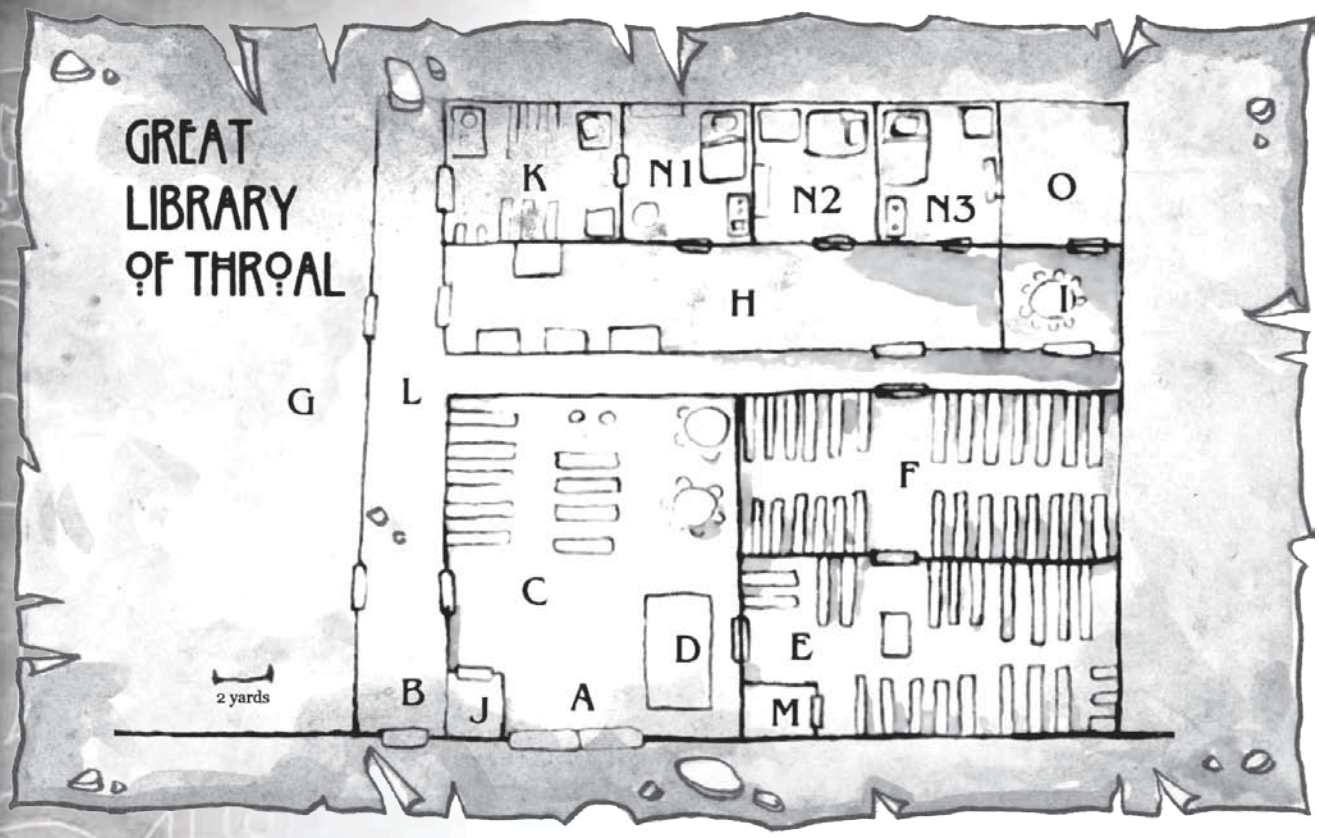
General Collections I and II (E, F)

These areas contain racks upon racks of scrolls and books, arranged by topic in a system that makes sense only to those trained in using it. Others, even those with experience as archivists, would have a hard time finding anything. These two collections consist largely of often-requested research materials: descriptions of the many kaers excavated and opened by His Majesty's Exploratory Force, histories of known magical items and legendary heroes, and so on.

General Collection III (G)

When most people think of the Great Library of Throal, the room housing this collection comes immediately to mind. This immense chamber is lined floor to ceiling with shelves, all stuffed with scrolls, books, and records. The stacks in





this room extend as high as 10 yards, and small balconies run along the stacks 3 and 6 yards above the ground. Small staircases, situated at the end of each 10-yard row of shelves, allow access to upper areas of the stacks. In between the stacks are tables with benches where archivists and apprentices conduct research.

Study Carrels (H)

This area contains work desks for the archivists, apprentices, and associates of the library.

Meeting Hall (I)

Meetings of library staff are held in this modestly furnished room.

Guard Room (J)

Guards take their breaks in this rest area, which contains a table and a couple of chairs.

Objects Collection (K)

The library collection also includes objects and artifacts, ranging from weapons to jewels to pieces of architecture. All these artifacts are of historical or scholarly interest. Unlike the text collection, the artifacts are badly organized; many are stored away in wooden boxes and have not been touched in decades. Some items might be extremely valuable; there might even be a magical treasure stored away here. The trick is separating the treasures from the junk. A Royal Guard unit is stationed in this room when the library is open.

Corridors (L)

The wide corridors of the library complex are lined with exquisite mosaics created during the Scourge. They show heroic scholars traveling throughout Barsaive to gather information for the *Book of Tomorrow*.

Privy (M)

This small room provides privacy for those caught off-guard by a "call of nature" while undertaking their research.

Master's Quarters (N)

The Master of the Hall of Records lives in this suite. N1 is a lavishly furnished reception area, kept clean and tidy by library staff (unlike the rest of Merrox's living quarters). N2 is Merrox's study, lined with books and objects that he has taken from the general collection for his own scholarly pursuits. Merrox knows that many of these items should be returned to their proper places, and he intends to put them back; however, he is a terrible procrastinator. He knows exactly where everything is, though to anyone else, the place looks like a rat's nest. N3 is Merrox's personal living space, including his bedroom. This room contains a concealed entrance to the secret passageways that connect the Great Library to the Central Chambers and the Royal Chambers.

Storage (O)

Centuries of worthless junk are crammed into this small room. Some apprentices spread rumors about fabulous treasures or trapped Horrors allegedly to be found here, but most of these tales are little more than vivid imaginings.

Standard Activities

The Great Library is almost always bustling with scholars, adventurers, and archivists from all across Barsaive,

searching its vast resources for knowledge. Despite the flurry of activity, the library remains quiet; the most prevalent sounds are the soft crackling of parchment and the occasional scratch of a quill pen.

Security Measures

A unit of the Royal Guard is always on duty at the doors of the Library. Because the Library is so close to the Royal Chambers and other areas of the Inner Kingdom, additional guards can be on the scene within two minutes should a disturbance arise.

The Central Chambers

The Central chambers are the administrative heart of the kingdom. The offices of all branches of the Throalic government are located here, along with the headquarters of the Royal Guards.

The Central Chambers form a vast maze of offices and meeting rooms in which the bulk of the kingdom's day-to-day business is conducted. Each of the main branches of the Throalic government has offices in this area, including the Chancellery (p. 78), the Arm of Throal (p. 95), the Eye of Throal (p. 92), His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps (p. 92), and His Majesty's Exploratory Force (p. 95). This area also contains the meeting rooms used by His Majesty's Trading Commission. A unit of the Royal Guard is on duty at the door to each of these offices, day and night. Several offices contain entrances to a network of secret passageways that leads to other areas in the Inner Kingdom, such as the Royal Chambers and the Great Library. Few people know of these passageways, and unauthorized entry is considered treasonous conduct subject to severe penalties.

Security Measures

This area is constantly guarded. Two Royal Guard units stand watch at the main entrance, and visitors must have been summoned or have made prior arrangements in order to gain entry. The guards have a listing of those expected in the Central Chambers each day; a person whose Name does not appear on the list is not allowed entry. In addition to the guards at the entrance, ten Royal Guard units roam the hallways at all times. Player characters should rarely be in this area unless they work for one of the government agencies headquartered here.

Royal Chambers

The king and his family live in the Royal Chambers of Throal, where the king also conducts his official business. Heavily guarded, this area is accessible only by invitation and so offers a quick death to interlopers. Player characters should not be able to storm the Royal Chambers. Gamemasters should feel free to beef up the security for adventuring groups consisting of high-Circle adepts.

Royal Hall

This grand entranceway, finished in pale green marble, is the dividing line between the Inner Kingdom of Throal and the Royal Chambers. The door between the Inner Kingdom and the Royal Hall is of pure silver; the door between the Royal Hall and the King's Court is solid gold. Both are embossed with the royal seal of Throal.

Forty veteran Royal Guards and eight high-Circle adepts guard the Royal Hall at all times. The adepts are members of the Elite Guard, a coterie of former adventurers who have decided that protecting the king is the greatest service they can perform for Throal. No member of the Elite Guard has ever been accused of disloyalty or corruption. Each member has at least one fabulous magical treasure at his disposal. The adepts and the Royal Guard units report to the Supreme General of the Arm of Throal.

No one may enter the Royal Hall without an invitation from the king or the chancellor. The guards will subdue and jail anyone attempting to do so. If the attempted entry posed no genuine security risk, the offender is fined 100 silver pieces and released, though in some cases, the king's advisers can arrange for the fine to be waived. If the suspect is thought to have harbored hostile intent, he is charged with treason. Offenders with influential friends may get off with a sentence of exile from Throal if found guilty, but those without political clout are condemned to death. The guards have the right to slay intruders who resist arrest.

Corridors run alongside the Royal Hall from the adjacent Guard House and Armory. The passages are lined with murder holes from which guards can fire arrows at intruders. The golden door leading to the King's Court includes a powerful magical trap which is activated by a whistle that the captain of the Elite Guard keeps on his person at all times. The trap's statistics are as follows.

Golden Door Trap

Detection Difficulty: 20
Disarm Difficulty: 20
Spell Defense: 20

Trap Initiative: NA

Trigger Condition: Once the whistle is blown, the gamemaster makes a Step 20/D20+D8+D6 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of anyone who touches the door. A successful test triggers the trap's effect.

Trap Effect: The victim and anyone with whom he shares a group pattern takes Step 20/D20+D8+D6 damage each round, until the trap is deactivated by one of the Elite Guard, the chancellor, or a member of the royal family. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Guard House

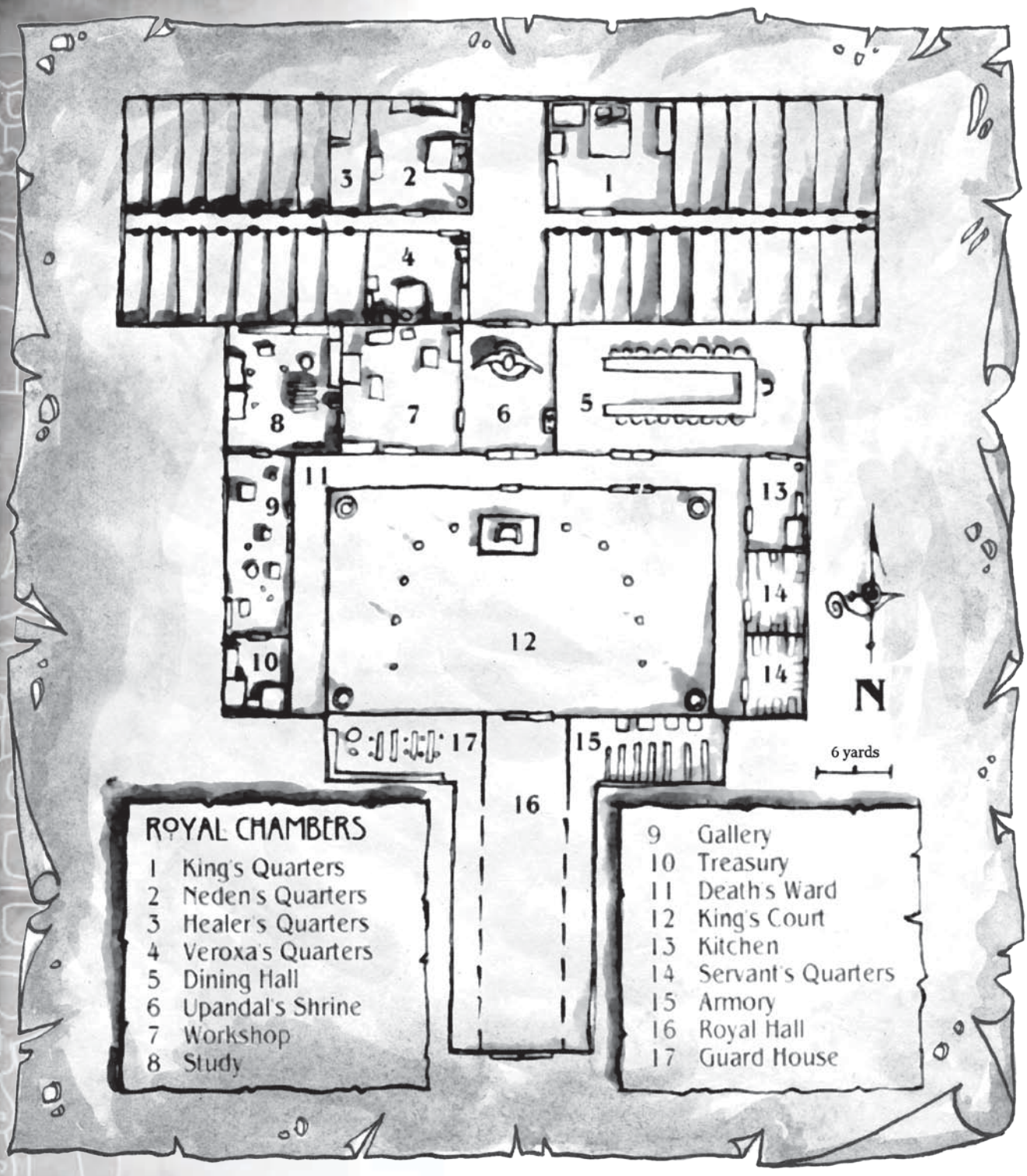
All but sixteen of the guards on duty spend their working time in the guard house. Of the remaining sixteen, ten guards wait inside the door of the Royal Hall and three guards each are stationed at the murder holes on either side of the Hall.

Armory

Weapons and armor for the guards are stored here.

King's Court

In this huge, vaulted chamber the king entertains petitions, adjudicates criminal cases, and makes proclamations.



He sits on a massive, elevated throne of carved gold and orichalcum, under a tapestry depicting the great kings and heroes of Throal's legendary early days. These lofty figures stare balefully down at any who oppose the king. The other walls are covered with mosaics showing the great deeds of House Avalus. The room is illuminated with enormous light crystals, and the king can alter their intensity by touching the arm of his throne. The crystals are arranged so that they back-light the king, making it difficult to look directly at him when they are at their brightest.

The king enters and exits the court through a door behind the throne. This door is made of wood and iron, and was taken from the throne room of King Braza I. Anyone not of the royal family must use another door just to the right of the royal entrance.

Death's Ward

This hallway is Named Death's Ward because it is a giant magical trap, activated by a word of command known only to the royal family. One round after the word is spoken, the floor of the corridor becomes a pit of molten rock. Anyone falling into the lava takes Step 30/D20+D10+D8+2D6 damage per round. No armor protects against this damage. It is not possible to crawl out of the pit without help—for

example, a companion tossing a rope to the victim and pulling him from the lava.

Though the nature of this trap remains largely unknown to the people of Throal, a popular rumor (no doubt spread by the help) has it that one of the Inner Chamber's protections was a gift to Varulus I from the great dragon Icewing.

Dining Hall

State dinners take place in this intimidating hall; when dining privately, the royal family eats in the king's quarters. The enormous dinner table is made of magically worked crystal inlaid with gems. The walls are lined with portraits of Throal's past kings and queens, with monarchs of House Avalus given pride of place.

Kitchen

Meals are prepared in this area.

Servants' Quarters

Male servants sleep on floor mats in the northernmost of these two chambers, female servants in the other. A royal servant's entire life is circumscribed by the demands of his position; servants who accept service with the king agree never to set foot outside the Royal Chambers. In addition, servants are forbidden to speak of the king to courtiers or other visitors to the Royal Chambers.

These practices began in the tenth century, after a scandal in which many servants were found to have passed sensitive information to the Therans. Most of King Neden's servants belong to families who have served Throal's rulers longer than House Avalus has held the throne; many of them, like their parents and grandparents, were born in the Royal Chambers and have never seen the rest of Throal.

The guards assigned to the Royal Hall have standing orders to apprehend any servant attempting to leave the Royal Chambers. Any servant foolish enough to do so faces a charge of treason.

The royal family treats their servants well, because Neden, like his father and grandfather before him, believes that no king can be a good ruler who treats his servants like a tyrant. Royal servants eat the same sumptuous meals as the royal family, live in the splendor of the court, and while away their generous private hours in the study or the workshop. Most of the servants have grown up with Neden, and they are loyal to him beyond question.

Upandal's Shrine

This hallway from the King's Court to the royal family's private living space doubles as a shrine to the patron Passion of the royal family, Upandal the Builder. A mosaic of Upandal on one wall faces a painted map of the Halls of Throal. The Royal Cartographer updates this map whenever new tunnel construction takes place.

Workshop

In this spacious room the king, his family, and his servants hone their artisan skills. Some of the royal servants are accomplished artisans and their works decorate the Royal Chambers.

Study

This library and reading room is casually appointed, full of well-used books and scrolls arranged in a terrible jumble. Merrox keeps trying to put the king's private collection (much of which is on "temporary" loan from the Great Library) in order, but the king and his servants continually defeat the Master's organizational ambitions. Private meetings of the king's closest advisors, where matters in Throal are truly decided, take place in this study.

Gallery

This long hallway houses the royal art collection. Many of the objects and paintings on display are priceless, and thieves throughout Barsaive dream of plundering this room's treasures.

Treasury

Thieves also dream of looting the royal treasury, which contains the crown jewels and trunks of gold and silver ingots and coins. This chamber holds all of Throal's unspent wealth. Chancellery officials frequently enter the Treasury to remove or deposit money.

Virtually every chest and display case is protected by a nasty magical trap, set to go off if anyone not of the royal family or authorized by the Chancellery comes near them. All of the traps do horrific damage, and most have other unpleasant side-effects for those lucky enough to survive their initial onslaught.

Dollas' Quarters

Since the assassination of Varulus III, the king's mother Dollas lives alone in these rooms, which were the former king's quarters. The rooms are simply furnished by comparison to the more public areas of the Royal Chambers. Varulus had kept the walls bare, saying that he spent so much time looking at the dazzling symbols of royal office that his eyes needed a rest at the end of the day.

King's Quarters

King Neden's quarters reek of military austerity, except for a number of trophies commemorating creatures Neden has slain. The trophies include an espagra head and a gargoyle's horn, both mounted on the wall, and a complete stuffed brithan that points towards the door in all its snarling fury.

Veroxa's Quarters

Veroxa's room is full of colorful junk, scattered around in complete disarray. Her furniture is barely visible under all the mess.

Healer's Quarters

The court healer, Rysil, lives in the Royal Chambers on a permanent basis. This grandmotherly traveled scholar and questor of Garlen was a childhood playmate of Veroxa's.

Unused Quarters

The Royal Chambers were built assuming that the king's extended family would be as large as the average dwarf's.

The many empty living chambers are a sad testimonial to the dwindling fortunes of House Avalus.

Encounters

Random encounters in the Royal Chambers are extremely unlikely. Adventurers will not be allowed to wander around; if they are summoned to this area at all, they will come on specific business. Once their business is done, they will be expected to leave. Wandering from one area to another within the Royal Chambers without permission is considered treasonous and can easily get the wanderer killed.

The Inner Cities

The Inner Cities of Bethabal, Hustane, Oshane, Tirtaga, Valvria, Wishon and Yistane were all built since the reopening of Throal. Varulus III wanted to attract all kinds of Name-givers to the dwarf kingdom, and so he commissioned the construction of the cities in order to make life underground as similar as possible to life in other Barsaivian cities. Not all city folk are immigrants; tens of thousands of Throalites moved from the Halls of Throal to the earliest-built cities to escape overcrowding. Many of these Throalites had been living in the *dahnat*, and considered moving to one of the Inner Cities a step up from squalor.

All the Inner Cities are laid out according to the same circular pattern, as shown on the map of Bethabal.

In the center of each city is a large public area known as the circle, where people can meet, celebrate holidays and listen to speakers. In the center of the circle is the baronial estate, which includes the private residence of each city's baron and his family as well as the offices of the local chancellery.

A bazaar much like the Grand Bazaar of Throal extends around the circle and a park surrounds the bazaar. Certain areas in the parks represent a stunning example of Throalic craftsmanship. The trees, flowers, shrubs and even grasses of these green spaces are all artificial, made of metal and wires and painstakingly hand-painted. They are even perfumed to smell like real plants. Touching a leaf or a tree branch breaks the illusion, however, for the plants feel like the metal objects they are. Living plants grow in other areas of the parks, sustained magically by the light of the vast light-quartz crystals embedded in the cavern ceiling and the walls surrounding the outer walls of each city.

The rest of each city is divided into ten large, wedge-shaped areas called dectants. In each dectant, residential and commercial buildings line gently winding streets. A dectant houses about 2,500 residents. The dectants are divided by wide lanes that radiate out from the city center to the edge of the vast artificial cavern in which the city nestles. Another laneway stretching around the outer perimeter of each city leads to tunnels that connect the Inner Cities with each other and with other regions of Throal.

Neighborhoods within a dectant break down along economic lines. The most coveted real estate lies closest to the city center; the richest city residents have large estates in these areas and the most prosperous businesses ring these estates. The rest of a typical dectant is a mix of residential and commercial spaces. As a general rule, neighborhoods are poorer the farther they lie from the city center.

Neighborhoods are most likely to be racially segregated in the farthest reaches of a dectant. Throalic law neither forces nor encourages Name-givers of the same race to live together; in fact, the barons of the Inner Cities try to discourage this pattern of segregation because it often leads to trouble. Racial riots have erupted repeatedly in Bethabal, Oshane, and Tirtaga over the past 40 years, and less serious incidents have occurred in Yistane and Wishon. Despite the objections of chancellery officials and magistrates, however, many people of the same culture strongly prefer to settle together.

Rulers

A baron and his extended family rule each city. Appointed by the king, these rulers serve for life and, consistent with most other Throalic customs, they can be either male or female. Upon the death of a ruler, the king may allow an heir to continue in the office or he may choose a new baron. When making this decision, King Neden takes into account the current ruling family's popularity among the people they govern. Therefore, city rulers have an incentive to govern well. Rulership of the cities is a matter of custom; it is not enshrined in the *Council Compact*, which was drafted long before anyone in Throal even thought of building the Inner Cities. The king of Throal can therefore change governing practices at will.

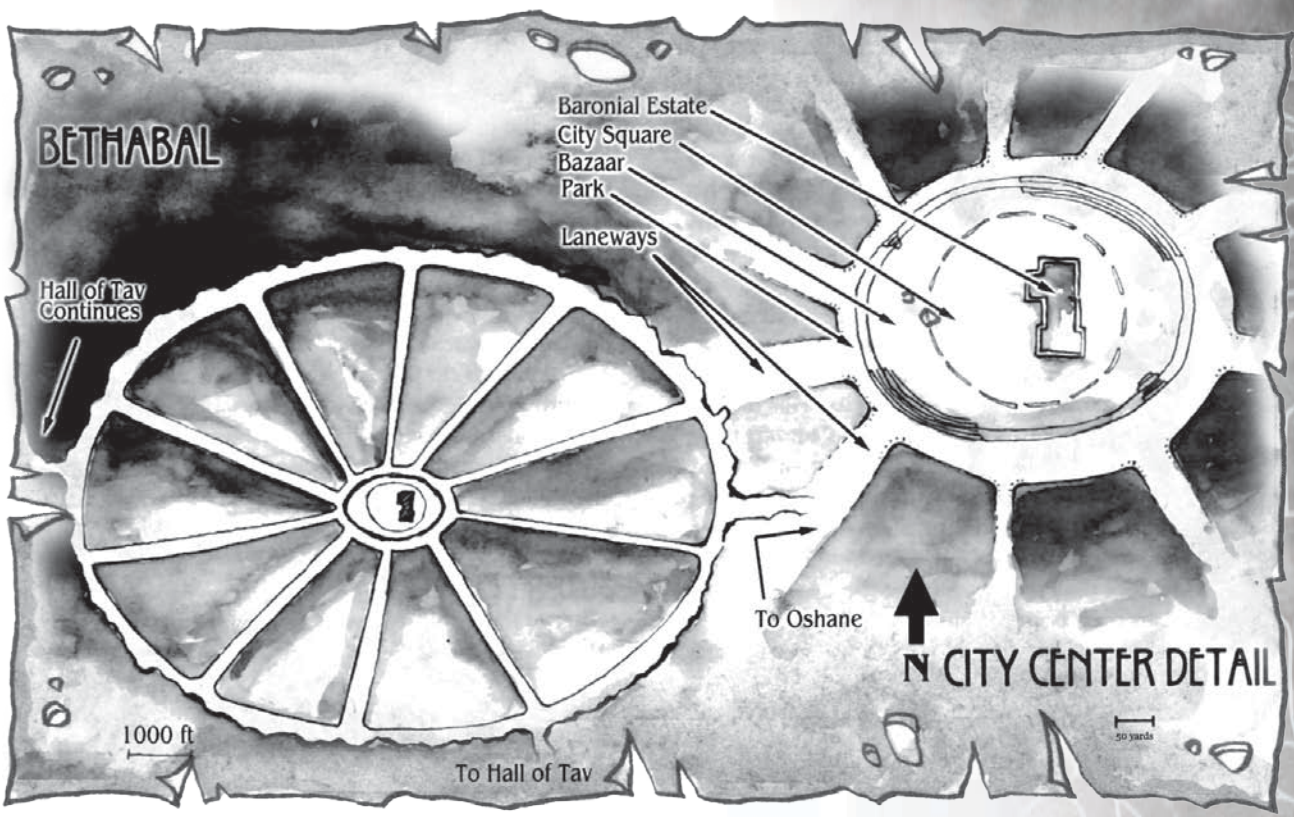
In an effort to demonstrate that Throal is not a kingdom for dwarfs alone but for all Barsaivians, King Varulus III had appointed non-dwarf barons to rule more than half of the Inner Cities. This choice is a sore point with elements of the old guard, who prefer Throal to remain predominantly dwarf. They want the non-dwarf rulers replaced, and immigration of other races slowed dramatically. Not surprisingly, the city barons oppose the old guard. However, not all of them support the king to the same degree.

The rulers of each of the Inner Cities are briefly described below.

Bethabal

Famed for the garden that seems to float near the roof of that city's giant cave, Bethabal features six stone walkways leading to the garden's observation platform from various parts of the cavern, each affording a spectacular view of the city.

Dajag Treaty-Keeper, baroness of Bethabal, is a quiet but determined ork who rules the city with steely efficiency. Before King Varulus III appointed her to this post, Dajag served as the liaison between the Throalic government and Terath's Chargers, the famed scorcher cavalry. No one was more surprised than she when Varulus III offered her the baronetcy of Bethabal. This city had suffered Throal's worst racial riots, mostly due to unrest in ork neighborhoods. Dajag inherited the task of bringing peace to Bethabal, and she has largely succeeded; the orks of Bethabal are pleased to see one of their own in a position of leadership. They identify strongly with her and do not want to undermine



her authority. Since Dajag took power, Bethabal's ork citizens have addressed their grievances through *chav'ao'ros* meetings instead of street demonstrations.

Not everyone is happy with Dajag's success, however. Old-guard dwarfs view her as the symbol of all that is wrong with the king's city policies. They fear that Bethabal will become a kingdom within a kingdom, and that the fast-breeding orks will soon hold a symbolic knife to the kingdom's throat. Unfortunately, many conservative are not at all shy about voicing these concerns. These fears therefore become self-fulfilling; the orks resent being thought of as disloyal, and resentment breeds rebellion.

According to ork custom, Dajag's consorts come and go. She has a recurring, tempestuous relationship with Earal Bloodstroke, who commands half of Terath's Chargers.

Hustane

Hustane, the newest of the open cities, is ruled by Baroness Divuna Divunicus, a calm, motherly member of the old-guard House Moberl. House Moberl is the family of Dollas, King Neden's mother, but the Moberl baron was removed from power in Bethabal after its recent spate of racial riots. Divuna, niece to the baron, served as magistrate in one of the troubled ork neighborhoods and showed that she was one of the few Moberl's capable of treating orks with respect. A bit of a rebel in her family, Divuna is known for her reformist tendencies, and is close to Dollas.

Varulus III had appointed Divuna as baroness of Hustane partly because he thought her qualified, and partly to mollify leaders of House Moberl who were outraged over their family's demotion. Because Divuna is a junior member of the family, however, Moberl's leaders have taken her appointment as a slap in the face. (There's just no pleasing some dwarfs.)

Because Hustane only recently opened to settlement, its population is much smaller than that of the other cities. The city is quieter, and entire neighborhoods are still uninhabited. These empty areas see few patrols. This has made the city a popular spot for covert meetings and lovers' trysts; there are fewer eyes to witness comings and goings.

Oshane

Oshane's baron is Stann Olowey, known unflatteringly as "Stann the Quaverer." A middle-aged human, Olowey has a speech impediment that gives his vowels a peculiar, shaky quality. He became Baron of Oshane as heir to his father, a popular and dynamic leader. Stann Olowey, by contrast, is a timid man ruled by self-doubt. He is afraid of his own officials, who easily manipulate him into following their agendas. Oshane's chancellery is terribly corrupt. Its chancellor, Marruth, is a matronly dwarf with an intimidating manner who bullies Olowey shamelessly while enriching her relatives with wasteful government contracts. Marruth is arrogant and venal, but not so much that she fails to cover her tracks. Though Oshane's public spaces are in poor repair and its guards badly paid and poorly motivated, no one outside the baronial estate has yet guessed that Marruth's family is robbing the city treasury blind.

Raithabal and Thurdane

With the events following the death of Varulus III, the crowning of his son as King Neden, and the landing of the Theran behemoth, the planned construction of these two cities has been placed on hold. This has proved to be a contentious decision, and barely a week passes without some form of open debate or public demonstration. Publicly, the reasons for halting construction were attributed to the war against the Therans—funding was diverted to the military.

However, after the Throalic defeat at Prajjor's Field, some elements within Throal saw this as the result of Neden's focus on revenging the death of his father, rather than continuing his father's good works in the Name of the kingdom. Since the battle of Prajjor's Field, petitions to recommence the construction of these cities have fallen on deaf ears; King Neden is yet to make a decision about Raithabal and Thurdane.

Tirtaga

Baron Lochariel of Tirtaga, a portly old elf, is famous for spending lavishly on public festivals and celebrations. A generous patron of the arts and sporting events, he is wildly popular with the common folk of Tirtaga, and has earned the city the nickname, "city of holidays." Lochariel's officials grimly note that his administration is heavily in debt, and that basic services such as street maintenance are falling by the wayside. They have imposed a special tavern tax to take advantage of the fact that many people from other parts of Throal come to Tirtaga to participate in its frequent celebrations. The surtax on beer and wine increased revenues, but Lochariel promptly spent that money on more parties. His chancellor, a humorless human woman Named Aurbach, is scrambling to come up with a way to increase the treasury while keeping Lochariel from getting his hands on the loot.

Valvria

Valvria is ruled by Baron Mardek Silkback, the son of a former officer of the Royal Chancellery. Mardek's late father, Deavak, was the first ork to achieve high office in the king's administration, and Mardek followed in his father's footsteps. King Varulus III had chosen Mardek to be Baron of Valvria because he wanted another ork in power. Orks make up more than half of the population of the Inner Cities, and had justifiably demanded more representation among the barons. Varulus III also needed a less controversial choice than Dajag Treaty-Keeper, the Baroness of Bethabal. While Dajag was a surprise appointment from outside the kingdom, the diplomatic Mardek represented the consummate insider. A smooth builder of political bridges, Mardek has carefully courted prominent members of the old guard, including Selenda and the grim sisters of House Chaozun. Despite being an ork, he is a favorite with the dwarf ruling class.

Dajag is more popular among orks than Mardek, though Throal's orks bear him no particular ill will. Mardek does not cultivate his own people as supporters; he is more interested in being a Throalic politician than a specifically ork leader. Mardek has been a baron for a short time, but in that time his greatest success has been a policy that rewards immigrants for settling in racially mixed neighborhoods. He is an eloquent advocate of a cosmopolitan Throal, which endears him to the king and his advisers.

Throal's rulers do not know, however, that Mardek has a dual nature. On the outside he is all smoothness and smiles. On the inside, he boils with ambition. He wants nothing less than to sit on the throne of Throal himself. He has assembled a vast network of informants, many of whom think they are really serving someone else. Based on their intelligence, Mardek expects King Neden to make blunders that will lead to a civil war. Anticipating this, Mardek has ensured that the guards and magistrates of Valvria are loyal to him personally rather than to Throal. In the event of an insurrection, Mardek hopes to use those forces to play kingmaker. Once he has a puppet ruler installed on the throne, he will then take the steps necessary to put himself in the puppet's place.

Mardek knows more about politics in Throal than almost any other Name-giver. He has sources in all factions, no matter how minor. Mardek realizes that it will take him longer than the average ork lifespan to work his way up from city baron to king of Throal, and he is secretly researching old books and legends in order to find a way to prolong his life.

Adventure Hook

The trolls in one neighborhood have been rioting for three nights in a row, throwing pots at passers-by and paint at shops. The trolls have no history of causing problems, so their rampage is making the authorities uneasy. They appear to be protesting the opening of an inn in the area because they object to its owner, a troll Named Kurtun. Kurtun's horns have been sawed off, which indicates that he is an Outcast—a highland troll who left his tribe after a disagreement over a point of honor (see p. 199 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). The trolls of the city are lowlanders and understand only a distorted version of the customs among their highland cousins. They think that Kurtun has committed terrible crimes and are demanding his expulsion from their community. They fear Kurtun will hurt them or their children, or will bring dishonor to trolls in Throal.

The local magistrate has pledged to protect Kurtun; he refuses to allow "strange racial customs" to dictate events in Throal. The trolls will continue to riot unless the adventurers help clear up the misunderstanding. Unfortunately, Kurtun will not talk about his severance from his tribe. He left because the clan chief married a woman to whom Kurtun had pledged his love, and Kurtun finds the entire incident too painful to discuss. The adventurers must learn Kurtun's story and convince the rioting trolls that it is true.

Wishon

Wishon is ruled by Baron Clifberz IV. This fretful, energetic dwarf has been groomed for the role since childhood; his family has run Wishon, the first of the Inner Cities, since its creation. Clifberz has a long face as flat as a pan, his forehead is furrowed with deep lines, and his ears stick out like enormous flaps. His speeches are notoriously dull. Nonetheless, Clifberz retains the support of the people. Wishon is a peaceful and prosperous community because Clifberz takes a direct hand in its governance, making many decisions that other barons leave to their chancellors. When the rest of the city is sleeping, the lights in the baron's private rooms are often ablaze, as he paces the floors thinking of more efficient ways to run things. When a problem arises in Wishon, Clifberz worries about it obsessively until he finds a solution.

Clifberz hates change. As far as he is concerned, new things just bring new problems. Neden's ascension to the throne worried him because the inevitable changes in policy would complicate his job. Despite this, Clifberz supports the throne; in the event of a coup attempt, Wishon would immediately deploy its city guards to serve the rightful king. A new royal family, after all, would represent even greater change than the inexperienced ruler of the current royal line.

Yistane

Yistane is ruled by Baroness Skaave, a young troll who has only recently taken command of the city. Her mother recently abdicated as baroness in order to undertake a quest supposedly given her by the Passion Garlen. Skaave, a Troubadour and Wizard, is the only adept currently ruling one of the Inner Cities. Her grandmother, Vaare Longfang, was the legendary captain of the lost airship *Earthdawn*. A devout follower of the Passions, Skaave is more concerned with mysticism than politics. This frame of mind makes her a good ruler for Yistane, which has a deserved reputation as the strangest of the Inner Cities.

Peculiar omens accompanied the building of Yistane. When King Varulus III decreed that the city should be built, a strange black bird flew into the King's Court, snatched the proclamation from his hands and flew into the Halls of Throal, never to be seen again. When the city's cavern was excavated, the diggers found the partial skeleton of a great dragon fused into the rock.

Similar omens manifest regularly in Yistane. Mirrors spontaneously shatter or cloud over. Light crystals suddenly stop working, and then just as mysteriously light up again. A low murmuring sound can be heard on certain streets late at night; the sound has no known source. Magicians report that threads are easier to weave and spells easier to cast here. (To account for these bizarre phenomena, subtract -1 from the Difficulty Number (to a minimum of 2) of all Thread Weaving and Spellcasting Tests made in the city.) Visitors to Yistane report unusually vivid and meaningful dreams. It is not unusual for residents to return home from a day's work and find that the furniture has been moved around, even though the doors are still locked. The spirits of the dead return as ghosts if their funerals are held in Yistane; consequently, city residents consult morticians from other cities when their loved ones die. Because of all these oddities, Yistane attracts more than its share of spellcasters, eccentric philosophers, and madmen. These mysterious occurrences are not necessarily evil or dangerous; in fact, Horrors seem to avoid the place. Yistane is just a little strange.

Skaave believes Yistane has a great destiny ahead of it that will affect all of Throal. She investigates as many peculiar events as she can, in the hopes that one of them will provide a vital clue to what that destiny might be. In addition to the usual guards and magistrates, Skaave has created a parallel organization called the Yistane Investigators' Corps. This group looks into weird happenings and reports their findings, if any, to Skaave. Skaave sometimes hires freelance adventurers as auxiliary members of the Corps. In exchange for aiding these inquiries every now and then, auxiliaries may live in Yistane tax-free. If a group of player characters likes solving supernatural mysteries, a connection to the Investigators' Corps serves as a useful recurring springboard for story lines.

Skaave leaves the practical affairs of Yistane in the capable hands of her aunt Yonaal, who serves as the city's chancellor. Like her grandmother and mother, Skaave is completely loyal to the king.

Security Measures

The Inner Cities are well policed, with a different magistrate overseeing each dectant in each city. During business and evening hours, disturbances bring at least one guard unit within 4 minutes. At night, guards arrive within 8 minutes. Guard units in the Inner Cities are identical to those in the Halls of Throal (see p. 104).

Standard Activities

Despite their occasional troubles, the Inner Cities are anything but hotbeds of adventure and intrigue. Player characters will find mysteries to solve in Yistane, and may walk into occasional riots in Oshane and Tirtaga. If a civil war or coup attempt occurs in Throal, the barons will get involved, but not all will be on the same side. In general, the cities are more suitable as safe and comfortable home bases for player characters than as places to stage adventure after adventure.

Encounters

Chance encounters in the Inner Cities might include the following:

- Groups of children from rival schools taunting one another.
- A tense confrontation between local orks and a group of foreign traders ensues when the orks decide that the traders have insulted them.
- A paid crier wanders the streets announcing the opening of a new tavern.
- A raucous coming-of-age party for the son of a local merchant spills out into the streets.
- A tax collector attempts to calm an enraged

homeowner who refuses to pay up.

- A harried guard unit tries to chase down a rabid dog hiding in a refuse pile.

Crystal Greenhouses

One of the biggest challenges of living out the Scourge in kaers and citadels was providing a constant, adequate food supply. The solution offered by the Therans and embraced by most kaers and citadels across Barsaive was to build vast growing rooms in which farmers would raise sufficient fruits, vegetables, and roots to feed the population.

The magicians of Throal, however, arrived at their own solution. They built the crystal greenhouses, the largest and most impressive underground farming operation sustained in Barsaive during the Scourge. The huge crystal greenhouses simulated natural sunlight in a way that other growing rooms could not match. The greenhouses have remained in operation since the end of the Scourge, though their function has changed.

Throal contains 30 crystal greenhouses, all situated in an immense chamber in the northern reaches of the Halls of Throal, beyond the far edges of the Inner Cities. Each greenhouse is a rectangular structure, approximately 30 by 60 yards, with a low-slung, triangular roof. The walls and roofs contain thousands of specially altered light crystals, held in place by an elaborate metal lattice. Using elemental magic, Throal's magicians converted these crystals to give off artificial sunlight. The metal lattices are intricately worked into patterns of vines, leaves, and flowers, and each crystal shines diffuse sunbeams down into the greenhouse.

During the Scourge, each greenhouse produced enough food to feed 2,500 people. Surplus greenhouses not needed to produce food were used to satisfy Throal's energy needs. These greenhouses grew stoveplants—hybrid plants magically bred by the Therans in preparation for the Scourge. Stoveplants grow quickly into tall, wood-like stems as big as a human's fist. Though a stoveplant has a few leaves and a basic root structure, almost all of its energy goes into creating this thick stem. Stoveplant stems make excellent firewood; they burn slowly, giving off plenty of heat and very little smoke.

Since the end of the Scourge, Throal has come to rely almost entirely on imported food. Fruits and vegetables grown in a crystal greenhouse lack crispness and flavor by comparison to food grown under natural conditions, and Throalites are willing to pay more for foodstuffs from outside. Nowadays, Throal uses most of its greenhouses to grow stoveplants, for which demand remains high. Burning coal or imported wood would soon choke the underground kingdom in smoke and soot, and so stoveplants remain the staple firewood.

Each greenhouse produces enough stoveplants for 7,500 people. Currently, stoveplant production requires only 23 of the greenhouses; the plants in the remaining greenhouses are exported. As stoveplants are not in high demand outside Throal, returns from these exports are modest.

Standard Activities

The crystal greenhouses are an impressive sight, sought out by most new visitors to Throal. Adventurers may come to the greenhouses repeatedly if they wish, and are likely to see members of the Royal Guild of Farmers going efficiently and quietly about their work. Now and then visitors might see a ritual in homage to the Passion Jaspree, as most of the farmers are members of Jaspree's *olzim*. Throal's farmers have little political influence. They want more greenhouses built so that they can grow enough food to support Throal if the kingdom should be forced to close its doors again. Such construction is an expensive proposition, however, and the Farmers' Guild has had no success in convincing fellow Throalites that the cost would be worthwhile.

Security Measures

The greenhouses are not especially valuable, and so guard patrols are infrequent. Now and then, a guard unit stops by to chat with the workers. As this area is little traveled, it takes roughly 7 or 8 minutes for guard units to arrive if trouble starts. Reinforcements are equally slow in coming.

The Mines

A staggering variety of minerals lie hidden in the depths of the Throal Mountains, of which gold, silver, copper, and orichalcum are the most valuable. The mines,

Adventure Hook

Oberliel, the guildmaster of the Royal Guild of Farmers, is frustrated by his failure to convince Throalites to build more greenhouses. Worried that Throal is headed for disaster, he leads a ritual to contact Jaspree and beg for the Passion's aid. Not being the Passion of politics, Jaspree ignores the farmers' prayers. However, Vestrial, the Mad Passion and trickster, comes to Oberliel in Jaspree's form and gives him a special fertilizer to sprinkle on the stoveplant crop. This fertilizer causes the stoveplants to give off a hypnotic smoke when burnt. Suddenly, all over Throal, individuals exposed to the smoke begin to sleepwalk in the middle of the night. (A character who fails a Step 6/D10 Effect Test against his Spell Defense succumbs to this effect.) They walk right out of the kingdom unless someone stops them. Many of the afflicted wander straight into the hands of scorcher bandits who unknowingly serve Vestrial. The adventurers must solve the mystery before too many people fall victim to this strange malady.



built by generations of dwarfs intent on unearthing these riches, are located in the northernmost reaches of the Halls of Throal. Miners continue to excavate new passageways, taking them further into the mountains in search of virgin veins of silver and gold. These passageways now extend dozens of miles past the inhabited areas of Throal. Certain parts of the mines have been all but abandoned, and rumor has it that some of Throal's secret societies—including those devoted to the Mad Passions—use these disused tunnels as meeting places.

Miners' Guild Politics

The mines are not the kind of place that would normally attract adventurers. Working men and women break their backs daily in the mines, in hopes of striking it rich. According to Throalic tradition, a mine belongs to the miners who discover and excavate it. Labor is the only essential investment in a Throalic mine, and so miners form cooperatives, pick their sites, and exploit them as best they can. Once a rich vein is found, its original discoverers become employers themselves, hiring other members of the miners' guild to work while they retire to a life of ease. If a miner works at an established mine, he is guaranteed a modest but steady income. Joining a cooperative to open a new mine offers rich rewards if the miners strike gold or silver, but a miner may go for months or years without income.

The miners' guild is a rich source of strife because its members often have contradictory interests. Partners in successful cooperatives are bosses; they want their employees to work as hard as possible for as little pay as they can get away with offering. Mine workers, of course, want to work as little as possible for higher pay. Control of the Royal Guild of Miners swings back and forth between the workers' faction and the owners' faction. These contests often become violent and sometimes involve widespread vote-buying.

Security Measures

The mines are violent places, full of roughnecks who drink to forget how hard they work. The newer mines are far from the protective embrace of the king's justice; the Royal Guards never set foot in them. Cooperative owners hire guards to keep their workers in order, but these sell-swords sometimes cause more trouble than they prevent. Though considered part of Throal, the mines are a lawless frontier where people make their own justice. If a particularly tense situation arises, the Chancellor may assign regular guard patrols; however, Chancellor Wishten would only take this extreme step if dangerous subterranean creatures or Horrors turned up.

Encounters

The three types of people usually found in the mines are workers, cooperative owners, and guards. Anyone who does not fit into these categories is greeted with suspicion, and there simply is no such thing as casual visitors. Needless to say, miners do not welcome adventurers investigating strange occurrences. Any encounters between adventurers and others in the mines are likely to be tense, and may quickly turn violent unless the player characters proceed very carefully.


The Mines
Crystal Greenhouses
Thardane
Hustane
Raithabal
Bethabal
Wishon
Tirtaga
Valvria
Oshane
R
C L A
Vistane
Wedshel
Estates
Wedshel
Dahnat
Estates
Grand Bazaar
Gates
THROAL
THE DWARF KINGDOM
⊿: Stairways
C: Central Chambers
L: Great Libary
R: Royal Chambers
A: Royal Auditorum

OUTSIDE THE KINGDOM

There's more to Throal than just the city, my friends. The mountains, both above and far below, answer to the King in their own way.

• Griforican •



The windling merchant darted above me in Bartertown's darkening sky. "It's not safe to be in the street at night any more. Even for you, Mereelva Gadj. Time to head for the inn."

There did seem to be too many loiterers and lurkers hanging about in the alleys and alcoves. Part of me wanted to provoke them. Do the sword dance with them, the dance of blood and sweat. But my joints ached; it was too late in the day for pointless risk. Silently I cursed the ways of Death, who drains the life out of us a drop at a time until we are spent.

I turned my attention back to Hithorn. "Not safe at night? I remember when this town was a safe enough place to pass time between expeditions. Everything grows old and dies, I suppose."

"Bartertown isn't dying. There's more money here than ever before. That's the problem. We're choking on silver and greed. I'll tell you more in the tavern. One never knows whose ears are listening."

We took a corner table. I brought over a thimble of sparklewine for the windling and several pitchers of hurlg for myself. Hithorn was a rumormonger's rumormonger—I knew his tale would be worth hearing. I would have to spend at least a month in Bartertown waiting for payment for the Gem of Thread-Breaking, and I needed to know how things stood.

Hithorn took a long pull at his sparklewine. "The problem is the black market," he said, passing a hand over his damp upper lip. "Three years back, Magistrate Clystone said what was clear to everyone: Bartertown was getting too large for half-hearted policing. The merchants wanted security—too many predators circling. And as the overtaxed citizens of Throal will tell you, you need silver aplenty to hire guards. So Clystone announced a new tax—on all goods and transactions in town. Made the merchants happy as pigs in muck. Seemingly.

"The twist is, no merchant wants to pay taxes himself. He wants someone else to pay. What do you expect from a town of fence sitters? We want to be safe, but we don't want to pay the price. So all of a sudden half the transactions in town are done on the sly. Everyone's a smuggler. Everyday transactions are crimes. This, of course, puts the professional criminal right on top of the mountain—you know, the sort who breaks bones when a deal goes wrong. My fellow merchants were counting their coppers and tossing their gold. As usual.

"We've two sets of taxes to pay here now. The official taxes, to Clystone and his men, and the unofficial taxes, to Shadowswift and his ilk. There's little difference between Clystone's bully-boys and Shadowswift's, as far as I can see." Hithorn sighed and stared moodily down at his wine cup. "I tell you, Gadj, I'm seriously considering relocating to Throal."

"That I find hard to believe," I said. "You'd stifle in that close air. But you speak of Shadowswift as if he poses a real threat. When last I spent time here, he was a weedy boy with a running nose. A petty shifter of merchandise, and not likely to become much else."

Hithorn gave a barking laugh. "Your snot-nosed boy's become king of the shifters, and of the extortionists too. He's got a hundred thugs and better at his command. He has rivals, mind you. These days, all you need to become a power in this town is a willingness to spill blood and a crowd of hirelings with sharper blades than brains."

"Hmmm." The hurlg *was excellent, surprisingly enough. "Do I hear opportunity's siren call? I have always toyed with entering politics in my old age."*

"Very droll, Mereelva."

"You think I joke?"

"More than a dozen have been slain over the black market in this month alone. I'd rather you weren't one of them."

"Fear not, Hithorn. I've no wish to turn gang leader. I learned what that life is like by Garlthik's side, many a year ago. Too much paper to push… and too little chance to do the things I truly enjoy."

Just then, a ragged-looking human girl lunged at us from the shadows, her crossbow trained on Hithorn. I tossed a throwing knife into the girl's forehead and embedded its sister in her chest as she fell to the floor.

Hithorn gaped at me, impressed by such a display of agility from a broken-down old fighter. I raised my hurlg *and grinned at him. "Behind on your taxes, old friend?"*

—From the Journal of Mereelva Gadj, as transcribed by Apprentice Archivist Deloron, 1508 TH

This chapter presents an overview of Throal's surroundings communities, including Bartertown, the mountain settlements, the House of the Spirit Wind, Braza's Kingdom, and the underground settlements of the Pale Ones.

Bartertown

Bartertown is perched on the Royal Road that leads to Throal's Grand Bazaar. It sprung up more or less by accident from its beginnings as an open-air market. Gradually, the market's merchants set up permanent establishments to take advantage of the thousands of customers Throal offered. Locating in Bartertown instead of in the Grand Bazaar enabled the merchants to sidestep Throalic law, particularly the high Throalic taxes. As long as only a few thousand merchants took advantage of its irregular status, Bartertown functioned well. Unfortunately, more and more people moved to the city until its population rivaled that of Throal's Inner Cities—and the level of law enforcement failed to keep pace with the change. Five years ago, Bartertown's population hit 50,000. Such a large community where so much silver flows freely cannot survive without reasonable law enforcement, which is noticeably absent in Bartertown. Always chaotic, Bartertown has become increasingly dangerous and even violent.

Throal would like to extend its sovereignty over Bartertown, but the merchants who run the city remain split over the issue of annexation by Throal. Half of them are fiercely opposed, saying defiantly that if they had wanted to be Throalites they would have set up shop in Throal when they established their businesses. The other half are beginning to see the loss of a little independence as a small price to pay for safety and renewed prosperity.

Five years ago, City Magistrate Clystone decided to increase taxes to pay for enough guards to effectively combat the rising tide of crime. Many merchants greeted this move with public acclaim and private disdain. The higher Clystone's taxes, the more ingenious the merchants became at evading them. Bartertown was founded by legions of tax avoiders, and the city's merchants have raised the art of tax evasion to new heights. A vigorous black market soon sprang up that made the criminals even more powerful.

In the past five years, Bartertown's problems have turned increasingly deadly. Clystone's attempts to clamp down on smuggling have corrupted him and his government. The magistrate's forces clash regularly with smugglers, especially those who pay tribute to Shadowswift, a young human with a flair for extortion. Battling Shadowswift for dominance over Bartertown are other would-be gang leaders who covet Shadowswift's illegal empire. Ordinary people get caught in the crossfire.

In addition, the assassination campaign of suspected Theran and Iopan spies in Bartertown has enraged its citizens, increasing the city's lawlessness. The growing anti-Throal sentiment has prompted Bartertown residents to emigrate to Throal in record numbers; the city's population has fallen to 40,000 and continues to shrink.

Government

In reaction to the explosion of the black market, Bartertown's government has inched toward tyranny. The city's founders liked loose laws, and more than anything else wanted to avoid restrictions on their businesses. However, the absence of a system of checks and balances has allowed the current magistrate to accumulate unprecedented power. Magistrate Clystone is no longer accountable to anyone; even the Council of Merchants, made up of prominent merchants from Bartertown's early days, is bullied by the man they appointed.

The Office of Magistrate

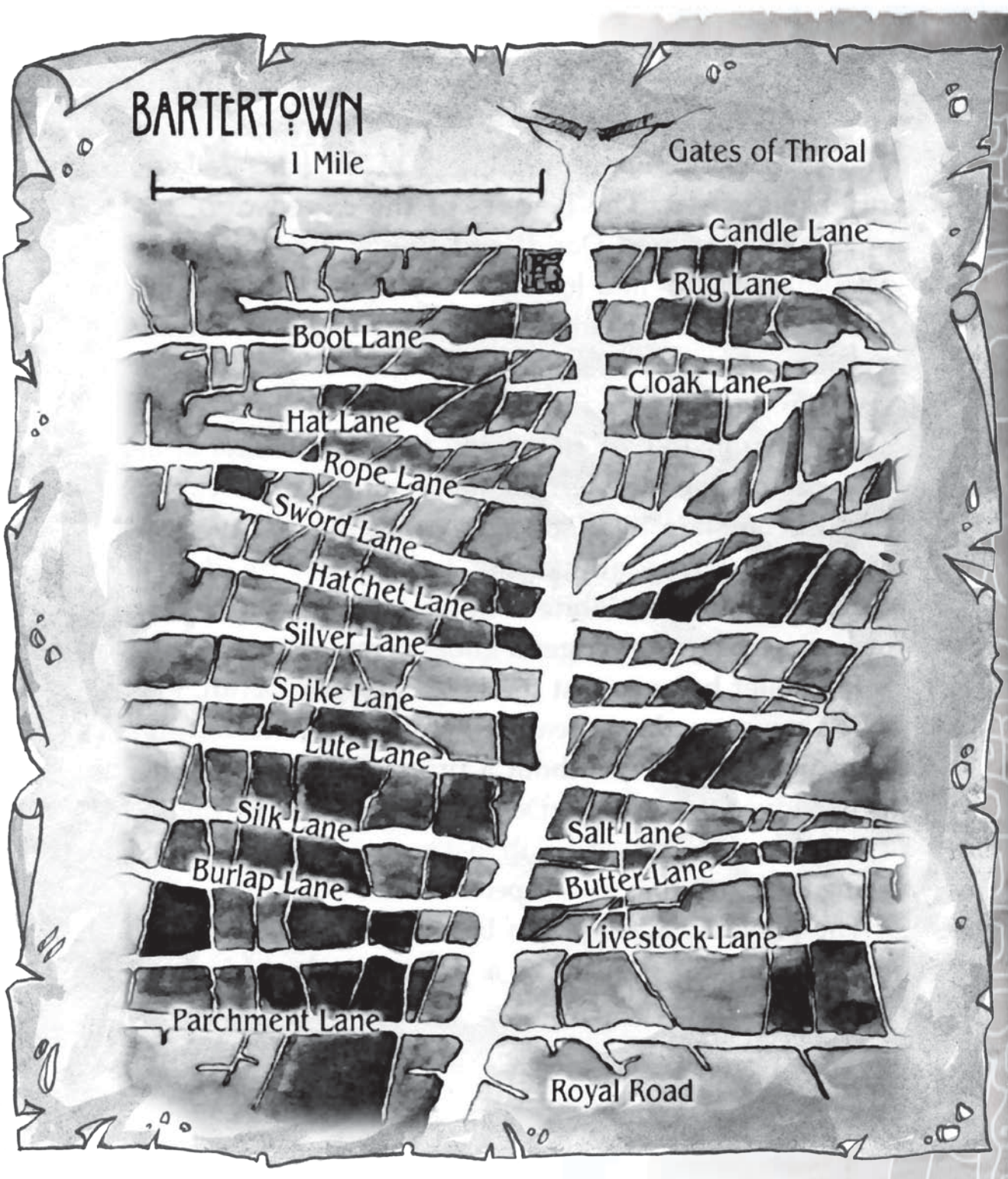
Technically, the magistrate serves at the pleasure of the Council of Merchants. In practice, he rules by decree. The laws of Bartertown are the accumulated decrees of the city's successive magistrates. Magistrates may repeal their own decrees or those of their predecessors at will.

In the past, the Council of Merchants restrained magistrates from enacting unpopular decrees by threatening to replace any magistrate overstepping his authority. Now, any council member foolish enough to complain about Clystone's behavior can look forward to a late-night visit from a pack of burly tax collectors. It has become hard to distinguish between the laws of Bartertown and the wishes of Magistrate Clystone, who seeks primarily to avoid unwelcome attention from Throal, and to collect taxes in order to fund the collection of more taxes, thereby keeping himself in power.

Magistrate Clystone

"I used to be consumed with doubt, Etheril. During my early days as magistrate, a problem like yours would have tormented me for weeks. After many sleepless nights, I would have affected some useless compromise or other. Since then, I have learned how to lessen my insomnia. Take him out to the pit, boys. You know what to do."

The beleaguered magistrate of Bartertown has undergone a terrible transformation in the past few years.



Clystone's face and body both show the strain of his thankless job, and his hair has gone prematurely gray from negotiating disputes between the inhabitants of Bartertown and the Kingdom of Throal. Though a clever Illusionist, his talents have proved surprisingly useless in resolving the day-to-day difficulties of his job.

When he first became magistrate, he had little confidence in his abilities. Appointed by the Council of Merchants precisely because they expected him to just muddle along, Clystone found many of Bartertown's problems intractable. He knew that the merchants of the city wanted contradictory things. He also knew, as did every magistrate before him, that the interests of anyone without money meant little in Bartertown. Clystone struggled through his first year or two in office, hoping to find some solution to the town's troubles. Finally, he decided to face the Council head-on with his citywide tax plan. When it became clear that the merchants intended to evade payment, Clystone began to crack down. At first, he spent the accumulated tax revenues on more tax collectors. As the fight with the merchants grew more bitter, Clystone's tactics became more uncompromising. He gave his tax officials greater discretionary powers, which they abused more often than not. As the tax battle went on, Clystone found himself more and more comfortable playing the bully and tyrant. Now he rules Bartertown entirely by force. The base of his power is approximately

100 heavily armed guards and tax collectors who owe their loyalty to him personally, as opposed to the office of magistrate or to Bartertown's city fathers. Magistrate Clystone has become little more than a gang leader with a seal of office and an education.

Personally, Clystone is happier than he has ever been. He has tossed aside his conscience along with his self-doubt, and his ability to casually order his enemies beaten or even killed makes him feel big and strong. Women now find him attractive. Merchants who once thought him a fool flatter him, afraid of his wrath. Clystone likes being a bully. He feels liberated. The one thing he fears is action by Throal. He knows that Throal would occupy Bartertown in a minute if the place became so chaotic that it threatened travelers to and from the dwarf kingdom—as illustrated by King Neden's recent assassination campaign. Therefore, Clystone must keep the battle over the black market under a modicum of control. If Bartertown becomes as lawless as Kratas, Magistrate Clystone will swiftly find himself deposed and tossed in a Throalic prison. He must appear to be a legitimate ruler, at least to the casual observer. Bartertown's merchants, tax collectors, and gang leaders can kill one another with impunity—but travelers and people with connections to Throal must be left in peace.

Clystone is a Fifth Circle human Illusionist.

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 34 (54)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (41)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Karma Points: 24
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents

Dead Fall [D] (5): 12/2D10
Disguise Self [D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Durability (4/3) (5): 5
False Sight [D] (5): 5
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Read and Write Language (5): 13/D12+D10
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang
Read and Write Magic [D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Speak Language (4): 12/2D10
—*Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang
Slough Blame [D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Spellcasting [D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Spell Matrix (5): 5
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Willforce (5): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Robe Embroidery (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Bartertown History (3): 11/D10+D8
Bartertown Politics (3): 11/D10+D8
Finances (3): 11/D10+D8
Government Administration (3): 11/D10+D8
Tax Collection (3): 11/D10+D8

General:
Bribery (3): 9/D8+D6
Evaluate (3): 11/D10+D8
Fast Grab (3): 9/D8+D6
Fence (3): 9/D8+D6
Picking Pockets (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Streetwise (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Thread Leather (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Dagger (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
Quarterstaff (Damage 6/D10)

Cloaksense Brooch
Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
Quiet Fingers
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Spells

Assuring Touch, Bellow of the Thundras, Best Face, Bond of Silence, Crafty Thought, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Enter and Exit, Ephemeral Bolt [M], Improved Alarm, Innocent Activity, Memory Blank, Noble Manner [M], Nobody Here, Rope Guide, Send Message [M], Tailor, True Ephemeral Bolt [M], Unseen Voices, You Got Me

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.

Loot

110 silver pieces

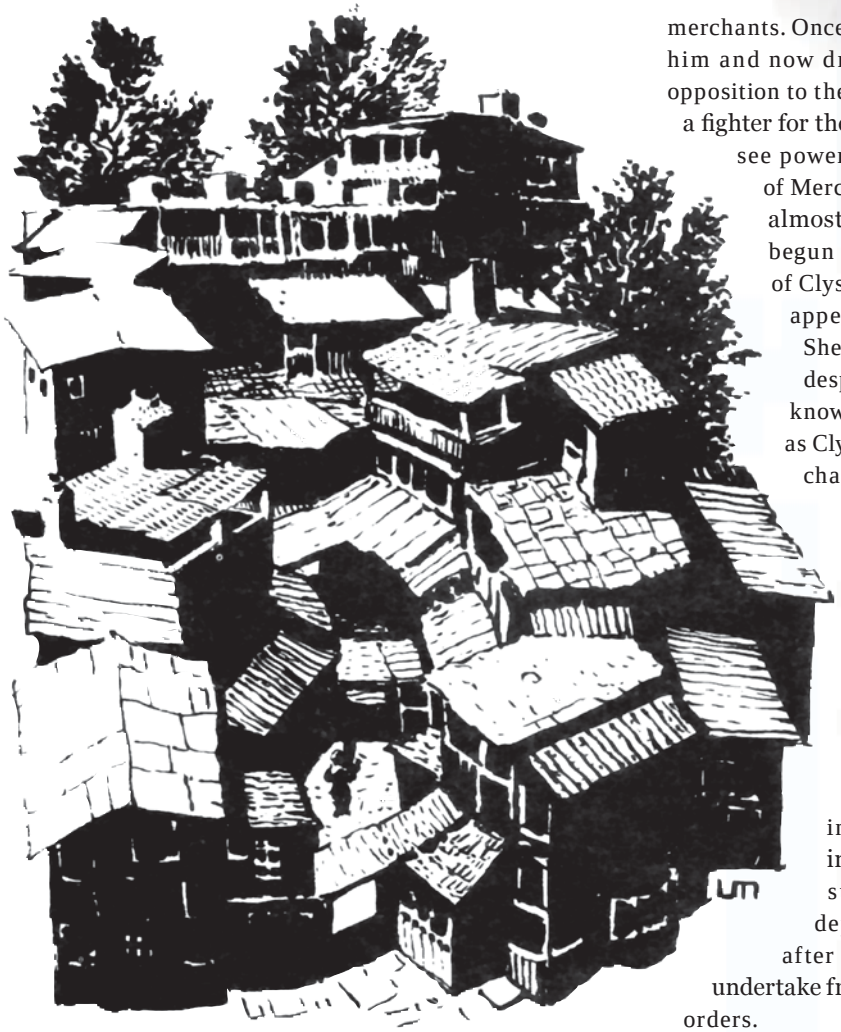
Legend Points

815 Legend Points

Notes

Clystone possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Fourth Circle: Glamour (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests



Council of Merchants

The Council of Merchants is an informal group composed of the founders of Bartertown and their heirs. More a clique than a real governing body, the council has no clearly defined membership and no charter governing its activities. Two-dozen merchants or so are members of the council, and new members can be added by unanimous consent.

Once, the Council of Merchants kept Bartertown's magistrate in check. Now the magistrate keeps the council under his thumb by following a divide-and-conquer strategy. A third of the councilors have become Clystone's toadies, lapping up tax revenue for their own personal gain. Another third are Clystone's bitter enemies who hope to unseat him. The remaining councilors are fence sitters, avoiding commitment to either side until it is clear who stands to win. Individual council members move back and forth between the three camps, and Clystone manipulates the council by occasionally dropping a toady or tempting a rival.

Clystone's chief toady is Keinar, a blustering and easily unnerved human. Keinar is the retired patriarch of a large spice import firm and a former magistrate of Bartertown whose tenure in that position was brief and undistinguished. He is fond of claiming that Clystone's iron rule represents a much-needed push for law and order in the city. In fact, he shamelessly admires Clystone's naked abuse of power.

Clystone's primary rival on the council is Taliel, a strong-willed elven woman who heads a consortium of gem merchants. Once Clystone's friend, she has come to despise him and now dreams daily of his downfall. Despite her opposition to the magistrate's tyranny, Taliel is not exactly a fighter for the rights of the downtrodden. She wants to see power in Bartertown shift back to the Council of Merchants, and opposes annexation by Throal almost as fiercely as Clystone. She has recently begun hiring adepts to eliminate the most brutal of Clystone's tax collectors, and so far their disappearances have not been traced back to her. She considers Shadowswift an enemy as well, despite their common loathing of Clystone; she knows that Shadowswift is just as much a threat as Clystone to the interests of Bartertown's merchant class.

Law Enforcement and Tax Collection

Clystone's armed thugs and tax collectors, known as guardians, are nominally responsible for public order in Bartertown. However, they do little to enforce it unless compensated under the table. Without payment from the parties involved, they make only a token effort to investigate crimes or break up fights. Not surprisingly, the results of their efforts depend on who is paying them most. Even after accepting bribes, the guardians will not undertake freelance work that conflicts with Clystone's orders.

Guardians travel in groups of six. The leader of each unit, called a sergeant, negotiates the terms of freelance arrangements. A typical group of guardians expects 50 silvers to hassle someone weak and helpless, and 100 silvers to beat up someone who might put up a fight. Like all bullies, the guardians are cowards, and no amount of money will entice them to confront an adversary more powerful than themselves, such as an adept. Guardians spend most of their official time collecting taxes from unwilling merchants. Merchants who voluntarily pay taxes keep careful records of all of their transactions and pay a percentage of their receipts at the magistrate's office each month. The percentage ranges from 2 to 9 percent per transaction, determined more or less arbitrarily by Clystone. Merchants who grovel to Clystone's satisfaction often get a lower tax rate.

If the guardians discover an unrecorded transaction, they threaten to vandalize the guilty merchant's property or rough him up. Threats against the merchant's family are business as usual to the guardians. They are under orders not to completely destroy a merchant's operation, as that would prevent them from collecting more taxes from him in the future. This stricture makes them slightly less brutal than the gang extortionists.

If player characters get involved in a disturbance in Bartertown, a guardian unit will arrive too late to do anything, if they show up at all. Under no circumstances will guardians risk their hides to break up a fight between obviously skilled or well-equipped combatants. However, at the

gamemaster's discretion, passersby may come to the aid of a Name-giver in trouble. If player characters cause the trouble, the gamemaster may decide that the passersby are righteous adepts out to subdue the rowdy player characters.

None of the guardians are adepts; trifling acts of harassment and graft are not the actions of heroes. When a guardian quits or gets killed, Clystone can easily find another. Game statistics for an average guardian appear below.

Average Guardian

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (8): 4/D6
Willpower (8): 4/D6
Charisma (5): 3/D4

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 1/D4-2
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 10
Social Defense: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Skills

Artisan:
Armor Runic Carving (2): 5/D8

Knowledge:
Tax Collection (2): 6/D10

General:
Avoid Blow (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (5): 10/D10+D6
Missile Weapons (5): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Streetwise (3): 7/D12

Equipment

Chainmail (Phys 7; Init 3)
Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19)

Mace (Damage 11/D10+D8)
Dagger (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
Sling (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 20–40–80)
Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Carving Tool
Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 gold pieces, 3D12 silver pieces

Legend Points

100 Legend Points

The Black Market

Any transaction in Bartertown for which no record is submitted to Clystone's guardians is considered part of the black market. In addition, any item brought into Bartertown without a proper form being filed is considered a smuggled item, as is anything sold to an exporter without the proper documentation. These draconian laws have turned all sorts of common, harmless goods and services into contraband.

Bartertown's economy depends on trade; almost all the items sold in the city are intended for resale somewhere else. In the wake of Clystone's tax program, a huge proportion of Bartertown's business has gone under the table. Merchants may fear Clystone's bully-boys, but they also know that the number of illegal transactions far outstrips the guardians' capacity to enforce the rules. Unfortunately, there are other attentive predators lurking in Bartertown.

These supposed "smugglers," typified by the human gang leader Named Shadowswift, are primarily extortionists. They offer to protect merchants from the guardians and other gangs, but in fact are demanding payment to refrain from attacking the merchants themselves.

Bartertown's gang members are known as *buundavim*, a combination of the Throalic word for "employee" and a vivid ork curse. *Buundavim* are just as cowardly as guardians; neither relishes the prospect of skirmishing with the other. Confrontations between the two factions typically involve threats, colorful insults, and plenty of chest beating. However, because people on both sides tend to be stupid, arrogant, and violent, matters sometimes get out of hand and blood washes the cobblestones of Bartertown. Guardians and *buundavim* are hypersensitive to one another's territorial boundaries, and guardians only raid the premises of a merchant under the protection of a large *buundavim* band after a thorough browbeating from Clystone. *Buundavim*, in turn, do not offer "protection" to merchants who are known allies of Bartertown's magistrate.

Much of the violence in Bartertown takes place between or within the gangs. Most minor gang leaders have pledged grudging allegiance to Shadowswift, currently the most powerful extortionist in town. They must pay him a percentage of their take or face his wrath. In turn, the minor gang leaders are supported by small groups of *buundavim* who pay them off in exchange for a "charter" to "protect" a set number of merchants. Disputes over which *buundavim* owns which charter form the largest wellspring of violence in Bartertown. When *buundavim* fight one another, they rarely resort to open street fighting; they prefer assassinations and ambushes. Now and then a minor gang leader decides to become a major one and launches a wave of assaults on Shadowswift and his men. So far, each of these rebels has ended up as vulture food.

Buundavim most often travel in packs of six or more, and in general are far better at swaggering than fighting. They rarely attack any opponent who appears capable of self-defense. A few *buundavim* are adepts of the most unsavory sort, hoping to use their magical talents to take over the black market in Bartertown. The following game statistics apply to the average *buundavim* without magical ability.

Adventure Hook

When the characters are staying at the Juggling Shadowmant, a friend asks for their help to find his son, who has been missing for some days now. One of the Shadowmant's waiters is running a lucrative pit fighting arena in a dark quarter of Bartertown, and the missing son is supposed to become the current champion's—a brutal troll Named Buurtan—next opponent.

The characters soon find out that the boy disappeared after he spent a night out with some friends. A tavern brawl broke out and during the fracas he was snatched away by the waiter with the help of hired thugs (and a debilitating poison). Openly asking questions may bring the characters more attention then they wanted, possibly leading to them being abducted for the pit as well...

Once the characters find out what happened to the boy, they may decide to find out who runs the fighting pit and try to stop him. Possible masterminds could be a Horror-marked Name-giver, a follower (or even a questor) of Raggok, or simply a greedy minion in Shadowswift's employ.

Average Buundavim

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (8): 4/D6
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 6
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 36
Full Movement: 72

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (1): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Extortion (2): 6/D10

General:
Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8+D6
Bribery (1): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Missile Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 9/D8+D6
Speak Language (2): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Or'zet*
Streetwise (3): 7/D12
Surprise Strike (2): 7/D12

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Hide (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10+D6; w/scabbard)
Club (Damage 9/D8+D6)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Sling (Damage 7/D12; Range 20–40–80)
Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Traveler's Garb

Loot

D6 silver pieces, D12 copper pieces

Legend Points

80 Legend Points

Notes

Buundavim possess the ork racial abilities of Low-Light Vision and *Gahad*.

Shadowswift

"Someone smashed up your shop, Nillo? How unfortunate. Now, didn't I tell you to upgrade your charter with us, to ensure increased protection? I'm sure I did. What's that, Nillo? You say my men smashed your shop? I'll have to have a word with them—as soon as you upgrade our arrangement."

A 25-year-old human Troubadour, Shadowswift has quickly seized unofficial power in Bartertown. The high-spirited Shadowswift delights in posing as a legitimate merchant. He toys with recalcitrant clients, coating his threats in honey. Unlike the *buundavim* who work for him or fear him, he boldly walks the streets of Bartertown as if he owns them. His taste for irony is acute; he is a vocal supporter of Clystone's policies because he could never have gotten where he is without heavy taxation. Should Clystone be replaced with an honest official, Shadowswift might become the target of attention from genuine law enforcement officers. Shadowswift's worst nightmare is Throalic annexation, and his *buundavim* have severely beaten several effective campaigners for union with Throal. Other residents of similar political persuasion have learned to keep their opinions to themselves.

Shadowswift's self-image as a cheerful rogue is betrayed by his vulnerability to criticism. He sometimes orders attacks on Bartertowners who condemn him in public.

In addition to vanity, his other sore spot is his past as a Theran slave. He has killed underlings with his own hands for merely alluding to that fact.

Shadowswift has invested his ill-gotten gains in various shipping operations, all of which operate solely on the black market. He has the best hiding places of any smuggler in town. Shadowswift likes feeling powerful and likes money, in that order. The status quo in Bartertown has been good to him, and he wants to maintain the current atmosphere of graft and corruption. Though his *buundavim* pose little threat even to novice adepts, Shadowswift has enough gold and silver to hire high-Circle teams of killers if player characters should decide to interfere with his plans.

Shadowswift is a Fifth Circle human Troubadour.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (8): 4/D6
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 8
Social Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 36 (66)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 28 (53)

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 24
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents

Disguise Self[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Durability (6/5) (5): 5
Emotion Song[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Engaging Banter[D] (5): 13/D12+D10
First Impression (5): 13/D12+D10
Item History (5): 11/D10+D8
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Melee Weapons (6): 14/D20+D4
Mimic Voice[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang
Speak Language[D] (4): 10/D10+D6
—*Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang
Taunt (5): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Story Weaving)[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Throwing Weapons (5): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (4): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Bartertown History (3): 9/D8+D6
Bartertown Politics (3): 9/D8+D6
Black Market Trade (4): 10/D10+D6
Extortion (3): 9/D8+D6
Smuggling (3): 9/D8+D6

General:
Bribery (3): 11/D10+D8
Evaluate (3): 9/D8+D6
Fence (3): 11/D10+D8
Lock Picking (2): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Shackle Shrug (2): 10/D10+D6
Silent Walk (4): 12/2D10
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Streetwise (3): 9/D8+D6
Surprise Strike (4): 8/2D6
Trading (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Thread Leather (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 10/D10+D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 8/2D6; Range 24–40–48)

Cloaksense Brooch
Quiet Pouch
Lute
Thieves' Picks and Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

110 silver pieces

Legend Points

425 Legend Points

Notes

Shadowswift possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Other Gang Leaders

Other notable gang leaders of Bartertown are described below.

Hamivar

This handsome young dwarf is Shadowswift's constant companion, a spendthrift and notorious carouser who shows little outward sign of the killer instinct needed to survive as a *buundavim*. The nature of his connection to Shadowswift is a matter of constant speculation in Bartertown; few people can understand what use Hamivar is to Bartertown's paramount gang leader. In private, Hamivar is a cold and ruthless planner who serves as a moderating influence on Shadowswift's temper. He has kept Shadowswift alive and in charge by repeatedly talking him out of foolish moves. Hamivar plans to kill Shadowswift eventually and take his place. Cautious soul that he is, however, he will make no move until he is certain of success.



Pavlak Greatgirth

This enormously obese ork understands nothing save the language of violence. A brutal newcomer to Bartertown's underworld, Greatgirth has recently caused problems for both Magistrate Clystone and Shadowswift by refusing to follow Bartertown's unwritten rules of corruption. Established boundaries mean nothing to this ex-scorcher, or to the *buundavim* who work for him. Local gamblers have begun to place bets on how long Greatgirth will live; the odds-on favorite is "less than two months."

T'shlea V'omponian

A sweet-natured t'skrang woman, T'shlea V'omponian long ago crossed the line from merchant to extortionist. Originally the target of Bartertown's *buundavim*, she gradually charmed the local thugs until they found themselves following her orders. Over the years she has increased her empire; dozens of minor gang leaders report to Shadowswift through her, and she takes a cut from each one's operations. T'shlea uses her knowledge of legitimate business to select the most promising targets in town. Uniquely able to divorce her often-cruel actions from her perception of herself, T'shlea believes that she is kind, honest, and compassionate. Her many victims would disagree.

Local Color

Bartertown has always been a sprawling monument to disorder, presenting a startling contrast to the calm and orderly life of Throal. The deterioration of the past few years has only intensified Bartertown's frontier atmosphere, often to the point of outright lawlessness. Residents of Bartertown are proud individualists in their private and public lives. Merchants see one another as competitors rather than members of a group with common interests. Workers gladly undercut one another to get the best jobs; they see guilds as unacceptably infringing on each worker's individual freedom. Devotees of the Passions wouldn't dream of forming *olzim*; to a Bartertowner, one's relationship with the Passions is no one else's business, and public ceremonies honoring the Passions are an unseemly waste of money and time.

Bartertowners respect the silver piece far above the life of the mind. Knowledge and the arts, like everything else, are commodities. Artworks that can be sold, such as statues or paintings or books, are valued; performances are not. Troubadours familiar with Bartertown know it as an unsophisticated place where people only appreciate simple drinking and dance tunes. Local authorities see the observance of holidays as a curious weakness of overconfident governments, and even wealthy merchants make poor patrons for arts and learning. A Bartertown merchant who spends too much time in leisure pursuits is mocked as lazy.

Even the most prosperous rarely put on sophisticated airs; well-to-do merchants like to believe they are as tough and rugged as the rawest newcomer with a small purse and big ideas. As for those who try to form political or philosophical organizations, the average Bartertowner sees them as a touch soft in the head. The most acceptable recreation in Bartertown is passing time in a tavern. Bartertown has more pubs and taverns per citizen than any other settlement in Barsaive. Sophisticated Throalites joke that Bartertown's culture consists of "pubs, pubs, taverns, and pubs," and they're not far wrong.

Pubs and Taverns

In Bartertown, player characters need never worry about running out of taverns. New ones spring up quickly, and established ones must frequently close for renovations after spectacular brawls. Some of the more famous taverns in the city are described below, along with the primary clientele they serve.

The Brave Warrior is a home away from home for traveling adventurers, mercenaries, and adepts. Player characters who hope to find an employer by making inquiries in bars should head directly to this establishment. **The Juggling Shadowmant**, run by a crippled troll and former adventurer Named Brainbiter, is also popular with adepts, but offers a more sedate atmosphere than the Brave Warrior. Player characters who have participated in the adventure **Infected** will know the Shadowmant well (see p. 140 of the **Adventure Compendium**).

Especially seedy and dangerous Bartertown watering holes include **The Canvas Bat**, a tavern frequented by Clystone's guardians; **The Staff of Office**, Clystone's current drinking establishment of choice in which he owns a partial stake; **The Steel Orphan**, where Clystone's enemies in the Council of Merchants often congregate; **The Tub of Rouge**, a notorious house of ill-repute as well as a tavern where patrons can rent companions to suit all tastes; **The**

Night Unending, Shadowswift's favorite tavern, which is well guarded by his *buundavim*; **The Red Blot**, a tavern atop a four-story warehouse that derives its Name from the mark left on the street below by unlucky patrons tossed from one of its many windows; and **My Dead Father**, sentimentally Named for the sire of its owner, a half-mad troll Named Tavarlon Tributemaker. This tavern is the filthiest and most disreputable in town.

Prominent Citizens

Player characters who spend time in Bartertown are likely to encounter the following gamemaster characters.

Arlorn

"We don't like your kind around here."

Arlorn works for J'Role, head of the Eye of Throal. Unofficially assigned to keep an eye on activities in Bartertown and report what he sees and hears to the proper authorities, he and his men are also expected to drive out infiltrators from enemy powers such as Iopos and Thera. Neither Clystone nor the *buundavim* particularly care if enemies of Throal are sitting on the kingdom's threshold, as long as they don't interfere with business, and so it falls to Arlorn to quietly but firmly encourage foreign adversaries, dangerous criminals, and those suspected of Horror taint to leave Bartertown. So far, his record is mixed. He has only a dozen infantrymen, all incognito, to back him up, and, unfortunately, not all troublemakers attract his attention, and some are too powerful for the limited forces at his command.

Unusually burly for an elf, Arlorn is a Fourth Circle Warrior. None of those serving under him are adepts, however. As an interesting campaign option, J'Role might hire a group of player characters to aid Arlorn in his efforts to keep a lid on trouble in Bartertown.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12 **Strength** (18): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12 **Perception** (12): 5/D8
Willpower (15): 6/D10 **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10 **Initiative**: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor**: 3
Social Defense: 9 **Mystic Armor**: 5

Death Rating: 39 (75) **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Knockdown**: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (59)

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (4): 11/D10+D8
Air Dance (4): 11/D10+D8
Anticipate Blow [D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Avoid Blow [D] (4): 11/D10+D8
Down Strike [D] (4): 11/D10+D8
Durability (9/7) (4): 4
Karma Ritual (4): 4
Melee Weapons [D] (5): 12/2D10
Thread Weaving (War Weaving) [D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Throwing Weapons (4): 11/D10+D8
Tiger Spring (4): 4
Unarmed Combat [D] (5): 12/2D10 (Pin Down, Head Butt)
Wood Skin [D] (4): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Wood Carving (2): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Eye of Throal Lore (2): 7/D12
Horror Lore (2): 7/D12

General:
Conceal Weapon (3): 10/D10+D6
Disguise (2): 7/D12
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Silent Walk (2): 9/D8+D6
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*
Streetwise (3): 8/2D6

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Bolas (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12–20–24)
2 × Daggers (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
Mace (Damage 11/D10+D8)
Warrior's Scarf (Damage 8/2D6)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Adventurer's Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
Wood Carving Tools
Disguise Kit
Elfweave Robe
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin

Loot

110 silver pieces

Legend Points

310 Legend Points

Notes

Arlorn possesses the elf racial ability of Low-Light Vision.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

CHARBOYYA

"Things are bad now, and they are only going to get worse. It is sad to abandon our dreams of independence, but better to live in safety than dream in filth."

A prosperous silk merchant, Charboyya is Bartertown's most vocal proponent of annexation by Throal. This humble, honest dwarf came from the faraway village of Hanto and started his now thriving business in Bartertown from nothing. Formerly a confidant of Clystone's, he has watched in dismay as his old friend has transformed himself into a tyrant. Charboyya feels there is little point in merely deposing Clystone; Bartertown has become so corrupt that only an outside force would be able to cut out the rot. Charboyya and his friends among the merchants want to see Bartertown become a barony under the rule of Throal's king, just like the Inner Cities. Charboyya's enemies claim that he wants to become baron himself, but in fact he just wants a safe, stable city in which to do business. He also wants to see Clystone and Shadowswift brought to justice. Charboyya's wisdom and decency make him a natural leader for those Bartertowners who agree with his objectives.

Though Charboyya scrupulously pays his taxes and avoids the black market, both Clystone and Shadowswift have tried to destroy his large establishment. Recently, Charboyya hired a team of seasoned guardsmen to protect his business and workers—a force that includes 16 former members of the Throalic Royal Guard.

Chancellor Wishten of Throal has offered Charboyya financial and logistical aid, which Charboyya has politely refused. He wishes to be seen as independent from Throal, and has repeatedly stated that the decision to join the dwarf kingdom must be made by Bartertown's people alone.



Charboyya appears as a patron of the adventurers in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Infected** (see p.140 of the **Adventure Compendium**). He is not an adept. His game statistics from p.190 of the **Adventure Compendium** are reproduced here for convenience.

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 35
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Tailor (7): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Dwarf Trade Routes (6): 12/2D10
Economics (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Conversation (4): 10/D10+D6
Etiquette (6): 12/2D10
Evaluate (4): 10/D10+D6
Haggle (4): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (4): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*
Speak Language (4): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*
Trading (7): 13/D12+D10

Equipment

Quarterstaff (Damage 7/D12)
Courtier Quality Hat
Craftsman Tools
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

Gold Earring (worth 25 silver pieces), Gold Ring (worth 25 silver pieces), 15 gold pieces

Legend Award

145 Legend Points

Notes

Charboyya possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Elberia the Avenger

"Misdeeds must be punished."

The delicate balance of power between Clystone's guardians and the *buundavim* may be upset by the recent arrival of Elberia the Avenger, a tall blood elf of indeterminate age who leads a small living legend cult called the Scalpel of Mynbruje. Of the sect's twenty members, five are adepts. Elberia possesses a grim beauty, which is only enhanced by her relative silence. She has shared little of her story with outsiders, but other members of the cult have looser tongues. According to the tales they tell, Elberia is an exile, banished from the Blood Wood for protesting a decision of Queen Alachia's as unjust. Elberia is also said to be a former questor of Mynbruje who was once able to contact the Passion directly. After a mysterious tragedy, she lost this ability. Ever since then, Elberia has attempted to atone to Mynbruje by seeking out evildoers who might otherwise escape punishment and killing them.

Elberia and her followers are reputed to have cut a bloody swath through the city of Kratas, methodically slaying each and every member of a certain minor bandit gang. No one is quite sure why Elberia and her followers have come to Bartertown, but bloodshed is very likely to follow. Both Clystone and Shadowswift assume she has come for them, and have been warily gathering information on her methods and capabilities.

Most Bartertowners believe Elberia is a Scout, Warrior, and Nethermancer, but she has so far displayed none of her talents within the city limits. Elberia is a blood elf Fifth Circle Warrior, Third Circle Nethermancer, and Second Circle Scout, following the *Dae'mistishsa* path of the Journey and the Wheel (see p. 27 and p. 44 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

She is currently on the Path of Travelers, advancing as a Scout.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (19): 8/2D6
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Initiative: 8/2D6
Spell Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 36 (81)
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28 (63)

Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Nethermancer Talents

Astral Sight[D] (4): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language (5): 13/D12+D10
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, T'skrang
Read and Write Magic[D] (3): 11/D10+D8
Spellcasting[D] (3): 11/D10+D8
Spell Matrix (3): 3
Spell Matrix (3): 3
Spell Matrix (3): 3
Spirit Talk[D] (3): 11/D10+D8
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)[D] (3): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Scout Talents

Climbing[D] (2): 10/D10+D6
Maneuver (2): 10/D10+D6
Silent Walk[D] (2): 10/D10+D6
Tracking[D] (2): 10/D10+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Warrior Talents

Acrobatic Strike (5): 13/D12+D10
Air Dance (5): 13/D12+D10
Anticipate Blow[D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Avoid Blow[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Down Strike[D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Durability (9/7) (5): 5
Gliding Stride (5): 13/D12+D10
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Melee Weapons[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Swift Kick[D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Throwing Weapons (5): 13/D12+D10
Tiger Spring (5): 5
Unarmed Combat[D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Wood Skin[D] (5): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Robe Embroidery (3): 9/D8+D6
Wood Carving (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Blood Wood History (3): 11/D10+D8
Kratas Lore (3): 11/D10+D8
Passion Lore (3): 11/D10+D8
Scalpel of Mynbruje Lore (5): 13/D12+D10

General:
Evidence Analysis (3): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*
Streetwise (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
Wood Carving Tools
Elfweave Robe

Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
Symbol of Mynbruje
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin

Spells

Astral Spear [M], Bone Circle, Bone Dance, Chilling Circle, Command Nightflyer, Dark Messenger, Experience Death, Grave Message, Mount Call, Pocket Guardian, Shadow Meld [M], Shadow's Whisper [M], Spirit Dart, Spirit Grip

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.

Loot

65 silver pieces

Legend Points

635 Legend Points

Notes

Arlorn possesses the blood elf racial abilities of Low-Light Vision, +1 Spell Defense, +1 Social Defense, Armor Restriction, Pain Resistance, and Reduced Recovery Tests.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Armor Restriction: All armors except fernweave must be modified for blood elf thorns. Wearing unmodified armor causes painful tearing of the elf's thorns and a Harried penalty for as long as it is worn (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Pain Resistance: Blood elves can sustain one Wound more than normal before incurring Action Test penalties (see **Wound Effects** on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). They are also immune to the effects of spells and powers that rely on pain to incapacitate their victims, such as the Pain spell (see p. 351 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Reduced Recovery Tests: A portion of a blood elf's natural healing ability must be devoted to healing the constant bleeding caused by his thorns. Thus, blood elves have one less Recovery Test per day (see **Health Ratings** on p. 47 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Emor Hawkcruncher

"You fix this suit of armor now, understand, tinkerer? It is needed for fight against Horrors. You not no Horror yourself, is you?"

This hulking, dull-witted troll leads the local contingent of the Grim Legion, a Barsaive-wide network of loosely affiliated adventurers dedicated to the eradication of Horrors. The Grim Legion has a bad reputation as a band of fanatics who believe the end always justifies the means (see p. 148 of the **Adventure Compendium** for more information on the Legion). Emor is a particularly shabby specimen of a Grim Legion captain. He spends more time drinking and telling stories about his alleged exploits than he does hunting Horrors. He is well known for bringing inexperienced adepts into his orbit, sometimes with a lot of arm twisting, then sending them off on dangerous missions that usually get them killed.

Despite being a buffoon and a fraud, he is also a Ninth Circle Sky Raider and Sixth Circle Warrior, mostly because he has a knack for surviving missions on which his coerced assistants die in droves around him. Local merchants, especially armorers and weapon makers, see Emor as just another extortionist. Whenever he brings a new Legionnaire into the fold, he browbeats the armorers into equipping the new recruit in the finest non-magical armor that threats of violence can buy. Clystone has tried repeatedly to trick Emor into leaving town, but he always returns, as indomitably stupid and selfish as ever.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (24): 9/D8+D6
Toughness (22): 9/D8+D6
Perception (7): 4/D6
Willpower (19): 8/2D6
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 11
Social Defense: 9
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 47 (119)
Recovery Tests: 4
Wound Threshold: 13
Knockdown: 9/D8+D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 40 (94)

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 3/D4

Sky Raider Talents (Knacks)

Air Sailing [D] (3): 11/D10+D8
Avoid Blow (11): 18/D20+D12
Battle Shout [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Crushing Blow [D] (9): 18/D20+D12
Durability (8/6) (9): 9
Endure Cold [D] (9): 18/D20+D12
Fence (9): 15/D20+D6
Fireblood [D] (9): 18/D20+D12
Great Leap [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Karma Ritual (9): 9
Lion Heart [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Melee Weapons [D] (11): 18/D20+D12 (Weapon Scream)
Missile Weapons (10): 17/D20+D10
Momentum Attack [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Second Attack [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Shield Charge [D] (9): 18/D20+D12
Steely Stare [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Swift Kick (10): 17/D20+D10
Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving) [D] (9): 13/D12+D10
Throwing Weapons (10): 17/D20+D10
Unarmed Combat (10): 17/D20+D10
Windcatcher [D] (9): 17/D20+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Warrior Talents

Acrobatic Strike (6): 13/D12+D10
Air Dance (6): 10/D10+D6*

Anticipate Blow[D] (6): 10/D10+D6
Down Strike[D] (6): 15/D20+D6
Gliding Stride (6): 13/D12+D10
Life Check[D] (6): 15/D20+D6
Tiger Spring (6): 6
Wood Skin[D] (6): 15/D20+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by –3 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Storytelling (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Extortion (4): 8/2D6
Grim Legion Lore (5): 9/D8+D6
Horror Lore (5): 9/D8+D6
Kaer Lore (5): 9/D8+D6
Scourge History (5): 9/D8+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 5/D8
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Troll
Streetwise (5): 9/D8+D6
Tracking (5): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Crystal Raider Shield (Phys 3; Myst 3; Init 2; Shatter 18)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Thread Leather (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Troll Sword (Forged +4; Damage 19/D20+2D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Troll Daggers (Damage 12/2D10; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Troll Spears (Damage 14/D20+D4; Range 18–30–36)
Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 16/D20+D8; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Points

6,055 Legend Points

Notes

Emor possesses the troll racial ability of Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength- and Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests



Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Hithorn

"I had heard rumors of such an item being found. I suppose a buyer might be found for it, though I fear legend has exaggerated its value."

Hithorn, a male windling whose wings gleam like emeralds, is one of the city's canniest merchants. He specializes in the sale of antiquities and magical treasures, prospering through his sheer skill at acquiring information and making contacts. He has connections to wealthy buyers throughout Barsaive and even in distant Thera. If the player characters find an art object they wish to sell for cash, Hithorn is the windling to deal with. Though he will not cheat adventurers outright, Hithorn will drive as hard a bargain as possible. If the player characters are not aware of the full value of an item, he certainly isn't going to help them out. His instinct for a quick profit is balanced by good sense; he realizes that it's bad business to alienate adepts who might bring him other valuable items in the future.

Hithorn tries to stay out of Bartertown's increasingly dangerous politics, but all the factions have taken an interest in him for various reasons. He has a knack for picking up rumors, including those unrelated to his business, and so makes a reliable (if reluctant) source when characters are investigating matters related to Bartertown or ancient artifacts. Hithorn is also a potential patron for an adventuring party: if he finds out that a band of adventurers is on the trail of a valuable item, he often hires adepts of his own to try to get to the treasure first. He pays extra for discreet work, not wanting to incur the wrath of legendary adventurers. Needless to say, adventurers are not advised to share their own plans with Hithorn, lest he hire other people to steal a treasure out from under them.

A questor of Chorrolis, Hithorn travels extensively to

search for valuable items and conclude crucial deals in person. Though he knows a great deal about adventurers and their expeditions, he knows surprisingly little about antiquities or magical treasures in general. Hithorn is no scholar; his gifts lie in sniffing out items that rich people desperately want and getting them before anyone else does.

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (8): 4/D6
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 8/2D6
Spell Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 28
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 7
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Combat Movement: 22/43*
Full Movement: 44/86*

* The second value is Hithorn's flying Movement rate.

Questor Powers

Questor of Chorrolis (5): 5
—Encourage Trade, Incite Greed (5): 11/D10+D8
—Locate Valuables (5): 12/2D10

Skills

Artisan:
Painting (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Bartertown Politics (5): 12/2D10
Bartertown Trade Routes (5): 12/2D10
Finances (5): 12/2D10
Information Gathering (5): 12/2D10

General:
Evaluate (6): 12/2D10
Haggle (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (6): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Sperethiel*, Theran, T'skrang, Windling
Search (5): 12/2D10
Speak Language (6): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Sperethiel*, Theran, T'skrang, Windling
Streetwise (5): 12/2D10
Trading (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Windling Two-Handed Sword (Damage 7/D12; w/scabbard)
Windling Dagger (Damage 5/D8; Range 9–15–18)

Adventurer's Kit
Quiet Pouch
Painting Tool
Windling Trail Rations (1 week)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

13 gold pieces

Legend Points

250 Legend Points

Notes

Hithorn possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flying, and Increased Physical Defense.

Pahoga Elcomi

"I can straighten out your difficulty. Many texts on Parlainth give dates that are incorrect by several centuries—a single mistake by a confused or drunken scribe, thoughtlessly reproduced again and again. If you wouldn't mind straightening out my account with the grocer first, I'll be happy to explain everything for you."

The Third Circle Traveled Scholar Pahoga is her respectable family's dirty secret. Shamed when she was dismissed from the Great Library of Throal for refusing to recant her bizarre historical theories, House Elcomi disowned Pahoga and has since refused to admit to her existence. Pahoga claims that dragons are manipulating the history of Throal; that much of Theran history is a lie, and that the Mad Passions summoned the Horrors to this world. Cut off from the Great Library she loves, she has decamped to Bartertown, where she scrabbles for a living as a cut-rate sage and attempts to find further proof for her theories. She is regarded as one of the town's charming eccentrics. Factions opposed to Throal like to use Pahoga as an example of the dwarf kingdom's authoritarian nature; in Bartertown, by contrast, people are free to say what they like without reprisal.

Pahoga makes a reliable source of information for adventurers on matters that do not touch on her grand conspiracy theories. She knows a little about almost everything, and can send adventurers on their way with solid clues. She might be willing to accompany them on a mission that could bring her closer to information she is seeking.

Pahoga is obsessed first and foremost with proving her theories, next with where she will get her next meal. She is friendly to those who seem genuinely interested in learning from her, but never forgives people who laugh at her. Her family's repudiation hurt her more deeply than anything else.

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 6
Mystic Armor: 2

Adventure Hook

Brainbiter, the friendly, informative barkeep of the Juggling Shadowmant, asks the player characters for help in a certain matter. Long ago, when he was a young troll just beginning his adventures, Brainbiter was part of a kaer exploration that ended in disaster. After the explorers found a magical club, an argument broke out over who should possess it. The leaders of the expedition, two human sisters Named Deridi and Viona, came to blows; Viona killed Deridi and left her body in the kaer, keeping the club for herself. Neither Brainbiter nor anyone else in the group intervened to stop the killing.

A few weeks ago, another member of the ill-fated expedition came to Bartertown and found Brainbiter at the Shadowmant. She bore terrible news: all the other explorers had been slain by a strange, wraithlike entity. Soon after sharing this news, she turned up dead in a Bartertown alley. Brainbiter knows he is next unless he takes action to lay the vengeful ghost to rest.

Brainbiter believes that the killer shade is Deridi, who has become an undead creature because she was left in a Horror-infested place without a proper burial. Brainbiter asks the adventurers to put Deridi's spirit to rest by finding her corpse and the magical club that cost Deridi her life, and burying them together in a respectable ceremony.

The player characters can be more easily drawn into this adventure if they have a prior relationship with Brainbiter. The troll appears in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Infected** (see p.140 of the **Adventure Compendium**).

Adventure Hook

A Bartertown merchant Named Inder hires the adventurers to find his unreliable nephew, Kossol. Kossol and his friends were supposed to build a new addition onto the merchant's shop, but failed to show up for work two days ago. It has since rained, and some of the merchant's wares were damaged. He wants to give Kossol a good dressing down, and is willing to pay the adepts in order to get his hands on the boy.

Kossol has a habit of ducking work and might easily have skipped out on this kind of job. This time, however, he has met with foul play. While working on the extension, he got a good look at a beautiful woman through the third-story window of a building on the other side of the alleyway. He watched her for a while, hoping that he would see something forbidden. Unfortunately for Kossol, the woman and her confederates happen to belong to the sinister Holders of Trust. This particular cell of the Holders came to Bartertown recently to seek out ways to infiltrate Throal. The Holders saw Kossol spying; they think he overheard their plans, and so they kidnapped him. They are holding him in the basement of their hideaway until they can sneak him out of the city for a quick execution. If the adventurers find Kossol, they might also discover other Holders lurking in Bartertown, or possibly even in Throal.

Adventure Hook

A rash of suicides strikes the city, and the only connection between the victims is the gruesomeness of the methods by which they end their lives. The evidence points to a Horror in town that is marking its victims and driving them to their deaths. Clystone offers a reward to anyone who finds and destroys the Horror.

The Horror, Aessraeth, exists only on the astral plane and feeds on despair and self-destruction. Aessraeth has discovered a unique method of marking its prey; it can project its consciousness into reasonably intelligent animals, from cats and dogs to more intelligent animals. Taking advantage of Bartertown's large population of pet cats, the Horror first possesses the cat belonging to a potential suicide victim. The cat then proceeds to scent mark the victim's home. Once the cat has established the home as its territory, Aessraeth can automatically mark the home's owner.

If the adventurers find out that all of the victims owned cats, they can start a campaign to kill the cats of Bartertown. Unfortunately, this action will bring unwanted attention from a group of Beastmasters who happen to be passing through. If the adventurers overcome the Beastmasters, Aessraeth will command the city's entire cat population to attack the adventurers en masse.

Death Rating: 38 (56) **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (45)

Combat Movement: 18 **Full Movement**: 36

Talents

Astral Sight (3): 10/D10+D6
Book Memory [D] (3): 9/D8+D6
Durability (6/5) (3): 3
Evidence Analysis (3): 10/D10+D6
Item History [D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Karma Ritual (3): 3
Melee Weapons (3): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language [D] (3): 10/D10+D6
—Human, *Sperethiel*, Theran
Research [D] (5): 12/2D10
Search [D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Speak Language [D] (3): 10/D10+D6
—Human, *Sperethiel*, Theran

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Embroidery (2): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Dragon Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Passion Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Theran History (4): 11/D10+D8
Throal History (5): 12/2D10

General:
Haggle (2): 7/D12
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Streetwise (2): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Quarterstaff (Damage 7/D12)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)

Adventurer's Kit
Embroidered Robe
Embroidery Tools
Symbol of Chorrolis
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

25 silver pieces

Legend Points

130 Legend Points

Notes

Pahoga possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

ADVENTURES IN BARTERTOWN

Bartertown's haphazard appearance mirrors its political disorder. Unlike the Inner Cities of Throal, it sprang up unplanned; its jumble of buildings was intended to be temporary, and it looks it. Most buildings in Bartertown are fewer than four stories tall and constructed on flimsy wooden frames. Many of the white stucco-covered houses, hastily and cheaply built, have already fallen into disrepair. Some structures lack proper foundations, and have begun to lean alarmingly.

Bartertown's merchants did not set up their businesses in neatly organized districts, and no clear distinction exists between business and residential areas. Therefore, it is often difficult to find specific places in Bartertown. In general, the more prosperous businesses are located on the Royal Road that runs through the triple Gates of Throal. In a typical show of defiance, Bartertowners never call the Royal Road by its full Name; they refer to it as "the Road."

Intersecting the Road are 21 wide lanes, each Named after a commodity sold by an early settler in Bartertown: Rug Lane, Candle Lane, Ale Lane, and so on. Running roughly parallel to the Road are countless narrow alleys, most of which are Named after early residents: Folok Alley, Zebremius Alley, Bankaj Alley, and so on.

Bartertowners do not number their buildings, which adds to the difficulty of finding given sites. They refer to locations by cross-streets, an improvement over the bewildering system of marking distance by the number of hours the destination lies from a specific point used in the Halls of Throal. Magistrate Clystone's offices are in a building at "Butter and the Road," and Pahoga's squalid hovel stands at "Silver and Aloccian."

Encounters

Bartertown lives on trade. During the day, the streets bustle with workers, buyers, and sellers. At night the *buundavim* take over and decent citizens head for cover. Most people entertain one another in their homes or while away the hours in the nearest tavern.

The city tolerates a wide variety of travelers, though the atmosphere is often less than welcoming. Neither the guardians nor the *buundavim* bother to check the credentials of Name-givers entering Bartertown, and only Arlorn's efforts keep enemies of Throal out. Therefore, player characters might run into anything or anyone in Bartertown's streets.

Some typical encounters are briefly described below. The nastier encounters are more likely to occur after dark.

- A group of *buundavim* lounge in the middle of the street, drinking from wineskins and swearing at passers-by.
- A wizened old dwarf woman offers to sell the adventurers her special soup, which she claims has curative qualities.
- A worker repairs the cracked stucco on the outside of a building.
- A stranger with a curious accent stops the adventurers and asks for directions.
- Some guardians kick in the door of a shop and start

breaking things.

- A scuffle breaks out when a dwarf starts shouting pro-annexation slogans and onlookers try to silence him.
- A t'skrang trader pulls a cart full of dried fish through the street; behind him, his young children play at being swordsmen.
- A disturbing domestic argument spills out onto the street; a troll woman is beating her human mate with an axe handle.
- Several ork cavalrymen chase a young human girl, shouting that she is a pickpocket; no one helps them.
- A merchant quarrels with a beggar perched outside his shop; the beggar has a terrible skin disease, and the merchant claims that she is driving his customers away.
- A furniture shop catches fire, and its employees frantically try to put out the flames.
- A performer sets up a puppet theater in the middle of the street and begins an obscene, mocking parody of the Founding of Throal; passing Throalic travelers pitch rocks at him.

The Mountain Settlements

Our stay at Goodweight was a pleasant one, thanks to the hospitality of Baron Sinoricus. Our most gracious host laid out an impressive feast; the local ale was fresh and light, the muttonchops cooked to perfection, and the company of the baron and baroness delightful. Both were keenly interested in events in the Halls of Throal. As you know, it has long been my habit to avoid politics, and so I had but meager intelligence to offer them. They inquired particularly after the health of the king and the doings of the prince; it seemed Baron Sinoricus wanted a sense of the prince's attitudes toward the mountain settlements. I confessed my ignorance of the prince's mind on this subject, and took great care not to suggest the truth: that the prince has likely not given the settlements the slightest thought (though I was sorely tempted to say so!).

At the meal's conclusion, I broached the difficult subject of our party's confrontation with ork mercenaries on our way to Goodweight. Baron Sinoricus sighed when I mentioned the Grinning Wounds cavalry; it seems that problems of discipline are widespread among the new mercenary units. Moreover, the baron feels he has too little authority to bring their excesses to heel. The Cavalrymen answer to Earal Bloodstroke of Terath's Chargers; they do not take direct orders from the barons of the four quadrants. I can see the wisdom in sending an ork to deal with an ork. But Earal is currently hundreds of miles away, in the northwest quadrant. It might be months before he next speaks to Baron Sinoricus, and by then our concerns will then be as stale as an Air Sailor's rations. Even then, it is naive to conclude that Earal's interests coincide completely with our own. But his Majesty doubtless knows best, and I shall waste no more words on this matter.

The following morning, we entered the mine at Goodweight. Brucada's adder immediately began to hiss, a sure sign of Horror infestation. It took us several hours to reach the end of the mine, where we found what we expected: a breach in the mine floor that opened up into a passageway below. The passage led straight down into the heart of the mountain. Its surface was rough, but appeared to have been worked. The sight confirmed our suspicions; the manifestations that haunted Goodweight came not from a natural maze of caverns, but from a distant annex of Braza's Kingdom. The passage was likely an unfinished ventilation shaft, abandoned before it reached air. It was approximately one yard in diameter, easy enough for we dwarfs to navigate, but a tight squeeze for Mailpiercer.

The troll placed a spike in the wall of the mine, to which we attached our mountaineering rope. After affixing small light crystals to the ankles of my boots, I lowered myself into the passage. It was by no means clear how far I would have to lower myself until my feet touched the floor. We had plenty of rope, however, so I was not worried on that account. The probable inhabitants of the chamber into which I was descending inspired greater apprehension. My last encounter with Horrors had left me more shaken than I cared to admit, even to myself. As I slowly went down into darkness, my pulse pounded in my ears like a hundred drums.

Sure enough, I was attacked before I touched bottom. A sudden shriek echoed against the rocks and something hit my right foot. Pain shot up through my leg—something had slashed me. The blow knocked the light crystal from my boot. I saw it fall, hitting something perhaps six or seven yards below. The crystal on my other boot illuminated the writhing, tooth-filled face of the thing attacking me. It was howling in fury; it didn't like the light. I needed to do more than annoy the beast, I needed to strike at it. But with both hands on the rope, my ability to harm it was drastically limited. As I dangled in the dank air, a thin, spidery arm covered with gleaming blades swung up at my uninjured foot.

I whispered the Name of my patron Passion and let go of the rope. Twisting to avoid the bladed arm, I landed square in the creature's left eye. I sank up to my waist in what felt like grape pulp. The thing groaned and bucked, throwing me high in the air. I recall nothing more before losing consciousness.

—Excerpt from a report by Griforican, member of His Majesty's Exploratory Force, 1508 TH

The sovereignty of Throal extends beyond the underground kaer and the Inner Cities. King Neden also rules over roughly 20,000 people who live in small settlements scattered throughout the Throal Mountains.

The Throal mountain range is also home to others, who do not recognize Throalic rule: the flying t'skrang of the House of the Spirit Wind and the great dragon Icewing, whose lair remains hidden amid the peaks of Mount

Adventure Hook

The Skull Wharg scorchers launch a series of assaults on Garahamite communities in the northwest quadrant, and Earal Bloodstroke sends mercenary cavalry units to combat them. The Skull Whargs, an undisciplined bunch normally prone to fleeing when challenged, show uncharacteristic resolve in fighting back. Even worse, Bloodstroke learns that Karak Bloodeyes is attracting dozens of new fighters every day. Desertion from Bloodstroke's own cavalry units begin to reach epidemic proportions, and many of the deserters seem to be joining the Whargs. Bloodstroke has his hands full fighting them off, and so he hires the adventurers to find out what is happening in Bloodeyes' camp to give his brutal raiders such fire and determination.

The player characters must first infiltrate the scorcher camp, a real challenge (especially for an adventuring party with non-ork members). They discover that the Whargs are inspired to feats of courage by a fearsome woman Named Tyrul Boldwords, a martial poet (Troubadour and Warrior) whose works appeal directly to the rebellious hearts of orks. The Skull Whargs regard her with fanatical devotion. To reverse the tide of support for Karak Bloodeyes, the adventurers must get this heavily guarded agitator out of the Whargs' camp.

They may find an unlikely ally in Bloodeyes himself. He is afraid that Boldwords plans to usurp his role as head of the Skull Whargs, but ordering the assassination of the poet might touch off a rebellion within the ranks. Bloodeyes could use a few outsider adepts to blame for the foul deed…

Vapor. A community of t'skrang known as the Pale Ones lives deep beneath the mountain slopes on the banks of an underground branch of the Serpent River, and an old subterranean complex built by the legendary King Braza has become a nest of Horrors and other malign creatures. Several mercenary ork cavalry bands (see **The Threads of Unity**, p. 98) also live in and roam across the mountain slopes near Throal.

Outlying Communities

Throal's outlying communities were founded soon after the dwarf kingdom's reopening. In order to encourage people to reclaim the surface world, King Varulus III offered land grants to anyone who settled in the Throal Mountains and foothills. In the past 80 years or so, Throal's citizens have established 37 communities, the population of which totals about 20,000 Name-givers.

The people who live in these surface villages proudly refer to themselves as Garahamites, to honor the legendary founder of Throal who is said to have tamed the mountain by making a deal with its spirit. The settlers claim to be repeating Garaham's great deed by taming the mountain with their blood and toil.

Economics

Most of the outlying communities are mining towns. Throal kept reliable records of the most lucrative mines prior to the Scourge, and so the early settlers knew just where to go to stake their claims. In those early, lawless days, rival settlers sometimes fought miniature wars over claims to the same mines. Throal's noble houses financed many parties of settlers, but only the people who actually worked the land could hold title to the claims. It took bravery and strength to reach the outlying lands and defend them against attacks by rival settlers, Horrors and other fearsome creatures, and ork raiders. The Horrors have gradually become less of a threat, though raiding remains a serious problem. The prime target for raiders is a settlement's mineral wealth, but for local residents food is also a treasured commodity. What little arable land exists in the Throal Mountains is not rich enough to support large-scale farming; much of it is better suited to grazing. With considerable effort, the Garahamites grow just enough food to support themselves. They import a little food from Throal, but losing even a portion of a crop to disease, bad weather, or raiding can be disastrous. In most of the outlying communities, food stores are guarded even more stringently than gold, silver, or other precious metals.

Government

Most of the outlying communities are divided into quadrants and appointed a baron or baroness from among the Garahamites to rule over each. Like the barons of the Inner Cities, the rulers of the outlying communities govern for life unless recalled by the king. If a baron rules well, an heir is usually appointed to take over the barony upon the ruler's death.

The ruler of the northwest quadrant is Baron Lemak, an ork raised in one of the mountain settlements. Though he adopts the mannerisms of a bumpkin, he is in fact a clever and sensitive ruler. Lemak lards his speeches with colorful country sayings, and neither his clothing nor his bearing show the powerful official and rich mine owner his friends and advisors know. Lemak does things his own way and often ignores royal orders that he dislikes. Officially, he has no more authority over the mercenary cavalries than any other baron, but the orks like him and often obey his wishes. The majority of Garahamites in the northwest quadrant are orks, and they sometimes make noises about declaring their quadrant an independent ork principality ruled by Lemak. The baron does little to discourage such talk, but has yet to defy the king's wishes on any major matter.

The northeast quadrant is ruled by Baron Sinoricus, the son of a former mucker who became the first baron of the

outlying communities. Though Sinoricus is well liked by the locals, he has had problems lately with the new and unruly ork cavalries, who frequently act more like an occupying force than hired men-at-arms. Sinoricus feared that Varulus was neglecting the Garahamites, though he is careful about where and when he voices such opinions. He worries that King Neden will be even more neglectful of the mountain settlements, but despite his misgivings he would never consider a break with Throal.

Palaja Diamondarm, a leather-skinned, foul-mouthed troll, is baroness of the southwest quadrant. The communities under her control are remarkably calm and peaceful, no doubt because of the swift and merciless justice she dispenses. In the early days, Palaja mounted the skulls of executed prisoners on stakes outside her estate. The king ordered her to discontinue this practice, but local settlers remember it well.

Even the worst-disciplined of the ork cavalries are

The Endless Stairway

During the time just before the Scourge, when Horrors walked the land but were not yet its masters, a great evil came to pass in the lands between the Serpent River and the Kingdom of Throal.

The dwarf Weaponsmith Ginn Darrow, who lived in a small mountain village, fell under the power of a nameless Horror and went mad. In the grip of his madness he worshipped the abomination and built a temple to it as though it were a Passion. He preached that salvation from the approaching Scourge would only come to those who sacrificed their lives to the Horror by dying a bloody death or dedicating themselves forever to its dreadful service.

Those who believed Darrow's mad words traveled to the blasphemous temple in the Throal Mountains, then spread out to ravage nearby towns and villages. Those who did not flee were killed outright or brought back to be sacrificed on the Horror's unholy altar. In this way, Darrow and his followers helped speed the coming of the Horrors to Barsaive, confident their dread masters would spare their lives in gratitude.

The armies of Throal and Thera struck at these evil-doers scant years before the Scourge began, killing many and driving the rest ever deeper into the Throal Mountains. Angered by their defeat and thirsting for revenge, the Horror-worshippers began to build the Endless Stairway, a set of steps to link the accursed temple in the mountain peaks to another hidden deep underground. From these two temples they intended to wreak vengeance on the Throalic and Theran armies by summoning the physical form of their patron Horror and so speeding the arrival of the Scourge.

Darrow and his disciples vanished during the Scourge. Some say the Horror took them into itself, while others claim the creature simply destroyed them. Still others say the account is no more than a tall story, but even today travelers who pass through the Throal Mountains tell tales of tribes who roam its isolated valleys, tribes that still worship the abomination and practice the forbidden rites. Some visitors even claim to have seen the Endless Stairway, ascending into the dark mists that surround the mountain peaks and winding its way deep into the black bowels of the earth. So far, no one has dared climb the length of the stairway, and the temples to the unknown Horror remain a mystery.

Adventure Hook

The so-called Endless Stairway extends roughly ten miles from top to bottom, with countless blind twists and turns that make it extremely hazardous to traverse. To reach the stairway, characters first must scale some of the most forbidding peaks in all of Barsaive. Much of the stairway itself lies in dark mountain passes infested with griffins, espagra, jehuthras, and other foul creatures spawned by the unholy unions of Horrors and the local fauna.

Characters who survive these dangers and reach the end of the stairway may find a temple built on a large plateau just below the highest peaks of the Throal Mountains. Populate the temple with any foul folk you wish—descendants of the original cultists, a tribe of savage trolls, a sect devoted to one of the mad Passions. Any of these would be plausible.

The lower reaches of the staircase may contain even greater hazards. Extending far underground, the stairway leads through numerous subterranean dens occupied by various nasty creatures. Some tales even claim a dragon's lair lies beneath the Throal Mountains. The gamemaster may choose to have the stairs lead into this lair, or to someplace worse. According to legend, the bottom end of the stairway leads to the temple of the patron Horror. Though the abomination has no Name in any of the tales, scholars have linked it to an ancient cult known as Those of the Great Hunter. That cult's adherents served the Horror called Verjigorm, the Hunter of Great Dragons. And if Darrow's disciples had any connection to the worshippers of Verjigorm, only the mightiest heroes should consider a trip down the Endless Stairway.

afraid to cross Palaja; in fact, they respect her ruthlessness.

Before his death, King Varulus III confirmed Baroness Uzarg, a young ork, as ruler of the southeast quadrant. The previous baron, Uzarg's husband, was slain by invae—mysterious insect beings that infested portions of southern Barsaive in the earliest days of the Scourge (see p. 360 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**)—during an attack on the now-abandoned settlement of Smelter. Uzarg claims that many more Horrors and Horror constructs are lurking in her quadrant and has sworn to use every means at her disposal to destroy them. Some say the death of her mate has affected her judgment, but others support her claim that the southeast quadrant is particularly rife with otherworldly menaces.

The barons of the four quadrants administer justice and maintain public order. They are expected to uphold the principles of the *Council Compact*, though differing circumstances sometimes force them to adapt its terms to fit the needs of the situation. The barons report to the king's chancellor, requesting funds, troops, or other support as necessary. On a local level, each of the outlying settlements selects a headman or mayor, usually by the consensus of an informal council of prominent citizens. The headman is responsible for each settlement's security and reports directly to the baron.

In recent years, the Throalic government has paid scant attention to the needs of the outlying communities. Neden tends to take the Garahamites for granted, and chooses to devote his realm's resources to extending trade ties and Throalic influence throughout the province. This benign neglect is a source of increasing resentment, especially to settlers suffering under harassment by ork mercenaries who supposedly serve the king.

Culture

The independent-minded Garahamites feel a powerful emotional bond to Throal, but believe in doing things for themselves. They live without the guarantees of safety that their brethren in the Halls of Throal take as a birthright. They know that raiders or Horrors could wipe out their towns at any moment, and so every able-bodied Garahamite has at least some combat training. Everyone also knows the basics of wilderness survival and has a working knowledge of farming, mining, and construction. Like many who live in Barsaive's hinterland, Garahamites tend to be suspicious of strangers. Newcomers might be swindlers, bandits, foul folk, or worse. The only way to win a community's trust is to shed blood for it, or to live there for many years.

The people of the mountain settlements feel strongly bound to each other. They rely on one another for survival and know all the intimate details of each others' lives. They are as forgiving of their own kind as they are distrustful of outsiders.

Settlement life is rugged, and so books, paintings, and other art objects are rare. Locals value the few pieces of art that they possess, however, and practice the art forms they can. Garahamites love to sing, play musical instruments, dance, and tell stories. Stories of the Founding of Throal are particularly popular, as the settlers live on the land where those great deeds took place.

Adventure Hook

Several airships vanish while traveling over the southeast quadrant of the Throal Mountains. The adventurers, hired to investigate, find the wreckage scattered across the slopes near the House of the Spirit Wind. If they consult with the *k'stulaami*, they learn that the spirits of the air are angry. Even the strongest flyers of the House have been knocked from the sky lately. As for the cause of the air spirits' fury, the *k'stulaami* believe that someone is mining True air without paying proper respect to the denizens of the elemental plane.

The winged t'skrang are correct. A group of deserters from the Throalic navy have captured a drakkar from a band of crystal raiders and are harvesting True air with no regard for the traditional rituals observed by legitimate miners. The adventurers must rid the area of these unscrupulous bandits and then find a way to contact and appease the air spirits.

Typical Defenses

All of the outlying communities are surrounded by walls, mostly built of pine trunks treated with a plant extract that makes them resistant to fire. Some of the older towns have walls of stone and mortar. In addition, each town has a watchtower with a lookout always on guard. When the lookout spots raiders, the children and elderly head for shelter in the mine. Usually in the center of the town, the typical mine is equipped with metal or wooden shutters to protect those inside it. Meanwhile, able-bodied men and women strap on armor and shields and rush to the walls to fire arrows and crossbow bolts at the invaders. Some of the larger communities have ballistae and fire cannon mounted on the walls as well.

These defenses are used primarily against the Skull Wharg scorchers, led by the implacable and possibly insane Karak Bloodeyes. The Skull Whargs believe that orks are the first Name-givers and are destined to rule Barsaive. They hate Throal and anyone even vaguely associated with Throal. Bloodeyes has announced his intention to ride into the Halls of Throal and come out with the king's head on a pike. Until that day, he satisfies his appetite for Throalic blood with raids on the outlying communities (and anyone else he can reach). The Skull Whargs consist of eight clans, numbering roughly 4,000 orks. Of these, approximately 1,000 are active fighters.

The game statistics for an average able-bodied Garahamite appear below. Several of the settlements also number adepts among their citizens, who help protect their towns against raiders. These adepts are most often First through Fourth Circles, and tend to follow the Archer, Beastmaster, Scout, and Warrior Disciplines.

Average Garahamite

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Initiative: 3/D4
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 9
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Mason (2): 8/2D6
Craftsman; Woodworker (2): 8/2D6
Storytelling (2): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Botany (2): 7/D12
Creature Lore (2): 7/D12
Farming (2): 7/D12
Geology (2): 7/D12
Mining (2): 7/D12
Throal History (2): 7/D12

General:
Hunting (2): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Missile Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Wilderness Survival (2): 7/D12

Equipment

Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1)
Ring Mail (Phys 6; Init 2)

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10+D6; w/scabbard)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Light Crossbow (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 50–100–200)
Quiver (w/15 light crossbow bolts)

Adventurer's Kit
2 × Craftsman Tools
Farming Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

None

Legend Points

95 Legend Points

Notes

Garahamites possess the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

The House of the Spirit Wind

In the southern spur of the Throal mountain range, on a series of high cliffs, live the *k'stulaami*, winged t'skrang who live apart from the rest of their kind (see p. 140 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). Roughly one in five hundred t'skrang are born with a membrane stretched between their wrists and hips that serve them as wings. These t'skrang grow up unable to fit into traditional t'skrang society, for at the onset of adolescence, they lose the ability to speak the t'skrang tongue, as well as all interest in any pursuits not connected to flight. The t'skrang of the Serpent River bring their winged youngsters to this mountain community, known as the House of the Spirit Wind. Though greatly reduced in number during the Scourge, the House of the Spirit Wind is slowly rebuilding along with the rest of Barsaive. Currently, just less than 1,000 *k'stulaami* call the cliffs home.

The *k'stulaami* hunt and forage to survive. They eat mostly birds and edible mosses and leaves that grow on the mountain slopes, and groups of hunters occasionally kill one of the large mountain sheep native to the region. The Spirit Wind t'skrang make most of what they need from material to hand, and so have limited use for trade goods. They make clothing and armor from sheep hides, tools from animal bones and baskets from dried grasses. They do not work metal, and so must trade for blades and other metal goods. They particularly value daggers forged by Weaponsmiths, which they strap to their tails in a manner much like their river t'skrang brethren. Some *k'stulaami* are skilled at finding True air, and trading parties from Throal and the *aropagoi* of the Serpent River occasionally come to the cliffs hoping to trade blades and metal tools for that elusive element. Traders, however, must drive a careful and canny bargain. The Spirit Wind t'skrang prize the work of their own hands above all else, and if they can make something themselves, they will not trade for a version of it manufactured elsewhere, even if the trade goods are stronger or more durable.

Arts and Language

Though the House of the Spirit Wind is isolated by its location, its people feel mostly curiosity toward outsiders, rather than hostility. They rarely come under attack, as the scorchers of the Throal Mountains can find plenty of easier targets than flying Name-givers who live atop tall, sheer cliffs. In fact, *k'stulaami* have little interest in most outsiders save for windlings, with whom they share a love of flying.

The winged t'skrang speak an odd, bird-like language that they instinctively acquire when they reach *kaissa*, the time when a young t'skrang changes from neuter to male or

female (see p. 131 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). A few members of the House of the Spirit Wind learn Throalic as well as re-learn the traditional t'skrang tongue in order to act as intermediaries with the outside world.

Artistically, the *k'stulaami* decorate useful objects and their own bodies with mystical patterns. Some wealthy art collectors prize *k'stulaami* crafts as rare and beautiful curios. The *k'stulaami* also have a rich tradition of unique legends and stories.

Society

Like other t'skrang communities, the House of the Spirit Wind is ruled by a *shivalahala*. However, it lacks the usual t'skrang clan structure because few of the *k'stulaami* are blood kin. Instead, members of the House of the Spirit Wind may join one of five associations: the Gales, the Upwinds, the Flyers-in-Storms, the Moss Gatherers, and the Prey Seekers. Each association has its own character, according to the temperament of its members. The Gales are hunters, reckless and bold. The Upwinds are craftsmen and thinkers. The Flyers-in-Storms are curious by nature, and travel far and wide in search of new sights (as well as new pockets of True air). The Moss Gatherers are patient and quiet, traits that serve them well in foraging. The Prey Seekers are the most aggressive of the *k'stulaami*, and members of their association fight to defend the House when necessary. Each association selects a *lahala*, who advises the *shivalahala*. When a *shivalahala* dies, the House selects a new one from among the *lahala*.



For security, the House of the Spirit Wind relies primarily on its isolation. The high, sheer cliffs they live on are a safer barrier to attack than any fortress, and the Prey Seekers serve as an effective defensive force.

Game statistics for a typical non-adept fighter from the House of the Spirit Wind appear below.

Average Spirit Wind Fighter

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Willpower (8): 4/D6
Strength (11): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Initiative: 7/D12
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Skills

Artisan:
Body Painting (1): 5/D8
Craftsman; Basketweaving (1): 9/D8+D6
Craft Armor (1): 6/D10

Knowledge:
Botany (1): 6/D10
Creature Lore (1): 6/D10
Element Lore (1): 6/D10
K'stulaami Racial Lore (1): 6/D10

General:
Climbing (2): 10/D10+D6
Gliding (2): 10/D10+D6
Hunting (2): 10/D10+D6
Melee Weapons (5): 13/D12+D10
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—T'skrang (*K'stulaami*)
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang (*K'stulaami*)
Throwing Weapons (5): 13/D12+D10
Wilderness Survival (2): 7/D12

Equipment

Hide (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

Ch'tard Thorn (Damage 7/D12; Tail Damage 6/D10)
2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Tail Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Dancing Blades (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 12–20–24)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit

2 × Craftsman Tools
Painting Tool
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot
None

Legend Points
80 Legend Points

Notes
Spirit Wind Fighters possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 5/D8).

Adventure Hook

Charboyya (see p.137) hires the adventurers to venture into Braza's Kingdom in search of the web of the fabled iridescent worm. The silk spun by this giant worm is worth 500 silver pieces a pound, and can be woven into a fabric that shimmers with all the colors of the rainbow when seen in any strength of light. In addition to its beauty, the fabric is extremely durable. Unfortunately for the player characters, the iridescent worm is actually a 50-foot long behemoth with jaws vast enough to swallow a troll in a single gulp... and it is extremely carnivorous.

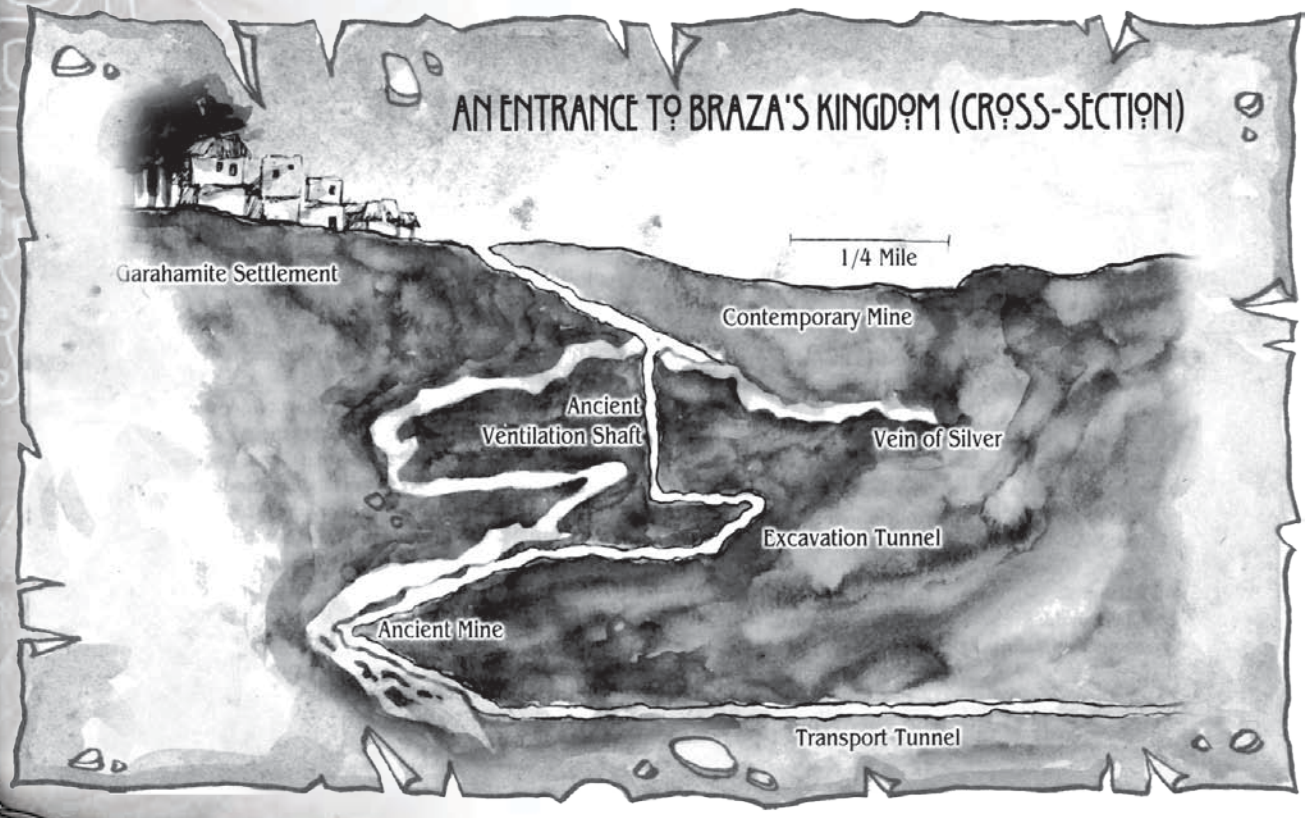
Braza's Kingdom

Braza's Kingdom lies deep underground, far beneath the Halls of Throal. First excavated around 200 TH, it was originally an exquisite suite of rooms and ceremonial halls, covering an area roughly the size of the Grand Bazaar. Later, residents of the Halls of Throal used it as the entry point for a vast network of small tunnels connecting mines deep in the heart of the Throal mountains. The tunnels were excavated over a 600-year period. Braza's Kingdom also extends across the mountain range to the natural caverns through which the underground branch of the Serpent River flows.

The entrance to Braza's Kingdom under the Halls of Throal was sealed up in 900 TH, after the people of Throal found several Horrors nesting there. Since the end of the Scourge, miners and adventurers have periodically sought permission to unseal the entrance, but King Neden, like his father King Varulus III before him, always turns down these requests. Many of the mines dug in the mountain settlements, however, are connected to this vast subterranean tunnel network. On occasion, the Horrors that still lurk in Braza's Kingdom surface in the midst of small mining towns and terrorize the inhabitants.

The vast majority of Braza's Kingdom has gone unexplored since the reopening of Throal. Adventurers who have mapped portions of it report that it remains heavily infested with Horrors and Horror constructs. Some of the Horrors have become dormant, likely from lack of food, and only awaken when Name-givers approach.

Because Braza's Kingdom is unexplored and full of hazards, legends of great treasures have naturally become attached to it. According to some tales, ancient miners hid untold wealth in the Kingdom's underground vaults. Still others say that the fabulous weapons wielded by the Founders of Throal are stowed away in Braza's Kingdom. Skeptical-minded scholars say there is nothing in the tunnel network other than dust and bones.



The map on the previous page shows a typical entrance to Braza's Kingdom through the active mine of one of the outlying communities. The entrance of the mine lies in the center of town and intersects with a partly completed ventilation shaft from ancient times. The ventilation shaft connects to a far older mine established to work the same vein via a small, rough tunnel, a cramped fit for anyone larger than a dwarf. Leading away from the mine is a transport tunnel large enough to allow a human or elf to stand upright; the floor of this tunnel is smooth and relatively easy to navigate. These transport tunnels go on for miles, connecting to other ancient mines and sometimes to surface entrances.

Encounters

If the player characters come across any living beings in Braza's Kingdom, the following encounters are most likely to occur:

- Meeting other adventurers exploring and/or seeking treasure.
- Run-ins with Horrors and predatory creatures.
- Meeting parties of miners seeking a rich, ancient mine; the miners may be Garahamites, Throalites, or foreigners.
- Stumbling across Skull Wharg scorchers seeking routes by which to launch surprise attacks against well-protected villages (these encounters will only take place near the surface).
- Meeting Pale Ones who have forged trade routes through parts of Braza's Kingdom (these encounters only take place deep within the mountains).

The Domes of the Pale Ones

Many miles of underground rivers flow through the Throal Mountains, some tributaries of the Serpent and others additional sources of that mighty river. All the rivers flow through a series of interconnected underground caverns far beneath the Throal Mountains. In these caverns live the Pale Ones, a tribe of t'skrang who never venture up to the surface world (see p. 138 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). Though these t'skrang seem to live in a more primitive society than their surface-dwelling cousins, they are canny traders and deadly foes when provoked. Unlike surface-dwelling t'skrang, the Pale Ones' hides are white or pale green; a few even have luminous skin. They also possess the racial ability of Heat Sight, a trait unique to this group of t'skrang.

The Pale Ones survive by fishing and trading. Many tribes offer river transport to dwarf miners, guiding them to sources of True water in exchange for needed goods. The Pale Ones live communally, sharing the fruits of their labors.

Social Organization

Each community of Pale Ones occupies a vast underground cavern, which they call a Great Dome. The typical community consists of five to six foundations, or *niall*, each with 30 to 50 members. Each foundation is led by a *lahala*; a *shivalahala*, selected by the *lahalas* from among their own number, governs the community.

Like the surface t'skrang, the Pale Ones regard their *shivalahala* with reverence as a living embodiment of their history. A *shivalahala* serves for life, and the continuity of her guidance helps ensure the survival of her people in an often-hostile environment. Unlike their surface cousins, Pale Ones do not travel far from their underground homes. Their insular focus on their own communities makes the *shivalahala's* influence all the more powerful; they hold her in awe, and to defy the *shivalahala* is unthinkable.

Ongoing feuds between neighboring communities are common, usually over fishing territory. Because battles between communities of Pale Ones are ritualized, however, a combatant is more likely to be taken prisoner than slain. Quarreling communities often seal a temporary truce by exchanging prisoners, and occasionally prisoners are adopted into the communities that captured them.

When wars between communities get out of hand, either side may petition the king of the Pale Ones, a water-dwelling great dragon Named Earthroot, for assistance (see p. 426 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). Though many scholars in Throal doubt Earthroot's existence, he is real. He dislikes being disturbed, and has been known to eat petitioners as a way of emphasizing his displeasure. The Pale Ones periodically pay him tribute with large amounts of True water; why he wants so much of it, no one knows. The only clue to Earthroot's plans or motivations may lie in an incident that took place roughly three years ago, when some Pale Ones appeared on the slopes of the Throal Mountains. They claimed to be bearing a message from their king to his fellow dragon, Icewing.

Earthroot's role as king of the Pale Ones seems typically dragon-like. He sometimes manipulates the communities into fighting one another for obscure ends; sometimes he encourages trade with the dwarf miners, but he is just as likely to order an all-out war against the Throalites. In general, Earthroot leaves the *shivalahala*s to run the communities as they see fit. When Earthroot wishes to convey an order to the Pale Ones, he usually sends one of his three aquatic drake servants (see p. 404 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Defenses

Every able-bodied Pale One must be prepared to defend his community's Great Dome. The Domes have only a few entrances, which are guarded at all times. The Pale Ones rely on numbers and ferocity, rather than sophisticated strategy, to repel foes.

Only a few Pale Ones become adepts, and of those that follow a Discipline, few ever reach much higher than Fifth or Sixth Circle. Because Pale Ones prefer to stay close to home, they rarely get out into the world to perform the legendary deeds required to attain higher Circles. The notable excep-

tion to this tendency are the *shivalahala*s of the various domes, of whom many are adepts of Twelfth Circle or higher. Game statistics for a typical Pale One appear below.

Average Pale One

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 6
Social Defense: 7
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 8
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Skills

Artisan:
Wood Carving (1): 6/D10

Knowledge:
Creature Lore (1): 6/D10
Element Lore (1): 6/D10
Pale Ones Racial Lore (1): 6/D10

General:
Fishing (3): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Missile Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—T'skrang (Pale Ones)
Sailing (3): 9/D8+D6
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang (Pale Ones)
Swimming (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19)
Leather (Phys 3)

Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Spear (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Short Bow (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 30–60–120)
Quiver (w/20 short bow arrows)

Adventurer's Kit
Wood Carving Tools
Fishing Kit
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

None

Legend Points

75 Legend Points

Adventure Hook

Grindo, the head of House Neumani (see **On Throal's Trading Houses**, p. 26), needs the adventurers' help with a serious problem. One of Grindo's sons, an impetuous youth Named Zeslericus, unearthed the legend of the White Tree, a vast plant that allegedly grows without sunlight in the heart of the Throal Mountains. According to legend, this tree is intimately connected to the destiny of the dragons. Zeslericus has decided that the White Tree is growing somewhere in the underground caverns of the Pale Ones and is determined to take a branch from it and auction off the branch to the highest-bidding Wizard or Weaponsmith. However, Zeslericus failed to discover one vital fact: Earthroot serves as the guardian of the White Tree. Grindo promises the adventurers a substantial reward if they follow Zeslericus and haul him home to daddy before he gets roasted by the Pale Ones or gulped down the dragon's gullet.

Notes

Pale Ones possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10) and their own racial ability of Heat Sight..

Culture

Parochial and suspicious of outsiders, the Pale Ones exhibit a curious mixture of civilization and primitivism. The few cultural practices that outsiders find particularly disturbing bear a distinct mark of cannibalism. For example when a member of a community becomes too lame or sick to contribute to the general good, he is fed to Earthroot—a great honor in Pale One society, but not one that all Pale Ones are happy to receive. Criminals and prisoners from other communities are frequently tortured, most often by boiling or roasting. Victims who show particular bravery in the face of torture are ritually devoured. Those who partake of the victim supposedly gain the qualities of bravery and stoicism. The Pale Ones also practice infanticide, smothering children born as *k'stulaami*.

Contrasting with such apparent barbarism, the Pale Ones are a literate people who read, write, and speak an ancient dialect of the t'skrang tongue. A few Pale Ones in each community also speak limited Throalic. They have a rich tradition of history and myth, and their music—heavy on percussion instruments and odd, stringed flutes—is haunting and complex. Outsiders who escape roasting and gain the trust of the Pale Ones have described them as Name-givers of deep feeling and compassion.

ADVENTURES IN THROAL

Quite the dangerous place is Throal. Oh, I know you might think otherwise. Let me tell you straight—rock and stone is good for building, but it's also good for concealing what's really *going in the dwarf kingdom.*

• Garand Hedmon, Citizen of Throal •



"Adventure? I don't want to talk about adventure. I've had enough adventure to last me a lifetime. To last me the lifetime of an obsidiman, even! I never intended to become an adept, you know. At least, not permanently. I just wanted to help my father. He was a great man, my father. The most honest man in Bethabal. Of course, that ran him afoul of the local magistrate. Back in the bad old days, you understand, before Dajag became baron. The old magistrate decided he wanted to expand his estate, and my father's laundry happened to be right in his way. So he trumped up a false charge against my old dad—treason, of all the stable-swillings! Accused him of associating with Theran agents. I was just a boy at the time, barely become a man. I needed to save my father, but hadn't the slightest notion how to go about it. Well, an enemy of the magistrate took pity on my tale of woe—which I poured out to him just like I'm babbling now, sitting on a tavern stool much like this one, so many years ago.

"Turned out that this enemy of the magistrate's was an adept, a Thief. Said he could smell my aptitude for the Thief's gift, reeking on me like yesterday's onion pie. So he initiated me. And I used my newfound talents to sneak into the magistrate's estate, where I found papers proving it was him hobnobbing with Theran spies. So my old dad went free, and folk called me a hero. I even got offered a job as a Royal Guardsman.

"All I wanted to do was go back to my father's laundry. But destiny cared not a whit for my desires. I suppose when you bring the magic into you, when you become an adept, trouble starts seeking you out. If you don't look for adventure, adventure looks for you.

"Not much danger in being a launderer, wouldn't you figure? Well, you'd figure wrong. A little time after I went back to working, the clothes we were washing started getting up of their own volition. Stalking the streets of Bethabal at night. Attacking people. One tunic strangled an old lady who'd been one of our best customers. Strangest thing you've ever heard of, I can see by your face, but true. And who better to investigate but me?

"Turned out to be an old Elementalist, Horror-touched, with a grudge against the family of his former wife. They were our customers, see? In a ruined kaer, he'd found a cake of soap imprinted with the spirits of the tormented dead. Slipped the soap into our supply. I had to kill him to stop all the craziness, and believe you me, his earth darts were plentiful and painful. Lucky for me, I got help at the last minute from a few young adepts who had their own score to settle with him.

"So I owed them a favor, and when they got into trouble I felt obligated to pitch in. Nothing much—just a little matter of an assassination attempt on the Grand Elder of the j'ha-olzim *of Thystonius. Just a pitched battle with the most ruthless band of Theran adepts you'd ever care to meet. Lost this finger in that battle—a t'skrang Warrior bit it clean off.*

"We took care of those blackguards, but attracted the attentions of a band of Raggok cultists. Lucky us, eh? They weren't happy that we'd helped followers of Thystonius. Turned out there were dozens of them, like dry rot, all through the Chancellery of Bethabal and some in the Royal Chancellery as well. Took months to clear them out, and in the meantime we'd ended up sentenced to death by the king and then pardoned.

"And that was just the beginning. I haven't said a word about the talking ring that tried to steal my soul; or the ants of elemental fire that almost devoured the gates of Throal; or the ancient mummies of House Chaozun; or the prophet who convinced all the women of Ontinus Lane to attempt suicide; or the old crones and their game of sticks that nearly collapsed the Hall of Donations.

"I've had adventurers from elsewhere tell me how much

they like Throal for its peace and quiet. A refuge, they say, a lovely place to take things easy between dangerous missions to the hinterland. I've never stepped outside this kingdom's threshold, but I know they're putting me on. I swear, one day I'm going to move these tired old bones somewhere safe. Like Parlainth."

—Anonymous, from Tamar's *Legends Told in Taverns*, 1502 TH

This chapter advises gamemasters on how to use the dwarf kingdom in their **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. Using the presented material as a setting or backdrop for adventures and campaigns can be challenging, but can also offer opportunities for different kinds of adventures. This section will help gamemasters solve the potential challenges of setting adventures in Throal and take the fullest advantage of the opportunities the kingdom can provide.

Experienced **Earthdawn** gamemasters know Throal as a fairly peaceful place, a haven of sanity and virtue in a province dominated by lawlessness and terror. Throal is exactly the kind of place where any sensible adept would want to stay between adventures, and player characters in many current campaigns are likely to have put down roots in Throal. As this book shows, however, appearances can be deceiving. Countless possibilities for adventure exist in the dwarf kingdom, enough for an entire campaign in which the characters never venture outside Throal's gates.

Because Throal tends to be peaceful in contrast to other areas in Barsaive, running interesting adventures in Throal can become a challenge. Quite a lot of subtle danger lurks just beneath Throal's placid surface, however, and gamemasters should make full use of it. If your player group starts to treat the dwarf kingdom as just a place for their characters to store their booty between kaer explorations, use the information in this book to give them a real surprise.

Campaigns in Throal

Campaigns in Throal fall into three categories. The first one, in which Throal serves as a base of operations for the player characters, allows the characters to engage in perilous activities throughout Barsaive and periodically return to Throal for rest, equipment, and information.

The second type of campaign is set entirely in Throal, emphasizing political and economic intrigue. These campaigns work well for player characters who have lived in the dwarf kingdom for a substantial period of time or who were born and raised there.

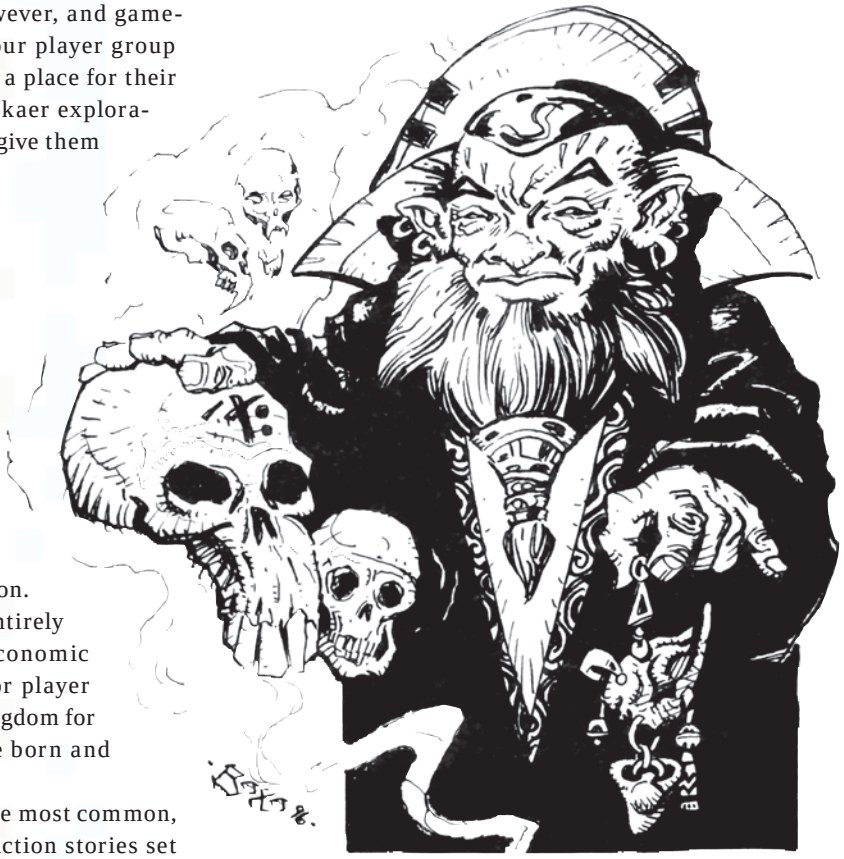
The third type of campaign is likely the most common, in which adventures alternate between action stories set outside Throal and character-driven stories in the dwarf kingdom. The former is a common type of **Earthdawn** adventure, seen in previously published **Earthdawn** products such as the **Adventure Compendium**. Several of the adventure ideas in this book can serve as springboards for character-driven adventures in Throal.

Working for Throal

Most of the adventure ideas in this book, as well as the adventures in previous **Earthdawn** products, assume that the player characters do not work for any government or organization. If the gamemaster wishes, however, he may have the dwarf kingdom employ the player characters in some capacity. The dwarf kingdom offers a number of Throalic government agencies and organizations to which the characters might belong, and through which they may get involved in adventures. Described in **The Threads of Unity** (p. 85), these agencies include the Eye of Throal, the Arm of Throal, His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, and His Majesty's Exploratory Force. Several adventure ideas featuring these groups appear throughout this book.

Creating and Running Adventures in Throal

In addition to the role the Kingdom of Throal can play in campaigns, it was designed to help the gamemaster run short, off-the-cuff adventures. The following guidelines describe some of the challenges of running adventures in



Throal and how the gamemaster can use the dwarf kingdom's rich detail and colorful personalities to create his own fully fleshed-out adventures.

Despite the fact that Throal is a maze of underground passageways and chambers, adventures in the dwarf kingdom are far less straightforward than an average kaer expedition. Characters have many choices available to them and it is often hard to predict how the players will choose to solve problems. And in Throal, the problems can be thorny indeed. Many of the adventure ideas in this book involve political intrigue or similarly tricky personal interactions, very different from the simple "bash those cadaver men!" plots likely to happen in the hinterlands.

The more complicated the problem in a given gaming session, the more unpredictable the players' solution is likely to be. Gamemasters who rely on tightly plotted adventures in which the characters travel obediently from one pre-planned scene to the next may be setting themselves up for frustration. Players like to feel that their bold and heroic characters are free to drive the story, and gamemasters can use this fact to their advantage when setting adventures and campaigns in Throal.

Let the adventurers advance the story line. Make it up as you go along. React to their actions by throwing interesting challenges in their path. Scrutinize the way they overcome these challenges and determine what the consequences of their victory (or failure) might be and how those consequences lead to further trouble. When the characters get out of that trouble, see what new trouble might arise from the new circumstances. Before you know it, you will have a complete and exciting adventure—possibly even the groundwork for an entire campaign.

Though this may sound daunting, especially for gamemasters who have run only prepared adventures, it is not as hard as it sounds. If you feel uncertain about what should come next, just remember that the players are even more in the dark than you are. They discuss their plans in front of you, so you can always stay one step ahead of them. One useful old gamemaster's trick is to listen to the various theories floated by your players to explain what is going on, then pick the most fiendish one and run with it.

The world of **Earthdawn** offers a tremendous amount of detail and a strong underlying logic. When you need to know what happens next, think about what would make sense in Throal. We have put together this book as a resource that you can use for inspiration in the middle of an adventure when you need a quick idea. Relax; have confidence in your imagination and the imaginations of your players. And don't forget to take notes so that you can remember decisions you make on the spur of the moment.

Using Characters to Create Adventures

Any story, whether a novel or a movie or even part of a roleplaying session, is about characters. The most important characters in gaming are the player characters, of course, but an interesting supporting cast can make or break an adventure. This book is packed with brief character sketches in the source material and in adventure ideas. Whenever you are at a loss for a plot development or the premise for an adventure, refer to the **Character Index** on p. 323. This table lists all of the characters in this book, including a brief description of the character and page references for finding additional material.

The **Character Index** serves as a helpful reminder of the dozens and dozens of gamemaster characters mentioned in this book. This table can also serve as an instant reference tool if you are in the middle of an adventure and need a gamemaster character with whom the player characters can interact. Depending on the situation, you can find someone the player characters already know or bring a new character on stage.

The player characters are working for a friendly trading house, tracking down Vono, an employee who embezzled funds. They have found the neighborhood where the thief lives, and want to ask around for clues. You have already decided what the next clue will be: someone saw Vono in the company of a smuggler from Bartertown. Now you need a gamemaster character to provide the clue. You scan the **Character Index** and choose Javira of Awett, a Weaponsmith from the hinterlands who recently moved to Throal. You decide she saw Vono with the smuggler. Next, you must decide what kind of challenge the player characters will face in getting this information out of her. Because Javira is from the hinterlands, you decide that she doesn't want to make waves in Throal by getting involved in local affairs. Therefore, the adventurers must overcome her natural suspicion of strangers and desire to mind her own business.

The **Character Index** also comes in handy if you are about to run a session and need a premise to get started. Pick a few characters from the table at random, then figure out what kind of story might involve all of them. This kind of lateral thinking can kick-start your imagination, breaking you out of habitual patterns. Think of it as the storytelling equivalent of connect-the-dots.

In search of an adventure idea, you select Dollas, Jarkna, and Johurrus Johuricus from the **Character Index**. What story line could possibly connect the queen of Throal, an outspoken ork woman, and a drunken innkeeper? Though Jarkna and Johurrus might know each other, Dollas is unlikely to have met either of them. You begin with Jarkna and Johurrus. Learning that Jarkna works in one of the Inner Cities, you decide she might have stayed in Johurrus' inn. Maybe she found temporary work in Bartertown and slept in Johurrus' flophouse upon her return. His place is filthy, and the outspoken Jarkna probably insulted him. You decide that Johurrus bears Jarkna a grudge.

To bring the queen in, you decide that someone stole her necklace while she was attending a performance at the Royal Auditorium. The Royal Guards are scouring the kingdom for this priceless national treasure.

Now that you have all three characters in place, you decide that Johurrus has the necklace. He took it from a mysterious stranger who slept in his place on the night of the theft. In search of a wineskin, Johurrus rifled through the stranger's bag while she slept, and found more than he bargained for. He is afraid to keep the necklace and is also terrified that the stranger—who surely must be an adept—will avenge herself on him if he identifies her. Johurrus

eventually turns the necklace in, but fingers Jarkna—the ork who insulted him—as the thief.

Now you need to answer one last question: where do the adventurers come in? You decide that Jarkna has friends, honest people of humble circumstances. They know that Jarkna is honest too, and so they pool their resources and hire the adventurers to find the real thief before poor Jarkna is executed.

You can also use lower-level gamemaster characters to represent the powerful people listed on the table. For example, if you choose the baron of an Inner City to be part of your story but do not want your player characters consorting directly with the dwarf kingdom's movers and shakers, you can use one of the baron's minor flunkies or servants instead.

Adventure Frameworks

The following adventures are presented in an adventure framework format. Adventure frameworks serve as blueprints that outline the basic events of a story line, which the gamemaster can flesh out according to his own tastes. The framework is a middle step between the brief adventure ideas and hooks presented elsewhere in this book and fully dramatized adventures like **Shattered Pattern** (one of the adventures in the **Adventure Compendium**), or **Ardanyan's Revenge**. If you like lots of dialogue and narration prepared in advance, you can create your own detailed notes to supplement the adventure framework. If you prefer to run your game by the seat of your pants, simply glance at these outlines, get the adventurers into trouble, and enjoy the fun.

Adventure Framework Format

No two gamemasters design adventures in the same way. Some prefer to plan for every possibility they can foresee in advance, leaving as little as possible to chance. Others prefer a looser style, where they plan the most significant events in the adventure and improvise the rest. To aid gamemasters in preparing adventures, we have devised the adventure framework format. Gamemasters can use this format to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they like. The four parts of the adventure framework are the **Setup**, **Events**, **Climax,** and **Sequels**.

Setup

The **Setup** describes how the adventure begins and how the characters become involved in the story. This section may also include events that have led to the adventure and background on other ideas touched on in it. This section is often the longest and most detailed in the framework.

Events

Each **Event** describes an encounter or event that occurs during the course of the adventure. These events may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists, creature encounters, or simply unexpected occurrences. Events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

Climax

The **Climax** is the conclusion or resolution of the adventure. It describes the most likely resolution based on actions that the gamemaster expects the players to take, and so it may differ considerably from the way the adventure actually ends. Because player groups often take unexpected actions, we suggest that the gamemaster plan for more than one possible climax.

Sequels

Sequels are stories that might happen after the adventure or as a result of the adventure. Sequels may be adventures that feature the same gamemaster characters or include a magical item discovered in the first adventure. Sequels help create a sense of continuity in a campaign.

See the **Adventures and Campaigns** chapter, starting on p. 97 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**, for more information about creating **Earthdawn** campaigns and maintaining campaign continuity.

Anaro's Serpent

A mysterious magical treasure strips a legendary adept of her powers, under circumstances that nearly kill her. Suspicion first falls upon followers of the Mirage, then on the machinations of House Ludi. The real motivation for this strange and terrible theft, however, lies closer to home.

Setup

The adventurers attend a duel in the Royal Auditorium pitting the great Throalic hero Shalanya Piercecasket against an obsidiman Warrior, Ompaca. Ompaca has made it his life's task to test the fighting mettle of all of Barsaive's legendary champions. There is no rancor between the two combatants; they are dueling in order to improve their skills and add to their legends, and admission from the duel will benefit the survivors of a recent scorcher raid on an outlying community. The prowess of both fighters has long been celebrated in song and story, and the people of Throal are looking forward to the match. (If your player characters are of high Circles one of them may take Ompaca's place in the story and fight Shalanya in the ring.)

As the battle begins, Shalanya draws a strange new weapon: a crystalline quarterstaff in the shape of a serpent. The two combatants exchange preliminary blows, which both easily parry. Then Ompaca strikes Shalanya a glancing blow that nearly kills her. The match ends abruptly, and Shalanya's friends rush to her aid. They soon discover that all of her magical talents, including Durability, have been stolen from her.

Shalanya is the primary *j'havim* of the Dream Spire free trading company and her accident is a dreadful blow to Dream Spire's operations. Oberh, the head of the company (see **On Trade**, p. 31), engages the player characters to find out how this catastrophe could have come about.

Event One

When interrogated, Ompaca seems genuinely horrified by Shalanya's injury. He wanted—and expected—her to be a worthy opponent. Defeating her by forfeit brings him no honor, no great experience to share with the others of his Liferock.

At some point, Ompaca invites a player character to spar with him. He performs terribly, and collapses in dismay as he realizes he no longer has his talents, either. He remembers touching Shalanya's curious staff as he knelt down to see how badly she was hurt, and the player characters may recall seeing this. Clearly, the staff has a terrible effect on adepts.

Event Two

Shalanya has gone into hiding from the many brigands, petty tyrants, and Theran trash who want to see her dead. Because she is powerless, she feels she cannot afford for anyone to find her, including the player characters. The crystal staff is now in the possession of Shalanya's aunt, her next of kin.

Investigating the staff is difficult. No adept with Weapon or Item History talents is willing to touch it to coax out its secrets, and the player characters are unlikely to want closer contact with it. (In fact, if it looks like they are going to touch the staff, give them a big fat hint warning them against such a foolish move. Most players will feel unfairly dealt with if their characters' hard-won abilities are taken away, even for the length of a single adventure.)

Shalanya's aunt knows only that Shalanya won the staff in a dice game with a group of other adepts. She knows some of their Names, but not all of them.

Event Three

Having gotten the Names of a few of Shalanya's gambling partners, the adventurers can look them up and pressure them until one of them says something useful. One gambler finally admits that "a stranger" gave him the staff shortly before the game and paid him handsomely to make sure he lost it to Shalanya. The gambler assumed that his mysterious benefactor was a representative of the Mirage (see **On Throal's Many Philosophers**, p. 48), one of Throal's odder philosophical societies. He happens to owe them a large gambling debt, and they have threatened to break his legs (in a philosophical manner, of course) unless he pays up.

Event Four

The Mirage may or may not be a vast criminal conspiracy, but it is certainly full of individuals who feel they have every right to act as they please. Many Mirage members are rich, powerful, and dangerous. Even more have done things they want kept secret from the authorities in Throal. The adventurers should get into at least one pitched battle while investigating the group. Finally, they reach the group's leader, Hyondak. She turns out to be a friend of Shalanya, who saved the philosopher's life several years ago. She shows the adventurers letters to prove her claims, and offers to double their reward for finding the culprit. Scratch one suspect.

Event Five

An informant the adepts consider reliable approaches them and reports a rumor that the members of the old guard House Ludi had a grudge against Shalanya. After she performed a heroic demonstration in the village of Sosk, in the hinterlands, the villagers were so impressed that they struck an exclusive trade arrangement with the Dream Spire Company. The Ludi representative, Ouglah, swore vengeance against Shalanya for depriving him of the deal. Ouglah is a notoriously slippery character and a noted questor of the sometimes unscrupulous Passion Chorrolis. After suffering through all sorts of trouble attempting to get at a member of this secretive, wealthy and well-connected trading house, the adventurers are forced to eliminate Ouglah as a suspect; he has been in Urupa for the past several months.

Climax

The adventurers get a message from Shalanya's aunt, saying that a shady character has been following her. When they reach her home, they find it ransacked and Shalanya's aunt badly beaten. She tells them she was attacked by a cloaked figure, who took the staff and tortured her until she told him where Shalanya was hiding—in an empty housing block in Hustane, the unfinished Inner City.

The adventurers arrive on the scene to see a human man assaulting Shalanya. The attacker, Urrif, is an Archer adept formerly employed by the Dream Spire Company. Shalanya once spurned his romantic attentions, and so, maddened with thwarted desire, Urrif decided to possess her any way he could. Scouring Barsaive for a weapon to use against Shalanya, he found the odd item known as Anaro's Serpent, a crystal staff that temporarily drains the magical talents of any adept who touches it. Only one adept may weave a thread to it at a time; that adept receives all of the talents stolen by the staff, at the step levels possessed by the staff's victims. Urrif has all of Shalanya's and Ompaca's talents to use against the adventurers; if they are of high enough Circles to need extra opposition, he may also have confederates at his side.

If the adventurers slay Urrif or somehow dispel the thread he has woven to the staff, Shalanya and Ompaca regain their talents. Now the adventurers face a dilemma: do they keep this foul, corrupting magical treasure, or destroy it?

Sequels

Whatever their decision, others are likely to have heard of the staff. Its original owners, cultists, Hand of Corruption assassins, or even scholars desiring to study it from the Great Library may hear of its use in the public duel and seek its current whereabouts. In addition, they now have powerful contacts in Shalanya, the Dream Spire Company, and Ompaca that might get them into more trouble in the future.

The Voice of the Mountain

The adventurers become entangled in a bloody feud within the Royal Guild of Miners, a situation complicated by an ancient, vengeful spirit in the Throal mountain range.

Setup

The Handshake Cooperative Gold Mine lies deep in the heart of the Throal Mountains, a five-day trip from the Halls of Throal. Discovered by a group of miners who made up the original Handshake Cooperative, the mine proved extremely lucrative. All but one of the original miners live comfortably in Throal, while a new generation of miners sweats and toils to take the gold from the ground. The last of the original group, a miser Named Terlesk, acts as overseer at the mine.

When four of the workers fail to return home to their families at the usual time, the families send a messenger to the mine. The messenger discovers that the missing men died in a cave-in. Knowing that tension existed between the miners and their supervisors, the families suspect that something else is going on, and convince the adventurers to find out the truth. Because miners in general tend to be clannish and distrustful of outsiders, the families suggest that the adepts pretend to be replacement workers.

Event One

Researching the history of the Handshake mine proves troublesome even in Throal. The miners' guild is split between factions supporting cooperatives and those supporting rank-and-file miners. The small but powerful cooperative faction is made up of former workers who founded their own mines and now oversee other workers at their establishments. The rank-and-file members toil in the mines for weekly wages, and often feel put upon by the cooperative owners. Everyone in the guild has heard of the troubles at Handshake, but they differ sharply in their interpretation of events. Cooperative owners blame rebellious workers. The rank-and-file blames indifferent or even murderous overseers. Tempers in the guild are at a fever pitch over the incident.

If the adventurers seem too friendly toward the co-op backers, ordinary workers assume that they are going to the mine to help the owners. In this case, two-dozen angry miners armed with picks and axes confront the adventurers on their way to the mine. Though individually they present a scant threat to the adepts, the adventurers cannot badly injure or kill a bunch of Throalic citizens simply for standing in their way. The adventurers will have to talk their way out of trouble.

If the player characters act too cozy with the rank-and-file, other members of the Handshake cooperative send a team of adept ruffians out after them. These miscreants will do more than block the adventurers' path; they will attack. In this case, the player characters can freely fight back in self-defense.

Event Two

When they arrive at the mine, the adventurers must prove themselves to Terlesk's overseers and to their fellow mine workers. Adepts who do not look like prime miner material, such as windlings, may find this especially difficult. Both the miners and overseers are suspicious to the point of seeming mentally unbalanced, so more senseless violence is likely to ensue unless the adventurers talk fast and well. The player characters should bend over backwards to avoid hurting the miners; they are working for miners' families, who will take a dim view of mayhem directed at their fellows.

Event Three

After they have won the workers' trust, the adventurers must undergo an initiation ceremony. Bonding rituals are important to people working in close and dangerous quarters, and Throalic miners are no exception. The miners rouse the player characters in the middle of the night, put bags over their heads, and lead them into the mines. The adventurers only cause more problems for themselves by fighting back, especially if they use talents that reveal them as adepts.

Once the adventurers are deep in the mine, one of the workers speaks to them through a metal funnel. Disguising his voice, he pretends to be the spirit of the mountain. He retells the ancient story of the pact between the Throalic hero Garaham and the mountain, from the mountain's point of view. In the story, Garaham promises the mountain spirit his loyalty, love, and a drop of his blood. The "mountain spirit" demands the same of the adventurers; they must repeat Garaham's oath and let the miners prick their thumbs to draw blood. The adventurers might be reluctant to do this, believing it to be part of some terrible blood magic ritual. If they refuse to participate, the miners treat them frostily for the remainder of the adventure.



Event Four

The next day, the overseer Terlesk spots the adventurers' cut thumbs and flies into a rage, bitterly cursing them for weakness and superstition. To him, making pacts with spirits and elementals is a fool's game. If the adepts did not participate in the ritual, let them look for clues, but make sure they eventually find out that Terlesk despises rituals and trafficking with elementals.

Terlesk's attitude is a clue to the truth—the Handshake Cooperative failed to ask permission to mine from the spirit that inhabits the mountain. Traditionally, every time a new mine is dug, the Throalic miners first re-enact the pact in which Garaham swore allegiance to the mountain spirit. Years ago, however, when the Cooperative first went prospecting at the mine site, they saw a vein of exposed gold gleaming seductively at them from the surface of the cavern where they dug the entry tunnel. They immediately fell to mining the vein, overcome with lust for gold. Too late, they realized that they had failed to seek the mountain's approval for their activities. The mountain spirit, an unforgiving entity, chose to bring woe and strife to anyone who worked the mine from that day forward. Even workers who swear allegiance to the spirit are not spared; the spirit has been sending crags to attack the miners (see Event 5). The mountain has also been affecting the minds of the miners and overseers, driving them to violent acts. A few weeks ago, overseers overcome with the mountain's baleful influence murdered the four workers whose deaths the adventurers are investigating. Terlesk is covering this up, just as he and his cooperative have for years concealed the curse on their lucrative mine.

Event Five

In the middle of the night the adventurers are attacked by crags, minor elemental beings commanded by the spirit of the mountain (see the **New Creatures** chapter, p. 269). The crags assault the player characters and any miners around them, striking without mercy and fighting to the death. Vary the number of crags depending on the strength of the adventuring party. No miners have yet survived a crag attack. If the adventurers take the remains of a crag to the mine workers (assuming they are still on speaking terms), the miners recognize the crags as servitors of the mountain spirit. They do not understand why the mountain would attack them. As one of them might say, "The mountain would never fight us, unless some fool didn't perform the right ceremonies when the mine was first sunk—and that's just not possible!"

Climax

With evidence of the crag attack, the adventurers can confront Terlesk with the suspicion that the Handshake Mine was opened without the permission of the mountain spirit. This accusation pushes him over the brink of madness. He loudly curses the mountain and swears that he hasn't an ounce of remorse for his sin of omission. The mountain responds by collapsing the entire mine. The adventurers must race to escape, and then must rescue the miners trapped inside. When they reach Terlesk, they find his body crushed to a pulp; only his face, still frozen in crazed defiance, remains intact.

Sequels

Such a dramatic collapse will have serious ramifications for the characters once word spreads throughout the miners' guild. Depending on the miners' Attitudes towards the characters the rank-and-file miners could see them as heroes or as perpetuating the cooperatives' oppression of them. Regardless, the cooperatives are likely to be alarmed, and may even hire other adepts to take direct or indirect action against the characters. If, however, the cooperatives can be convinced of the truth of Terlesk's omission, there may be other troubles the characters are hired to deal with in mines throughout the province.

A Matter of Trust

King Neden learns that the Holders of Trust have stolen a sword that may well be one of his pattern items. The adventurers learn that the sword has been sent to the headquarters of the Iopan-allied t'skrang House Ishkarat, at Lake Vors. They set out for Lake Vors to retrieve the item and end up confronting Jada Denairastas, the magician who killed Neden's father, Varulus III, by using one of the dead king's pattern items. In order to run this adventure, the characters must have established a close working relationship with either the Eye of Throal or King Neden himself.

Setup

The Eye of Throal has recently learned that the Holders of Trust have stolen King Neden's sword, which is theorized to be a Major pattern item for him since he used it to execute a supposed Theran agent. Even though it turned out that the agent was just a scapegoat for the assassin who killed his father, the execution was the first physical confirmation of Neden's authority as king, and he used the sword to commit the dramatic and bloody act. The Eye of Throal knows that the spell that was used to kill Varulus III requires a pattern item from its victim, and that the caster must have touched the victim before. Neden was present in his father's chambers when Jada Denairastas pretended to treat Varulus, and he does not remember whether she ever touched him. If she did—and if she gets the sword—the Denairastas may be able to kill Neden with the same type of spell they used against Varulus.

Event One

The Thief suspected to have stolen the sword is Named Lemora, recently uncovered to be a member of the Holders of Trust. Before she left, Lemora operated a food stall near one of the gateways to Throal. If the adventurers ask around for Lemora, they learn that she packed up and left town during the mobilization of Throalic forces for the march on the Theran behemoth. They find one food seller: an old dwarf Named Fezulon who can't stop talking about Lemora's charms. Fezulon developed quite a crush on Lemora, and the adventurers can get him to admit this if they are astute enough to realize it. Fezulon will also admit that he followed Lemora on her way out of town to wave good-bye to her, but never got up the nerve to approach her. He knows that she joined a caravan run by the troll trader Yamin Wheelmaker.

Event Two

Yamin Wheelmaker is mourning the death of two of his sons, both infantrymen in the service of Throal. Before the adventurers can state their business, he shares his grief with them and bitterly blames his sons' deaths on King Neden. If the adepts tell him that they serve the young king, he refuses to help them. If they tell him they serve Neden's rivals, criticize the new king, or tell Yamin they plan to humiliate Neden somehow, the troll shares the following information.

Yamin says that Lemora booked passage for herself and four other Bartertowners on a caravan bound for Jerris. He offered her passage on an airship but she refused, even though an airship would be faster. (It is harder to locate a single caravan in the trackless Barsaivian hinterland than to find one of a few airships in the skies over the province.) Lemora also left a package with a caravan headed for Lake Vors. The package was a long, thin, wooden box. "Yes, it could have been a sword," Yamin says if asked. The package was addressed to one V'sigar F'szaffinal Ch'othobi (Vuh-SIGH-gar Fuh-SAFF-eye-nall Chuh-0-thoh-bee) of House Ishkarat. Yamin also has detailed maps that show the routes of both caravans. If the adventurers antagonize Yamin, they must sneak into his establishment and steal his records to get this information.

Event Three

The adventurers should understand that the sword is a more important quarry than Lemora Wuculcian. If they head off in search of her, you can either give them a blatant hint or create a series of tough challenges for them as they attempt to accomplish this less worthwhile goal. Either way, the players should get the message that their characters are on the wrong track.

Event Four

In Bartertown, or soon after they start their journey to Lake Vors, the adventurers notice that they are being shadowed. Selenda has hired a group of adepts to follow them and obtain the sword for her (use the gamemaster character statistics on pp. 236–265 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). These adepts flee if the adventurers confront them; they have nothing to gain by fighting the adventurers unless combat will let them get the sword somehow. These adepts can stay in the background and trail the player characters or harry them throughout the adventure, as the gamemaster sees fit.

Event Five

The villages around Lake Vors are controlled by House Ishkarat, a group of bellicose t'skrang intent on expanding their sphere of influence in the region (for more information on House Ishkarat, see p. 175). Ishkarat soldiers, who keep an eye out for strangers and confront any apparent threat to House Ishkarat's security, patrol these villages and the surrounding areas. Local villagers are reluctant to talk to strangers because they fear Ishkarat retaliation for unknowingly aiding enemies of the powerful t'skrang trading house.

The player characters must be subtle to avoid a confrontation with the Ishkaratans as they try to find the Ishkaratan administrator V'sigar F'szaffinal Ch'othobi. This plain-spoken, bullying t'skrang commands the force that maintains authority over the villages. When the player characters encounter V'sigar, he has already turned the sword over to Jada Denairastas. Only the use of force induces V'sigar to reveal the sword's whereabouts.

When the encounter begins, V'sigar has four bodyguards on hand (if the adventurers are having too easy a time with them, have more bodyguards show up during the fight). V'sigar and his bodyguards are all Sixth Circle t'skrang Warriors, Swordmasters, or Taildancers (see p. 226 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

V'sigar and his Bodyguards

Sixth Circle Swordmaster

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6 — **Strength** (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10 — **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8 — **Charisma** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10 — **Initiative**: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 7 — **Physical Armor**: 9
Social Defense: 9 — **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 38 (80) — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 — **Knockdown**: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (66)

* The character knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 38 — **Full Movement**: 76

Karma Points: 25 — **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents

Avoid Blow [D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Disarm [D] (4): 12/2D10
Durability (7/6) (6): 6
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Heartening Laugh (6): 11/D10+D8
Maneuver [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Melee Weapons [D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Riposte [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Second Weapon [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Speak Language (5): 10/D10+D6
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll
Taunt (6): 12/2D10
Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving) [D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Throwing Weapons (6): 14/D20+D4
Wound Balance (6): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Sworddancing (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Government Administration (4): 9/D8+D6
T'skrang Politics (4): 9/D8+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang
Streetwise (4): 9/D8+D6
Unarmed Combat (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 4 Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6; Tail Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48)

Adventurer's Kit
Craftsman Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Whetstone

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

895 Legend Points

Note

V'sigar and his Swordmaster bodyguards possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Sixth Circle Taildancer

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6 — **Strength** (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10 — **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8 — **Charisma** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10 — **Initiative**: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 7 — **Physical Armor**: 9
Social Defense: 8 — **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 37 (79)* — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 — **Knockdown**: 6/D10**
Unconsciousness Rating: 29 (65)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** The character knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 38 — **Full Movement**: 76

Karma Points: 25 — **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (7): 15/D20+D6
Air Dance (6): 13/D12+D10*
Avoid Blow (6): 14/D20+D4
Durability (7/6) (6): 6
Engaging Dance[D] (6): 12/2D10
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Lizard Leap[D] (6): 12/2D10
Maneuver[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Melee Weapons[D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Swift Kick (6): 14/D20+D4
Swimming[D] (6): 12/2D10
Tail Dance[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Taunt (6): 12/2D10
Thread Weaving (Tail Weaving)[D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Throwing Weapons (6): 14/D20+D4
Unarmed Combat[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Wound Balance[D] (6): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified for –1 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Dancing (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Government Administration (4): 9/D8+D6
T'skrang Politics (4): 9/D8+D6

General:
Fishing (4): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang
Streetwise (4): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 4 Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Ch'tard Blade (Forged +2; Tail Damage 12/2D10)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Dancing Blades (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12–20–24)

Adventurer's Kit
Fishing Kit
Trail Rations (1 week)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

895 Legend Points

Note

V'sigar and his Taildancer bodyguards possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Regrow Tail (1 Damage Point)
Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Sixth Circle Warrior

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6 — **Strength** (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10 — **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8 — **Charisma** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10 — **Initiative**: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 7 — **Physical Armor**: 9
Social Defense: 8 — **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 38 (92) — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 — **Knockdown**: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (72)

* The character knows the Wound Balance skill.

Combat Movement: 38 — **Full Movement**: 76

Karma Points: 25 — **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (7): 15/D20+D6
Air Dance (6): 13/D12+D10*
Anticipate Blow[D] (6): 11/D10+D8
Avoid Blow[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Down Strike[D] (6): 12/2D10
Durability (9/7) (6): 6
Gliding Stride (6): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Life Check[D] (6): 12/2D10
Melee Weapons[D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Missile Weapons (6): 14/D20+D4
Swift Kick[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Thread Weaving (War Weaving)[D] (4): 9/D8+D6
Throwing Weapons (6): 14/D20+D4
Tiger Spring (6): 6
Unarmed Combat[D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Wood Skin[D] (6): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent
* Modified for –1 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Weapon Runic Carving (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Government Administration (4): 9/D8+D6
T'skrang Politics (4): 9/D8+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang
Streetwise (4): 9/D8+D6
Wound Balance (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 4 Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10 w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48)
Sling (Damage 8/2D6; Range 20–40–80)
Belt Pouch (w/15 sling bullets)

Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tools
Craftsman Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Whetstone

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

895 Legend Points

Note

V'sigar and his Warrior bodyguards possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Climax

The adventurers learn that V'sigar has given the sword to Jada Denairastas, who is aboard the *River Pearl*, a luxurious riverboat used by the leaders of House Ishkarat to impress visiting dignitaries—chiefly the Denairastas. The boat is decorated with lavish fixtures of gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl; it is also heavily equipped with mechanical traps devised by House Ishkarat's artificers and magical wards woven by Jada Denairastas herself.

Jada has used her Anchored Spell talent knack (see p. 216 of the **Player's Compendium**) to place all of the magical traps. Neden's sword is in Jada's quarters. To retrieve it, the adventurers must first board the *River Pearl* unnoticed; the ship is anchored in deep waters far from the lakeshore. Then they must penetrate the traps, fight off Jada's Ishkaratan guards stationed aboard the vessel, and survive a final confrontation with Jada.

Jada orders her t'skrang guards to capture the adventurers if at all possible. Jada is a curious young woman, and is content to chat amiably with the adventurers until they make a move on her. Though she seems quite pleasant and is not prone to gloating or making wild threats, she follows the grand villainous tradition of telling her enemies all about her master plan before she kills them. She confirms her family's intention to kill Neden in the same way as his father to send Throal into a deep crisis; Neden has no heir and the struggle for his succession is likely to cause a civil war to erupt upon his death.

When the inevitable fight begins, Jada pulls out all the stops against the characters. This is the magician who killed the King of Throal; so she should be no pushover! The characters succeed in this adventure if they defeat Jada and take the sword. If they kill her, so be it—there are more Denairastas where she came from.

If Jada escapes in the end and leaves the sword behind, she can return to bedevil the adepts in later adventures. Jada has constructed a Bone Circle (see p. 347 of the **Player's Compendium**) in her quarters on the *River Pearl*, and can use it to escape via astral space. If you want her to live, have her flee to her room at the first opportunity and cast the Spirit Portal spell (see p. 363 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Jada Denairastas

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (21): 8/2D6
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 11
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 11
Social Defense: 12
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 36 (84)*
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 11
Knockdown: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 28 (64)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 40
Karma Step: 5/D8

Illusionist Talents

Dead Fall [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Disguise Self [D] (6): 14/D20+D4
Fast Hand [D] (6): 12/2D10
False Sight [D] (6): 6
Slough Blame [D] (6): 12/2D10
Speak Language (6): 14/D20+D4
—*Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Nethermancer Talents (Knacks)

Arcane Mutterings (11): 17/D20+D10
Armored Matrix (11): 11
Armored Matrix (11): 11
Astral Sight [D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Bargain with Summoned Creature [D] (11): 17/D20+D10
Durability (4/3) (12): 12
Enhanced Matrix (11): 11
Enhanced Matrix (11): 11
Frighten (11): 19/D20+2D6
Karma Ritual (11): 11
Lifesight [D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Orbiting Spy [D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Read and Write Language (9): 17/D20+D10
—Human (Iopan), Obsidiman, *Or'zat**, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Read and Write Magic [D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Spellcasting [D] (11): 21/D20+D10+D6 (Anchored Spell, Gaping Wounds, Maintain Spell Threads, Name Spell, Spell Design, Spell Stacking)
Spell Matrix (11): 11
Spell Matrix (11): 11



Spell Matrix (11): 11
Spell Matrix (11): 11
Spirit Dodge[D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Spirit Hold[D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Spirit Talk[D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Summon (Ally Spirits)[D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Summoning Circle[D] (11): 19/D20+2D6
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy)[D] (12): 20/D20+D8+D6 (Unraveling)
Willforce (11): 19/D20+2D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.
* *Or'zat* is the ancient language of the orks, shorter and more guttural than the modern *Or'zet* (see p.297 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**)

Skills

Artisan:
Miniature Sculpture (2): 8/2D6
Robe Embroidery (6): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Alchemy and Potions (5): 13/D12+D10
Barsaivian Politics (5): 13/D12+D10
Botany (5): 13/D12+D10
Death Rebellion History (5): 13/D12+D10
Holders of Trust Lore (7): 15/D20+D6
Magical Theory (6): 14/D20+D4

General:
Alchemy (5): 13/D12+D10
Conversation (5): 11/D10+D8
Melee Weapons (6): 12/2D10
Physician (5): 13/D12+D10
Read and Write Language (1): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Research (5): 13/D12+D10
Speak Language (2): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human (Iopan)

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/Cloaksense Brooch)
Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Thread Varulus' Broadsword w/Throal seal (Best Quality; Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; w/Best Quality scabbard)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)
Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; Spellcasting Tests +2; Effect Tests +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Arcane Tomes
Embroidered Robes
Embroidery Tools
2 × Grimoires
3 × Healing Potions
Healing Kit (3 uses)
Physician Kit (3 uses)
Scrolls
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Waterskin
Writing Kit

Note: Alchemy Kit and Thread Neden's Broadsword w/Throal seal (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; w/scabbard) on the *River Pearl*.

Illusionism Spells

Assuring Touch, Astral Shadow, Best Face, Bleeding Edge, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Flesh Eater, Fun with Doors, Light, Mind Fog[M], Monstrous Mantle[M], Nightmare of Foreboding, Rope Guide, Suffocation, Unseen Voices

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.

Nethermancy Spells

Astral Horror, Astral Spear, Bone Circle, Bone Dance, Bone Pudding, Bone Puppet, Bone Shatter[A], Chilling Circle, Constrict Heart[M], Damage Transfer[E], Dry and Wet, Fatal Food, Friend or Foe, Mordom's Mirror (Named Ritual spell used to kill King Varulus III), Mount Call, Putrefy, Shield Mist, Spirit Dart, Spirit Double, Spirit Grip, Spirit Portal[M], Shift Skin[A], Talent Shredder[A], Wither Away, Wither Limb

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.
[A] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Armored Matrix.

Loot

Gems and Jewels (worth 530 silver pieces), 20 silver pieces

Legend Points

24,480 Legend Points

Notes

Jada Denairastas possesses the dragon-kin racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight and Low-Light Vision and the human racial ability of Versatility.

Fourth Circle: Glamour (1 Damage Point); Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Seventh Circle: +1 Social Defense
Eighth Circle: Karma on controlled spirits or creature Action Tests
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Karma on spell Effect Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense
Eleventh Circle: Otherworldly Control (2 Damage Points)

THE SERPENT RIVER

Ah, how the river sparkles! Liquid divinity, like the Passions come to rest in Barsaive.

• S'rella Jristol, T'skrang Troubadour •



Of all the Name-giver races, none is more closely associated with the Serpent River than the t'skrang. To the t'skrang, the river is life itself—a source of food, shelter, livelihood, even divine inspiration. The traditional t'skrang tale of the Four Gifts of Upandal explains the origins of the t'skrang mastery of the Serpent. This tale is told in t'skrang villages to this day, each word unchanged since the first telling.

In the days before the Theran Empire, before t'skrang riverboats and village towers had spread across the river, the t'skrang foundations lived on the banks of the Serpent and plied its waters in oar-driven galleys. In those days the elves were a great nation, and they vied with the t'skrang to be masters of the river waters.

It so happened that the Passion Jaspree favored one of the Elven Queen's attendants, a questor Named Elidar, with powers over elemental wood. Armed with these powers, Elidar crafted a new kind of ship, a vessel propelled by the wind and the energy of elemental wood. So swift were these new ships that they outpaced even the swiftest t'skrang ship. The elves armed their ships with archers and swordsmen, and expanded the realm of the Elven Court all along the river from Lake Vors to Lake Ban.

Now in those days, one shivalahala *ruled all the t'skrang—the Prophetess of Syrtis. The Prophetess had great wisdom, and the t'skrang of the Serpent River looked to her as the elves did their Queen. When the elven fleet besieged the Halls of Syrtis, countless brave t'skrang came to their honored leader's defense; but the elven fleet was strong and well supplied, and all too soon the defenders of Syrtis came near to surrendering from sheer exhaustion. The* shivalahala, *seeing their distress, drew upon the vast knowledge and power of generations of t'skrang, and beseeched the Passions to aid her people.*

In answer to her call, Upandal the Builder appeared to the shivalahala *as a huge four-armed t'skrang, clad in the apron of a blacksmith, carrying a hammer and a steel triangle in his right hands and bearing a cup and a flame in his left hands.*

"Welcome, O Passion, to the Halls of Syrtis, the Nightwatcher," said the shivalahala. *"From Lake Vors to Lake Ban, the elves in their sailing ships chase my people away from the river. Our ships lie sunk and abandoned on the riverbed. Our villages are empty and the people have lost hope. Jaspree has delivered a great boon to the elves, but a great curse upon t'skrang. We seek counsel and salvation, Upandal, you who laid the foundations of the world."*

Upandal looked out over the face of the land and saw that things were as the shivalahala *said. And the Passion said, "The balance of life on the river has come undone. I cannot undo the work of Jaspree, for hers is the power over life, and thus over the wood and cloth that makes the elves strong. But in my hand lies command over the other four elements. What will you have of me, Mother of the Riverfolk?"*

The shivalahala *thought long, then answered thus: 'The Halls of Syrtis are a great fortress against the enemy, but my people are many and these halls cannot hold them. If it can be, I would ask that you provide refuge for my people in citadels all along the river, that they may defend themselves against the elves."*

At this Upandal let fly his hammer, and the hammer ran the length of the river. And where it touched the surface of the waters, great towers of stone erupted from the riverbed.

And the shivalahala *thought again and said, "My people will rest safe under the great towers you have raised, Upandal. We shall make our homes on the riverbed of the Great Mother Shivoam. But our gills are not such that we can live under the River's water. We must have air to breathe."*

And so Upandal reached out with his steel triangle and cut half of the towers to the surface of the river. The force of the river's current broke against these towers, and air flowed through the towers.

Once more the shivalahala *thought, and said, 'The ships*

of the elves can still come against us, bringing war to our towers and blood to our homes. We must have fortifications to turn back their ships."

And so Upandal overturned the cup in his left hand and elemental water poured forth into the river. The water took solid form as reefs of spikes around the towers, sure to pierce the hull of any ship that passed too close. These were the refselenika.

Finally, the shivalahala *said, "All this that you have made is wise, Lord Upandal. But what good shall come of all you have wrought if the t'skrang are prisoners in the fortresses you have built for us? We must have a boat that can stand against the ships of Elidar, so that we can come and go along the river as we please."*

In reply, Upandal placed his remaining hand on the forehead of his questor, T'chaidos. The flame in the Passion's hand passed into the questor's mind. Filled to the limit of madness by the Builder's gift, T'chaidos constructed the first fire engine and the first riverboat. Armed with these new tools, the t'skrang soon raised a fleet and sailed against the ships of Elidar. And when the K'choss na Erawyrm, the War Between the Elves and the T'skrang, ended, the t'skrang became the undisputed masters of the Serpent River.

—From *The Four Gifts of Upandal: A T'skrang Tale*

The t'skrang know her as Shivoam, the River Dragon. To the dwarfs of Throal, she is Zhirazkhul the Encircler. The elves of the Blood Wood call her Shilarai, the Watersong. And the trolls of Barsaive know her as the Shining Path, for she becomes a glittering ribbon of light when seen from an airship. From the rushing waters of the Grand Cataracts to the impenetrable fog of the Mist Swamps, the Great Serpent River runs the length of Barsaive, connecting the far-flung settlements of the province. Since the dawn of history, Name-givers have plied her waters in fishing boats, merchant vessels and mighty warships. And today, the Serpent River still flows through the hearts and histories of Barsaive's peoples. To know the Serpent River is to know Barsaive.

A Brief Overview of the Serpent River

The following overview of the Serpent River briefly describes the river's geography, the *aropagoi* that dominate the various regions, present-day politics surrounding the river trade, and the workings of trade and travel along the river.

On the Serpent's Geography

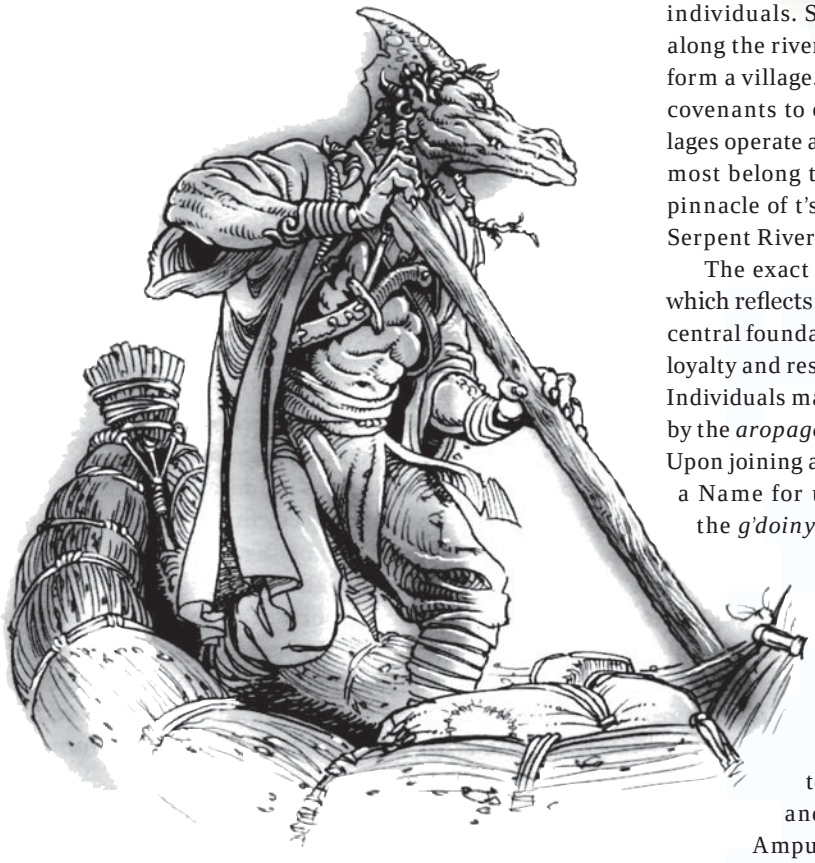
The long, winding Serpent River runs the entire breadth of Barsaive, from beyond the Scol Mountains in the north to the Mist Swamps in the south. Countless tributaries feed the Serpent along its course, forming a network of watery highways that travelers and traders have used for thousands of years. The Serpent also provides fresh water to thousands of Barsaivians, and its banks contain some of the richest farmland in the province.

The source of the river lies in the uncharted mountain ranges to the northwest of Barsaive beyond the Grand Cataracts, a series of waterfalls that tower more than one hundred feet in the air. The river becomes un-navigable beyond the Cataracts, and so the exact source of the Serpent remains unknown.

A few hundred miles south of the Grand Cataracts, the **North Reach** of the river runs south past Iopos, home of the Denairastas clan, then winds eastward in the shadow of the Scol Mountains, the domain of isolated troll moots. From there, the river continues east to Lake Vors, site of the Citadel of House Ishkarat, the fierce t'skrang *aropagoi* that dominates the Serpent's North Reach. The harsh, untamed lands along the North Reach contain little more than isolated settlements of Name-givers.

East of Lake Vors the Serpent is joined by the River Mothingale, which marks the beginning of the Serpent's **Mid Reach**. The Mid Reach flows east through the foothills of the Scytha and Caucavic Mountains, then turns south before it reaches the Lalai Gorge, site of the Cliff City of House Syrtis. As the river flows south, the rugged foothills give way to lush vineyards and increasing numbers of farming settlements. The Mid Reach passes through the dwarf settlement of Tansiarda and the renowned boatyards





of Denlikiyan before reaching the northern shores of Lake Ban.

Lake Ban marks the confluence of the Serpent and the Coil River, which flows from the Throal Mountains down to Urupa, the powerful trading city on the shores of the Aras Sea. The lake is best known as the site of the Floating City of House V'strimon, a powerful t'skrang *aropagoi*.

From Lake Ban, the **South Reach** of the river flows west to Lake Pyros, located along the edge of the Servos Jungle. Pyros is the smallest of the Serpent Lakes, but its fertile shores continue to attract numerous Name-givers in spite of the nearby jungle's hazards. West of Lake Pyros, the Serpent is joined by the Byrose River, which runs south to the wealthy trading city of Travar. The Serpent then continues west and is joined by the Servos and Tylon rivers before it empties into the Mist Swamps.

For more information on the Serpent River's geography, including notable settlements and personalities, refer to **A Tour of the Serpent** on p. 217.

Of Trade and Politics

Throughout the history of the Serpent River, trade and politics have been intimately intertwined. The t'skrang communities of the Serpent have dominated both since time immemorial, and this dominance—personified by the *aropagoi*, the t'skrang great trading houses—largely determines the conditions traders and travelers on the Serpent must face.

The fundamental social, economic and political unit of Serpent River t'skrang society is the *niall*, or foundation. Each *niall* is an extended family that may include up to 200 individuals. Some *nialls* maintain their own settlements along the river, but most often two or more join together to form a village. Each village forms its own crew and trading covenants to operate riverboats. While many t'skrang villages operate as independent economic and political entities, most belong to one of the *aropagoi*, which represent the pinnacle of t'skrang economic and political power on the Serpent River.

The exact translation of *aropagoi* is "honored center," which reflects the key function of an *aropagoi*: to serve as a central foundation based not on family relationships, but on loyalty and respect gained within the *aropagoi* organization. Individuals may join an *aropagoi* by being elected or chosen by the *aropagoi's* members, who are known as *aropagoinya*. Upon joining an *aropagoi*, a new member adopts a *g'doinya*, a Name for use within the central foundation. During the *g'doinya* ritual, the initiate also receives a token of identification unique to the *aropagoi*. As a member of the *aropagoi*, the individual receives several privileges, including the opportunity to serve as an officer on one of the *aropagoi's* warships. Because t'skrang consider *aropagoi* membership so important, most regard possession of an *aropagoi* token under false pretenses as a criminal act, and punish offenders by cutting their tails off. Amputation of an arm or leg is the typical punishment for non-t'skrang offenders.

Every *aropagoi* is led by a *shivalahala*, who serves as political, social, and spiritual leader. *Shivalahalas* preserve the ancestral memories of their predecessors and many are said to possess supernatural powers. Because of their importance to their *aropagoi*, *shivalahalas* seldom venture forth from their home cities. Most *shivalahalas* maintain councils whose members aid them in setting and implementing trade and political policies, as well as governing the *aropagoi*. Generally, council members are selected from the various villages and foundations that belong to each *aropagoi*.

Before the Theran War, riverboats from more than a dozen *aropagoi* plied the waters of the Serpent River. These *aropagoi* grew over the course of centuries, as the river t'skrangs' never-ending quest for supremacy over trading rivals led them to form ever larger groups. Despite their high level of political and economic development, the t'skrang of the Serpent have never exhibited a sense of national identity like that displayed by Barsaive's dwarfs and elves, largely because of the wide dispersion of t'skrang settlements along the Serpent and the intense, ongoing economic competition between the *aropagoi*.

Currently, six t'skrang *aropagoi* dominate trade on the Serpent: **House K'tenshin**, **House V'strimon**, **House Syrtis**, **House Ishkarat**, **House Henghyoke,** and **House T'kambras**. Each *aropagoi*, with the exception of House Henghyoke, controls a section of the river system, but riverboats from all the *aropagoi* travel the length of the Serpent. Although many t'skrang villages and settlements along the river are not officially affiliated with any *aropagoi*, all settlements operate under the system of trade the *aropagoi* make possible.

House Ishkarat



House Ishkarat, the House of the Wheel, dominates the North Reach of the Serpent River. The *aropagoi* has adopted a crimson wheel set on a field of white as its symbol. A ritual dagger of black obsidian serves as the *aropagoi's g'doinya*. The *aropagoi's* base, an island fortress located in the western end of Lake Vors, is known as the Citadel of Ishkarat. The *aropagoi's* thirst for conquest has left it with few allies, other than the Denairastas clan of Iopos. Little is known of the *aropagoi's shivalahala*.

For more information on House Ishkarat, see **House Ishkarat**, p. 175 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

House Syrtis



House Syrtis, the House of the Dragon Moon, has ruled the Serpent's Mid Reach for centuries. The *aropagoi's* symbol is a silver dragon on a blue field, and a silver ring with a dragon cameo set in blue crystal serves as its *g'doinya*. The heart of the *aropagoi* is the Cliff City, which lies in the Lalai Gorge. The Syrtis *aropagoi's* only true ally is House V'strimon, but in recent years House Syrtis has joined forces with the elves of the Blood Wood to check the expansion of House Ishkarat. The House of the Dragon Moon is led by the Shivalahala Syrtis, a Wizard also known as "the Prophetess" for her extraordinary prophetic gifts.

For more information on House Syrtis, see **House Syrtis**, p. 179 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

House V'strimon



House V'strimon, the House of Reeds, controls the Coil River, which runs from the Throal Mountains to the Aras Sea and intersects the Serpent at Lake Ban. The *aropagoi* also controls a small portion of the Serpent on either side of the lake. A sheaf of green reeds on a blue field serves as the symbol of the house. As their *g'doinya*, the *aropagoinya* of House V'strimon wear bracelets woven with reeds native to Lake Ban. The reeds remain forever green and supple around the bearer's right wrist.

The Floating City, located in the center of Lake Ban, serves as the *aropagoi's* central settlement. House V'strimon is closely allied with Throal, the city of Urupa, and House Syrtis. The Shivalahala V'strimon, an Elementalist of monumental talent and a questor of Jaspree, leads the *aropagoi*. Recent events have led to open warfare with House K'tenshin.

For more information on House V'strimon, see **House V'strimon**, p. 192 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

House K'tenshin



House K'tenshin, the House of Nine Diamonds, controls the South Reach of the river. The *aropagoi's* symbol is nine red diamonds set on a gold field. The *g'doinya* of the *aropagoi* is an earring of ruby and gold, which K'tenshin *aropagoinya* wear in the skin folds under their left ear slits.

The *aropagoi's* base is a magnificent river village located on the Serpent between the Byrose and the Servos rivers. The village features 16 towers, arranged to form a pattern of nine diamonds.

House K'tenshin is an ally of the Theran Empire. Since the arrival of the Theran behemoth, the K'tenshin seized control of the river from the Mist Swamps to Lake Ban. The *aropagoi* is best known for its war college, which is headed by the Shivalahala K'tenshin, a respected Warrior adept.

For more information on House K'tenshin, see **House K'tenshin**, p. 205 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

House T'kambras



The recently revived House T'kambras, the House of Swift Waters, vies with House K'tenshin for control of trade on the Tylon River. The *aropagoi's* symbol is a white salmon leaping over blue-green river rapids. The *g'doinya* of the *aropagoi* is unknown.

This *aropagoi's* influence is strongest along the northern Tylon, but the precise location of House T'kambras' central settlement remains unknown. The house is allied with House V'strimon and has no known *shivalahala*, but its most prominent member is the riverboat captain known as Jedaiyen Westhrall.

For more information on House T'kambras, see **House T'kambras**, p. 212 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

House Henghyoke



House Henghyoke, the House of the Otter, is actually a pirate confederation whose riverboats raid the entire length of the Serpent. A brown river otter carrying a silver egg in its mouth serves as the *aropagoi's* symbol. As a *g'doinya*, each Henghyokian *aropagoinya* wears a platinum torc around his neck. The location of House Henghyoke's base remains unknown, and the *aropagoi* has no known allies. The Shivalahala Henghyoke is reputedly a powerful Illusionist, but little else is known of her.

For more information on House Henghyoke, see **House Henghyoke**, p. 215 of **The T'skrang Aropagoi**.

Of the Serpent's Many Goods

The Serpent River and its tributaries are lifelines of trade throughout Barsaive. Most riverboats travel the Serpent loaded to the limit with trade goods: preserved fish and fine baskets from t'skrang trade covenants; spices, toys, and ceramics from riverside villages; beer and metal from the dwarf kingdom of Throal; firewood and furniture, wine, and vinlo from the towns of the Mid Reach; silk from the far east across the Aras Sea; and much more. All the best that the lands near the Serpent have to offer journeys from market to market on the river. In the days just after the end of the Scourge, few save the t'skrang lived near the river's edge because most of Barsaive's people had built their kaers further inland. The promise of trade, however, has drawn people of every race back to the river to build new towns and settlements.

The *V'strimon Protocols*, drawn up by House V'strimon at the start of the post-Scourge trading boom, define the standard unit of cargo freight as the *duari*. The original *duari* was a wooden cask, four feet tall and three feet in diameter, that could contain approximately 300 pounds of rice. The *Protocols* specify the exact size, shape, and composition of the cask, and prescribe fines and penalties for traders who deceive their buyers with fake *duari*. Over time, however, the definition of the *duari* has expanded to include earthenware urns, baskets, and even bundles and racks of cargo. Just as the legal code of Throal has become the foundation for much of Barsaive's evolving civic structure, so the *Protocols* have rapidly taken over Barsaive's market places. The *duari* has become a standard unit of cargo throughout the province, and at every market along the river one can see riverboat crews rolling *duari* up and down the gangplanks of their ships.

Certain kinds of freight are too valuable to be sold in measures as large as *duari*: pure elemental substances, spices, dyes, silk, inks, and paper. These items are typically sold by the ounce, or by a unit of weight known as the *shimsa duari*. The *V'strimon Protocols* precisely define the weight of a standard *shimsa*, and copies of both the *duari* and *shimsa duari* standards can be found in every major market place in Barsaive.

On the Balance of Power

Shortly after the Theran War ended, the dwarfs of Throal brought the three houses of the lower river—Houses K'tenshin, V'strimon, and Syrtis—together for trade negotiations. Apparently, Throal's trade shipments along the Serpent were being severely delayed, rerouted, and even lost as a result of the t'skrang practice of *bakshevas*, the ancient tradition of collecting tolls and booty. *Bakshevas* allowed the captain of a t'skrang riverboat to extort any "toll" he could get from any vessel encountered on the river.

The historical meeting produced the Free Trade Compact, an agreement that led directly to the present-day balance of power on the river and set the spheres of influence that the *aropagoi* continue to command. In the compact, the K'tenshin, V'strimon, and Syrtis *aropagoi* agreed to suspend the practice of *bakshevas* and provide all vessels toll-free access to ports within their territories, regardless of a vessel's affiliation. In exchange, each *aropagoi* retained the right to limit access to any tributaries entering the Serpent River within its territory.

House K'tenshin, which had allied itself with Thera during the war, had to pay token reparations to Throal and the other *aropagoi* under the terms of the compact. (To this day, K'tenshin *aropagoinya* still refer to the settlement as "payment for the lease of access to northern and southern ports.") The K'tenshin *aropagoi* also agreed to relinquish control of the Byrose River, thus opening the city of Travar to free trade. In return, the compact ended the isolation of House K'tenshin and freed its crew covenants to trade in the ports of Throal and its allies. House V'strimon retained control of the Coil River and the lucrative trade with Urupa, and gained access to the elemental fire trade from the Death's Sea. And by largely eliminating the practice of *bakshevas* on the lower river, the compact enabled House Syrtis to devote most of its war vessels to checking the rapid expansion of House Ishkarat.

In broader terms, the compact made travel on the lower and middle Serpent River relatively safe for the first time in history and opened up trade on the river. The development of open trade forced the *aropagoi* to compete for trade and transport contracts with one another, as well as with countless newly independent river villages that had formerly labored under the excessive tributes exacted by the powerful *aropagoi*. Soon the riverboats of the *aropagoi* and independent villages began to compete for business by lowering their transport and ferry rates. These dropping rates, along with the opening of riverbank roads the *aropagoi* had once actively sabotaged, led to the founding of new trading towns along much of the Serpent.

Although many have benefited from the resulting peace and prosperity, no organized power has benefited as much from the Free Trade Compact as the Kingdom of Throal. By the end of the Theran War, Throal's merchants had become almost entirely dependent on House V'strimon, which controlled all the river ports near the dwarf kingdom. By opening trade on the river, Throal effectively broke the virtual V'strimonian monopoly of Throalic river trade. By forcing the *aropagoi* to compete in relatively free markets, the dwarfs lessened each *aropagoi's* influence along the river. At the same time, Throal won the gratitude of all river residents who had chafed under the yoke of *aropagoian bakshevas*, gained countless new trading partners, and provided itself with an unprecedented opportunity to expand its own economic and political power along the Serpent.

So far, Throal's leaders have made the most of that opportunity. By carefully balancing Throal's trade and transport contracts between the three main *aropagoi* and the unaligned villages, the dwarf leaders have effectively blocked the *aropagoi* from monopolizing the transport market and dictating rates to Throal. Ideally, the dwarfs would like to further their economic fortunes by creating their own fleet of riverboats and transporting their own goods. To do that, however, they need elemental fire engines—and protecting the secret of the fire engine from outsiders is one of the few goals on which all t'skrang, regardless of their political affiliations, have traditionally

agreed. Despite this obstacle, the dwarfs of Throal are still attempting to learn the secret of these engines. According to one rumor, an organization of dwarf engineers persuaded a small t'skrang foundation on the Coil River to provide them with a complete fire engine, which the dwarfs apparently intended to disassemble in the hope of learning its secrets. And almost every year some group of dwarfs attempts to raise a sunken t'skrang riverboat or salvage a derelict vessel with the intention of repairing and refitting it. At present, however, the dwarfs have not succeeded in their attempts to obtain their own fire engines.

On the Return of the Therans

House K'tenshin's alliance with the Therans returned the House of the Nine Diamonds to its former position of power among the t'skrang *aropagoi* when the Therans arrived. Almost immediately after the behemoth arrived, Theran troops took up residence in the K'tenshin stronghold's Carinci Tower (see p. 206) and began aiding the *aropagoi* in actions against its enemies.

First, House K'tenshin seized control of the South Reach of the Serpent River with the aid of its Theran allies. The K'tenshin then declared that all vessels passing through the South Reach out of Lake Ban must pay a toll to the House of the Nine Diamonds. Contingents of Theran troops were posted aboard several K'tenshin riverboats to help House K'tenshin collect the new toll—and to ensure that the Therans received their cut. Legitimate taxes and additional bribes began to produce a tidy profit for both House K'tenshin and the Therans.

Shortly after the capture of the South Serpent, House K'tenshin also moved to recapture the "rebel towns" along the shores of Lake Pyros. The Theran presence prevents House V'strimon from blocking this offensive, and House K'tenshin warriors easily seized control of the lake settlements. Some of the townspeople fought back, but most surrendered. Others fled into the Servos Jungle, where they began a resistance movement aimed at ousting the K'tenshin occupiers. Many of those who fled were adepts, who helped their fellow refugees survive the jungle's harsh conditions.

Theran and K'tenshin troops also began to conduct joint slaving raids into the Servos Jungle, using the captured slaves to clear additional plantations along the jungle's many rivers or shipping them upriver to Triumph for eventual delivery to Vivane or elsewhere in the Empire. The human and t'skrang jungle tribes attempted to fight back, but the Therans successfully continued the K'tenshin practice of turning the jungle tribes against one another by offering protection to any who cooperated in the capture of other tribes. According to rumors, some tribes took refuge in the jungle's ancient subterranean caves and tunnels, where they joined anti-Theran rebels and refugees from the towns along Lake Pyros.

Emboldened by the power of its Theran allies and the lack of response from Throal, House K'tenshin sent ships down the Coil River to the city of Urupa in defiance of the Free Trade Compact. Initially, House V'strimon's warships sent the K'tenshin vessels fleeing back to the safe waters of the South Serpent River. The K'tenshin vessels returned soon afterward, escorted by a pair of Theran vedettes and occasionally one of the kilas stationed at the fortress city of Triumph. The Theran escorts dissuaded the V'strimon ships from confronting House K'tenshin's traders and persuaded the Urupan trading companies to reluctantly trade with the K'tenshin ships. These excursions down the Coil River continue, but are few and far between, as most of House K'tenshin's ships are needed to consolidate the *aropagoi*'s control of the South Serpent and Lake Pyros.

With its position in the South Reach secured by the presence of the behemoth, House K'tenshin turned its attention to other matters, such as dealing with House Henghyoke's raiders and the re-emergent House T'kambras. The raiders and pirates of House Henghyoke had long been a scourge to K'tenshin trade in the South Serpent, and General Nikar responded to Shivalahala K'tenshin's request for Theran aid by posting soldiers from the Eighth Legion aboard K'tenshin ships carrying shipments of particular importance to the Therans. The presence of these troops discouraged raids somewhat, but Henghyoke harassment continues to this day. Shivalahala K'tenshin pins her hopes on the Henghyoke eventually angering the Therans enough to provoke a concerted Theran effort to destroy them.

The Theran presence had a much greater impact on House K'tenshin's efforts to destroy House T'kambras, however. Theran-K'tenshin control of the outlets to the South Reach made smuggling supplies and weapons to the rebel t'skrang *aropagoi* increasingly difficult for House V'strimon. Efforts to supply House T'kambras via overland routes proved extremely difficult, but House V'strimon—aided by the obsidiman Omasu and the so-called Liferock Rebellion—recruited adepts for such missions. Despite these efforts, the Theran-K'tenshin blockade forced House T'kambras to rely heavily on Kratas and other western settlements for aid and supplies. Kratas' mayor, Garlthik One-Eye, proved willing to aid the rebel house because he didn't want to see the K'tenshin establish a stranglehold on the South Serpent and so be in a position to dictate terms to him through complete control of access to the Tylon River. The Scavians also aided the anti-K'tenshin cause by supplying elemental fire to the T'kambras riverboats, prompting House K'tenshin to target Scavian settlements for slaving raids in an effort to intimidate them. This effort, however, failed completely.

Theran airship patrols also intercept and inspect all foreign airships passing within sight of the Triumph fortress—including merchant ships. In fact, Theran air crews commonly appropriate any cargo they desire from passing vessels, under a Theran law that authorizes military personnel to requisition any civilian property "deemed necessary for the defense of the Theran Empire." This practice wreaks havoc with Travar's burgeoning air-shipping industry and enables House K'tenshin to profit handsomely from its trade monopoly along the Byrose River.

Like Throal, the other *aropagoi* of the Serpent River respond with extreme caution; the riverboats of the t'skrang are simply no match for the Therans' airships. Whenever possible, the *aropagoi* attempt to conduct trade in their normal fashion. However, the imposition of the K'tenshin-Theran toll on the South Reach has shifted the balance of trade, prompting House V'strimon and House Syrtis to redirect their mercantile efforts to other regions of the river.

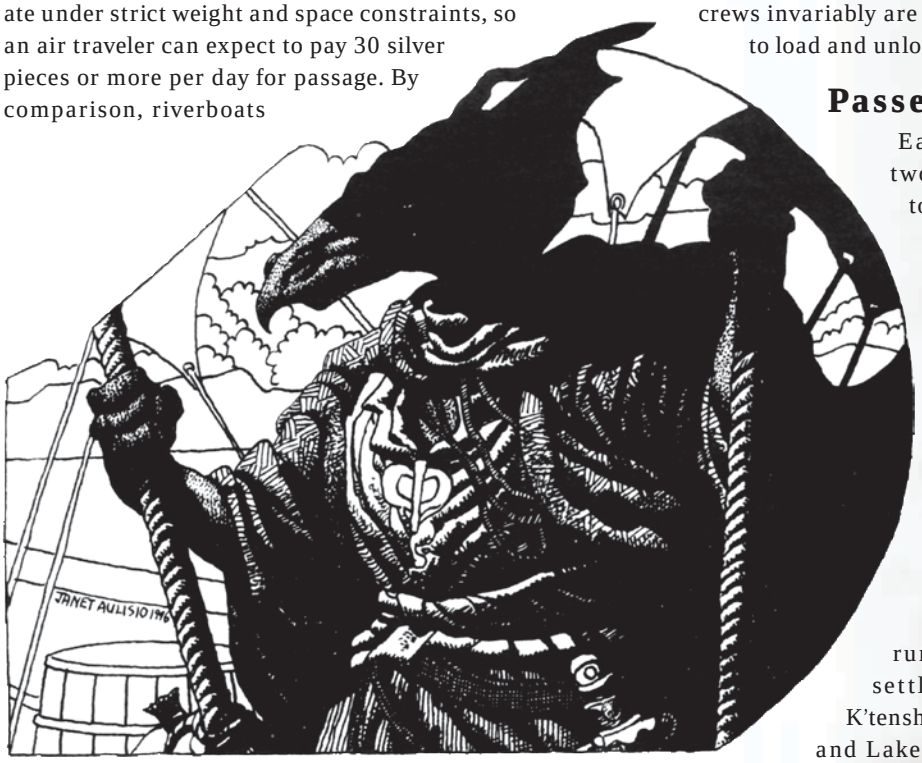
Trading vessels belonging to all the *aropagoi* nonetheless continue to ply the waters of the southern Serpent because some goods are not available anywhere else. The Therans' presence also makes smuggling goods and supplies to House T'kambras more difficult, though V'strimon ships still make occasional runs to the renegade t'skrang when possible.

For unknown reasons, sightings of Henghyoke raiders beyond the South Serpent dropped after the arrival of the Therans, the mysterious pirate t'skrang seem content to limit their raids to K'tenshin targets, though they mounted a few scattered assaults on T'kambrian and Scavian vessels as well. Though this phenomenon seems to suggest that House Henghyoke may be taking an anti-Theran stance, the true loyalties of the pirates remain unknown.

Travel along the Serpent River

From Lake Vors to the Mist Swamps, the Serpent River stretches approximately 2,000 miles. A man can walk that distance in 80 days, but a riverboat can traverse it in 20—and do so much more safely as well. The walker must labor under the weight of his own provisions, all the while avoiding bandits, wild animals, foul weather, suspicious villagers, and the occasional Horror to reach his destination. The riverboat sailor, on the other hand, need only keep the fire engines hot, his cargo holds supplied, and his riverboat running true down the center of the river to reach his goal.

For these reasons, river travel is the preferred method for traveling long distances in Barsaive. By traveling for 16 hours per day at an average speed of six to seven miles per hour, a riverboat can cover nearly 100 miles in a day. Airships may be faster, but airships are hard to find outside the largest Barsaivian cities. Furthermore, airships operate under strict weight and space constraints, so an air traveler can expect to pay 30 silver pieces or more per day for passage. By comparison, riverboats can be found throughout Barsaive, readily accept passengers, and a traveler can book passage on one for as few as 5 silver pieces per day. And that rate usually includes a bed and two daily meals. For the same rate, a traveler can transport his mount and feed it from the ship's stores. Moreover, riverboat crews are always looking for an extra pair of hands, so an enterprising traveler who is not afraid of a little hard labor can usually work off part or even all of his passage fees.



See the **Adventuring** chapter, starting on p. 113 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**, for more information on river travel and the different costs involved.

Types of Passage

Generally, a traveler can choose from four types of riverboat service along the Serpent and her tributaries: freighter passage, passenger service, warship passage, and ferry service. Although prices and rate arrangements may vary in different parts of the river, the following descriptions list common fares and the amenities they buy.

Freighter Passage

The trading vessels that run the river usually set aside ten to fifteen berths for passengers, with the understanding that passengers are the best kind of cargo. After all, one never needs to worry about how to sell them to achieve a profit. The so-called standard daily rate of 5 silver pieces is anything but standard, however, and every riverboat captain conducts fare negotiations in his own way. Some even renegotiate rates each day.

Whatever the price they pay, travelers booking passage on a freighter can expect to bunk four to a cabin and take their meals alongside the crew in the ship's galley. Freighters also provide budget-minded travelers with frequent opportunities to work in exchange for passage, because freighter crews invariably are short-handed when it comes time to load and unload cargo.

Passenger Lines

Each *aropagoi* maintains one or two riverboats devoted exclusively to transporting passengers. These riverboats make scheduled stops along the river and offer a variety of comforts to their customers. Accommodations depend on the rate a passenger is willing to pay. Five silver pieces per day buys a room with three other people and two square meals. For 25 silver pieces per day, the traveler can expect all the amenities of a luxury inn, including a private bath and gourmet meals.

The scheduled passenger routes run between large cities or densely settled areas. For example, House K'tenshin operates a route between Travar and Lake Ban. House V'strimon operates

two passenger vessels that ply the length of the Coil River between the Kingdom of Throal and Urupa, and another two that take passengers from the Floating City to the Cliff City in the Lalai Gorge.

Although passenger vessels provide greater comfort and convenience than freighters, passengers are rarely allowed to work for their passage on these boats.

Warship Passage

Occasionally, *aropagoi* warships take on passengers—but only adepts who can make a difference in a fight. All warship passengers are expected to be experienced warriors, and to keep their weapons ready at all times. Under the most typical rate arrangement, a passenger must pay a daily fee of 5 silver pieces for passage, but all of his money is refunded if the ship sees battle.

Adepts must have a Legendary Status of Level 1 or more (see p. 430 of the **Player's Compendium**), or have extensive riverboat experience before a warship captain will consider taking them on as passengers.

Ferry Service

Ferry boats specialize in crossing the Serpent River rather than traveling its length. Most of the Serpent's ferries are operated by independent crew covenants, which offer exclusive service to and from specific locations. For whatever reason, the *aropagoi* tend to regard ferry services as unattractive enterprises, although House V'strimon operates an extensive ferry system on Lake Ban.

In addition to the regular ferry providers, almost any riverboat crew can be persuaded to transport a passenger across the river if the price is right. Typically, fares to cross the river range from 10 to 20 copper pieces, depending on the weather, the time, and the demand for service.

Special Rates

Merchant caravans often receive special discount rates on riverboat travel, regardless of the type of service. Normally, merchants with one or two mules are charged as passengers with mounts, but may receive hourly or half-day rates if they have only a short distance to travel. Larger caravans usually receive cargo rates for both their freight and the people in the caravan (3 silver pieces per day).

Dwarf barges often hire riverboats to tow them upstream for 20 to 30 silver pieces per day, depending on whether they are carrying a full or partial load.

Showboats

Among the most welcome sights along the Serpent River are the showboats, the floating shows and carnivals that many t'skrang count the most profitable of the river trades. The first showboats appeared shortly after the Theran annexation of Barsaive, in response to the Theran colonists' craving for culture and entertainment in a province that many of them regarded as a barbarian backwater. The t'skrang, never ones to ignore a chance to make a copper, took immediate advantage of this unique opportunity.

As the t'skrang tell it, the crew of a Syrtis riverboat happened to dock one evening at a Theran outpost. To pass the hours between the evening meal and sleep, the crew began playing and singing their favorite old songs. Within an hour, half the town had gathered by the dock to listen. The captain, seeing his impromptu audience as ready silver and gold, set up a booth near the boat the next night and charged admission. The t'skrang say this captain never sold another *duari* of anything in his life, yet retired a rich man.

About 40 showboats ply the river between Lake Vors and the Mist Swamps, some of them Troubadour covenants and some traveling carnivals. The Troubadour covenants are the most common, each specializing in varied entertainments. Some offer music, some perform plays and tell stories, and still others offer jugglers, magicians, dancers, and comedians performing together in a single show. Some troupes leave their boats to set up chairs and tents on the shore. Others have made their riverboats into huge, covered halls suitable for plays or concerts. Many of the troupes employ Illusionists to create dazzling displays of light and sound. Though not all crewmen aboard such a ship are Troubadours, every one of them contributes something to the show. Most Troubadour covenants are racially diverse, with elves, humans, and dwarfs working side by side with t'skrang for a fair share of the ship's profits.

The most famous Troubadour showboat belongs not to a t'skrang covenant, but to the company of dwarf actors known as the Royal Theater of Throal. Founded by King Varulus I during the Scourge, the Royal Theater performs the brilliant verse dramas of the Elven Court and the intricate, sophisticated plays penned by the Theran Empire's greatest dramatists, as well as the occasional morality play and tale of revenge that are the staples of dwarf drama. King Varulus wished to keep his people from cultural stagnation and preserve vital artistic traditions should the rest of the world fail to survive the Scourge; since the end of that dark time, the Royal Theater has widened its audience considerably beyond Throal's underground cities. Shortly after the end of the Theran War, troupe director Elbonius Tartakull struck a deal with the t'skrang of Myrenal village, an independent crew covenant in the Mid Reach of the Serpent River. The dwarfs helped to rebuild the covenant's riverboat, the *Quirinalia*, as an enclosed 700-seat theater. In exchange for that labor and a share of the profits, the Myrenal covenant gave the Royal Theater of Throal exclusive use of the riverboat for a three-month tour each year, with stops all along the Coil and Serpent Rivers. Rumors claim that the Eye of Throal, the dwarf kingdom's intelligence service, has placed several members in the Royal Theater company.

The carnival showboats are modeled after the overland traveling carnivals long beloved in song and story. In addition to food and games of skill and chance, showboat carnivals offer spectacular shows on a scale that land-bound caravans cannot hope to match. Unlike Troubadour covenants, the typical traveling carnival is too big to perform on shipboard; it must disembark and set up its tents ashore. Most carnivals turn this necessity into a gaudy, noisy parade designed to attract the townsfolk; crew members wear colorful costumes, caged wild animals and strange creatures ride in open view of spectators, and musicians beat drums and blow horns in an attempt to pique the interest of anyone who might be within earshot. Upon arriving at the chosen



site, the carnival unfolds its tents and opens its wagons for business. Once the carnival opens its gates, spectators may wander around the tents and wagons, buying food, playing games of all kinds, and seeing various marvels for the price of a copper or two.

Rumors abound along the Serpent that Theran spies sometimes travel with carnival boats, using their many stops at riverside towns and cities to keep the Empire's eye on Barsaive. According to other rumors, alleged spies and soldiers of Iopos known as the Holders of Trust lurk within the traveling carnivals and report all that they see to their Denairastan masters. Thus far, no proof exists of either claim.

Bakshevas

River travelers and merchants may also incur additional expenses in the form of *bakshevas*. Although the Free Trade Compact effectively ended the practice on much of the Serpent River, a traveler may still pay *bakshevas* if he encounters a rogue t'skrang crew or enters a section of the river controlled by an *aropagoi* or village that does not honor the compact.

The literal translation of the t'skrang word *bakshevas* is "taking the tenth part." The word is as old as the Serpent is long, and it refers to the toll system still enforced on many isolated stretches of the river, particularly along the tributaries. In the old days, when a riverboat submit-

ted to a pirate vessel, the pirate captain would board and demand a tenth of the ship's cargo in return for the lives of the ship's crew. On receiving his payment, the pirate would then pledge free passage along the river to his victim for a year and a day.

As time went on and pirates gave way to crew covenants and foundations, the ritual of *bakshevas* changed. Trying to ride the Serpent from Lalai Gorge to Lake Ban, handing a tenth part of one's cargo to every pirate that happened along, simply didn't make for good business. And as the volume of trade picked up, the number of possible targets from whom a pirate could extract a toll made it impractical to take a tenth part of everyone's cargo. No riverboat could carry that much loot! Furthermore, killing an entire riverboat crew became no small task as riverboat designs improved, fire cannons became more affordable, and boatmen became increasingly formidable foes.

As a result, privateers began taking only the most compact and valuable portions of the cargoes they seized. Gifts of gold, silver, and gems replaced jars and barrels full of goods. Rather than threatening an opposing crew with death, the t'skrang borrowed a page from the trollmoots and forced defeated crews into indentured servitude, typically for a year and a day. With the advent of the *aropagoi*, these captured ships would often be outfitted and supplied with *aropagoi* cargo. When the crew had performed the services required to lift the burden of *bakshevas*, the *aropagoi* would give the crew a tenth part of the profits they had earned for the *aropagoi* and send them back home to their foundations. Soon *bakshevas* became a ritual of honor, and participants came to rely on little more than blood magic and the captain's good word to seal their deals.

With the establishment of the Free Trade Compact, the practice of *bakshevas* has largely subsided along the Serpent. Typically, the major *aropagoi* only invoke *bakshevas* along the major tributaries that fall within their spheres of influence. On isolated sections of the river, however—particularly in the Servos Jungle, the Caucavic Mountains, and the rivers that feed into the Aras Sea—many unaligned crew covenants protect profits in their waters using the old ways. Usually, these privateers draw up to passing vessels in friendly fashion and ask for a toll using the traditional phrase, *Shivoam v'nokamai daureis*, which translates as "the spirit of the river requests a gift." A round of haggling over the toll ensues, with a typical toll ranging between 50 and 200 silver pieces. If a toll cannot be agreed on or the target simply refuses to pay, the privateer draws back a respectable distance and both vessels prepare for battle.

Typically, both captains employ tactics designed to preserve their riverboats and crews. The gunners aim the fire cannons to frighten, rather than kill their opponents.

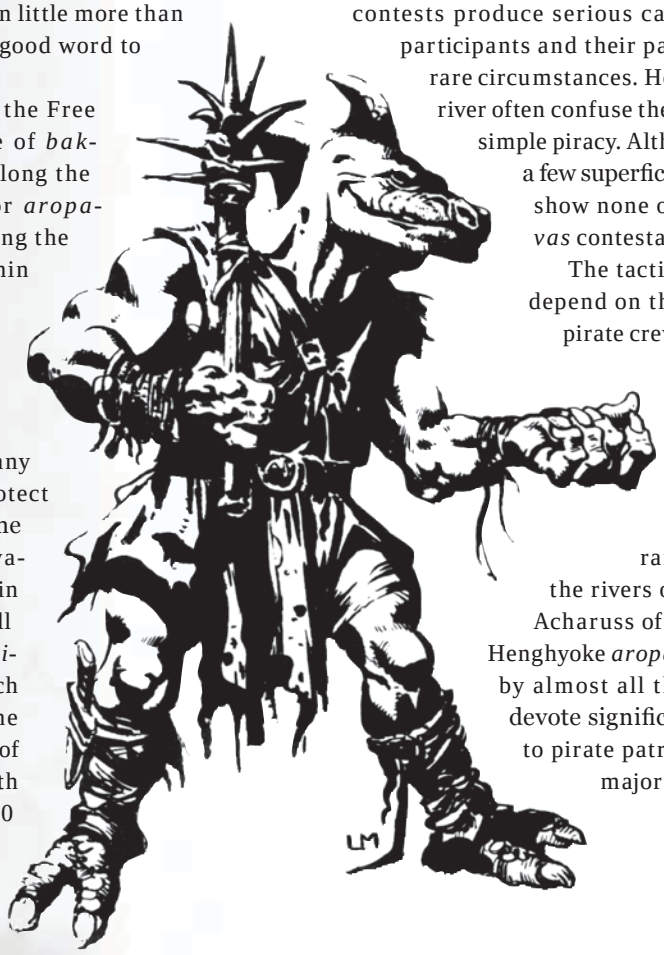
Crew members who are wounded in the melee lay down their weapons and refrain from combat, and in return their opponents pass over them during boarding actions. Whenever one side begins to gain the upper hand, it offers its opponent numerous opportunities to surrender, long before either side takes considerable damage. And almost all t'skrang crews consider harming passengers, or using them as shields or obstacles, as the greatest dishonor.

Once one side or the other raises the white flag, the victor sets a price for his opponent's freedom. Traditionally, the price is double the original toll, regardless of the actual damage inflicted by the battle. If the defeated boat cannot or will not produce this fee, its captor may either take the loser's cargo or demand a service from the losing vessel and its crew. The service demanded may be returning whence the ship came, transporting goods from one port to another, attacking another ship on the river, or even raiding an abandoned kaer or ruin. Such services may be sealed with blood magic by the two captains or simply with the defeated captain's word of honor.

Piracy

Although the riverboat crews of rival *aropagoi* may fight quite fiercely during contests of *bakshevas*, the long-held traditions of that practice virtually guarantee that such contests produce serious casualties or damage to the participants and their passengers only in extremely rare circumstances. However, travelers new to the river often confuse the practice of *bakshevas* with simple piracy. Although both practices exhibit a few superficial similarities, pirate crews show none of the restraint of a *bakshevas* contestant.

The tactics of pirate crews typically depend on the element of surprise, and pirate crews rarely grant their targets any quarter. As a result, pirate attacks often result in the deaths of crewmen and passengers and the destruction of riverboats. Indeed, piracy now ranks as the worst hazard on the rivers of Barsaive. Pirates such as Acharuss of Scol and the raiders of the Henghyoke *aropagoi* are considered outlaws by almost all the major *aropagoi*, which devote significant numbers of riverboats to pirate patrols on the Serpent and her major tributaries.



The T'skrang Aropagoi

It has been said a house divided will surely fall, though after examination of the political system of the t'skrang, I begin to doubt the veracity of that statement.

• Karon Foll, Historian of Throal •



Currently, six t'skrang *aropagoi* dominate trade on the Serpent: **House Ishkarat**, **House Syrtis**, **House V'strimon**, **House K'tenshin**, **House T'kambras,** and **House Henghyoke**. Each *aropagoi*, with the exception of House Henghyoke, controls a section of the river system, but riverboats from all the *aropagoi* travel the length of the Serpent. Although many t'skrang villages and settlements along the river are not officially affiliated with any *aropagoi*, all settlements operate under the system of trade the *aropagoi* make possible.



House Ishkarat

The origins of House Ishkarat, the House of the Wheel, are shrouded in mystery. Most scholars believe the *aropagoi* was founded by Serpent River villages in the far northwest corner of Barsaive, but even today the river villages of that area are spread so thin that any political union among them is difficult to maintain. Some scholars at the Library of Throal, however, believe the origins of the Ishkaratan *aropagoi* are related to an ancient North Reach river village called Elekso, whose crew covenants carried obsidian daggers that resembled those wielded by modern Ishkaratan crews. The exact location of Elekso remains unknown, and the evidence of an Elekso/Ishkaratan connection remains far from conclusive.

The first recorded sightings of Ishkaratan vessels date back to the years shortly after the end of the Scourge, when the first riverboats to explore the North Reach encountered Ishkaratan warships near the intersection of the Scol and Serpent Rivers. Those Ishkaratan crews fired on the explorers and shunned all contact with outsiders. Less than 20 years later, another wave of explorers encountered Ishkaratan vessels at the eastern end of Glenwood Deep and received a similar reception.

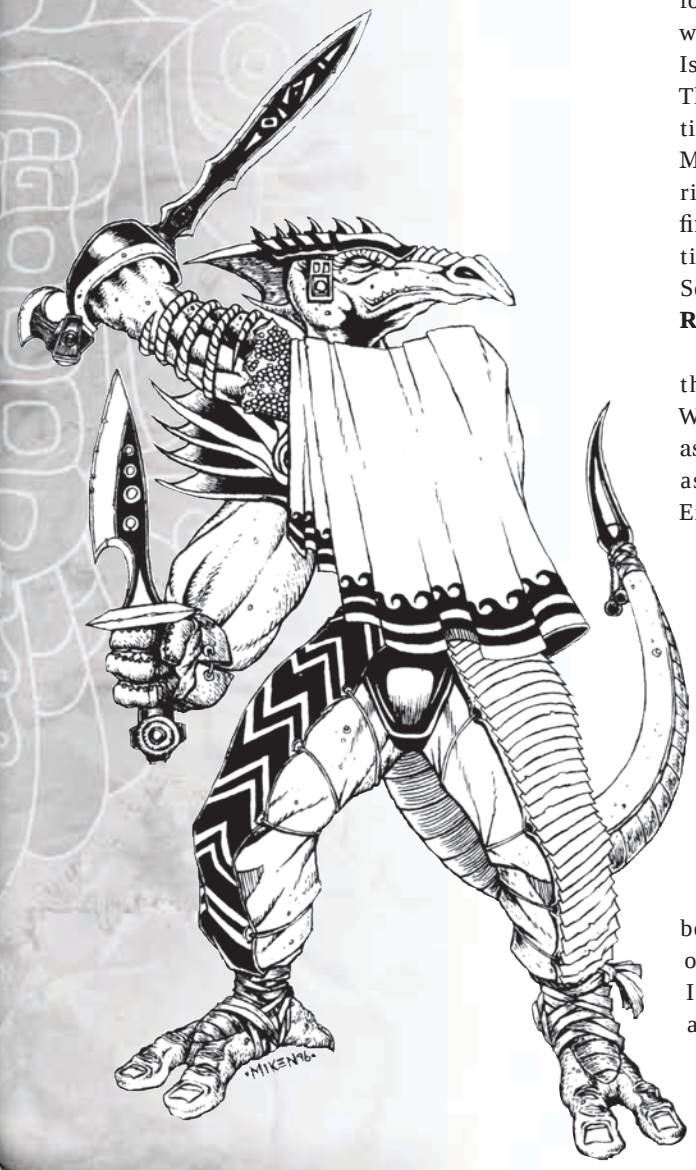
In the following years, Ishkaratan trading vessels began venturing into the Mid Reach of the Serpent to trade with river villages there. Despite these activities, the Ishkaratans still refused to reveal the location of their central village to outsiders and prohibited all non-Ishkaratan vessels from passing east of Glenwood Deep. At the same time, House Ishkarat continued to expand its influence by subjugating river villages west of Lake Vors.

Soon, Ishkaratan vessels began to appear on the lake itself. In defiance of House Syrtis' Maratha *niall*, which had traditionally controlled all trade on Lake Vors, the Ishkaratans traded openly with the lake villages and refused to pay *bakshevas* to the Marathans. The number of Ishkaratan vessels on the lake—and Ishkaratan hostility toward the Marathans—grew steadily, and within months the Ishkaratans began wresting control of villages from the Maratha *niall*. At the same time, small squads of Iopan agents—primarily members of the Holders of Trust and spies and soldiers employed by the Denairastas clan—began to infiltrate the villages around Lake Vors. Apparently acting in league with House Ishkarat, the Iopans sabotaged Marathan supply lines and undermined Throalic influence in these settlements.

Despite the Maratha *niall's* repeated pleas for help, House Syrtis' High Chamber took no action to check House Ishkarat's growing power, even when the Ishkaratans began annexing Marathan villages east of Lake Vors. Apparently,

the Syrtisian leaders hoped to reason with the Ishkaratans during the negotiations sponsored by King Varulus III after the Theran War. Those hopes were dashed, however, when the Ishkaratan delegation—which consisted of two Ishkaratan *aropagoinya* and two Holders of Trust—took such contradictory positions and engaged in such outrageous intrigue that Varulus himself ordered them ejected from the negotiations. In retrospect, it seems that the Ishkaratans had no desire to enter into the Free Trade Compact or any other agreement that would limit their ability to annex river villages or exact *bakshevas* from any passing riverboat. (To this day, the t'skrang of House Ishkarat ignore the principles of the Free Trade Compact. Ishkaratan captains insist that their right to unfettered "free trade" entitles them to trade freely with any settlement on the Serpent River system and to exact *bakshevas* wherever, whenever, and from whomever they please.)

Despite the Ishkaratan rejection of the Free Trade Compact, Marathan leaders believed that House Ishkarat was ready to negotiate a peaceful trade treaty in 1488 TH when the Ishkaratans agreed to attend talks to determine the future of trade on Lake Vors. The Marathan leaders agreed to host the summit at the *niall's* Fortress Isle, located in the middle of Lake Vors. Feeling secure in the confines of their stronghold, the Marathans were rudely surprised when the Ishkaratan delegation's "honor guard"—actually a full crew of Swordmasters—seized the *niall's* leaders as captives and held the fortress against a larger force of Marathan troops until a fleet of Ishkaratan warships arrived. In the end, only two riverboats of Marathans escaped.



Ironically, the Ishkaratan capture of the Maratha *niall's* fortress led to a decline in House Ishkarat's military fortunes. Although the capture is considered one of the most impressive military achievements in post-Scourge times, it jolted both the Elven Court and the Syrtisian High Chamber into action. Previously, both groups believed House Ishkarat to be no more than a minor power and certainly no threat to the Blood Wood or the settlements of the Mid Reach. After the capture of Fortress Isle, however, both groups took notice of House Ishkarat and immediately began making plans to check the growing power of the *aropagoi*.

Fortunately for both the elves and the Syrtisians, the Ishkaratan leaders uncharacteristically squandered an important opportunity when they failed to consolidate their control over villages east of Lake Vors. Instead, the Ishkaratans wasted several months gloating over their newfound prestige; consolidating their hold over river villages west of Lake Vors; and installing themselves at Fortress Isle, which they re-christened the Citadel of House Ishkarat. That decision provided the elves and Syrtisians with enough time to construct a fort at Kaer Eidolon at the meeting of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers and muster a small fleet of riverboats to oppose the Ishkaratans. When the Ishkaratans finally reached the confluence in 1502 TH, the joint Syrtisian/elven force soundly defeated them at the Battle of Sejanus. (For more information on the Battle of Sejanus, see **Recorded History of House Syrtis**, p. 181).

That defeat effectively denied the Ishkaratans access to the River Mothingale, and thus easy passage to the Blood Wood. Furthermore, the defeat seemed to check Ishkaratan aspirations to expand their influence east of the Mothingale, as no Ishkaratan warships have been spotted east of Kaer Eidolon since the battle.

House Ishkarat's defeat at Eidolon has not affected the *aropagoi's* strength west of the Mothingale, however. The *aropagoi* has firmly entrenched itself at Lake Vors by refurbishing the fortifications on the island fortress, reinforcing the fortress with numerous troops, and—according to rumor—installing its *shivalahala* at the Citadel. House Ishkarat has also built a new town on the north bluffs across from the island. More than a thousand immigrants from upriver villages have settled in the town, which the Ishkaratans have named Axalekso, or "New Elekso."

Although the Ishkaratans control numerous villages between Kaer Eidolon and Lake Vors, they generally permit outside trading vessels to trade in the area. However, House Ishkarat exacts enormous *bakshevas* from vessels in the area and absolutely prohibits foreign vessels from freely entering Lake Vors. Although the Ishkaratans have permitted the original settlers of Lake Vors to remain in their villages, reports indicate that the Ishkaratans exact extremely high tribute from these settlements

Adventure Hook

During a journey along the northern Serpent, close to Lake Vors, the player characters witness Ishkaran forces raiding the river village of Kleshor, killing most of the inhabitants. After the Ishkarat warship leaves, the group finds only two survivors in the almost completely destroyed village: an old couple who claim that the t'skrang kidnapped her own daughter.

They beg the group to follow the warship and free her daughter if she's still alive. The warship destroyed the village because it continually refused to pay tribute to House Ishkarat, so the *aropagoi* finally made their threats a ruthless reality. The couple knows of another river town called Ish'klamaz where the Ishkarat usually re-supply and (in this case) sell their loot. If the characters hurry, they have a good chance to reach Ish'klamaz while the warship is still there. With most of it s crew spending silver in the local taverns, the group would have a chance to sneak onboard and search for the girl.

On their way to Ish'klamaz, the characters meet a group of headhunters looking for a fugitive adept Named Ferad—a dangerous Warrior and Illusionist agent of the Denairastas. Of course, the characters haven't heard of Ferad before, so the headhunters are on their way.

Two weeks prior the raid, Ferad appeared at Kleshor, searching for a place to hide the headhunters. He murdered the girl, used illusion magic to take her place, and decided to lay low in Kleshor for some time. When the Ishkaratan warship arrived, he revealed himself to the captain and convinced him take him aboard.

The player characters are in for a big surprise when they find the warship, search for the daughter and stumble over Ferad, who is likely to reveal his plan before trying to kill the group.

and regularly execute any who oppose their rule. The Ishkaratans' tight control of traffic into and out of the lake prevents anyone from verifying such reports, but few doubt them, considering the ominous lack of refugees from other river settlements that have fallen under Ishkaratan control since the end of the Scourge.

Despite the Ishkaratan defeat at Kaer Eidolon, House Ishkarat remains a dangerous and powerful force on the Serpent. Ishkaratan riverboats, disguised as the vessels of independent villages, regularly travel the southern reaches of the Serpent. Even when discovered, the Ishkaratans rarely suffer reprisals simply because their ships and crews are so dangerous. Only *aropagoi* flagships are truly equipped to board and storm them. The majority of Ishkaratan crewmen—even on the *aropagoi's* trading vessels—are Swordmasters rather than Boatmen, which makes Ishkarat vessels more than a match for most opposition. Furthermore, the Ishkaratans remain allied with the treacherous Denairastas clan of Iopos, and they display none of the worshipful fanaticism native Iopans show toward the clan. The Ishkaratans consider themselves equals of the Denairastas, and their actions bear this out. Throughout their brief history, the Ishkaratans have proved they are second to none when it comes to cunning and cruelty.

Unbelievable! A band of river rats think they match the prowess and trading might of the Denairastas. I'm surprised Uhl tolerates it really. T'skrang are all the same—long mouths full of hot air.

—Grimmas, Merchant of Iopos

Acharuss, Captain of the Gorruus

A Swordmaster and notorious pirate, Acharuss is a green-scaled t'skrang nearly six feet tall, with silver-gray flecks along his spine. Known as the bane of the North Reach, Acharuss is a merciless raider who strikes fear into the hearts of townsfolk and sailors alike. He attacks without warning and seldom leaves survivors. As he plies the Serpent River north of the Kingdom of Throal in his riverboat, the sight of the Gorruus' green and purple prow cutting through the waves strikes fear into the heart of many a villager living along the riverbanks. Though his raids are infrequent, they are always successful. Infamous for his cruelty to prisoners, Acharuss prefers to kill enemies rather than accept surrender. He takes what he wants and leaves the rest floating in the water alongside the corpses. The pirate plays no favorites; the dwarfs of Throal, the elves of the Blood Wood, and the t'skrang of Syrtis and Ishkarat have all suffered at the hands of this raider and his men.

Acharuss commands a crew of devoted cutthroats who would gladly lay down their lives for him. He ensures the loyalty of his crewmen by sharing all booty with them, treating them with even-handed—if somewhat ruthless—discipline, and looking after the families of crewmen who die in his service. The location of Acharuss' headquarters remains unknown, but most believe the pirate and his men hole up in a river village on a minor tributary of the Serpent somewhere between Kaer Eidolon and Lake Vors.

Acharuss' long and lucrative career has spawned numerous rumors about the source of his success. According to one rumor, Acharuss is a tool of the Denairastas clan of Iopos and has received some kind of tainted magic from Uhl Denairastas that infuses his crew with fanatical devotion.

In return, Acharuss harasses the enemies of the Denairastas, pays the clan tribute, and preys upon their Ishkaratan allies, to keep Ishkarat's leaders from challenging Denairastan power.

⅄ ⅄ ⅄

I don't believe for a second Acharuss is one of them; his timely raiding has saved us from punishment and excessive levies many a time, even returned our taxes once. He might be a pirate, but he's as good as they come.

—Dokaros, Elder of Mikanos on Lake Vors

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Acharuss is a Ninth Circle t'skrang Swordmaster. Acharuss' ship, the *Gorruus*, is the same size as an *aropagoian* warship. A crew of 125 fanatical, battle-hardened sailors mans the ship. About a year ago, Acharuss also managed to win movable gun platforms and a corvus (see **Ishkarat Warship**, p. 317) from an Ishkarat warship and install them on board the *Gorruus*. Unfortunately, the crew can seldom supply ample elemental fire for the *Gorruus*' fire cannon and typically cannot afford to fire more than three volleys before exhausting its ammunition.

Having recently witnessed the effectiveness of the ramming heads on V'strimon *shimorams*, Acharuss intends to add one to the *Gorruus*.

Acharuss

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (18): 7/D12
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 15
Initiative: 8/2D6
Spell Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 6
Social Defense: 11
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 42 (112)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 12
Knockdown: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (94)

* Acharuss knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Anticipate Blow [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Avoid Blow [D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Cobra Strike (9): 17/D20+D10
Disarm [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Durability (7/6) (10): 10
Engaging Banter (9): 15/D20+D6
Heartening Laugh (9): 15/D20+D6
Impressive Strike [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Karma Ritual (9): 9
Leadership (9): 15/D20+D6
Maneuver [D] (2): 10/D10+D6



Melee Weapons [D] (10): 18/D20+D12 (Deflect Blow)
Resist Taunt [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Riposte [D] (9): 17/D20+D10 (Arrow Cutting)
Pin [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Second Attack [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Second Weapon [D] (10): 18/D20+D12 (Matched Weapons)
Speak Language (6): 12/2D10
—Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, Windling
Taunt (9): 15/D20+D6
Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving) [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Throwing Weapons (9): 17/D20+D10
Wound Balance (9): 16/D20+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Woodworker (5): 13/D12+D10
Mapmaking (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Riverboat Trade Routes (5): 11/D10+D8
Serpent River Lore (5): 11/D10+D8

General:
Conceal Weapon (3): 11/D10+D8
Fence (5): 11/D10+D8
Fishing (5): 11/D10+D8
Missile Weapons (3): 11/D10+D8
Navigation (5): 11/D10+D8
Pilot Boat (7): 14/D20+D4
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Read River (7): 13/D12+D10
Surprise Strike (5): 12/2D10
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang
Streetwise (5): 11/D10+D8
Swimming (5): 12/2D10
Unarmed Combat (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

2 × Broadswords (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; w/scabbards)
2 × Spears (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 18–30–36)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10; Tail Damage 9/D8+D6)
2 × Daggers (Damage 9/D8+D6; Tail Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)

Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1; Climbing (1): 9/D8+D6)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)
Thread Ring (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Adventurer's Kit
Chest Key
Climbing Kit
Craftsman Tools
Fishing Kit
Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case
Painting Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

600 silver pieces in a locked and trapped wooden chest with iron reinforcing in his quarters. (Lock Picking Difficulty 14; Dart Trap with Black Brine poison coating on the darts—see the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 109 and p. 121 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Legend Points

5,460 Legend Points

Notes

Acharuss possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 7/D12).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests

The Gorruus

Base Price: NA

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 15/20

Hull:
Armor: 16 **Ramming**: 25
Cargo: 115

Damage:
Derelict: 69 **Critical**: 22
Destroyed: 76

Crew:
Captain: 7 (14) **Crew Size**: 125
Crew Skill: 2 **Crew Rating**: 18
Morale: 70

Special

The ship's engineer, Griskoll, is a Seventh Circle t'skrang Boatman and knows the Pilot Boat talent at Step 14/D20+D4. The corvus adds +3 to an opponent's Difficulty Number when he attempts to break off from a boarding action, and also adds +3 to the *Gorruus*' Crew Rating on the first turn of any boarding action.



House Syrtis

The Syrtisian *aropagoi* ranks just behind the Elven Court of the Blood Wood among Barsaive's most ancient institutions. Most scholars believe that the *aropagoi* was born when a number of the t'skrang villages in the vicinity of the Lalai Gorge banded together against their common enemies. However, the only existing account of the origins of House Syrtis and its Cliff City at Lalai is the legend of the Courtship of Synopae:

Long, long ago, Syrtis, the Dragon of the Moon, was flying across the night sky when he spied a young maiden named Synopae of Kralipur collecting the white blooms of the night lotus in a mountain pool. Filled with the longing of a man for a woman, Syrtis watched Synopae as she sat on the pool's bank, letting the cool air dry her as she strung her flowers into a glowing necklace. As Synopae sat, she beheld the reflection of the moon in the still waters of the pond.

After a moment she went back to her work and then returned her gaze to the pool. Where the image of the moon had glimmered, she now saw a man swimming toward her across the water. As he rose from the water, Synopae saw that he was more beautiful than any man living; surely he was a god or a Passion. But Synopae had wisdom to match her beauty, and though she felt the sting of Astendar's dart she did not fly headlong into the arms of this handsome young stranger. Instead, she resolved to test her suitor.

When Syrtis approached his beloved, whispering words of love, she replied, "Gladly would I be your love and your life, but I am pledged to tend my dear, sick father. He lingers with fever, well nigh on the shores of the river of death, and the only balm that can save him is a prick from a thorn of the roses that grow in the garden of the Elven Queen."

Hearing her words, Syrtis bowed his head and said, "I will bring you the thorn, that your father may live to see his daughter wed." That very night he took himself away to the court of the Elven Queen. Taking the form of a silver beam of moonlight, he passed through the wall of flame and ice that protects the Queen's rose garden and plucked a single thorn from a rose vine. But a warden from the Queen's court chose that very night to enter the rose garden to meditate on

eternal truth, and Syrtis was forced to delay his escape. By the time he returned to Synopae waiting by the mountain pool, the rosy-fingered dawn had touched the horizon. The maiden told her suitor, "You must come with me to be my husband and enter the foundation of my ancestors."

But Syrtis knew that with the dawn would come the jealous gaze of his consort, T'schlome the Sun. Shuddering with fear, he replied, "I must go, but I shall return for you on the night of the next full moon."

And so Synopae the Wise watched as he disappeared under the lake, and perhaps she understood a little more about her lover.

When the moon had turned its cycle, and the lamp of night once again burned in full glory, she walked to the pool in the mountains where the night lotus grew. Soon enough, she spied her beautiful stranger, returning to her from the water. Again he approached her, whispering the honeyed seeds Astendar had sown in his heart, but Synopae drew away from him, saying, "Gladly I would give myself wholly to you, but my heart bears the burden of a cold, cruel curse. A witch has come from the Elven Court and surrounded my heart with an ever-burning flame that will destroy anyone foolish enough to love me. The only salve that will quench her wicked spell is a wedding garland made from the Glitterfrost Orchid that grows in the garden of Icewing the Dragon."

Hearing her words, Syrtis was moved. "I shall go at once to my old friend Icewing. Surely he can spare one bloom." That night, he took a dragon's form and entered the lair of Icewing, who made a great welcome for his brother. They walked through Icewing's garden and talked of the Glitterfrost Orchid and many other things besides, which is the way of dragons. The night wore on, and by the time Syrtis returned to his beloved waiting by the mountain pool, the rosy-fingered dawn had touched the horizon. The maiden told her suitor, "Now you shall become my husband and enter the foundation of my ancestors."

And so the Dragon of the Moon took the maiden in his arms and delivered a kiss, but with the dawn came the jealous gaze of his consort, T'schlome. Trembling with haste, Syrtis left Synopae with the words, "I must go, but I shall return for you on the night of the next full moon."

Another month went by before Synopae returned a third time to the pool. This time she was careful to keep Syrtis waiting, and did not arrive until the last hours before dawn. Again Syrtis spoke of his love for her, but again she would not surrender to his desire, instead saying, "Gladly I would have you as my love and my life, but how can you enter the foundation of my ancestors if you can only stay for one night of the month? If you will not make your home in my village, then you must prepare a home for us someplace else, a place so beautiful that I shall not want for my family."

The Dragon of the Moon sighed, for the cunning Synopae had bested him a third time. He said, "I will show you a place where I will build you a home a hundred times more splendid than any village on the river." And taking her hand, Syrtis flew both of them to the Gorge of Lalai. There, he entered the Liferock at Zirabul, and the elders of that place bent respectfully to their lord. He said to the obsidimen of Zirabul, "You must prepare this place to become a home for my wife and my family, and they shall abide with you through the ages."

Then Syrtis returned them both to the pool, where they spent what remained of that night together. When the shadow of the sun appeared on the horizon, the young man looked to the east, where T'schlome arose and he told Synopae, "When next I come, we shall go to the Halls of Zirabul." Synopae, a maiden no longer, tried hard to cling to him, but he vanished into the air without a trace.

And so Synopae understood a little more about her lover, but perhaps not enough. On the day before the moon had turned its cycle, the orb of the sun dipped low to the village of Kralipur, and T'schlome appeared to her husband's lover. "It would be better for you if you stayed close at home this night," T'schlome said to Synopae. "Should you ever again see my husband, I shall destroy you and all you hold dear."

When Synopae felt the furious heat of the jealous sun, she became afraid and said, "I shall do as you ask, Mother of Day. Will you not accept this garland as a token of my devotion and a balm to soothe your wrath?" With these words, she lay the garland she had made from the blooms of night lotus and the Glitterfrost Orchid about the neck of the Dragon of the Sun.

T'schlome was so pleased with the young girl's gift that she did not notice when the touch of the Glitterfrost Orchid loosened one of the scales on her breast. Synopae, however, was looking for just that, and without a moment's thought she used the thorn of the elven rose to pry that scale from the Dragon of the Sun. When Synopae had the dragon scale in her hands, she wove a thread to it and said to T'schlome, "My time with your husband will be but a short time in the life of the immortals, but for that time, this thread shall protect both me and my family."

That said, she used the power of her magic to send the jealous sun back to the skies. That night, Lord Syrtis arrived at Kralipur village in the boat that carries the lamplight of the night, and he carried Synopae and her foundation to their new home in the Gorge of Lalai. In time Synopae gave Syrtis four sons and four daughters, who each fed at the breast of the Moon himself, so that ever afterward the descendants of Synopae called themselves House Syrtis, the House of the Dragon Moon.

When T'schlome learned of Synopae's trickery, the Dragon of the Sun became enraged and vowed to exact revenge on Synopae and her children. And so after pondering her predicament, T'schlome took the Glitterfrost Orchid that Synopae had given to her to Upandal the Builder. Using guileful words to prick his pride, she challenged the Passion to match in beauty and desirability what Icewing and Jaspree had fashioned so well.

Accepting the Sun Dragon's challenge, Upandal returned to his workroom, determined to show T'schlome that he was every bit the match of Jaspree the Lifegiver. After many years of work, during which time the children of Synopae grew to adulthood, Upandal appeared with his masterpiece, a duplicate of the Orchid wrought in gossamer, gold and glass. Then to prove to T'schlome how trivial he thought the challenge, he gave it to her freely as if it were a trinket.

T'schlome took Upandal's gift and placed it in a box on which she inscribed these words: "For the most beautiful."

Then she flew at once to the heart of the Wyrm Wood, where the Passions had been invited to bless the wedding vows of Princess Aenea and Prince Gamelan of Sereatha. When the wedding feast was begun, T'schlome persuaded Vestrial the Trickster to deliver the box to the banquet table. Sure as night follows day, the Passions found the box and opened it. All who beheld the Golden Orchid that Upandal had wrought were beside themselves with desire to hold it in their hands.

Soon Aenea, Astendar, Erendis, and Jaspree fell to arguing over whom the prize was intended for. Aenea argued that the Golden Orchid must be a wedding gift from her prince. Jaspree argued that the gift was surely a token of appreciation from Icewing, for it was clearly modeled after the Glitterfrost Orchid. Astendar and Erendis, of course, simply believed that they were each the fairest, and therefore the gift's intended recipient. Garlen had a foreboding of trouble and wisely chose to keep silent. Upandal, who along with Chorrolis had drunk much wine at the feast, found the whole business so amusing that he kept the truth secret: that he, himself, had originally given the Golden Orchid to the Dragon of the Sun!

Now in the court of the Elven Queen at that time was a councilor named Elidar, whom many considered the wisest of the Queen's courtiers. And so Prince Gamelan suggested to the rivals that they lay their contest at the feet of Elidar the Wise. After considerable bickering, the rivals concurred. After some contemplation, Elidar said to Aenea, "Against all mortal beauty, thine own is unmatched. But you cannot think to compare your beauty with that of the immortal Passions." To Astendar and Erendis, he said, "Although each of you has beauty far and above the mortal sphere, in truth your beauty is derivative, for the truest beauty resides in the ever-changing renewal of life itself." And turning to Jaspree, he said, "Life in all its forms finds both rest and inspiration in your bosom, O Gardener of the World, and so you are unarguably the most beautiful."

At Elidar's judgment, generosity filled Jaspree's heart, and the Passion favored the elves with the magical fernweave and wood that made their ships invincible. When these gifts threatened the livelihood of Synopae's children, Upandal felt remorse for the way T'schlome had tricked him and so sought to redress the imbalance by granting the t'skrang the vision of the fire engine. The t'skrang, in turn, used the fire engine to great effect against the elves, prompting the other Passions to take sides in the growing conflict.

Chorrolis and Upandal sided with the children of Synopae, and Jaspree and most of the other Passions supported Aenea and her elven children. After ten years, ten months and ten days of war, Upandal sought to end the feud that had cost Synopae's children so dearly. As evidence of his desire for peace, Upandal pledged to prevent all other Name-givers from learning the secret of the fire engine, a pledge he has kept to the present day.

Recorded History of House Syrtis

Despite the central role House Syrtis plays in the mythic memory of the t'skrang, its role in recorded history is far less illustrious. Even before the Scourge, when the Therans first claimed Barsaive as part of their empire, House Syrtis was weak and divided. Many of the Syrtisian t'skrang willingly collaborated with the Therans on issues of trade, and most of the *aropagoi's nialls* arranged separate deals with their Theran conquerors in attempts to gain advantage over their fellow *aropagoinya*. Two of the *aropagoi's* eight *nialls*, Fenestral and Brabant, even joined in punitive Theran slaving operations on the fringes of the Wyrm Wood and pirate raids against the mining settlements of the Scol Mountains.

Though House Syrtis' collaboration with the Therans still mars the *aropagoi's* reputation among many Barsaivians, most Serpent River t'skrang communities remain grateful for the leading role the Shivalahala Syrtis took in helping t'skrang communities prepare for the Scourge. The Shivalahala Syrtis assembled the council of *lahalas* that devised the t'skrang protections in the years preceding the Scourge. Drawing on their ancestral memories, the *lahalas* presented Barsaive's dragons with twelve riddles, each designed to trick the t'skrang's Firebrothers into sharing valuable information about surviving the Scourge. Using the dragons' answers, along with their ancestral memories, the *lahala* council published a special addendum to the Rites of Protection and Passage that taught the t'skrang how to safely induce hibernation. This sleeping state eased the claustrophobic strain of long imprisonment under the river, enabling the free-wheeling lizard-folk to survive the Scourge without going mad.

When the Scourge arrived, most of the Cliff City's population abandoned the citadel in favor of their home villages. At one point, the chamberlain of House Syrtis, a member of the Brabant *niall*, attempted to abduct the *shivalahala* away from the Cliff City and back to his own village, apparently intending to establish some kind of permanent influence over the *shivalahala*. The t'skrang remaining in the Cliff City discovered the chamberlain's plan, however, and apprehended him before he could board his ship and escape. The mob escorted the chamberlain and his entourage to Nithagi's Door and forced them all to walk off the edge of the cliff to their deaths.

Unfortunately, the Horrors took a special interest in the Cliff City. Despite the vigilance of the city's residents, Horrors breached the city's defenses on six separate occasions during the Scourge. The Shivalahala Syrtis personally fought each invading Horror that slipped through during each breach. The *shivalahala's* dedication inevitably killed her, forcing her to pass her ancestral memories to a new *shivalahala* and creating lasting psychological scars that continue to afflict the Shivalahala Syrtis.

The legendary airship *Earthdawn* arrived at the Cliff City in the year 1418 TH to herald the end of the Scourge, and within weeks the leaders of House Syrtis' *nialls* convened the post-Scourge meeting of the Syrtisian High Chamber. More than a third of the villages aligned with the Syrtisian *aropagoi* had fallen to Horrors, which had nearly destroyed three of the *aropagoi's* eight *nialls* as well, and the once fertile lands of the Mid Reach lay ravaged.

Understandably, House Syrtis was slow to recover from the depredations of the Scourge. The arrival of a copy of the

Council Compact from Throal prompted months of acrimonious, unproductive debate in the High Chamber. After a particularly garrulous session, the *niall* leaders decided to allow every Syrtisian t'skrang to fend for himself. Within days, the tensions between the *nialls* erupted into petty squabbles and vendettas.

Unfortunately, the Shivalahala Syrtis proved unable to offer her people much help during this dark time. For months she had been showing signs of the psychological scars left by her struggle against the Horrors, exhibiting decidedly odd behavior. Her attendants, who feared for her status in the eyes of her subjects, began to isolate her from all other members of the *aropagoi*. That decision nearly destroyed House Syrtis, for the *shivalahala* was probably the only individual capable of checking the growing divisions among the members of the High Chamber.

Fortunately, the centuries of history shared by the Syrtisian *nialls* provided enough of a bond to keep the factions from severing their ties altogether. Still, the High Chamber met only seven times during the first 70 years after the Scourge. The Syrtisian council met three times during the Theran War to consider and ultimately reject Varulus III's requests for aid in the war against the Therans. House Syrtis' neutrality created significant friction between Throal and the *aropagoi*, and at one point Throal accused the Syrtisian *nialls* of Fenestral and Brabant of secretly conspiring with Theran agents to find a river passage to the Kingdom of Throal somewhere along the Serpent.

Although the High Chamber ratified the Free Trade Compact, the body did not resume regular meetings until House Ishkarat seized the Maratha *niall's* fortified island of Filen on Lake Vors in 1488 TH. The Scourge had reduced the Maratha *niall's* holding to the island fortress, and only two riverboats of refugees escaped the Ishkarat seizure of the island. In an unprecedented resolution, the High Chamber voted to dissolve the Maratha *niall*, ban its descendants from entering House Syrtis' central foundation, and eliminate its seats in the chamber on the grounds that its disgraceful defeat had stained the sacred honor of the *aropagoi*.

However, the High Chamber members soon realized that House Ishkarat's growing power threatened all of their *nialls*, and they began to exhibit a sense of their common destiny. During the next few years, the chamber members restored the power of the chamberlain of Syrtis to exact levies from their *nialls* to fund defensive measures. The chamber commissioned new warships and created the office of the Admiralty to provide the Syrtisian fleet with a single commander. The chamber's diplomatic initiatives resulted in the construction of the Syrtisian/elven fortress of Kaer Eidolon in 1497 TH and the leasing of five *shimoram* from House V'strimon.

The chamber's efforts paid off in the spring of 1502 TH, when five warships under Admiral Shaido of the Wavram *niall* clashed with three Ishkarat riverboats just west of Kaer Eidolon in the Battle of Sejanus. The Syrtisian force sank one of the Ishkaratan vessels, captured another, and forced the third to retreat. House Ishkarat later claimed that the riverboats were merchant vessels protected by the provisions of the Free Trade Compact—and therefore victims of Syrtisian piracy—but since the battle House Ishkarat has apparently restricted its expansionist designs to Lake Vors and the Serpent River west of the lake.

The Cliff City of House Syrtis

A few miles south of the confluence of the Caucavic and Serpent Rivers, the Throal Mountains collide with the Caucavic Mountains to form the Lalai Gorge, one of Barsaive's unique natural wonders. Each of the two mountain spurs comes to an abrupt halt at the gorge, terminating in sheer cliff faces that rise nearly 3,000 feet on each side of the river. The gorge runs for about 20 miles, narrowing to about a half mile at a spot called the Dragon's Gullet, where the river makes a sharp turn south. Here the river flows with such force that during the rainy months a riverboat is hard pressed to make the journey upstream through the canyon in the hours between sunrise and sunset.

The Cliff City of Lalai Gorge is set in the cliffs on the south side of the Serpent River, about 500 yards upstream from the Dragon's Gullet. The *aropagoinya* of House Syrtis have made their homes in the Cliff City since before the Scourge, when the site was pressed into service as a citadel against the Horrors. Throughout its long history the city's residents have employed various building methods and architectural styles to expand their metropolis, giving the ancient city the appearance of a haphazard patchwork of parapets, carvings, towers, windows, and balconies when viewed from the river. Sections of the city alternate between the natural caverns typical of obsidimen, huge halls like dragon lairs, ornate dwarf-style decorative work, and the simple rough-cut stonework associated with t'skrang villages. In some places the various architectural styles produce astounding effects; in others they simply jar the senses.

The Cliff City is arranged in several vertical levels along the cliff face, an arrangement that often disconcerts first-time visitors. The inhabited parts of the city seem to be perched precariously on the cliff face, and nearly every road and path seems to slope up or down at an extreme incline. The city's t'skrang residents employ a wide variety of mechanisms to move from one level of the city to the next. To drag heavy loads up the inclines, the residents use winches and levitating platforms powered by elemental magic, similar to the Theran elemental elevators at Sky Point. Swing ropes are used to cross gaps and skip quickly up and down levels. Narrow staircases take the place of the alleys that one might find in a more conventional city, and strangers find it difficult to adjust to the idea that one must look not only left or right at an intersection, but also above and below.

Many first-time visitors also remark on the city's oppressive, haunted atmosphere. The Cliff City could probably hold 60,000 Name-givers, but barely 6,000 reside within its boundaries. As one walks up through the city's byways, one cannot help but notice the emptiness. Some towers carved in the cliff side are inhabited only by flocks of birds, while hermits claim other places. The eerie atmosphere created by the vacant spaces is strengthened by the sound-conducting properties of the stone, which often transmits faraway conversations. Passersby can often hear the murmur of voices

Adventure Hook

During a stay in the Cliff City of House Syrtis, the player characters notice two obsidiman watching them—seemingly crossing their path at random times. Later, while at a tavern, they overhear the latest news: a member of the Piscean Planters has gone missing from his duties in the subterranean caves. On their next sighting of either of the obsidimen, he motions to them, pointing down and then up before vanishing again. Puzzled, the characters can investigate and hear in the Hives, a number of Golds, unemployed t'skrang and refugees have disappeared recently.

At this point the two obsidimen approach them, and introduce themselves as member of the Zirabul Brotherhood. They ask the group to cleanse the taint on the city by determining the cause of the vanishing people, and hand them a silver ribbon.

If the characters take up the investigation, they will find out that a coven of Silvers has gotten involved in slave trade to gain the attention of the Therans; secretly passing their slaves off to disguised K'tenshin trading ships. The Silvers' operation is based out of the fourth level of Lalai Gorge, near an otherwise unused lift down to the docks. If the characters play their cards right they might be able to stake out the next shipment, which likely results in a wild chase through the Dragon's Gullet and on down the Serpent. If they fail and lose the slavers, House Syrtis will ask them to rescue the captured citizens—a quest leading them to the slave markets of the Serpent River's South Reach ...

even in sections of the city that have not been inhabited since pre-Scourge times.



That place gives me the creeps, and I've lived in caverns! I swear those Horrors the Shivalahala supposedly drove off just went into hiding in the vast empty spaces of the place. Don't go out walking without a spare light quartz and a good sword, that's my advice.

—Thom Hammerblade, Dwarf Weaponsmith



The Great Cavern

The main entrances to the city, known as the Doors of Shivos, are located at the base of the cliff at the water's edge. Each opening is more than 30 yards high and 130 yards wide. Both can be sealed by a combination of *refselenika* below the water and huge stone disks above. Neither door has been closed since the end of the Scourge, however. Behind the Doors of Shivos lies the largest known open cavern outside of Throal. The entire cave is flooded to a depth of 25 yards and lit by light quartzes embedded in the cavern ceiling and the riverbed. Towering stalagmites of pink- and blue-tinged crystalline granite support the roof of the cavern, and wooden piers that can accommodate up to 40 riverboats at a time extend from the edges of the cavern across its waters. Next to the piers stand several wooden buildings used by trading companies and trade covenants. Many of these buildings have fallen into disrepair in the past few years; the High Chamber has considered removing them, as they create an undignified first impression for visitors arriving by river to the Cliff City.

Because of the city's proximity to the Dragon's Gullet, the rapid river current and submerged rocks near the Doors of Shivos make the approach to the Cliff City quite treacherous. (Maneuvering a riverboat through the Doors of Shivos and docking it in the cavern requires a successful Pilot Boat (7) Test.) The aquatic entrance to the Cliff City is further protected by the fire cannon of the massive Syrtisian Dreadnought, which is permanently anchored just outside the Doors of Shivos (see **The Dreadnought**, p.190, for details).

Below the surface of the river, the Great Cavern opens into a system of submerged caves that are many times larger than the portion of the cavern above the water line. These submerged caves extend deep under the cliff into a bizarre subterranean world. Light quartzes mounted in the cliff walls of these aquatic back areas provide nourishment to a host of crops cultivated along the cave floors. Additionally, several chambers in this underwater cave system contain pockets of fresh air, which enable a t'skrang to remain in the submerged caves for several hours without the need to return to the surface. Some say the submerged cave system reaches all the way to the Kingdom of Throal, where it joins the waterways of Shuss Halima, the domain of the t'skrang Pale Ones. However, no one has yet blazed an aquatic trail from the Cliff City to Throal.

The Hives

The second level of the Cliff City, located directly above the Great Cavern, consists primarily of residential apartments. The city's inhabitants call these structures "The Hives," because the constant buzz of their residents and the intricate pathways that connect the apartments make the level resemble a huge honeycomb.

In keeping with the city's traditional segregation patterns, servants and workers exclusively inhabit the Hives. Throughout its history, Syrtisian society has remained highly stratified, and strict laws dictate where an *aropagoinya* may live. The city's lower classes are restricted

to residences in the lower levels of the Cliff City, while residences in the city's higher levels are reserved for the *aropagoi's* upper classes. Each of the second level's apartment complexes, or "hives," is inhabited by a specific group of servants or workers. For example, members of the Piscean Planters, the group that tends the underwater crops in the Great Cavern, live in one complex. Members of the August Order of Ropes and Pulleys, who maintain the swing lines and winches throughout the city, live in another complex. Members of the group called the Couriers, who run messages up and down the city's levels, live in another. Other complexes contain groups Named after work that no longer exists. For example, one complex belongs to the Guild of the Diligent Oarsmen, whose members would take a nobleman's place at the galleys of ships in ancient times. The t'skrang have not run oar-driven galleys anywhere on the Serpent since the creation of the fire engine millennia ago, yet the Name persists. Present-day members of the Oarsmen's guild are sailors and dock workers.

The Hollow

The Cliff City's main marketplace, known as the Hollow, is located on the city's third level. The market sits on a ledge under an overhang about 160 yards above the river. The ledge is about 100 yards wide and contains three tiers of narrow buildings. The buildings are crudely constructed of stone blocks cut from the back wall of the Hollow, and each building is divided into stalls. The seven current *nialls* of House Syrtis own most of the stalls and rent them out to visiting traders who wish to sell their goods.

Trade Covenant Quarters

House Syrtis' few remaining trade covenants occupy buildings on the city's fourth level, directly above the Hollow. The only Syrtisian trade covenant that retains any fame outside of the city is the Right Honorable Commission of Toymakers. The covenant preserves the secrets of manufacturing some of the best-loved toys on the river, including extraordinary spinning tops that create kaleidoscopic patterns as they spin and animated, elemental-water toy soldiers that engage one another in sword fights if brought close together. At one point, the *aropagoi's* High Chamber attempted to relocate the toy-makers to a village under its sway, as it had done with many other lucrative covenants. However, when a seven-year-old child was chosen as the next Shivalahala Syrtis, the High Chamber decided it would be in the *aropagoi's* best interests to keep the toymakers within the city.

Crew Covenant Quarters

The fifth level of the Cliff City is devoted to residences for House Syrtis' navy and crew covenants. Today, much of the level remains vacant, as the competing factions of the *aropagoi's* High Chamber have seized control of nearly all of House Syrtis' warships. However, about 100 sailors from the *Dreadnought's* skeleton crew reside permanently in barracks on the fifth level. Because the *Dreadnought* never leaves port, the crew is employed as the city's police force under the nominal command of the High Chamberlain of Syrtis.

Upper Levels

The upper levels of the Cliff City contain lavish quarters for House Syrtis' *shivalahala*, High Chamber representatives, and members of the *shivalahala's* court. Each of the *aropagoi's* seven *nialls* maintains a resplendent residence for its representatives. Many such residences are as large as typical *niall* domes, with dozens of rooms furnished with priceless tapestries and finely crafted furniture.

The chamber members, most of whom descend from the *aropagoi's* noble families, also maintain a spacious theater, a splendid solarium, a library, and many meeting rooms. The solarium, known as the Eye of Syrtis, features a massive window of metal-rimmed crystal and glass that looks out across the canyon. The library contains a large collection of ancient manuscripts and monographs written by past members of the High Chamber. Because these texts are written almost entirely in the ambiguous, pictographic language of the t'skrang, scholars have never regarded the library's collection as particularly useful or noteworthy.

These features, along with ranks of bathing attendants, tailors, scribes, footmen, and assorted servants employed by the residents of the upper levels, produce an atmosphere of opulence that contrasts sharply with the poverty spreading throughout the lower levels of the Cliff City.

Upper Entrance

At the top of the Cliff City lies Nithagi's Door, a magnificent stone arch created by the ancient sculptor Nithagi as a memorial to the ancient victory of the t'skrang over the . The 24-yard high arch is decorated with 40 separate carvings that depict scenes from the legendary war between the two races. Although the arch is more than 2,000 years old, the passage of time has caused little wear to the carvings, which are protected by elemental magic. Despite the arch's Name, it leads nowhere, as it is built on the brink of the cliff.

The actual upper entrance to House Syrtis is located 200 yards away from Nithagi's Door, in a squat, architecturally unremarkable edifice called the Pinnacle Gate. The Pinnacle Gate contains the only entrance to Syrtis from the highlands above the Cliff City. A squad of ten to fifteen soldiers stationed at the gate watch for bandits from the Throal highlands, who occasionally loiter around the approach to the Pinnacle Gate and harass arriving pilgrims.

Near the Pinnacle Gate, several mountain streams feed a small mountain lake called Synopae's Pool. The lake empties into a stone aqueduct that carries water down to a series of beautiful artificial falls and fountains that cascade through the Cliff City like pearl beads on a necklace. During the Scourge, the city's residents rerouted the aqueduct through Nithagi's Door, creating a vast waterfall that obscured the city from the river.

The Obsidimen of Zirabul

The Cliff City is also home to the mysterious obsidimen of Zirabul. No one knows just how many live in the city, because no one has ever spotted more than two at a time. Most often, pairs of the obsidimen clad in their blue and silver *horklas* can be seen shaping or repairing the city's rocks, sitting quietly in abandoned sections of the city, or

walking along the docks of the submerged Great Cavern.

Some residents of the city claim that all the sightings can be attributed to only two obsidimen—the elders who tend to the Liferock of Zirabul, which lies deep within the cliffs behind the city. Although this explanation sounds plausible enough, no obsidiman has ever claimed descent from the Liferock, and the rock men of the Cliff City are notably laconic even for obsidimen. As a result, the local obsidimen remain a constant subject of speculation. Adding to the mystery adventurers who stop at the Cliff City often find that their obsidiman companions disappear for a day or two and reappear without explaining their absences.

Shivalahala Syrtis

The Shivalahala Syrtis, also known as the Prophetess, is revered by every race in Barsaive for her exceptionally long memory and her incredible insight into the future. Her legendary status, like that of the now-deceased King Varulus III of Throal and Queen Alachia of the Blood Wood, is a critical thread in the True pattern of Barsaive. Much like Alachia, this small part of the pattern is beginning to unravel—the *shivalahala* of the Dragon Moon is slowly losing her mind. The *shivalahala* has always been more concerned with astral matters than with politics and trade, which comes as no surprise to those familiar with House Syrtis. Tradition holds that a tenuous link to the physical world is the price the *shivalahala* must pay for the prophetic vision that lets her walk the corridors of time, visiting with spirits long dead and those yet to come and fixing her gaze on the darkest part of the Barsaive's pattern.



The beginning of the *shivalahala's* descent into madness, however, can be traced back to the Scourge, when six Horrors slipped through the Syrtisian citadel's magical defenses. The *shivalahala* confronted each Horror, each time surviving the confrontation just long enough to pass her ancestral memories to a new *shivalahala*. During the last of the six battles to save House Syrtis, a Horror corrupted the *shivalahala's* Warp Astral Space spell (see p. 393 of the **Player's Compendium**) so that its effect remained permanent. Since that time, the results of any magic except her own have become unpredictable within 50 yards of the Shivalahala Syrtis. That corruption also affected the *shivalahala's* traditional resistance to the aging process, usually bestowed during a *shivalahala's* initiation into ancestral memories. Since that time, this resistance has been gradually eroding. The last Shivalahala Syrtis lived only ten years after receiving the gift of the Prophetess.

The transmission of memories from one *shivalahala* to the next has become less reliable, resulting in the increasingly bizarre behavior exhibited by the *aropagoi's shivalahalas*. The first *shivalahala* after the Scourge displayed an obsession with music and spent most of her waking hours singing or playing musical instruments. Her successor often slept for days on end. The *shivalahala* after that exhibited an inexplicable terror of insects.

Just eight years ago, the most recent incarnation of the *shivalahala* passed on her memories to a seven-year-old successor. The *shivalahala's* selection mortified the High Chamber. "The House of the Moon presided over by a sexless child? Preposterous!" exclaimed then-Chamberlain Gammalon Toolika. However, the representatives' fears were quickly dispelled when the child demonstrated a down-to-earth wisdom the *shivalahala* had lacked for generations. What at first seemed folly proved an act of genius.

As the child approaches *kaissa*, a t'skrang's time of change, the old *shivalahala's* choice is once again in grave doubt. The royal servants are up in arms trying to pick up after an increasingly moody and contrary adolescent. The *shivalahala* is sleepwalking, talking to voices inside her head and throwing rages and temper tantrums with all the strength of an experienced wizard. Even worse, the leaders of House Syrtis are beginning to wonder what might happen if the *shivalahala* turns out to be male.

Two recent events may indicate that the current *shivalahala* has not escaped the madness that plagued her predecessors. The first occurred in 1507 TH, when King Varulus III traveled to the Cliff City to question the Prophetess about the future of his kingdom. The two conducted their audience in the strictest confidentiality, so no one but the Prophetess and Varulus himself knew the king's question or the *shivalahala's* reply. However, those close to the king and the *shivalahala* say that upon receiving the Prophetess' answer, Varulus flew into an uncharacteristic rage and left in great haste.

The second, more recent event occurred shortly after the Prophetess granted an audience to a group of travelers from the Pilgrimage Route. As the Prophetess sat in meditation after meeting with the last of the travelers, she suddenly cried out in anguish, shouting about impending doom. The *shivalahala* refused to speak clearly of the matter, but afterward she immediately sent a message to the obsidiman merchant Omasu. The contents of the message remain unknown to all but Omasu and the *shivalahala*.

Shivalahala Syrtis

No game statistics are provided for the Shivalahala Syrtis because her immaturity, nascent madness, innate clairvoyant abilities, and incomplete development make her virtually impossible to describe in game terms. However, if any character attempts to cast a spell in her immediate vicinity, the character suffers a -8 penalty to his Spellcasting Test. The *shivalahala* has a Spell Defense of 18.

Hierarchy

House Syrtis is nominally ruled by its Triumvirate, which consists of the Shivalahala Syrtis, the chamberlain, and the admiral. The latter two individuals are elected by the *aropagoi's* High Chamber, a legislative body composed of representatives from the house's seven noble *nialls*. The chamberlain holds the real power in the *aropagoi*, however, because he retains the power to levy taxes on each of the *aropagoi's* affiliated villages and *nialls*. He also prepares the budget for House Syrtis' communal concerns, which enables him to embezzle a portion of the annual taxes into his private coffers. The chamberlain also has the sole power to call for resolution votes in the High Chamber, which effectively means the chamber cannot act without his approval.

The admiral is charged with the difficult task of commanding the *aropagoi's* patchwork fleet of warships and maintaining peace among the ships' captains. The admiral cannot vote in the High Chamber, but the chamber cannot censure the admiral's conduct short of dismissing him and appointing a new one.

The *shivalahala* remains the spiritual leader of the *aropagoi*, but her governing powers are limited. She can advise the chamber and the other members of the Triumvirate and may cast votes in the chamber, but otherwise she has no special governing powers. Traditionally, the Shivalahala Syrtis does not bother to exercise her right to vote, preferring to exert her power through her influence among the common *aropagoinya* of House Syrtis. In any case, the High Chamber has made it clear that it judges the current *shivalahala* too young to exercise her voting rights. In truth, this judgment seems solely based on political considerations, as a Shivalahala Syrtis of any age possesses ancestral memories that make her far better qualified to guide the *aropagoi* than any chamber member.

The High Chamber consists of three representatives from each *niall* of the *aropagoi*. Unlike the *nialls* of most other *aropagoi*, the Syrtisian *nialls* are noble dynasties that trace their lineage back to the sons and daughters of Synopae and Syrtis. For most of its history, House Syrtis contained eight *nialls*: Wavram, Fenestral, Brabant, Dharm, Satya, Maratha, Sanessa, and Toolika. A few years ago, however, the High Chamber stripped the Maratha *niall* of its status as a noble house and eliminated its chamber seats.

The leader of each noble Syrtisian *niall* bears the title of scion and retains the power to appoint his *niall's* chamber representatives from among the noble-born of his family. Although scions may appoint themselves to the High Chamber, most prefer to use their power of appointment as a way to curry favor and build power within their own communities. Indeed, in some noble *nialls* a seat on the High Chamber is considered a sentence of exile, because local concerns are often more important to the Syrtis nobility than the issues confronting the *aropagoi* as a whole.

The Syrtisian Nobility

Because noble birth is a prerequisite for all government and military leadership positions in House Syrtis, a Syrtisian t'skrang's genealogy is a matter of grave importance. The t'skrang of House Syrtis recognize five ranks of nobility. The lowest, or fifth rank, consists of individuals of common birth who have married into the noble class. The fourth rank consists of the offspring of parents who have married into the noble class. The third rank consists of individuals who can trace their noble ancestry back two, three, four, or five generations. The second rank of nobility can trace their noble ancestry back six to fifteen generations, and the first rank can trace their noble ancestry back 16 to 50 generations. A noble who marries a t'skrang of common blood immediately reduces his children's social standing to the fourth rank.

Traditionally, social rank is the sole qualification for leadership positions in House Syrtis. *Niall* scions are selected from *niall* members of the first noble rank. High Chamber representatives are selected from individuals possessing the second rank. Riverboat captains must be of at least the third rank, and riverboat officers must be of fifth rank or higher.

The importance of noble rank has led to several unique customs among House Syrtis' aristocracy. For example, Syrtisian noblewomen commonly maintain private hatcheries, because the use of common hatcheries prohibits one from confirming the lineage of one's offspring. Additionally, noble Syrtisian couples still arrange marriages for their offspring. (This custom once prevailed among t'skrang communities all over the Serpent River, until the corruption of the Scourge severely reduced the field of desirable mates.) In House Syrtis the practice continues, however, for one low-born mate can ruin a thousand years of careful breeding. The stakes are so high, in fact, that high-ranking Syrtisian nobles commonly seek out prospective mates for their children before the eggs have even been laid. Despite such precautions, the fickle nature of t'skrang fertility has left many a noble family devoid of heirs, leading to a burgeoning black market for t'skrang eggs of good pedigree—and a new class of "scholars" who specialize in confirming the genealogies of suspect eggs. (For the right price, one can purchase a genealogical chart for any occasion, whether it be to allay the suspicions of one's in-laws or effect the ruin of one's rival.)

Inbreeding has become all too common among the nobility in the city-states of Barsaive. It has affected the birth rates of the Syrtisian nobles, causing a longer lifespan than normal, but decreasing fertility in the kings of Throal. Only the reclusive Denairastas know what toll it has taken on their offspring. It is a custom that may spell the end of the ruling houses of many Barsaivian city-states.

—Kallarian of Jerris, Scholar

Although the Syrtisian preoccupation with lineage has greatly enhanced the profits of the *aropagoi's* genealogists, many observers identify this preoccupation as the main cause of the *aropagoi's* declining fortunes. These t'skrang warn that centuries of inbreeding often produce feebleminded individuals, and point to numerous examples among the upper levels of Syrtisian society to support their claims. For example, these observers often claim that the Maratha *niall's* disastrous defeat at Filen resulted directly from the leadership of the Maratha scion, a fine-looking 30-year-old t'skrang with the mind and habits of a two-year-old hatchling.

The warnings of these t'skrang are not far from the truth. While several outstanding Syrtisian captains serve at Kaer Eidolon, in truth the glory of the captaincy is often reserved for braggarts and fools. Despite the lack of fertility that haunts every level of Syrtisian society, there always seems to be more than enough bluebloods around to wreck even the most promising situation.

Apparently, the *shivalahala* of House Syrtis recognized such dangers long ago. In response, she instituted a custom designed to strengthen the *aropagoi's* pool of leaders by providing opportunities for common *aropagoinya* to "jump" the normal social order. She established the Order of the Dragon, a central foundation for House Syrtis. To gain membership in the order, an individual must earn the recommendations of three sponsors of the third noble rank or higher. Noble-born t'skrang can usually gain membership by soliciting recommendations from three near relatives. Common t'skrang can win recommendations by saving the lives or reputations of potential sponsors. New members immediately receive fourth-rank status and become eligible for all appropriate leadership positions. Additionally, they pass their noble status on to their offspring.

Once in the Order of the Dragon, common-born t'skrang can earn third-rank nobility for themselves and their descendants by winning an appointment to the Honor Guard of House Syrtis. Chamberlain T'kradio Dharm established the Honor Guard when he realized that the Ishkaratans could easily destroy the Syrtisian fleet unless he expanded House Syrtis' pool of talented captains. To this day, the chamberlain hand-picks every member of the Honor Guard.

Although these measures have noticeably improved the quality of Syrtisian leadership, the rise of common-born *aropagoinya* has fostered resentment among House Syrtis' noble *nialls* in recent years. As a result, fewer and fewer nobles are willing to sponsor candidates for membership in the Order of the Dragon.

House Syrtis' fortunes have also been crippled by the fierce rivalries within and between the *aropagoi's* seven *nialls*. Typically, each *niall* controls a central village and several vassal villages. The *niall* exerts control over its vassal villages via councilors, who are appointed by the scion of the *niall*. Depending on the inclinations of the *niall*, its councilors may perform the duties of ambassadors, advisors, or spies. The *nialls* of Fenestral and Brabant are infamous for their ruthless councilors, who often engage openly in bribery and blackmail. The Sanassa *niall*, by contrast, appoints no councilors at all. Instead, it invites its vassal villages to send representatives to advise its scion. Meanwhile, each vassal village may contain several nobles seeking to propel themselves into positions of power—usually at the expense of their *niall* brothers and sisters.

Rivalries between the *nialls* may go back generations. The *niall* scions constantly scheme to expand their spheres of influence by wresting control of a rival *niall's* villages. And every time a village changes hands, it must pay taxes to its new rulers. Of course, if a vassal village finds itself back under the control of a former ruler, it can expect to pay punitive penalties in cash and kind. *Niall* riverboats also exact *bakshevas* from riverboats of rival *nialls*, even though they honor the Free Trade Compact when dealing with other vessels. This practice often enables a *niall* to pay its annual tribute to the *aropagoi's* central foundation with money and goods exacted from its rivals.

Goals

Since the end of the Scourge, House Ishkarat, the *aropagoi* that rules the North Reach of the Serpent River, has steadily expanded its sphere of control east along the river toward the Blood Wood. The Ishkaratans apparently aim to seize control of the junction of the Mothingale River and the Serpent and with it, control of the lucrative Blood Wood trade. In the process of conquest, the Ishkaratans have taken control of numerous river settlements previously beholden to House Syrtis. Therefore, it is not surprising that in recent years the primary goal of House Syrtis has been to check House Ishkarat's expanding power.

The best means of achieving that end, however, has been the subject of fierce debate among the contentious political factions of House Syrtis. So far, the *aropagoi* has adopted the strategies of the so-called Blue faction, Named for the blue ribbons worn by its supporters. The Blues long argued for Syrtisian unity in the face of the Ishkaratan threat and counseled alliances with the Elven Court and House V'strimon to bolster House Syrtis' weak war fleet. Those alliances resulted in the construction of a joint Syrtisian/elven fortress at Kaer Eidolon at the confluence of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers and the loan of a squadron of V'strimon riverboats—both of which proved instrumental in the Syrtisian victory over the Ishkaratans at the Battle of Sejanus in 1502 TH.

At present, the Syrtisian forces at Eidolon are augmented by a full regiment of the Queen's Guard—approximately 150 elven soldiers, who are replaced with fresh troops every three months. The fortress also serves as a base for joint

Syrtisian/elven river patrols. Typical patrols consist of two riverboats, each manned by a crew of 20. Although tensions run a bit high between the elven and t'skrang troops involved in the joint defensive arrangement, no serious incidents have occurred so far. Additionally, elven and Syrtisian leaders have taken a number of steps to promote cooperation between their troops, and Syrtisian leaders are currently contemplating the Elven Queen's suggestion that command of the fortress alternate every six months between a representative of House Syrtis and a warder from the Elven Court.

While Eidolon is by no means impregnable and has not stopped disguised Ishkarat riverboats from slipping downriver, the joint Syrtisian/elven enterprise has effectively prevented the Ishkaratans and their allies, the Denairastas of Iopos, from expanding their spheres of influence east of the Mothingale. Perhaps equally important, the success of the forces at Eidolon and the Syrtisian victory at the Battle of Sejanus have greatly strengthened the Blues' status in internal Syrtisian politics. Shaido of the Wavram *niall*, the Blues' supporter who led the victorious forces in the battle, later was selected chamberlain of House Syrtis largely on popularity gained from his victory. Additionally, the Blues have garnered support for their policies from the *aropagoi's* Green faction, which advocates closer ties with House V'strimon and Throal and seeks to reform House Syrtis' rigid caste system.

The nascent Blue/Green alliance, however, has triggered opposition from the so-called Silver faction. The Silvers, led by members of the Fenestral and Brabant *nialls*, advocate alignment with the Theran Empire as a means of regaining the *aropagoi's* lost influence. Although most Syrtisian *aropagoinya* do not dispute the success of the Blue faction's policies, some are attracted to the Silvers' proposals simply as a means of showing contempt for Throal, which has remained aloof to the plight of House Syrtis. In view of House Syrtis' neutrality during the Theran War, King Varulus III's successor, King Neden, apparently sees little reason to aid House Syrtis during its hour of need.

Although House Syrtis currently seems to enjoy a fruitful alliance with the Elven Court and has received help from House V'strimon in its battle against the Ishkaratans, most foreign powers remain understandably cautious about allying themselves with House Syrtis. The contentious *nialls* of the *aropagoi* have been known to produce abrupt shifts in House Syrtis' policies in the past, and few foreign leaders are eager to stake the security of their people or their own political futures on alliances with the Syrtisians.

Furthermore, fears of Syrtisian instability have been generously fueled in recent months by the appearance of a fourth faction in the Cliff City, the so-called Golds. Traditionally, the representatives of House Syrtis' High Chamber have employed hundreds of servants from the *aropagoi's* lower classes. As Syrtisian politics have grown increasingly adversarial, however, many chamber representatives have begun to replace their native servants with t'skrang from their own villages. As a result, the number of unemployed residents in the Cliff City's lower levels has grown rapidly. Coincidentally, the city's lower levels are also home to the disenfranchised refugees from the former Maratha *niall*. The Marathans recognized the similarities between their plight and that of the newly unemployed very quickly, and formed the Gold faction as a means of exploiting the growing discontent of these citizens and regaining some of their own power. Currently, the leaders of the Golds are demanding seats in the High Chamber so that they might "represent the interests of the city's disenfranchised and unaffiliated residents." According to rumors, some faction members have even begun attempts to arm their constituents, leading to talk of rebellion and revolution.

Aemilius Velluniium, Captain of the Breeton II

With scales of silver and a heart of gold, Aemilius of the independent village of Velluniium has a reputation all along the Serpent as the friend of the needy and the bane of injustice. Son of the renowned Captain Patrochian, Aemilius carries on his mother's tradition of accepting missions on the behalf of those whom fate and fortune have abandoned. He is both a Boatman and a Swordmaster, which makes him a dangerous enemy on land or water. Wherever he goes, people know him by Name and reputation as a fair and honest man. His crew consists of the sailors who served with his mother, along with their now-grown offspring.

Aemilius is the epitome of the classic t'skrang adventurer hero; he can bring home a profit through trade, fight off a pirate attack, mop the floor with a Horror construct, and cut a dashing figure at the same time. He is an approachable hero to whom ordinary people bring their problems, and his fierce brand of t'skrang bravado revels in glory. He has achieved Eighth Circle as a Boatman and Sixth Circle as a Swordmaster.

The original Breeton was lost in an unusual crew mutiny shortly before the start of the Theran War. Captain Patrochian was famous for her support of free trade, opposition to slavery, and sympathy for the Throalic cause. At the time, the village of Velluniium was a vassal to the powerful pro-Theran Brabant *niall*, however, and the *niall* leaders conspired to fill the *Breeton's* crew with pro-Theran agents. On the way to a rendezvous with Throalic emissaries, the crew mutinied. Rather than allow the crew to use the *Breeton's* guns to sink the ship containing the dwarf ambassadors, Patrochian blew a hole in the *Breeton's* hull and sent it to the bottom of the Serpent River.

When Patrochian returned to Velluniium, she persuaded her village to declare its independence from the Brabant *niall* and the Syrtisian *aropagoi*. When King Varulus III heard the story of the Breeton, he immediately compensated Velluniium for its loss. The villagers went back to the site of the sinking, but could only salvage the *Breeton's* fire engine. With King Varulus' money, however, the villagers built the *Breeton II*. Patrochian herself did not survive to captain the new ship; a Brabantian assassin killed her.

The *Breeton II* is a standard t'skrang merchantman armed with 17/17 firepower, which reduces its cargo allowance to 220. The crew consists of 40 or so seasoned sailors and ten adepts from various Disciplines, ranging in Circle from Third to Sixth.



Aemilius Velluniium

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (18): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 14
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 5
Social Defense: 13
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 38 (86)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (70)

* Aemilius knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 36
Full Movement: 72

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Boatman Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (6): 13/D12+D10
Avoid Blow (9): 16/D20+D8
Cast Net[D] (8): 15/D20+D6 (Dragging Parry, Unarmed Cast Net)
Climbing[D] (9): 15/D20+D6*
Durability (6/5) (8): 8
Engaging Banter[D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Evaluate[D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Haggle[D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Great Leap (8): 15/D20+D6
Heartening Laugh (8): 15/D20+D6
Karma Ritual (8): 8
Leadership (8): 15/D20+D6
Melee Weapons[D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Missile Weapons (8): 15/D20+D6
Pilot Boat[D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Second Weapon[D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Speak Language (6): 12/2D10
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, Windling
Swimming[D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Thread Weaving (River Weaving)[D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Throwing Weapons (8): 15/D20+D6
Unarmed Combat (8): 15/D20+D6
Wound Balance[D] (8): 14/D20+D4

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.
* Adjusted for +1 Climbing rank bonus from thread boots.

Swordmaster Talents

Disarm[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
First Impression (6): 13/D12+D10
Maneuver[D] (2): 9/D8+D6
Riposte[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Taunt (6): 12/2D10
Winning Smile (6): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Woodworker (4): 11/D10+D8
Mapmaking (4): 10/D10+D6

Knowledge:
Horror Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
T'skrang Politics (4): 10/D10+D6

General:
Fishing (4): 10/D10+D6
Navigation (4): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang

Equipment

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Barbed Net (Damage 8/2D6; Entangle 14)
2 × Barbed Throwing Nets (Range 7–11–14; Entangle 11)
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/scabbard)
Casting Net (Entangle 10)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; Tail Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Bandana
2 × Craftsman Tools
Fishing Kit
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot
550 silver pieces

Legend Points
3,610 Legend Points

Notes
Aemilius possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

The Breeton II
Base Price: NA

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 17/17

Hull:
Armor: 15 **Ramming**: 25
Cargo: 220

Damage:
Derelict: 67 **Critical**: 21
Destroyed: 74

Crew:
Captain: 8 (14) **Crew Size**: 40
Crew Skill: 2 **Crew Rating**: 17
Morale: 60

The Dreadnought

The origins of the *Dreadnought* can be traced back to House Syrtis' Prince Kalieston, the questor of Upandal who first dreamed of building the largest riverboat ever constructed, one the size of a kila. Most Name-givers recognized the folly of the proposal immediately but expressed little surprise, as many questors of Upandal seem to be "a few bricks shy of a load" (as the saying goes). Few people, however, expected the Syrtisian High Chamber to seriously consider the prince's idea, let alone commission the vessel's construction. Apparently, several influential chamber members decided that a giant riverboat would be just the thing to restore House Syrtis' waning prestige among Barsaive's political powers, and so they persuaded their colleagues to provide money to build the ship.

In later years, the project seemed to take on a life of its own. Several chamber members tried to stop it at different times, but in each instance a majority of the chamber members overruled them. Apparently, many prominent *aropagoinya* had grown wealthy after being awarded contracts to work on the project. Many chamber members also feared that stopping the project meant implicitly admitting that they had been wasting the *aropagoi's* money all along. And so work continued.

Finally, after 20 years and several cost overruns, Prince Kalieston unveiled the finished *Dreadnought*. The massive vessel proved an immediate success. 200 yards long and 80 yards wide, with eight decks, three paddle wheels, and four separate fire engines, the ship's size alone left most onlookers awestruck. When the *Dreadnought* reached unprecedented speeds of more than 35 miles an hour during its maiden voyage, the experts declared Prince Kalieston a genius. The prince, however, was entirely dissatisfied with the *Dreadnought's* performance. Vowing that the vessel could move even faster, he set to work retuning the fire engines. The next day, one of the fire engines exploded as Kalieston worked on it, and the prince died.

The engineers of Syrtis replaced the engine and repaired the damage, but they have never been able to duplicate Prince Kalieston's precise tuning of the *Dreadnought's* three paddlewheels. Some say that only a questor of Upandal in the rapturous throes of the Passion could perform this task, but even other questors have failed to duplicate Kalieston's feat. As a result, the *Dreadnought* is no faster than a war galley and even less maneuverable. Furthermore, the rebuilt *Dreadnought* consumes an enormous quantity of elemental fire. The vessel's elemental fire consumption is so high, in fact, that it prevents the Syrtisians from moving the vessel more than a few miles, much less the hundreds of miles to Kaer Eidolon and the Ishkarat enemy. The *Dreadnought* remains an impressive gun platform, thanks to its powerful fire cannon, but the massive riverboat seems destined to languish at anchor just outside the Doors of Shivos until Syrtisian engineers can solve its fire engine problems.

The Dreadnought
Base Price: NA

Speed: 6
Maneuverability: 5
Firepower: 20/25

Hull:
Armor: 25 **Ramming**: 30
Cargo: 1,130

Damage:
Derelict: 108 **Critical**: 29
Destroyed: 114

Crew:
Captain: 6 **Crew Size**: 400
Crew Skill: 2 **Crew Rating**: 18
Morale: 82

Belit Shustal Syrtis, Captain of the Mistral

Belit Shustal Syrtis is one of the wizened old river rats of the Serpent, a veteran of the Theran War with the scars to prove it. A controversial supporter of House Syrtis' Green faction, Belit Shustal held the office of admiral and had been preparing to assume command of Kaer Eidolon when members of the Blue faction took control of the High Chamber. The Blues ousted Belit Shustal from her official position, effectively canceling her plans to take command at Eidolon. As her last official act, however, Belit Shustal assigned herself command of one the *aropagoi*'s sleek new V'strimonian *shimorams* and hand-picked a crew. Belit Shustal met her successor, Admiral T'kraidos, on the docks at Kaer Eidolon only long enough to relinquish her command, then immediately boarded the *Mistral* and set about doing what she does best—making derelicts out of enemy ships.

The last time Belit Shustal brought the *Mistral* in for repairs, the new admiral surprised her by replacing half of her carefully chosen crew with a squadron of elves from Queen Alachia's army, "to promote better relations between the races." In recent months, however, T'kraidos' thinly veiled attempt to hamstring his rival's ability to destroy enemy vessels and win further glory has proved a failure.



Initially Belit Shustal believed that the traditional animosity between the Syrtisian t'skrang and the elves, combined with the close quarters in which a *shimoram* crew must live, would result in disaster. But after seeing a phalanx of elven archers with warbows launch a volley of arrows across a hundred yards for the first time, she realized that her mixed crew could present a deadly threat to any opponent.

She immediately began running the *Mistral's* crew through training drills aimed at promoting unity among them, and within weeks the elves and t'skrang were working as one. Subsequent military successes further helped cement unity among the crew, which is quickly earning a reputation as one of the Mid Reach's finest.

While we remain grateful to House Syrtis, they must keep in mind the decisive role we played in the Battle of Sejanus. Without our aid, I doubt their ability to have driven off the ferocious Ishkarat.

—Takaris Talshara, Blood Warder

The *Mistral* is a V'strimon *shimoram* (see **New Riverboats**, p. 319) and Belit has improved its speed and armor attributes. The t'skrang crewmen are crack troops, as are the elves from the Queen's army. The *Mistral's* second Firepower rating is based on the ship's elven archers and damages only the crews of opposing ships.

Belit Shustal is a Seventh Circle t'skrang Boatman.

Belit Shustal Syrtis

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (18): 7/D12
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (18): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 11
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 5
Social Defense: 13
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 42 (84)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 12
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (69)

* Belit knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Boatman Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (6): 12/2D10
Avoid Blow (7): 13/D12+D10
Cast Net[D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Climbing[D] (8): 14/D20+D4*
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Heartening Laugh (7): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Melee Weapons[D] (7): 13/D12+D10

Pilot Boat [D] (10): 16/D20+D8 (Assault)
Second Weapon [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Speak Language (7): 14/D20+D4
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, Windling
Swimming [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (River Weaving) [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Throwing Weapons (7): 13/D12+D10
Unarmed Combat (7): 13/D12+D10
Wound Balance [D] (7): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.
* Adjusted for +1 Climbing rank bonus from thread boots.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Tailor (4): 10/D10+D6
Mapmaking (4): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Military Procedures (4): 11/D10+D8
T'skrang Politics (4): 11/D10+D8
Theran Military Organization (4): 11/D10+D8

General:
Fishing (4): 11/D10+D8
Navigation (4): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang
Tactics (4): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Thread Padded Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Barbed Net (Damage 8/2D6; Entangle 14)
2 × Barbed Throwing Nets (Range 7–11–14; Entangle 11)
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/scabbard)
Casting Net (Entangle 10)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; Tail Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)
2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Elven Warbow (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 80–160–320)
Quiver (w/20 warbow arrows)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Adventurer's Kit
2 × Craftsman Tools
Elfweave Robe (tailored to fit t'skrang)
Fishing Kit
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Points

1,495 Legend Points

Notes

Belit possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests

The Mistral

Base Price: NA

Speed: 8
Maneuverability: 8
Firepower: 17/17 (12/12)

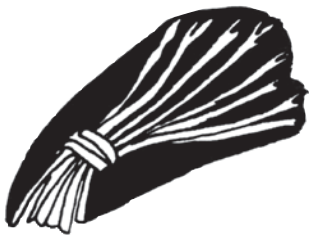
Hull:
Armor: 16 **Ramming**: 28
Cargo: 125

Damage:
Derelict: 68 **Critical**: 21
Destroyed: 75

Crew:
Captain: 10 (16) **Crew Size**: 75
Crew Skill: 3 **Crew Rating**: 17
Morale: 67

Special

The elven archers' separate 12/12 Firepower attack affects only enemy crews.



House V'strimon

House V'strimon, the House of Reeds, is one of the Serpent's oldest t'skrang *aropagoi*. The members of the *aropagoi* describe the origins of their house and its magnificent Floating City with the following tale of the Old Man of the Nets:

Now it was after the Parliament of Mermaids, after he had caught the Great Sea Bass wearing the Sign of the Wheel and set it as Bailiff over the prison he built to hold the Deep Ones, when the Old Man of the Nets sailed home to his house by Lake Ban. And when he pulled up his boat on the shore he saw his wife, V'ranna of the Many Baskets, sitting there weaving the reeds with a look on her face that could curdle an egg in its shell.

"I am home, good wife," called the Old Man of the Nets.

"It is well," said V'ranna, who did not rise to greet him.

"What ails thee, my V'ranna?" asked the Old Man with a sigh.

"For six turns of the moon, you have been journeying," said his wife, ever weaving. "The larder is empty, there is no wood for the fire, the garden needs weeding, and my bed has grown cold. And now here you come without fish, without firewood, and ask 'what ails thee, wife of mine?'"

Quickly, the Old Man produced from his pocket the seed he had been given by the Parliament of Mermaids. "All this is true, my dearest V'ranna, but here I have a gift from the folk under the river, and they tell me it shall grow a reed that will make you a basket greater than any you have made before."

At this V'ranna stopped weaving and took the seed from his hand. Then she fixed an icy glare on him, saying, "A reed tomorrow or a basket the day after shall neither feed me nor warm me by sundown today. Any gift from a mermaid is a foul gift indeed, and better it go to the depths of the lake before we let a weed like this into our garden." And she threw the seed out across the waters, where it sank straight to the deepest part of the lake.

And so the Old Man of the Nets resumed his old life, gathering fish for the larder, cutting wood for the fire, and pulling weeds from the garden. On the days of the half moon, he rowed up the river to market to sell V'ranna's baskets and tell his story of the Great Sea Bass.

Thus, life went on as always until one day the Old Man of the Nets returned from a long journey down the river with the bottom of his boat full of wire eels he had caught near the jungle's edge. But when he came to the place where the river meets Lake Ban, he found his way blocked by a thicket of reeds. The reeds grew all across the river and deep into the lake, and they so muddled the old man's sense of direction that he was forced to leave his boat by the shore and reach home on foot.

When he came to the place where his house once stood, all he could see was covered with reeds. And there was V'ranna, lashing away at the green growth with a sickle, her looks and her words ragged and sharp enough to cut those same reeds with a withering glance.

"Our garden is ruined and our house is gone," V'ranna told her husband. "As fast as I cut them, these weeds grow back. They'll not stop growing till they cover the shore and the whole world. It is unnatural, and you must do something about it this instant!"

And so the Old Man shrugged and pulled out his bone flute, which he had fashioned from the toe bone of Shivoam. He sat on the shore and played, and the Spirit of the River gave heed to his call. V'ranna, who had never before seen the Great Serpent, for once in her life, had nothing to say. She sat down next to the Old Man and held tight to his arm.

Said the Old Man to Shivoam, "We are afflicted, Great Mother. Attend to our need."

And the Great Mother replied with a riddle:

"Throwing the seed without heed
Makes seed into weed.
Weave weed into reed
and fulfill your need."

The Old Man and his wife made a meal out of the wire eels and talked deep into the night about the meaning of Shivoam's words. When they awoke the next morning, V'ranna stepped to the shore and began to weave the reeds all around her. She started that morning and wove all through the day, then wove all through the night. She wove all that week and then three weeks more, until the moon had run its cycle and she could weave no more. Every last rush and reed that had choked the surface of the lake had gone to make a basket larger than V'ranna of the Many Baskets had ever made before, a basket of living reeds that floated upside down on the surface of Lake Ban, right in the center over the deepest waters.

The Old Man of the Nets saw what she had done and realized that they no longer needed shelter. He packed his weary wife and all their belongings into his boat, and made their new home in the basket V'ranna had woven. And in time the ever-growing reeds formed the Floating City of House V'strimon.

Because t'skrang love stories more than history, the truth of such legends can never be verified. However, most scholars agree that House V'strimon likely evolved from a confederation of t'skrang river villages that existed long before the arrival of the Therans in Barsaive. If anyone knows the true extent of V'strimon's age, surely the *shivalahala* does, but she has never offered any answer on the subject (other than a haughty "Harrumph").

During the Days of Preparation, when Thera cast its shadow over all of Barsaive, V'strimon stood firmly opposed to Theran subjugation. Even today the *aropagoinya* of House V'strimon loathe slavery above all things, and the V'strimon Protocols prescribe death for enslaving a fellow Name-giver. Before the Scourge, House V'strimon controlled trade on the Coil River, and the city of Urupa grew from a V'strimonian trade covenant that settled there when the Scourge ended.

Some time before the Orichalcum Wars, the Shivalahala K'tenshin approached the Shivalahala V'strimon with a proposition. House K'tenshin wished to extend its control of the Serpent River northward across Lake Ban, at the probable expense of House Syrtis. In return for permission to cross Lake Ban unmolested, House K'tenshin offered to pay House V'strimon a generous yearly fee. After some discussion, the Shivalahala V'strimon refused the offer on the grounds that House K'tenshin was deeply involved in the Theran slave trade. That refusal triggered a conflict between the two *aropagoi* that lasted until the sealing of the kaers.

Each year, *bakshevas* collected by K'tenshinian riverboats drained much of House V'strimon's wealth. According to legends, House K'tenshin, aided by the Theran navy, staged at least three full-scale sieges of House V'strimon's island citadel during this time. In retaliation, House V'strimon supported rebels of all kinds who sought to free the lands along the Serpent River from Theran control.

These years also saw the birth of the alliance between House V'strimon and Throal, which continues to this day. Throal often used its position as the Therans' administrators in Barsaive to intervene on behalf of its t'skrang allies along the Coil River, and House V'strimon would surely have faced larger Theran forces if not for Throal's intervention. In

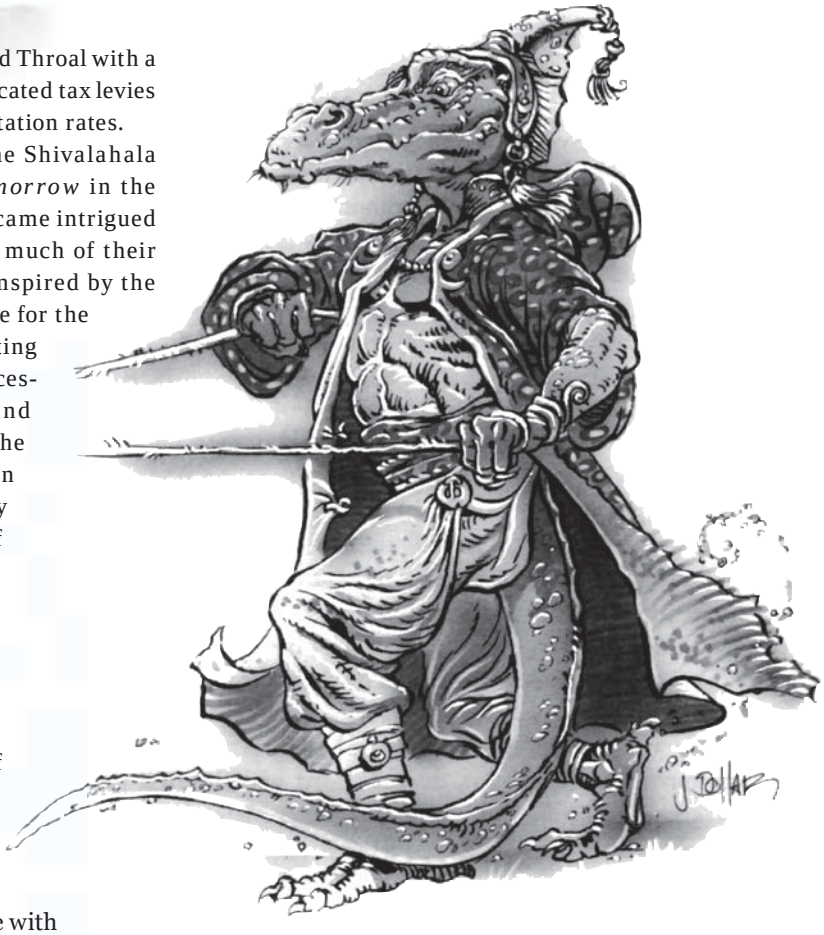
return, House V'strimon's riverboats provided Throal with a way to circumvent Thera's impossibly complicated tax levies and House K'tenshin's outrageous transportation rates.

When the king of Throal presented the Shivalahala V'strimon with a copy of the *Book of Tomorrow* in the years before the Scourge, she reportedly became intrigued with the way the dwarfs had captured so much of their culture's vital essence in written words. Inspired by the feat, she resolved to create a similar treatise for the t'skrang even as her people sealed the Floating City against the Scourge. Combining her ancestral memories with the work of scribes and scholars from her library, she undertook the transfer of t'skrang oral traditions to written words. The fruits of her labor survive today as the *V'strimon Protocols*, a collection of writings to which the *aropagoinya* of House V'strimon add a new volume every year.

After the Scourge, the riverboats of House V'strimon were among the first to venture out from the safety of their kaer. Indeed, the airship *Earthdawn*'s first encounter on its momentous journey out of Throal was a meeting with the V'strimonian riverboat *Shikasta* on the upper reaches of the Coil River. V'strimon crews were the first t'skrang to establish regular trade with Throal, the first to establish trade with the fledgling city of Urupa, and the first to cross the Aras Sea to lands beyond Barsaive. Today, these trading relationships form the foundation of House V'strimon's prosperous economic empire.

When the Therans returned to Barsaive, House V'strimon left no room for doubt about its contempt for the invaders. The *aropagoi's* riverboats regularly went out of their way to raid Theran river outposts, harass Theran troops on the march, and rescue entire river towns from the clutches of Theran slavers. More important, gallant V'strimonian riverboat crews and captains such as the famed Westhrall regularly ran a gauntlet of Theran airships and infantry to transport desperately needed food and raw materials up the Coil River to the besieged dwarfs. The heroic actions of the t'skrang enabled Throal to withstand a Theran blockade designed to starve the dwarf kingdom into submission. In 1456 TH, House V'strimon's continued support for Throal prompted Overgovernor Fallan Pavelis to deploy a fleet of 20 vedettes and a kila to destroy the riverboats docked in the harbor of the Floating City. Omoo of Urupa, an obsidiman Troubadour visiting the court of V'strimon, recounts the story, which stands today as House V'strimon's finest hour.

It was a late summer evening during the dark of the moon when word arrived from the Tower of Air that the Theran fleet was flying toward V'strimon. The Shivalahala V'strimon had just sat down to dinner, and everyone in the hall fell silent at the news. All eyes turned to the leader of the House, but the *shivalahala* continued to help herself from the plates of food on the table without saying a word. The messenger stood uneasily, shifting from foot to foot, his tail twitching. The crowd remained speechless as the



shivalahala calmly picked up her fork and began to eat. The messenger repeated himself in his strongest voice, sounding all the louder in the surrounding stillness. "The Theran fleet has set course for our city and will reach here before daybreak tomorrow!"

After several mouthfuls of food, the *shivalahala* looked at the messenger and said, "Youngling, I'm not deaf. I heard you the first time." Then she returned her attention to her plate.

The young messenger, put out by this display of apparent indifference, said, "But Great Mother, what do you intend to do?"

The *shivalahala* put down her fork, wiped her lips with her napkin, and replied, "I intend to finish my supper. Worrying is bad for the digestion." And she took her fork in hand again and helped herself to more fish.

All that night, the *shivalahala* remained serene. When the castellan asked for instructions on deploying his regiments along the city's perimeter, the *shivalahala* said, "There's no cause for alarm. Let the young men sleep." When the harbormaster requested permission to evacuate the docks and send the riverboats south to Urupa, the *shivalahala* gently refused, reminding him that shipments were due in Throal that week. When the leader of the council of trade covenants suggested the *shivalahala* assemble the people of the city inside the Great Hall for their own safety, she replied that there was no need for such action. Instead, she held a brief audience with the chief steward of the city's College of the Vine and retired earlier than usual.

An hour before sunrise, the Shivalahala V'strimon awoke and came to see me before any of her greatly astonished servants could catch up to her. She appeared at the door to my

room at the palace, dressed in a simple patterned robe like those worn by the novitiates of magical orders. She grinned the crooked grin peculiar to t'skrang and said, "I have need of an obsidiman who can sing."

I dressed swiftly—most unusual for one of my race—and followed her as she bustled to the foot of the city's Tower of Earth. There she found the entire College of the Vine waiting for her. I remember the chief steward was carrying a long length of rope coiled across his shoulder. Together, we all marched to the top of the tower like a squad of warriors deploying to repel the invader.

We spoke a general blessing in the Name of Garlen, preserver of hearth and home; then an unusually long and detailed prayer to Jaspree, Caretaker of Barsaive. Everyone stood in a circle around the *shivalahala*. The chief steward took the rope, handed one end to the t'skrang on his left, wrapped the rope around the *shivalahala's* waist, then went back to the edge of the circle to the next t'skrang on the left. When he had repeated this for each individual in the circle—ten times in all—the rope connected the *shivalahala* to her servants in a pattern of loops, like the petals of a flower. We waited there in the darkness before the dawn, alert and yet strangely relaxed, until the first light in the east caught the hulls of the advancing Theran vedettes.

Not until then did I realize that the rope was made of braided reeds. The t'skrang on the outside of the circle pulled their loops taut and began to walk slowly around the *shivalahala*, who pivoted in her bonds. As they walked, the t'skrang slapped their tails against the ground with whiplike force. The beating became a rhythm, and the walk became a slow, sedate dance. Then I knew what song I had been brought there to sing. It was the song of the Dreaming, the song my people share when anticipating the merging with the Liferock. At first my voice faltered, for the song is not for energy-wasters. But each time the circle completed a revolution, the *shivalahala* locked her eyes with mine, and I could not refuse her unspoken request. Gradually the tempo of the dance quickened, forcing me to use all my skill as an adept to keep up.

The dancers on the edge of the circle wove in and out among each other, and the floral pattern of the rope began to take a new, more complex form. The radius of the circle began to collapse toward the *shivalahala* as her bonds tightened, and the rope patterns grew more intricate. I felt a tremor underfoot, as if the whole tower were responding to the ritual, and I sensed the impending Oneness that an obsidiman normally feels only near a Liferock.

Electrified, I felt the energy of the dance take astral form and launch itself toward the Theran fleet. Suddenly the two vedettes in the vanguard dropped like stones from the sky. Within moments the other Theran vessels followed, as though the airships were ordinary boats that had tumbled over a waterfall. But they did not float when they struck the water. Instead, they vanished beneath Lake Ban with barely a ripple. Not one vessel survived the awesome might of that spell, not even the vast kila. The *shivalahala's* magic had sunk the Theran fleet.

After later research, I came to understand that the Elementalists of the College of the Vine had cast a spell they call Earth and Air against the Theran airships. The spell transformed all the kernels of elemental air inside the Theran fleet into elemental earth. With nothing to hold them in the sky, the ships fell to the ground far faster than ever they had left it. It truly was an awe-inspiring experience, and I doubt that I shall ever see its like again.

The Floating City of House V'strimon

At the center of Lake Ban lies the Floating City of House V'strimon. Five towers, arranged in the shape of a perfect pentagon around a sixth tower, form the foundation of the city. Hanging on and growing between these towers is a floating island of densely woven reeds more than 300 yards across at the widest point. A hexagonal weave is used in the platform, which is composed solely from live specimens of the lake's unique reed species. Tradition holds that the island is a single, living organism growing from a central root that extends all the way to the deepest part of Lake Ban. The reed island supports the weight of the city's remaining structures, which include riverboat piers and buildings more than three stories tall.

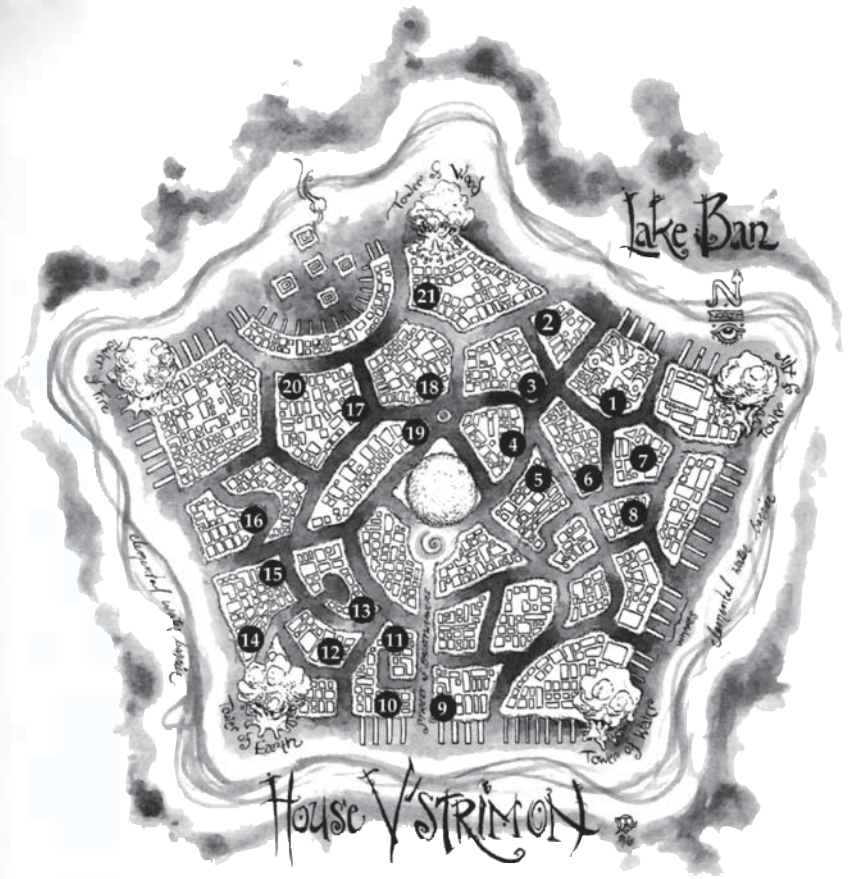
Each year, just after the first crocus blooms, the entire island blossoms with lustrous, purple flowers. The *aropagoinya* mark the occasion with the Festival of Flowers, a three-day holiday. At the end of the festival the city's residents pick all the remaining flowers and throw them onto the surface of the lake, where the current of the Serpent carries them down the river to the sea.

Were it possible to cram any more people into such a confined space, the Floating City might rival Travar and Bartertown for the title of Barsaive's most populous city. As it is, the city's relatively small size and its network of interlaced canals limit the amount of living space available. Despite these limitations, an impressive number of t'skrang make their homes in the Floating City, and the city's canals are choked with boats ferrying passengers and goods from place to place.

Though its appearance suggests otherwise, the Floating City is actually a citadel covered by a dome of densely woven elemental air. Beneath the surface of the lake, the city is protected by an equally impenetrable system of massive *refselenika*. The *refs* provided excellent protection against Horrors during the Scourge, and even today few non-V'strimon riverboat captains are capable of navigating the *refs* without endangering their ships and crews. As a result, most outsiders prefer to dock at one of the landings along the lakeshore and hire a V'strimon guide to take their ships into the Floating City. No one has successfully entered the city from the air since the end of the Scourge.

Once within the *refs*, a riverboat must cross more than 300 yards of open water before reaching the docks on the city's perimeter. This extra space may seem excessive, but vessels must frequently circle the city to find an open dock, as all are operated on a first come, first served basis. Travelers should keep this in mind when boarding a ferry to the city, because the arrangement prevents a ferryboat captain from knowing precisely where in the city he will land his vessel.

MAP KEY	
#	Location
1	V'strimon Central Foundation
2	Upandal's Pride
3	Vranna's Basket
4	The Mermaid's Gift
5	Erendis
6	Dragonclaw
7	P'skarrot
8	Golden Crescent
9	Red Crest
10	Serpent's Coil
11	Watched by Chorrolis
12	T'schlone
13	Laughter in the Water
14	Swift Runner
15	Shivoam's Daughter
16	Whispering Wheel
17	Old Man of the Nets
18	Astendar's Dart
19	Riversong
20	D'zur's Longing
21	Lady of the Lake



The docks are a patchwork of independently owned and operated facilities. Most *ref* guides know of an open berth somewhere in the city, but the traveler should be warned that the open dock will invariably belong to the guide's cousin, who pays a commission to his relative from the docking charge. Expect to haggle over the docking fee, which may be quite high. However, a well-paid V'strimonian dockmaster will watch over a ship in his care as if it were his own child.

The only vessels with assigned berths are V'strimon's war vessels, which dock at an isolated wharf reserved for their use on the northeast side of the city. The V'strimon fleet contains five warships. Two are based in Urupa, another at Kaer Eidolon near the Blood Wood, and a fourth patrols for pirates along the Serpent River between Lake Ban and Lake Pyros. The fifth warship is stationed at the Floating City, but even this vessel regularly sets out on various missions.

On almost any day, three to six V'strimon *shimorams* are docked at the fleet's wharf. These ships are about half the size of a typical t'skrang trading vessel. Unlike most riverboats, which have flat bottoms, *shimorams* have keels. This feature makes the *shimoram* faster and more maneuverable than any other type of fire-driven river ship. The *shimorams* are built in nearby villages, close to the raw materials used in their construction.

The city's armory and the V'strimon Foundation House are located near the war fleet's wharf. The armory is a long, low warehouse that holds caches of elemental air and fire kernels for use in fire cannon and fire engines, as well as enough armor and weapons to outfit 1,000 soldiers. The V'strimon Foundation House is actually a maze of interconnected houses and courtyards where sailors on leave from the war fleet can bivouac for a nominal fee.

The Marketplaces

The Floating City contains four main markets. The largest is located in the Plaza of the Scarves in the southeast corner of the city. This market serves as the central exchange for the trade routes of the Coil and Serpent Rivers, and contains auction houses, trading pits, warehouses and specialty shops that offer every trade good imaginable. Many of the city's best inns and taverns lie along the edges of this market, catering to the often wealthy merchants who frequent the Plaza.

The busiest part of the Plaza of the Scarves is marked by a huge slate chalkboard labeled "Covenant Share Market." Here, individuals can meet with agents from t'skrang villages all along the Serpent River network and purchase associate shares in each village's annual riverboat journeys. Scribes of the share market record all transactions and provide documentation to both buyer and seller. When the riverboat completes its trip, shareholders can claim their cut of the profits from the village's agent at the share market.

When purchasing covenant shares, travelers must be wary of fraud. Mere months ago an agent from the village of Astoras appeared in the share market one day, extolling the virtues of owning a share of the riverboat *Serpentreach*. The agent said Astoras had been blessed with bumper crops of *kiratai* and *ustendar,* and expected to realize a handsome profit. Investors lined up by the hundreds for a share in the rich prize. Every three weeks the agent from Astoras appeared in the market with a letter from the captain of the *Serpentreach*, describing the incredible profits he was making as he traveled along the river. The price of the associate shares spiraled.

Then one day a traveler from the village of Sherah

entered the market, saw the price on shares of the *Serpentreach* and begged to know the reason for the extraordinary cost. "You see," she said, "Sherah has a shipyard, and we have been laboring all summer to repair the *Serpentreach* of Astoras."

Within minutes an angry mob of investors had surrounded the so-called agent from Astoras. The "agent" turned out to be a Sherahan thief who had manufactured the entire ruse. The rogue was brought before the Shivalahala V'strimon, who had agents of her own seize the thief's tidy nest egg. His possessions were auctioned and all the money returned to the investors, though none recovered their full losses. The *shivalahala* then had the thief's tail cut off and the perpetrator thrown into the lake just outside the city's *refs*.

A visitor who asks a city native for directions to the "main market" will eventually find himself at the Solarus, a huge checkerboard of stalls and shops located at the base of the Tower of Fire on the city's west side. At the Solarus, city dwellers buy their food and household items. Customers can choose from hundreds of varieties of rice, fish, fruits, beans, pots, pans, baskets—virtually anything imaginable. Finding a particular item, however, can be a challenge. The Solarus is a maze with very few landmarks, and vendors in search of the perfect location constantly exchange stalls with each other. The visitor who asks for directions to a particular merchant's stall is likely to be laughed at, misled, or sold something that is "not quite what you were looking for, but much cheaper." The Solarus remains open late into the night, doing business long after sunset by the light of the flame at the top of the Tower of Fire.

The Floating City's other main markets specialize in baskets and preserved fish. The Street of Basketweavers is a single canal that runs straight from the edge of the island to the center of the city. The canal is wide enough to accommodate the large skiffs that collect reeds from the South Marsh. These skiffs stop at each of the long row houses along the canal, where they sell their wares to the seven *k'rohyin*, or trade covenants, that specialize in the art of basketweaving for House V'strimon. Each *k'rohyin* has as many as 200 skilled craftsmen who turn the reeds into watertight baskets, baskets that preserve food against spoilage, decorative mats, and a myriad of other unusual basket designs. Although other basketmakers sell their wares in the Floating City, the trade covenants on the Street of the Basketweavers are renowned as the best in Barsaive.

The fish sellers conduct their business in the Plaza of Spices, located near the city's northwest wharves. The pungent aromas of fresh fish, pickled fish, and fresh spices—which most *aropagoinya* of House V'strimon think of as the good smells of home—engulf this market. The marketplace is built on six small islands inside a small harbor. Each island contains a large building, some as high as five stories, that house the so-called cooking covenants of House V'strimon. The facilities of these *k'rohyin* resemble armed encampments, so jealously do the fish cookers guard their secret techniques. To gain entry to a covenant kitchen, a visitor must produce the token of the covenant and know the password, which changes each day.

Every morning and evening, fishing boats crowd the market's eastern wharf, unloading the day's catch under the watchful eyes of the *k'rohyin* agents. The agents purchase fish by the boatload, then send for boats from their kitchens to pick up the fish. The laden kitchen boats enter their covenant houses by fortified gateways. Other *k'rohyin* agents buy spices and other ingredients from other markets and carefully transport their purchases to their covenant houses under the same tight security. Generally, *k'rohyin* agents are suspicious of outsiders as well as agents from rival covenant houses, for the fish trade is so lucrative that

Adventure Hook

The Golden Reed, a tavern near the Plaza of Scarves, is losing business. The tavern has a reputation as a high-class establishment, with prices of 50 silvers or more for a meal—however, its proven reputation brings wealthy clientele and the place is (normally) rarely empty. Sh'ondla, the t'skrang owner, has no idea why she is losing customers.

S'hondla asks the characters to help her investigate why the tavern is losing its reputation. Recently, she overheard a conversation between a rival tavern-owner and some surly-looking individuals saying that "the Reed will not serve for much longer". She can give the characters the Name of the rival: Nochurr, an ork with a bad reputation and owner of The Smiling Crojen. Despite its rough name, the tavern serves meals and wine of high quality, and competes directly with The Golden Reed for customers. Nochurr inherited the tavern a few months ago when his brother (and former owner) of the tavern died in an accident. The ork found a rundown house frequented only by dock workers looking to get drunk on cheap ale after the end of their work shift.

Nochurr wants to establish The Smiling Crojen as a new high-quality tavern. He decided to sabotage The Golden Reed—hiring a human Thief Named Mugga—to get rid of the competition. Mugga spread rumors on the streets and markets: "customers of the Reed got sick after eating their meal," and "the tavern's kitchen is filthy and full of vermin," and other defamatory stories of the gamemaster's invention. The characters can confront Nochurr or try to find Mugga (who is well-known in the local underworld) and help restore The Golden Reed's excellent and well-deserved reputation.

competitors often resort to espionage and other extreme measures in their quests for ever-larger profits.

The Baths

Another feature of this distinctly t'skrang city is the plethora of bathing sites along the city's north, south and west shorelines. Typically, bathing sites consist of wooden boardwalks that lead down to the water and buoy lines that extend 50 feet out from the water's edge to protect swimmers from encroaching boats. Boats that violate the bathing zones are subject to fines up to 100 silver pieces. Most of the bathing sites also feature small shelters and buildings. Some are changing rooms, where bathers can leave their clothes and towels. Others are drying rooms with fire pits, in deference to the t'skrang sensitivity to temperature shifts.

During the early morning hours, when the bathing sites are most crowded, food vendors pull their carts to the boardwalks to offer bathers a little breakfast after their morning dips. Other vendors sell scented water, soap, and perfume. Non-t'skrang are advised to bring their own combs and brushes—t'skrang have no hair, and so no vendor sells such items.

The Floating City also boasts several private bathing sites for those put off by the spectacle of public bathing. The most famous is the Baths of the Nine Passions in the southwest part of town. For a fee of 40 silver pieces, a customer can receive nine ritual baths, each named for one of the Passions. Each bath features a unique combination of temperature, scent, and atmosphere. For example, the Bath of Upandal is a steamy sauna with the sulfurous aroma of coal, while the Bath of Jaspree features cool water scented with rose and sweet jasmine. Wine is served in the Bath of Floranuus, while a magnificent banquet is provided in the Bath of Chorrolis. The Bath of Astendar has gained a lascivious reputation, the sole basis for which is a Troubadour song made popular during the Theran War, the refrain of which is: "I'll be hoping and dreaming to meet you alone by the Bath of Astendar in V'strimon".

The Foundation Houses

The central foundation of House V'strimon includes approximately 1,000 t'skrang from villages along the Coil and Serpent Rivers and Lake Ban. Advancement to the central foundation is a great honor, and those who are chosen are proud to show the bracelets of reeds that betoken their membership. The central foundation serves as a pool of manpower and leadership for the *aropagoi's* war fleet, but the *niall* is not a tightly bound organization in the manner of ork scorcher bands or trollmoots. Rather, the members of the central foundation enjoy certain privileges, such as the opportunity to join the crew of their choice, captain a warship, or even to go home to their villages as heroes. Chief among the perquisites of central foundation membership is a room in the V'strimon Foundation House, located near the armory.

The V'strimon Foundation House is considered the finest place to live anywhere on the river (at least among t'skrang). The foundation house is a maze of courtyards, gardens, and fountains in which every turn greets the stranger with new surprises. The house, with room for a thousand or more t'skrang, is run like a cross between a luxury inn and a genuine village dome. A sailor returning from duty with the fleet will find a private room waiting for him, with clean bedding and many other amenities. He may stay as long as desired, with room, board, and a whole host of services provided for nominal fees. The foundation house also maintains an egg hatchery and an exemplary school system for hatchlings born of the foundation members.

Twice a year, during the meetings of the *aropagoi's* Council of Crew Covenants, the V'strimon Foundation House becomes a madhouse as crews from every V'strimon riverboat converge for a week of revelry and renewed acquaintances. But for much of the rest of the year, the foundation house is a quiet place with relatively few inhabitants. The housekeepers are a friendly but motley crew, made up of retired *aropagoinya*, grown children who never ventured out on the river, and a small staff of retirees from the inns around the Plaza of the Scarves.

Shortly after the founding of the Floating City, many of the best craftsmen in V'strimon's sphere of influence began to leave their home villages to join the trade covenants of the city. To satisfy the desire of these t'skrang for membership in a foundation, the Shivalahala V'strimon established a new kind of foundation called the *niall dynasthai*, or "powerful foundation." Each of these fraternal orders is dedicated to supporting one of the 20 "motherships" in the V'strimon fleet.

The motherships serve as reminders of House V'strimon's proud history. Six of these vessels provide ferry service around Lake Ban. Four more are showboats that travel the Serpent, providing entertainment. The remaining ten conduct regular trading voyages. None of the motherships are part of the *aropagoi's* war fleet; the t'skrang of V'strimon recognize that arming riverboats for war produces little profit.

Members of the central foundation and *niall dynasthais* pay regular dues to support and supply their motherships, in much the same way as traditional crew covenants. The crews of many of these ships, however, are drawn from outside the foundation or *niall*. *Niall* members also share in the profits realized by their mothership crews.

Each *niall* also maintains a foundation house where *niall* members may live. The typical foundation house includes interconnected living quarters, usually with one central dining area and kitchen. Some of the foundation houses even have their own *lahalas*. Most maintain rooms for egg-tending and distribute hatchlings to menfolk who wish to sample the joys of parenting. Most important, the *nialls* operate schools where students may learn the particular craft of the *niall*. For example, the school of V'ranna's Basket is located near the Street of the Basketmakers and teaches the nuances of basket weaving. Troubadours run the school of Riversong, and the school of Upandal's Pride produces exemplary Boatmen. Any t'skrang can join a *niall* by paying the required dues, but each *niall* may discharge any member it finds too disruptive by refunding his dues.

Each year after the spring meeting of the V'strimon crew council, the *nialls* decorate their motherships for the Council Review festival. During this festival, the 20 moth-

Adventure Hook

The basketmakers on the Street of the Basketweavers are said to be the best in Barsaive; a reputation that has tempted many rivals to find out about the secrets of their mastership. Not long ago, the basketmaker Named S'rakar began to sell supreme work for a surprisingly low prices. As a result, the other weavers are afraid to loose their income, and hire the characters to investigate the secret of the new weaver to learn how he can operate on such a low budget.

At their investigations the group discovers that S'rakar's partner, a gnarled old human man Named Qulbas, is actually a questor of Vestrial. The questor arrived at the Floating City only a few weeks earlier and exploited S'rakar's habit of compulsive gambling. The t'skrang can't resist a game of cards or throwing some dices and has become heavily indebted by criminals. Qulbas bought off S'rakar's debts and forced him to lower his prices drastically. If pressed S'rakar will break and tell the whole story, including that he is effectively operating at a loss. The t'skrang hopes that the characters will help him one way or another and points them to the place Qulbas lives.

Qulbas resides in a brothel not far from the Street of the Basketweavers. There he gathered a group of "loyal" followers around him, people that are also indebted to him (including the brothel owner, Fulkan). When confronted, he orders his followers to take care of the characters. Qulbas is rich and ressourceful, and will flee the brothel if the player characters become a serious threat to his mischievous dealings to cause unrest. Of course, he is vengeful and will come back at the characters at a later time...

erships, along with any V'strimon warships in port, parade around the shores of Lake Ban, then enter the *refs* and circumnavigate the Floating City. At the southwest wharf, near the Plaza of Scarves, the Shivalahala V'strimon reviews the vessels and awards a special flag, called the Golden Scarf, to the most beautiful ship. The event is grand spectacle as only the t'skrang can appreciate, and the *nialls* plan their decorating schemes weeks in advance.

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While I'm usually not much for the t'skrang arts, I'd tell anyone to go out of his way to behold the sheer beauty and majesty of these ships. They go a long way to make an airship look homely and down to earth.

—Vrayma Dawnharrow of Clan Burntclaw, Troubadour

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The Six Towers

The five outlying towers of the Floating City are Named after the five elements: wood, fire, air, earth, and water. The Tower of Wood is actually an enormous tree that draws sustenance from the island's reeds. The reeds and vines are so closely intertwined with the tree's trunk and branches that distinguishing where the tree ends and reeds begin is quite difficult. Some say that the Tower of Wood sprang from a seed from the Wyrm Wood, which Queen Dallia sent to the Shivalahala V'strimon as a gesture of peace and good will between the elven and t'skrang races. The truth of this tale cannot be confirmed, but elves from all over Barsaive continue to make pilgrimages to see this tree, for it is said that the memory and magic of the ancient, pre-Scourge Elven Court live within its branches and leaves.

Suspended with vines from the Tower of Wood are the basketlike quarters of the College of the Vine, the *aropagoi's* school of elemental magic. The college's staff and students are responsible for tending the island's reeds and ensuring their health by performing the required rituals. Traditionally, the Shivalahala V'strimon holds the title of master of the college, but in practice the Steward of the Vine oversees the operation of the school. Visitors to the island city should realize that the steward holds magisterial powers that he may wield against anyone found desecrating or destroying the reeds of the Floating City. Although it has not happened in recent memory, the steward may banish perpetrators of such crimes from the Floating City and sentence to death any exiles that return.

To the east of the Tower of Wood, a collection of smaller trees called the Long Grove extends along the lake's edge. The Long Grove is home to a large community of windlings called the Almarra. Originally, the Almarra lived in a kaer in the lake's South Marsh. When a Horror breached the kaer's defenses shortly after the Scourge began, an Almarran Wind-dancer Named Shirala flew to the Floating City to request refuge for the windling community. The effort of dancing through the citadel's extensive defenses so exhausted her that she collapsed and fell into the waters, and a fisherwoman Named Kreesta rescued her. Not knowing quite what to make of the windling, Kreesta brought Shirala to her *niall's lahala*, who brought both of them before the Shivalahala V'strimon. Shirala begged the *shivalahala* to send a riverboat to rescue the windlings of Almarra. But the *shivalahala* refused the call for aid, claiming that House V'strimon could not risk the breach of its own citadel by sending a riverboat. The *shivalahala* said she could offer Shirala sanctuary within the Floating City, but no more. Then Kreesta the fisherwoman stepped forward and said,

"I shall go."

The *jik'harra* of the simple fisherwoman so impressed the *shivalahala* that she granted Kreesta a boon.

"If I were to have a boon, *shivalahala*, it would be that you should come with us," Kreesta replied.

The *shivalahala* suddenly looked very sad and answered, "Ready your boat to sail at dawn." So Kreesta and Shirala prepared all that night for their journey. Just before dawn, the *shivalahala* announced herself with a knock on Kreesta's door and the three of them quietly left the Floating City. The *shivalahala* guided Kreesta's fishing boat through the *refs*, and Shirala showed them the way to her people's kaer. They found the windlings, as well as the Horror, which the *shivalahala* engaged in a long, bitter battle. During the skirmish, the Horror destroyed Kreesta's boat and killed the *shivalahala*, but not before the V'strimon leader dealt it a mortal blow. And so Kreesta built a raft to carry the Almarra away from their ruined kaer, then pulled the raft across the lake with the strength of her own swimming. When the fisherwoman reached the Floating City's *refselenika*, the voice of the old *shivalahala* spoke to her and guided her through the magical protections. When the group arrived at the Floating City, Kreesta the fisherwoman was no more, and a new Shivalahala V'strimon stood in her place.

Ever since that time, the windlings of Almarra have been utterly devoted to the Shivalahala V'strimon. In fact, a small, all-female corps of Almarrans known as the Shiralaki comprise the *shivalahala's* only bodyguard. In addition, the Almarra operate the most prestigious (if not always the most dependable) messenger service in Barsaive. Apparently the Almarra have absorbed some of the renowned t'skrang bravado over the years of their residence in the Floating City; the windlings have developed a reputation for fearlessness in the execution of their duties.

The Tower of Fire contains an elemental spirit that the *shivalahala* rescued from a Horror-marked adept several centuries ago. In gratitude the spirit, which takes the form of an ever-burning flame, has vowed to guard House V'strimon until the *shivalahala* passes her Name to her successor. Elementalists from across the province come to the tower to converse with this spirit, partly to practice the art of speaking the elemental tongue without fear of reprisal and partly to gain knowledge of changes in the elemental planes since the coming of the Horrors.

The city's Tower of Air is by far the tallest of the six towers, and it, too, has an unusual property. A Boatman who stands atop the Tower of Air can, with proper meditation, view any section of the Serpent River from the Servos Jungle to the Lalai Gorge or any part of the Coil River from its source in the Throal Mountains to the Aras Sea. The view resembles that from the crow's nest of a large riverboat, approximately 30 feet above the water. The observer can move his field of vision along the water at the same speed as a riverboat.

The Tower of Earth, while the shortest tower, still is impressive in its height. Its weight is even more the marvel, as its thick walls and heavy dark stones seem out of place in juxtaposition to the waters of the lake and reeds of the city. Just under its shadow lies a patch of dry earth upon which an obsidimen land house stands. The *shivalahala* apparently had a soft spot for obsidimen and felt such a place would comfort those brave enough to venture on the Serpent's waters. In addition, it has seen much use of late due to frequent visits by the *shivalahala* herself and various obsidimen rumored to be part of the Liferock Rebellion.

A true testament to the t'skrang mastery of water, the Tower of Water is a wonder to behold. It is made of translucent, constantly flowing blocks of elemental water, which provide a breathtaking view to those fortunate enough to find themselves near the tower at sunset. It is said that within carefully guarded areas of the Tower of Water one can sense and manipulate the many *refselenika* that surround the Floating City and that many a V'strimon Boatman has been taught the extent of these defenses there. It is also claimed that in its lower pools one can somehow "feel" all that moves in the waters of Lake Ban, and possibly beyond.

The Dome of House V'strimon

The central tower of the V'strimonian complex is a dome made of the indigenous island reeds. The largest freestanding dome in all of Barsaive, the structure can accommodate the island's entire population in times of crisis. The dome also serves as a meeting hall, where the Shivalahala V'strimon gives her public audiences and the *aropagoi's* covenant council conducts meetings on the first day of each new moon. The dome also contains the *shivalahala's* private chambers, which are renowned for the elegant craftsmanship of their extravagant design and furnishings.

Along the southern face of the dome lies the Well of Shivoam, which leads to a sunken pool 40 feet beneath the lake's surface. The walls of the well are made of tightly woven reeds, and three wooden staircases along the well's inner walls lead down to the pool. Three canals that feed the well pass through a series of baffles that prevent boats from tumbling over the edge of the well. Legend has it that after the Old Man of the Nets moved his family to live in V'ranna's Basket, the Spirit of Shivoam would come to visit him in the well. In memory of the Old Man, pilgrims who journey to V'strimon often stop to bathe in the well's sacred waters.

The Floating City's five canals converge just north of the dome. Where they meet lies a small island, on which stands the Westhrall Memorial—an elemental water sculpture surrounded by fountains and cascades. The memorial commemorates the captain of the riverboat *Astendar's Dart*, a man known only as Westhrall and a much-loved hero of the Theran War. Its origins can be traced back to shortly after the Theran War, when the hero returned to the Floating City to settle down and raise his daughter, Jedaiyen. At that time, Westhrall demanded that the *shivalahala* erect a monument to his achievements in the war. Finding the *shivalahala* cool to the idea, Westhrall commissioned the sculpture and surrounding fountains with his own money. When the *shivalahala* discovered Westhrall's plans, she agreed to provide a place of honor for the statue near the dome.

Upon completion, the Westhrall Memorial was unveiled amid great pomp and ceremony in the Plaza of the Five Canals. But when the architects set the fountains going at the climax of the ceremony, Westhrall saw that the dazzling,

dancing waters virtually obscured his statue. He turned angrily toward the *shivalahala* as if to strike her, but she said, "Look carefully, captain. You will see that there is one fountain for each and every crewman who died in the service of the glorious Westhrall."

It is said that the great captain began to weep inconsolably at the *shivalahala's* words.

Since the construction of House V'strimon's sixth and central tower, philosophers have speculated about its symbolic meaning. Many believe that the tower may hint at the existence of a sixth element, because the Floating City's other five towers represent the five known elements.



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If the reeds of V'strimon are simply one vast plant, then the whole of the island is woven of a continuous thread. Truly then, might not an image of the Great Pattern of Barsaive be seen in the woven reeds of the dome of the Great Hall of V'strimon?

—Geltharion Pan'del, Lightbearer

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THE SHIVALAHALA V'STRIMON

Greatly concerned about the arrival of the Theran behemoth on the shores of Lake Ban, the Shivalahala V'strimon has emerged as a leader of the opposition to the Therans. By working to create and sustain an alliance of Name-giver communities against the Theran incursion, the Shivalahala V'strimon hopes to protect House V'strimon and its holdings from Theran control and spare the region the worst depredations of Theran power.

Shivalahala V'strimon is a dignified figure who inspires loyalty in her humblest servants and obedience in even her proudest ship captains. She is widely acknowledged as the grand dame of the river and has transformed the t'skrang obsession with personal adornment into a public statement of the wealth of her people and her own excellent taste in clothing and jewelry. Indeed, it is said that when House K'tenshin captured her eldest daughter, the *shivalahala* supplied the full measure of the ransom with the gems and jewelry on her person. Her coterie of advisers and counselors has been compared to that retained by Queen Alachia of the Blood Wood, and it is said the *shivalahala* has a particular weakness for news and gossip from the Elven Court.

This mask of shallow urbanity, however, is a disguise. The Shivalahala V'strimon has no rivals in the language of trade and politics, profit, and risk. Her ambition—which she is wise enough never to reveal publicly, yet cunning enough to keep alive in Barsaive's rumor mills—is to unite House V'strimon, Throal, and the Blood Wood in a sphere of prosperity that will rival the economic power of Thera. She has propped up the waning fortunes of House Syrtis by lending the *aropagoi* riverboats and access to trade routes, so that it might better resist the growing strength of House K'tenshin, a common enemy of Houses Syrtis and V'strimon, as well as check House Ishkarat's advances in the north. She has also supported certain factions within House Ishkarat to counter what she calls "the corrupting influence of the Denairastas of Iopos" on that *aropagoi*.

The *shivalahala's* strengths are not confined to trade and politics. Barsaivian Elementalists universally recognize the Shivalahala V'strimon as perhaps the greatest living authority on elemental magic. She does not practice her magic often, however, leading some to speculate that the bulk of the *shivalahala's* knowledge of Elementalism resides in the memories of a particularly unpleasant V'strimonian

ancestor. Others, however, contend that the *shivalahala* is simply growing old and chooses to concentrate her dwindling energies on the business fortunes of House V'strimon. On the other hand, the *shivalahala* is undoubtedly a questor of Jaspree, for she makes no attempt to conceal her public devotions to the strange plant growth that forms the island of V'strimon.

Currently, she is particularly concerned with protecting House V'strimon's control of the Coil River, which provides the *aropagoi* with access to Urupa and the Aras Sea and enables House V'strimon to control the flow of trade from that city to Lake Ban and elsewhere along the Serpent. Theran military escorts have already enabled a few K'tenshin vessels to trade directly with Urupan merchants, and the *shivalahala* fears that House K'tenshin ultimately intends to wrest control of the valuable trade route from House V'strimon altogether.

Most observers believe that the *shivalahala* is nearing the end of her life, for she has served in the position since the middle of the Scourge, through the opening of the Floating City to the world approximately 100 years ago.

The Shivalahala V'strimon is a Twelfth Circle t'skrang Elementalist.

SHIVALAHALA V'STRIMON

"Yes, yes, that's all very interesting, but it's old news now, isn't it? If you've come that near the Blood Wood during your travels, then surely you have heard news about those ambitious Denairastas, hmmm? And how many riverboats of Ishkarat did you pass on the river? Oh, and if you by chance can remember, what was the asking price of a barrel of fish in Lalai? Captain Rh'gullian is taking the Whirlpool *north next week, and we can change his manifest if the market looks good."*

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 (13)[P]
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 11 (16)[P]
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 3 (8)[P]

Death Rating: 32 (80)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 5/D8**
Unconsciousness Rating: 24 (60)*

[P] Enhanced by +5 through place True pattern (see Notes, below).
* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** The Shivalahala V'strimon knows the Unshakable Earth talent.

Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Air Speaking[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6 (Whispered Conversation)
Animate Object (12): 19/D20+2D6
Armored Matrix (12): 12
Armored Matrix (12): 12
Astral Sight (12): 19/D20+2D6
Bargain with Summoned Creature[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Cold Purify[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Durability (4/3) (12): 12
Elemental Hold[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Elemental Tongues[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Enhanced Matrix (12): 12
Enhanced Matrix (12): 12
Fire Heal[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Karma Ritual (12): 12
Leadership (8): 15/D20+D6
Metal Ward[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Questor of Jaspree (11): 11
—Animate Plant, Command Animal, Plant Growth (11): 18/D20+D12
Plant Shelter[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Read and Write Language (7): 14/D20+D4
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Read and Write Magic[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Reshape Object[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Safe Path[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Spellcasting[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6 (Maintain Spell Threads)
Spell Matrix (12): 12
Spell Matrix (12): 12
Spell Matrix (12): 12
Spell Matrix (12): 12
Summon (Elemental Spirits)[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Summoning Circle[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Temperature[D] (12): 19/D20+2D6
Thread Weaving (Elementalism)[D] (13): 20/D20+D8+D6
Unshakable Earth (12): 17/D20+D10
Willforce (12): 19/D20+2D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Tailor (6): 11/D10+D8
Robe Embroidery (5): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Barsaivian Politics (4): 11/D10+D8
Creature Lore (5): 12/2D10
Economics (7): 14/D20+D4
Riverboat Trade Routes (6): 13/D12+D10
Serpent River Lore (5): 12/2D10
T'skrang Politics (6): 13/D12+D10

General:
Conversation (8): 15/D20+D6
Etiquette (6): 13/D12+D10
Haggle (7): 14/D20+D4
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (9): 16/D20+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human (Scavian, Vorst), Obsidiman, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Trading (7): 14/D20+D4

Equipment

Thread Crystal Spear (Rank 6; Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 24–40–48; +1 Initiative step; 1 Strain Point to add +2 to Physical and Spell Defense for thread rank rounds or until an Attack Test is made with the spear; 2 Strain Points to add a +2 bonus to the next Damage Test made with the spear)

Thread Reed Net (Major True pattern item; Rank 5; increase the Shivalahala V'strimon's Physical and Spell Defense, and Mystic Armor by +5 when she is in the Floating City of House V'strimon)

Craftsman Tools
Embroidered Robes
Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Spells

Elementalism (Any up to Twelfth Circle), Dragon's Breath [A], Earth and Air [M], Fire and Water [M], Liquid Arrow [A], Nutritious Earth [E], Plant Talk [M], Root Trap [M], Silver Shadow [E]

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.
[A] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Armored Matrix.

Loot

Anklets, bracelets, earrings, gems, necklaces, and rings (worth 2,400 silver pieces total)

Legend Points

33,290 Legend Points

Notes

Shivalahala V'strimon possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 5/D8). The *shivalahala* has used thread magic to boost several of her characteristics. These bonuses come from a Rank Five thread woven to a major True pattern item of House V'strimon, increasing her Physical and Spell Defense, and Mystic Armor. They apply only when the *shivalahala* is in the Floating City, the center of House V'strimon.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Fire and Ice (1 Damage Point)
Seventh Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Eighth Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Spell Defense
Twelfth Circle: Earth and Wind (2 Damage Points)

HIERARCHY

The Shivalahala V'strimon, the Council of Crew Covenants (*Tikka T'slahyin*), and the Council of Trade Covenants (*Tikka K'rohyin*) share decision-making power in House V'strimon. The trade council consists of representatives from each of the *nialls* that owe allegiance to House V'strimon *aropagoi* and representatives from each of the Floating City's foundation houses. Officially, the trade council meets each month in the Great Hall at the new moon. However, administering the *aropagoi's* fortunes requires such constant attention that the council remains continuously in session for all but a few days at the end of each month.

The trade council is responsible for ensuring that goods move through the *aropagoi's* shipping system and that covenant shares are returned to their *nialls*. Many t'skrang think of the trade council as a wishy-washy clique of paper-pushing bureaucrats, but in truth the council is a sophisticated institution. It must ensure that all the *nialls* of House V'strimon share in the *aropagoi's* prosperity, while simultaneously distributing the *aropagoi's* losses among the *nialls*—all without arousing the quarrelsome individualism of captains, crews, and foundations. When one considers the natural bluff and bluster of the t'skrang as a race, it is a wonder that House V'strimon's centralized planning system has lasted for so long. Much of the credit for this longevity can be attributed to the Shivalahala V'strimon's judicious use of her veto powers as president of the trade council.

It's a miracle the council hasn't fallen apart yet. Why, just last year I saw two captains at each other's throats. How's that for cooperation?

—Alvar Otterpaw, Boatman of the Order of the Scavian Guard

The trade council effects its decisions primarily through its power to determine the trade routes and contracts included in House V'strimon's annual Protocol List, one of the oddest economic tools in all of Barsaive. Every captain of the *aropagoi's* fleet receives a certified copy of the Protocol List in the spring of the year. Any customer whose name appears on the list can approach a captain of House V'strimon, demand the services of his riverboat, and expect to receive a set price and immediate attention. The Protocol List rarely contains more than 20 names in any given year, and merchant companies have been known to go to great lengths to secure a place on it.

House V'strimon's crew council is made up of all the captains of the *aropagoi's* riverboats. It meets only twice a year, on the first full moons following the spring and autumn equinoxes. The crew council meetings are meticulously choreographed, formalized, grand, and glitzy affairs, full of pomp and circumstance. The key duties of the crew council are ratifying the decisions of the trade council; recognizing new members of the *aropagoi's* central foundation; and conducting a complete review of the condition, location, and captain of each of House V'strimon's riverboats. Technically, the crew council may recommend legislation in the same way as the trade council, but traditionally the crew council simply ratifies all trade council policies with a single voice vote. Most of a crew council meeting is devoted to the review of the riverboats. The riverboat review is a dynamic oration that may take up to three days, as the coun-

cil's Reader of the Lists goes through the roster of vessels one by one and the captain of each riverboat boasts of his crew's exploits. When a riverboat cannot return to the Floating City in time to participate in a crew council meeting, the riverboat captain customarily sends a written report, which a representative recites before the assembly.

During the fall meeting of the Council of Crew Covenants, each riverboat captain submits the name of one of his crewmen for membership in the *aropagoi's* central foundation. The selection process varies from vessel to vessel, but most captains allow the crews themselves to select a candidate by a show of hands. Records of these nominations are kept by the V'strimon central council, which traditionally grants membership in the central foundation to any candidate who is nominated three times. Typically, no more than 30 individuals receive membership in a given year. The *shivalahala* presides over the initiation ceremony, placing the bracelet of living reeds around the initiate's wrist. In addition to living space at the Foundation House, central foundation members receive the right to captain one of the foundation's motherships or warships.

The extent of House V'strimon's influence on the Serpent River is difficult to gauge, because the *aropagoi* does not exert direct control over the daily activities of its member villages. To qualify for a seat on the trade council, a village must send a special share of its profits to House V'strimon's trade council for three consecutive years. In return, member villages receive the protection of V'strimon's war fleet, access to business as defined by the Protocol List, and the competitive advantage that trade allies can exert against an isolated rival.

By and large, House V'strimon remains stable and united. The *aropagoi* continues to grow steadily more prosperous, and almost all V'strimonian *aropagoinya* view their *shivalahala* as a benevolent and competent overseer. Rancor within the trade council is rare, and when it does occur the *shivalahala* is quick to reconcile quarreling parties. Recently, some council members have suggested that House V'strimon withdraw from the Free Trade Compact in response to House K'tenshin's efforts to change the agreement in order to open up trade on the lower reach of the Coil River. So far, however, such proposals have garnered little support.

Goals

During the Theran War, approximately 70 member villages held seats in House V'strimon's trade council. Since the end of that war, however, many villages have let their memberships lapse in the absence of direct threats from the Therans or House K'tenshin. As a result, House V'strimon currently enjoys the allegiance of only 40 member villages. Despite this drop, the lucrative Coil River trade and the *aropagoi's* close relationship with the Kingdom of Throal have enabled House V'strimon to remain one of the richest and most influential *aropagoi* of the Serpent River.

House V'strimon's primary goals are protecting its sphere of influence and maintaining its prosperity. In practical terms, this means checking the expansionist plans of its long-time rival, House K'tenshin. For centuries the two *aropagoi* have kept up a fierce feud, further fueled when the two houses fought against one another during the Theran War. Despite the Free Trade Compact that cemented the peace after that war, the feud continues and the riverboats of both *aropagoi* still engage in combat when they encounter one another on their respective house's tributary rivers.

In recent years, House V'strimon has taken over six large river villages between Lake Ban and Lake Pyros previously under House K'tenshin's control. That development, along with the favorable terms House V'strimon enjoys under the Free Trade Compact, seems to have reinforced House K'tenshin's determination to regain its economic influence at the expense of House V'strimon. As a result, House V'strimon has repeatedly had to block House K'tenshin's attempts to persuade the compact signatories to renegotiate the portion of the pact that grants House V'strimon sole control over the Coil River trade. In particular, House K'tenshin wants the south Coil opened, so that it, too, may profit from the trade flowing through Urupa. So far House V'strimon, with the aid of House Syrtis, has been able to stymie House K'tenshin's efforts. However, the K'tenshinian proposal has the support of the Theran Empire and even Throal, which fears a V'strimonian monopoly over the Coil River trade. House K'tenshin may yet succeed in its scheme unless House V'strimon can find some way to definitively stall the proposed changes.

Understandably, the opposing goals of the Therans and House V'strimon have destroyed any hope for diplomatic relations between the two powers. Additionally, General Nikar of Triumph (see p. 235) holds a personal grudge against the Shivalahala V'strimon and her house and would like nothing more than to see House K'tenshin's fortunes rise at House V'strimon's expense. In response to Theran and K'tenshin hostility, the *shivalahala* has strengthened V'strimon's ties with Throal as well as the other *aropagoi* of the Serpent by painting Thera and House K'tenshin as the common enemy to Barsaivian independence and free river trade. House Syrtis is largely behind V'strimon, while House Ishkarat continues to waver in hopes of playing both sides against the middle and coming out on top.

House V'strimon has also sought to check K'tenshinian expansion by supporting anti-K'tenshin rebels, most notably the villages of the newly revived House T'kambras, by aiding rebel groups opposed to the Therans and House K'tenshin behind the scenes. V'strimon blockade runners take shipments of supplies to House T'kambras and allied communities in the South Reach, while the *aropagoi's* Floating City often provides refuge for agents of the Liferock Rebellion and the Eye of Throal. House V'strimon regularly provides fire cannons, elemental substances, and other supplies to the T'kambrian rebels, who have wrested control of more than half of the Tylon River trade from House K'tenshin in recent years and emboldened other settlements to resist K'tenshinian control. Recently, House V'strimon has even taken to hiring overland caravans to provide aid to their allies.



House K'tenshin

House K'tenshin, the House of Nine Diamonds, was founded two centuries before the Orichalcum Wars by four t'skrang villages west of Lake Pyros. These villages had acquired great wealth through piracy and, more important, they had acquired influence among the Therans through the Theran trading house of Carinci. Eventually the villages decided to build a huge river settlement from which they could absorb weaker communities into their growing network of alliances and propel their burgeoning enterprises to even greater success. They pooled their wealth and, through their contacts in House Carinci, bought the services of a number of skilled Theran Elementalists to aid in the design and construction of the ambitious new settlement: a city-sized kaer now known as the Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin. The project also cemented an alliance between the t'skrang of House K'tenshin and the Theran Empire that has lasted for almost a thousand years.

As Theran influence in Barsaive grew, the fortunes of their t'skrang allies in House K'tenshin rose as well. At that time, the land between the Servos Jungle and the Mist Swamps contained some of the finest farmland in all of Barsaive, and settlers from across the province had carved out a number of prosperous cities, towns, and trading posts along the banks of the Serpent River and its southern tributaries. Using military force and intrigue, the K'tenshin began to extort money and goods from nearby settlements. Eventually, the *aropagoi* gained control of all river settlements from the Mist Swamps east to Lake Ban and perfected a system of taxes, tolls, and protection money that enabled House K'tenshin to skim enormous profits from these settlements.

In those days, House V'strimon controlled the Coil River and House Syrtis ruled the Serpent from Lake Ban to Lake Vors. After careful consultation with the Therans, House K'tenshin attempted to strike a deal with House V'strimon that would enable V'strimon to concentrate on undermining the power of House Syrtis. House V'strimon had no interest in negotiating free passage across Lake Ban to an upstart band of pirates and racketeers, however, particularly one that engaged openly in slavery. House V'strimon's rebuff led to war between the two *aropagoi*, but the Orichalcum Wars soon overshadowed that conflict. The Orichalcum Wars, in turn, left Barsaive vulnerable to annexation by the Theran Empire.

Theran annexation proved a double-edged sword for House K'tenshin. Although the Therans supported their *aropagoi* ally's aspirations to control all trade on the Serpent, the annexation opened up increased opportunities for air transport in Barsaive, and competition from air transport soon slashed the profits of river traders. In the end, House K'tenshin found that its market had shrunk even as its power among the t'skrang had grown. Despite this setback, House K'tenshin managed to bring House V'strimon to heel and planted the seeds of dissent in House Syrtis during the 60 years between the end of the Orichalcum Wars and the Scourge.

House K'tenshin weathered the Scourge fairly well, thanks to the Theran magical spells incorporated into the Sixteen Towers during their construction. The *aropagoi's* t'skrang fell into a reptilian torpor, like their brethren throughout Barsaive, and the Theran spells lengthened the K'tenshinians' hibernation. House K'tenshin did not emerge from the Scourge unscathed, however. At some point, 240 members of the *aropagoi's* Kerioli *niall*—virtually the entire foundation—and four of its riverboats simply disappeared.

The House of Nine Diamonds awakened slowly after the Scourge lifted. Riverboats of House V'strimon, which had emerged from its slumber slightly before the opening of Throal, passed through the Sixteen Towers of K'tenshin while the towers' inhabitants still slept. The V'strimon riverboat crews, however, chose not to awaken their ancient rivals. The K'tenshin *aropagoi* did not awaken until the Therans returned to Barsaive and landed vedettes inside the Sixteen Towers—a coincidence that has led some to claim that the Theran Elementalists who laid the foundations of the Sixteen Towers intentionally incorporated spells to keep the K'tenshinians in a state of hibernation until the Therans' return.

Smart of those Therans, I'd say. I bet they wish they'd been able to do that to the rest of Barsaive. Good thing we never gave 'em the chance, but the buunda *instead.*

—V'Gogh Bonecracker, Innkeeper

Whatever the truth of this allegation, the returning Therans found in House K'tenshin an ally ready to aid them in the reconquest of Barsaive. To prove their allegiance, House K'tenshin invited a contingent of Theran t'skrang from House Carinci to take up residence in the tower vacated by the Kerioli *niall*. Soon, the Theran generals set a twofold role for the *aropagoi* in the reconquest. First, House K'tenshin would establish supply routes to Theran garrisons as the Theran legions pushed toward Throal; second, the *aropagoi's* riverboats would blockade enemy vessels along the Serpent and Coil rivers to isolate Throal from its allies. With these plans laid out, Theran airships and K'tenshin riverboats set out from the Sixteen Towers to reconquer Barsaive, full of all the swagger and confidence of an imperial power certain of swift victory.

Both the Therans and their K'tenshin allies were surprised to discover that Barsaive and its people were no longer a ripe target for conquest. The *aropagoi's* captains quickly discovered that House V'strimon had contacted almost all the river villages between Lake Pyros and Lake Ban and placed them under its protection. Thus, House K'tenshin found itself forced to reconquer hostile villages

that had once been its vassals. When the first K'tenshin warships reached the Floating City of House V'strimon in Lake Ban, they discovered that the rival house had fortified its city so heavily that even the most aggressive K'tenshin captains blanched at the thought of attacking it. Meanwhile, V'strimonian blockade runners made a mockery of House K'tenshin's efforts to block trade on the Coil River and isolate Throal.

House K'tenshin's performance during the Theran War was a disgrace to its proud warrior tradition, and the Therans did not hesitate to bring this fact to the attention of both the Shivalahala K'tenshin and the First Governor. When Overgovernor Pavelis chose to retreat to Sky Point, all of Barsaive knew that Thera had abandoned House K'tenshin to the mercy of its enemies.

Perhaps this abandonment made House K'tenshin's enemies prone to mercy. Some observers say that Barsaive's Troubadours, with their relentless lampoons of K'tenshin naval disasters, had rendered the *aropagoi's* predicament so comical that Throal found it difficult to be angry with its black-sheep neighbor. Other, more cynical observers speculate that Throal was none too anxious to destroy House V'strimon's primary competitor in the river trade, in the interests of Throal's prosperity. Whatever the reasons, the terms of the truce were a yoke that hung lightly around the neck of House K'tenshin. Indeed, some observers claim that the Free Trade Compact placed the *aropagoi* in a better position than it might have gained from a Theran victory.

The *shivalahala* realizes that House K'tenshin is risking ostracism among its Barsaivian neighbors by allying itself with the Therans again, but she believes the opportunities presented by the alliance far outweigh this risk. In fact, she believes that Theran military support will enable the *aropagoi* to not only consolidate its control over the Serpent River's South Reach but extend its influence beyond the region as well. So far, the *shivalahala's* gamble has been paying off. Emboldened by its new alliance, House K'tenshin has ruthlessly begun to exert its newfound power. As the *shivalahala* had hoped, no Barsaivian power—not even Throal—has proved able to confront the Theran forces supporting House K'tenshin.

Despite this success, the *shivalahala* recognizes that the Therans have re-formed the ancient alliance only because it serves their own purposes. The Shivalahala K'tenshin respects General Nikar as a military man and a warrior, and she welcomes the presence of the Therans as an opportunity to improve her *aropagoi's* fortunes. She knows, however, that the Therans would not hesitate to turn against House K'tenshin if they deemed such an action strategically advantageous, and so she has K'tenshin Naxos spies watching the Therans as closely as they watch House K'tenshin's avowed enemies.

The Sixteen Towers

House K'tenshin maintains its headquarters at the junction of the Byrose and Serpent Rivers. Here, the Sixteen Towers of K'tenshin form a four-by-four gridwork that outlines nine diamonds, an arrangement that gave the House of Nine Diamonds its Name. The towers, which are the largest and tallest anywhere on the river, soar 300 feet above the water's surface and are each a bit more than 200 feet in diameter. Although the towers are spaced at regular intervals, their shapes are irregular. Some look like natural rock formations, in contrast to the smooth, man-made appearance of most of the Serpent's t'skrang village towers. Wooden and rope bridges span the gaps between the towers, and wooden balconies sprout like strange fruit on the stone ledges that jut out at every level.

On the surface of the water, the K'tenshin t'skrang have surrounded each tower with a wide, encircling boardwalk where boats of all sizes can dock and load and unload cargo and passengers. The four central towers, known as the "Inner Towers," are so large that they can each house a full riverboat. These towers serve as dry docks for repairing and refurbishing the *aropagoi's* vessels. Before the Theran War, the roofs of these squat towers often docked Theran airships, including massive kilas. After the war, the Therans withdrew to Sky Point. In the past few years, however, several Theran airships have been sighted at the Sixteen Towers, giving rise to rumors that House K'tenshin is again strengthening its ties to the Theran Empire.

The bustle of the Sixteen Towers immediately dazzles any traveler entering the settlement for the first time. Here swarm t'skrang in boats, on bridges, along balconies, on airships, even swimming in the water. The settlement looks

Adventure Hook

Agents of House V'strimon have make contact with a faction inside House K'tenshin opposing the alliance with the Therans. Delivering messages (and sometimes equipment) is dangerous, as the counter-intelligence of House K'tenshin has a close eye on rebel activity inside it's own *aropagoi*.

The player characters are hired to act as ordinary merchants offering their goods to trade with House K'tenshin and thus get access to the river town of Jil'has close to the Sixteen Towers. Their contact is P'kralan, a t'skrang working at the docks. P'kralan is supposed to exchange new reports for House V'strimon for much-needed Potion Charms filled with a deadly poison (see the **Name-giver's Compendium** on p. 283). The rebels need these charms to prevent themselves from revealing how far the resistance inside House K'tenshin goes if they get captured.

Due to the close proximity to the heart of House K'tenshin, their forces are alert, so the player characters face a difficult and dangerous cloak and dagger mission.

as if the Serpent had flooded an enormous city and everyone simply climbed up the tallest tower they could find to escape the rising water. Amazingly, this bustle represents only a portion of the Sixteen Towers' population, because most of the residents live in the traditional domes that lie at the base of each tower on the river bottom.

Each of the twelve "Outer Towers" is Named after the *niall* that lives in the tower's dome: the Abanos Tower, Byepo Tower, Gamaroon Tower, Daishan Tower, Edeinos Tower, Zeugmani Tower, Henika Tower, Thymbrium Tower, Ippikos Tower, Carinci Tower, Lamia Tower, Meru Tower, and Naxos Tower. The four Inner Towers are Named for each of the four pillars of *haropas*: The Jik'harra Tower, Kiatsu Tower, P'skarrot Tower, and Kya'apas Tower. The domes of the four Inner Towers reach inward toward the settlement's *t'slashina*—the central, sheltered area where crops often grow—like the petals of a flower. An enclosed underwater garden called the *Haropakilea*, the Flower of Haropas, lies at the intersection of the domes. Legend has it that the Shivalahala K'tenshin ordered the garden planted during the years immediately before the Scourge, so that her people might better remember the beauty of the outside world. The garden features flowering plants of unusual size, shape, and hue, and many plants that radiate heat and light in every color of the rainbow. Certainly the *Haropakilea* is one of Barsaive's pre-Scourge marvels, and those who can swim will find it a sight unmatched in the province.

Outside the Inner Towers lies a cordon of twelve smaller towers submerged just below the water's surface. These are air ducts that keep fresh air moving through the underwater city of House K'tenshin. Between these towers and the defensive *refselenika* lies the complex's *t'slashina*, which is the most expansive on the Serpent River. To work such a large area, the K'tenshin regularly capture slaves from the primitive t'skrang tribes of the Servos Jungle.

The Nialls of House K'tenshin

The twelve *nialls*, or foundations, of K'tenshin are Abanos, Gamaroon, Meru, Byepo, Zeugmani, Daishan, Edeinos, Henika, Ippikos, Lamia, Naxos, and Carinci. Each *niall* owns a riverboat of the same Name and performs some type of specialized work to benefit the *aropagoi*. For example, the Abanos are slavers, and their tower is home to the largest slave auction in Barsaive. The Gamaroon and the Meru are both farmers, but the Gamaroon specialize in the underwater crops grown in K'tenshin's *t'slashina*, while the Meru farm rice, beans, and vegetables on the nearby riverbanks and the *aropagoi's* plantations. Byepo handles the trade in elemental fire and other resources from the Scarlet Sea, and the Zeugmani turn these resources into K'tenshin porcelain in the glassblowing shops of their tower. The Daishan *niall* makes baskets, while the Edeinos specialize in fish recipes. The Henika are woodcutters who harvest the rare and colorful hardwoods of the Servos Jungle and produce everything from barrels to furniture to decorative art. The Ippikos are hunters. Like the Henika, they depend on the Servos Jungle, where they obtain the hides, feathers, and wild animals that they sell to the people of Travar for the city's annual Founding festivities.

The Lamia *niall* runs the K'tenshin shipyards, which are located in the Kya'apas and Kiatsu Towers. The K'tenshin shipyards are considered by many to be the largest and best in Barsaive. However, K'tenshin shipwrights work only on riverboats that belong to the K'tenshin *aropagoi*. For years after the end of the Scourge, the Lamia *niall* petitioned the Shivalahala K'tenshin for permission to open a for-profit shipyard somewhere along the river. The *shivalahala* refused, however, because she rightly realized that any ship the Lamia repaired or refurbished would likely be turned against House K'tenshin when the Theran reconquest commenced. Soon after the Free Trade Compact went into effect, the *shivalahala* reconsidered her decision and allowed the Lamia *niall* to establish a dry dock in the village of Tremeer, just west of Lake Pyros. Now the shipyards of Tremeer and Denlikiyan, the unaligned village north of Lake Ban, vie for the reputation of finest shipyard in the province.

King Varulus III once described the Naxos *niall* to a visiting Blood Warder from the Elven Court as "the School for Spies and Thugs," and with good reason. The Naxos *niall* trades in information and persuasion, and its members have refined gossip, rumor, and blackmail to a science. According to rumor (which may well have originated in Naxos), nothing moves on the river without the Naxos *niall's* knowledge. Of course, the apparent failure of Thera and her allies to predict the actions of their enemies during the Theran War casts some doubt on the competence of the Naxos t'skrang. Another rumor, however, contends that Naxos deliberately misinformed the Therans on several occasions because the Naxos leaders had no desire to see the Therans triumph.

The last of the twelve *nialls*, Carinci, is named after the Theran House Carinci. The tower that the Carinci occupy originally belonged to the Kerioli *niall*, which disappeared mysteriously during the Scourge. The *niall* now consists mostly of Therans who relocated to the Sixteen Towers when the *aropagoi* headquarters served as a center of operations during the Theran War. After the war, the Shivalahala K'tenshin convinced many of the Theran t'skrang that lives of uncertain rewards in Barsaive would be preferable to the certain disgrace they would face upon returning to Thera. So persuasive was the *shivalahala* that a small crew of non-t'skrang asked to remain with the *aropagoi* as well, and so the ranks of the Carinci *niall* include orks, humans, and elves. The Carinci *niall* maintains facilities for Theran airships visiting the Sixteen Towers; in addition, many members of the *niall* are adepts in the combat Disciplines and serve on K'tenshin warships or teach at the *aropagoi's* renowned war college. The crews of visiting Theran airships prefer to bivouac in the Carinci Tower because the *niall's* non-t'skrang members maintain a separate living area within the Carinci dome that is far removed the relentless bustle of the *niall's* communal t'skrang quarters.

The Shivalahala K'tenshin

The Shivalahala K'tenshin is a commanding leader whose presence demands obedience. She maintains a military outlook on life, and has little patience for answering too many questions when she gives orders. *Aropagoi* lore attributes this outlook to the fact that the first Shivalahala

K'tenshin was a graduate of the Theran Military Academy, and that the present-day *shivalahala* is only twice removed from the original.

The Shivalahala K'tenshin's face and form provide no clue to her age, a phenomenon common to the *shivalahalas* of all the t'skrang *aropagoi*. Some individuals claim that the Shivalahala K'tenshin has guided the House since before the Scourge, an idea made credible only by the *aropagoi's* long hibernation during the Scourge. If these tales are true, the Shivalahala K'tenshin has lived through the height of Theran power in Barsaive and surely remembers the ambitions of her *aropagoi* during those glory days—as well as her *aropagoi's* humiliating defeats.

In many ways, the aftermath of the Theran War was the Shivalahala K'tenshin's defining moment. When the members of the Theran House Carinci made ready to retreat to Sky Point, she urged them to accept the tower of the vanished Kerioli *niall* as their home. The Theran t'skrang accepted the offer, much to the consternation of many high-ranking Therans at Sky Point. Additionally, the *shivalahala*, accompanied by a squadron of ten soldiers, journeyed to Throal to personally negotiate the Free Trade Compact—and she used money from her private purse to pay the *aropagoi's* reparations to House V'strimon, Throal, and House Syrtis. The latter action spawned a rumor that the Shivalahala K'tenshin bankrupted her personal treasury.

Currently, the *shivalahala* seems obsessed with restoring House K'tenshin to prominence in Barsaive. In pursuit of this goal, she runs House K'tenshin with brutally demanding discipline. She does not tolerate nonconformity or dereliction of duty. In recent years, the Therans have slowly increased their trade with House K'tenshin and increased the number of airships committed to protecting the Sixteen Towers in the event of a serious attack—actions that testify to the success of the *shivalahala's* determined effort to make House K'tenshin the dominant power of the Serpent River.

The Shivalahala K'tenshin has another side as well. The *Haropakilea* is her creation, and the peace and beauty of that garden belie the stony, disciplined exterior the *shivalahala* customarily displays. She is also one of Barsaive's most sought-after teachers of the arts of war, and she personally oversees House K'tenshin's war college. In fact, some members of the K'tenshin council whisper that she spends far too much time at the war college and too little time minding the affairs of the *aropagoi*.

The Shivalahala K'tenshin is a Tenth Circle t'skrang Warrior.

Shivalahala K'tenshin

"To my ears, these sound like excuses, captain. Excuses are a waste of my time and your breath. I asked for your report. Either give it or do not. Whatever you choose, the consequences are mine to decide. At present, I am not inclined toward leniency."

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (19): 8/2D6
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12 (16)[P] **Initiative**: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 8 (12)[P] **Physical Armor**: 5
Social Defense: 9 (13)[P] **Mystic Armor**: 8

Death Rating: 36 (126) **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 10 (14)[P] **Knockdown**: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28 (98)

[P] Enhanced by +4 through place True pattern (see Notes, below).

Combat Movement: 28 **Full Movement**: 56

Karma Points: 25 **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (10): 16/D20+D8
Air Dance (10): 16/D20+D8
Anticipate Blow[D] (10): 15/D20+D6
Avoid Blow[D] (10): 16/D20+D8 (Bounce)
Cobra Strike[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Down Strike[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Durability (9/7) (10): 10
Earth Skin (10): 16/D20+D8
Gliding Stride (10): 16/D20+D8
Karma Ritual (10): 10
Leadership (8): 15/D20+D6
Life Check[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Matrix Strike (10): 18/D20+D12
Melee Weapons[D] (11): 17/D20+D10 (Deflect Blow, Improvised Weapons)
Missile Twister (10): 18/D20+D12
Missile Weapons (10): 16/D20+D8
Second Attack (10): 16/D20+D8
Second Weapon[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Spirit Strike[D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Swift Kick[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Thread Weaving (War Weaving)[D] (10): 15/D20+D6
Throwing Weapons (10): 16/D20+D8
Tiger Spring (10): 10
Unarmed Combat[D] (11): 17/D20+D10 (Pin Down, Head Butt)
Wood Skin[D] (10): 16/D20+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Gardener (6): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Barsaivian Politics (6): 11/D10+D8
Botany (6): 11/D10+D8
Farming (6): 11/D10+D8
Military Procedures (5): 10/D10+D6
Serpent River Lore (5): 10/D10+D6
Theran Military History (6): 11/D10+D8
Theran Military Organization (6): 11/D10+D8
Theran Politics (6): 11/D10+D8
T'skrang Politics (6): 11/D10+D8

General:
Conversation (6): 13/D12+D10
Pilot Boat (7): 15/D20+D6



Read and Write Language (4): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human (Scavian), Theran, T'skrang
Read River (6): 11/D10+D8
Speak Language (4): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human (Scavian), Theran, T'skrang
Swimming (5): 11/D10+D8
Tactics (9): 14/D20+D4

Equipment

Thread Crystal Ringlet Armor (Rank 5; Phys 5; Myst 5; Init 0; see p. 350 of the **Adventure Compendium**)

Thread Three-Axe (Rank 4; Damage 14/D20+D4; 2 Strain Points for +5 Damage bonus on one Damage Test; 3 Strain Points for +7 bonus on one Damage Test)
Thread Wooden Training Broadsword (Minor place True pattern item; Rank 4; increase the Shivalahala K'tenshin's Wound Threshold by +4 when she is in the K'tenshin War College; Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; Tail Damage 8/2D6)
2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1; Climbing (1): 7/D12)
Thread Diamond with 16 facets (Major place True pattern item; Rank 4; increase the Shivalahala K'tenshin's Physical, Spell, and Social Defense by +4 when she is in the Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Craftsman Tools
Farming Tools
Gardening Tools
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

250 silver pieces

Legend Points

12,065 Legend Points

Notes

The Shivalahala K'tenshin possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10). The *shivalahala* does not normally wear armor or carry weapons. In the rare event that she enters battle, she dons threaded crystal ringlet armor and may carry any of several thread weapons in her private armory.

The *shivalahala* has used thread magic to boost several of her characteristics. Three of these bonuses come from a Rank 4 thread woven to a major True pattern item of House K'tenshin increasing her Physical, Spell, and Social Defense. They apply only when the *shivalahala* is in the Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin. The other bonus comes from a Rank 4 thread woven to a minor True pattern item of the War College, increasing her Wound Threshold. This applies only when the shivalahala is in the War College.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: Karma on unarmed Damage Tests
Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; +1 Recovery Test

Hierarchy

The Shivalahala K'tenshin rules her *aropagoi* as an autocrat, with few close advisors. However, she generally reserves her executive prerogatives for matters that affect the *aropagoi* as a whole. She delegates supervision of many lesser affairs to the K'tenshin Council, which represents the twelve *nialls* of the *aropagoi*. Each of the twelve *nialls* supplies two representatives to the council: the *lahala* of the *niall* and her hand-picked appointee. The council elects one of its members Advocate, an office unique to the K'tenshin *aropagoi*. Although the *shivalahala* alone is empowered to make policy for the *aropagoi*, the council can advise her and the Advocate can veto any of her decisions. Needless to say, the K'tenshin Advocacy is a difficult, if prestigious position.

The membership of the council, including the *shivalahala*, numbers 25—which corresponds to the sum of the towers and diamonds of the K'tenshin complex. This little piece of numerology may offer the casual observer some insight into the minds of t'skrang. The loss of the Kerioli *niall* during the Scourge effectively reduced the council membership to 23. This condition persisted up to the end of the Theran War, when the *aropagoi* offered the Theran contingent from House Carinci full membership in House K'tenshin. The offer—which essentially authorized the wholesale induction of a large group without regard to individual merit—was controversial at the time. However, any misgivings over this breach of tradition were apparently overshadowed by the K'tenshin belief that its failures during the war were caused by a break in its *kya'apas*, the perfect balance of the house as represented by the Council/Towers/Diamonds equation. When seen from this point of view, the loss of the Kerioli *niall* represented an imbalance that cursed the *aropagoi's* efforts. The induction of the Therans filled this numerological void, and undoubtedly most K'tenshinian *aropagoinya* deemed it vital to healing the house's besmirched honor.

Another unique feature of the K'tenshin's governing structure is its practice of separating the members of the twelve *nialls* from those of associated foundations that maintain allegiance to the *aropagoi* but do not live within the Sixteen Towers. These associate villages do not have representatives on the K'tenshin Council and often operate under the direct supervision of an officer from the *aropagoi's* headquarters, called a *diktos*. The associate *nialls* pay regular fees to the central *aropagoi* for safe passage along the river, usually an associate share of their riverboats' profits each year, but otherwise remain free to conduct their business as they choose.

Representatives from the central *nialls* privately approach prospective candidates for membership in the *aropagoi* proper. Candidates then petition the central *niall* of their choice, thus qualifying for the *g'doinya*.

Candidates who enter the *aropagoi* from an associate village are expected to move into the headquarters. *Aropagoinya* born within one of the twelve *nialls* qualify for full membership in the *aropagoi* immediately upon completing *kaissa*.

Goals

Like every other t'skrang *aropagoi*, House K'tenshin seeks to expand its influence and increase its profits. To achieve this objective, the Shivalahala K'tenshin is directing her *aropagoi's* efforts to meet three intermediate goals: renegotiating the Free Trade Compact; convincing the Therans that Barsaive is worthy of their attention; and re-establishing control of House K'tenshin's traditional territories, while preserving the *aropagoi's* existing sphere of influence.

At present, the *shivalahala* demands that all K'tenshinian vessels observe the dictates of the Free Trade Compact to the letter, because the compact enables K'tenshin covenants to trade at the ports of the *aropagoi's* former enemies in the Theran War—ports that would otherwise be closed to them. At the same time, she is maneuvering to renegotiate more favorable terms for House K'tenshin. Specifically, she wants the compact signatories to re-designate the lower reach of the Coil River, from Lake Ban down to Urupa, as part of the Serpent River.

Under the current terms of the compact, House V'strimon enjoys exclusive rights to trade on the Coil River. This monopoly has proved especially profitable for House V'strimon because Urupa is the sole port of entry for goods entering Barsaive from across the Aras Sea. By re-designating the lower Coil River as part of the Serpent, all the compact signatories—including House K'tenshin—would have equal access to Urupa and the Aras Sea trade.

So far, House V'strimon has jealously guarded its monopoly, but the Shivalahala K'tenshin's proposal has received strong diplomatic backing from the Theran Empire. Additionally, in this matter House K'tenshin may have an ally in Throal, which has grown concerned over House V'strimon's maneuvers to keep prices high in the Aras Sea trade. If House K'tenshin can coax both Throal and the volatile House Syrtis faction to back its proposal, it may succeed. Not surprisingly, House V'strimon recently granted a position in the Aras trade fleet to a ship from House Syrtis.

By convincing the Therans that Barsaive is worthy of their attention, the Shivalahala K'tenshin hopes to encourage the Therans to increase their economic and military presence in the province. An increased Theran presence would undoubtedly raise the stature of Thera's main Barsaivian ally—House K'tenshin. To achieve this end, the *aropagoi's* leaders have instructed K'tenshin crew captains to make cut-rate and even below-cost deals with Theran traders wherever they find them. Additionally, even the lowliest Theran Air Sailor is treated like a guest of honor at the Sixteen Towers. The *aropagoi* has also recently begun to send to the Therans any rare art treasures, magical artifacts, and orichalcum its crews obtain. The *shivalahala's* strategy appears to be working, for each passing year sees more Theran airships docking at K'tenshin's towers.

Reestablishing control of its pre-Scourge territories and preserving the *aropagoi's* existing sphere of influence are probably the most pressing tasks facing House K'tenshin. Currently, House K'tenshin is besieged from all sides. The most serious threat facing the *aropagoi* is its long-time rival, House V'strimon. For centuries the two competing *aropagoi* have engaged in a bitter feud, fostering a mutual hatred further sharpened when the two houses fought against one another during the Theran War. Although House K'tenshin sealed a peace with Throal and its allies by signing the Free Trade Compact, the pact did little to lessen the animosity between Houses K'tenshin and V'strimon. The riverboats of both *aropagoi* still engage in combat when they encounter one another on the *aropagoi's* tributary rivers, and in recent years House V'strimon has taken control of six major river villages between Lake Ban and Lake Pyros that previously lay under House K'tenshin's control.

Furthermore, House V'strimon provides fire cannons, elemental substances, and other war materiel to the so-called House T'kambras, a group of t'skrang villages on the Tylon River. In recent years the T'kambrians, who also receive open support from the city of Kratas, have taken

Adventure Hook

When researching the history of an legendary artifact in the depths of Kaer Vilrum, a t'skrang Wizard Named Zsombol Vak stumbled over an old tome of Theran origin. However, Zsombol's hired translator wasn't able to keep his mouth shut about the tome's contents. Soon, everyone in the nerby town of Ghalum speculates about the magical formula able to create a powerful ward which could be used to strengthen an existing fortification of any size.

When the leaders of Ghalum make an offer to buy the tome, Zsombol gets greedy. He assumes that House K'tenshin might be interested to strenghten the magical defenses of the Sixteen Towers and intends to sell the tome to his *shivalahala*. He hires the player characters as an escort to the Sixteen Towers.

However, word spreads fast and both House V'strimon and House T'kambras send their agents to make an offer (or get hold of the tome in case Zsombol turns them down).

control of more than half the trade on the Tylon River—a river traditionally controlled by House K'tenshin. As if to add insult to injury, three K'tenshin warships languish in dry dock awaiting repairs because of the depredations of the T'kambrian captain Jedaiyen Westhrall, whose war ship, *Astendar's Desire*, has become the bane of K'tenshinian crews. House K'tenshin has offered a bounty on Jedaiyen's head, currently standing at more than 5,000 silver pieces. Despite monthly increases, the fee has gone uncollected.

The failure of K'tenshin warships to drive the upstart T'kambrians from the Tylon especially disturbs the Shivalahala K'tenshin, because the T'kambrians have inspired other South Reach settlements to rebel against House K'tenshin's tolls and taxes. For example, the T'kambrians recently saved a Scavian barge under attack from a K'tenshin flagship, and soon after that other Scavian barges stopped paying the yearly river toll to House K'tenshin. Shortly after the T'kambrians freed a Dinganni village from a K'tenshin extortion scheme, Dinganni along the length of the Tylon began threatening to lynch any *aropagoinya* of House K'tenshin.

Emboldened by House K'tenshin's weakness, the merchant enterprises of Travar constructed a fleet of airships to challenge K'tenshin's trade monopoly on the Byrose River. House K'tenshin's military failures have also emboldened the ravenous pirates of House Henghyoke, who seem to have a special appetite for K'tenshin boats and outposts.

With the return of the Therans, House K'tenshin can muster considerable resources against these threats, however. The twelve central *nialls* of the *aropagoi* remain the most populous on the river, and in their collective memory the glory of the Theran Empire in Barsaive remains fresh. A new generation of *aropagoinya* has risen through the ranks since the first Theran War ended, and they are determined to restore the honor of their *aropagoi*. The crews and their warships are a match for any on the river (with the possible exception of Jedaiyen Westhrall and *Astendar's Desire*), and a fear to behold because of their alliance with the Therans.

The War College of House K'tenshin

The renowned War College of House K'tenshin is modeled after the Theran Military Academy. The war college's facilities in the Inner Tower of Jik'harra include training rooms, classrooms, and dormitories that can accommodate up to 600 students, making the war college the largest warrior school in Barsaive. The school's headmaster is the Shivalahala K'tenshin, who takes her duties as a teacher of the combat arts quite seriously. Each week she stalks the college's gymnasiums and practice rooms, making observations and comments, correcting students' form, and teaching classes in the history of riverboat combat. The college's faculty also boasts several grand masters of numerous unarmed combat styles, distinguished scholars of military history, and combat-oriented magicians.

Admission to the war college is one of the most sought-after privileges in Barsaive. The college, however, accepts only 25 new students from outside the K'tenshin *aropagoi* each year. All the remaining students come from within House K'tenshin. Training at the war college is guaranteed to any members of K'tenshin's twelve *nialls* who display the desire and fortitude for it. Aspiring students who cannot afford the college's fees can compete for twelve scholarships awarded to the winners of an annual open tournament. Candidates compete against one another in non-lethal combat, arranged by single-elimination rules. The twelve top finishers all receive free training at the college. The overall tournament champion receives a single coin of elemental water as well.

The full course of study at the war college takes six years. Most applicants from within the *aropagoi* join the year after their *kaissa*, the time that a t'skrang's gender becomes apparent. As a result, most students enter the college at the age of 14. No official age restriction exists, however. Some students have been as old as 30, and once a young human girl from Travar gained admission at the age of ten by winning the elemental coin at the tournament that year. The student body is 99 percent t'skrang, although there are always a few students of other races wandering the halls of the tower.

The physical regimen of the college is uncompromisingly brutal. One of the more talked-about exercises students must endure during their first year is the "Standing Lesson." During this exercise, a class is brought to the top of the Tower of Jik'harra just before dawn. After the daily calisthenics routine, the class lines up and stands at attention. They are told not to move from their spots for any reason

until the sun sets. Any student who moves is brought back the next day, and the day after, and the day after that, until he ~~or she~~ can accomplish the task.

The college teaches armed and unarmed combat, including advanced methods of underwater melee combat and riverboat boarding maneuvers, as well as the use of hundreds of melee weapons and specialized tactics for use against some of Barsaive's more common creatures. The college is especially renowned for its classes in the many forms of t'skrang tail attacks. T'skrang students can learn the use of the *ch'tard*, a four-inch blade attached to the tail, and the *skora*, a steel tail gauntlet used as a parrying weapon (see p. 281 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

The student's life is more than physical training, however. The college also teaches military history, siege warfare, naval tactics, the design and construction of fortifications, reading, writing, mathematics, and organizational skills. Members of the Naxos *niall* teach an annual class on information gathering and the dissemination of misinformation, and students also learn how to craft makeshift weapons from raw materials, survival tactics, proper procedures for the operation and maintenance of fire cannon, and Theran etiquette.

The six-year course in the K'tenshin war college trains a student for battle, but the regimen is so exhaustive that less than half of those who start the training ever finish it. At the end of the training, the student is given a battery of written and oral examinations, after which he must engage one of his teachers in non-lethal single combat. The teacher must approve the student's conduct in the combat circle before the student may graduate. The Shivalahala K'tenshin herself presents gold and ruby rings to those who complete training. (These distinctive rings are customarily worn on the left hand.) Before the Theran War, the *shivalahala* also exacted blood oaths from graduates, in which the warriors had to swear never to harm House K'tenshin or any of its members. Since the war's end, however, the *shivalahala* has dropped this stricture for reasons she has yet to explain.



House T'kambras

About 12 years ago, House K'tenshin began raising its riverboat rates for cargo coming out of Daiche (see p. 255). For a while, the Kratas trading companies accepted the rate increases as the cost of business—after all, the *aropagoi* had a monopoly on the Tylon River trade. Eventually, however, Sagramon and his fellow Daicheans realized that House K'tenshin intended to slowly buy out the entire town. After consulting closely with Garlthik in Kratas, the merchants of Daiche began contracting cargo service from a confederation of pirates and privateers, who called themselves "House T'kambras," and opened numerous clandestine loading sites all along the Tylon.

Within months, spies from House K'tenshin uncovered the deceit, and soon the red and gold warships of House K'tenshin began to patrol the waters of the Tylon. After capturing one of the unaffiliated renegade riverboats, House K'tenshin sent envoys to confront Sagramon and demand an explanation. Witnesses claim the old dwarf simply shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well now, you found us out—but can you blame us, really?" Subsequently, Sagramon and the K'tenshinian envoys made a series of promises that both

Adventure Hook

The fate of the Kerioli *niall* has been subject to speculation for t'skrang scholars ever since the Scourge ended. When a sunken riverboat is found on V'strimon territory and word of it spread across the river communities, House K'tenshin becomes interested in finding out if this riverboat is one of the four that disappeared with the Kerioli *niall*.

The player characters are hired to escort a group of K'tenshin scholars to the wreck and salvage what they can find (without letting the characters know which *aropagoi* their employers hail from). They don't know what secrets the ship may hide, but the characters can feel that it must be of importance to them and their *aropagoi*.

Getting to the wreck is not easy, however: a ship full of T'kambrian river pirates is also interested the wreck, already salvaging the fire cannons to increase their ship's firepower when the group arrives. It's only a matter of time until a V'strimon warship will show up to deal with them (and salvage the wreck on their own).

While searching for a way to the wreck without being captured by the pirates, the characters encounter another group of adepts with the same intentions. These adepts have been hired by a Theran merchant who heard the rumours on the wreck being a Kerioli ship. The merchant wants to pick it's secrets before anyone else and plans to sell whatever he finds to the highest bidder.

parties had no intention of keeping. Satisfied, the envoys returned to their warship and prepared to return to the Sixteen Towers.

Before the warship had gotten a hundred yards from the pier, however, another warship pulled into view—the first appearance of *Astendar's Desire* in the annals of Barsaive. Within minutes, the *Desire* had transformed the proud K'tenshinian warship into a useless derelict. Then the *Desire* pulled alongside its fallen foe and the renegade ship's captain, Jedaiyen Westhrall, demanded that the K'tenshin *aropagoinya* drop their token earrings into the river or she would sink their ship. When the *aropagoinya* chose to save the ship, Jedaiyen gave them a message to relay to the Shivalahala K'tenshin: "Bid the *shivalahala* to remember the ghost song of the Shivalahala T'kambras. The House of Swift Waters shall live as long as the River Tylon flows into Death's Sea."

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I'd like to show that Jedaiyen a thing or two, myself. She may handle riverboats well, but I long to see how well she dances tail to tail. Then all will see that the Taildancers of the War College truly rule the waters.

—C'hali Teres'za Vosvard Ippikos, Taildancer of House K'tenshin

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Since the appearance of *Astendar's Desire*, the Tylon River has become a hotbed of intrigue. For several years, House K'tenshin attempted to blockade Daiche from all river trade. This heavy-handed tactic only strengthened anti-K'tenshin sentiments along the Tylon, however. The merchants of Daiche began hiring the nomadic Dinganni to transport their goods to secret loading sites along the Tylon's shores, where T'kambrian riverboats would pick up the cargo. The Dinganni hide the goods within their caravans, then make camp on the riverbanks. K'tenshin patrols can never be sure which encampments hide smugglers, and the Dinganni are such fierce fighters that attacking every Dinganni encampment is impractical.

The Scavians (see p. 260), who live in barge villages along the riverbanks, also aid the T'kambrians in their long-running battle with House K'tenshin. Long a favorite target of *aropagoi* patrols, the Scavians are happy to share their expertise in crafting elemental fire with House T'kambras. The Scavians regularly provide the T'kambrians with elemental fire for their riverboats' fire engines and fire cannon. In return, T'kambrian riverboats come to the aid of Scavian barges in nearly any circumstance. Many Scavian barges also smuggle freight out of Daiche and onto the Serpent River, where it can be transferred to other riverboats protected by the Free Trade Compact. The favorite port for making such exchanges is the trading town of Farram, where the Iontos River enters the Serpent.

House V'strimon, the traditional enemy of House K'tenshin, also uses the ongoing T'kambras-K'tenshin feud to harass House K'tenshin. Despite the repeated protests of the Shivalahala K'tenshin, House V'strimon continues to provide aid to the T'kambrians and V'strimon warships regularly escort Scavian barges on the Serpent. Although House V'strimon denies any involvement in the feud, the prominent role of Jedaiyen Westhrall, daughter of V'strimon's greatest modern hero, in the T'kambrian resistance strongly suggests otherwise.

Recently, House K'tenshin has apparently shifted its strategy. Although K'tenshin warships still patrol for T'kambrian vessels, they no longer attempt to blockade Daiche. Instead, K'tenshin riverboats have slashed their cargo rates in an attempt to drive the T'kambrians out of business. The merchants of Daiche, however, have wisely chosen to split their freight between both factions to prevent the formation of a new trade monopoly on the Tylon.

The Central Foundation of House T'kambras

Since the rebirth of House T'kambras, many spies and scouts have been employed to discover the location, if any of their new central foundation, and their *shivalahala*, if she exists. The K'tenshin would pay a great deal for such information, and so not only have their own spies been looking, but so have those of independent intelligence brokers of Kratas. House T'kambras may just be a loose knit group of pirates and smugglers put together by Garlthik One-eye and given support by House V'strimon. If so, they are likely to fall apart without those patrons.

The K'tenshin fear; however, that one of the *lahalas* of House T'kambras may have escaped their attempt to destroy them all before the Scourge, and may have passed down the *aropagoi's* collective memories to a currently living *lahala*. This would make the T'kambrians much stronger and more committed to fighting over the Tylon River. If they have a *shivalahala*, and the K'tenshin manage to discover her location, they will attempt to correct their oversight by killing her and destroying her central foundation.

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Unknown to history, the Shivalahala T'kambras was a powerful Elementalist as well as Troubador. When she was dying and sang her ghost song, she performed a powerful variant of the ritual that lahalas use to pass on their niall's memories to their successor. Rather than passing them on to another t'skrang, who would have been killed by the K'tenshin, she bestowed the memories of her aropagoi *on the spirit of the river itself. If you ask me, I doubt that Jedaiyden Westhrall was being figurative in her message to the Shivalahala K'tenshin. However, I wonder if the spirit now rules the T'kambrians or if it passed the memory on to a* lahala *that escaped House K'tenshin?*

—Alord Mach'ed, Free Trader

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Jedaiyen Westhrall, Captain of Astendar's Desire

Jedaiyen Westhrall is rapidly on her way to surpassing her illustrious father as the greatest river captain Barsaive has ever known. No one is quite sure why Jedaiyen chose to abandon House V'strimon for the outlaw House T'kambras, but some believe she is acting on orders from the Shivalahala V'strimon—although the historical friction between the Westhralls and the *shivalahala* make such a claim almost unbelievable. Others believe that Jedaiyen intends to revive House T'kambras as a political entity. Or perhaps Jedaiyen simply wants to pursue *jik'harra*, and House K'tenshin, with its ties to Thera and involvement in the slave trade, makes the best possible target against which she can measure herself.

The riverboat *Astendar's Desire* was built entirely with the reward money that the Westhralls received from the Royal House of Throal in return for the elder Westhrall's extraordinary service to that kingdom. Jedaiyen's father designed the riverboat himself and personally oversaw its construction at the Denlikiyan shipyards, much to the exasperation of the engineers at Denlikiyan. The frame of that original riverboat lives on in the present-day *Desire*, a *shimoram* that features a split paddle wheel. This unique design innovation consists of a great wheel that runs the width of the ship, split into a left and right half. The vessel's fire engine can provide different amounts of power to the two wheel halves, which dramatically increases the ship's maneuverability in combat.

Jedaiyen has also increased the riverboat's firepower, and she has made a questor of Floranuus named Milos a member of her crew. Milos, in turn, can use his Passion-granted abilities to enhance the *Desire*'s Speed and Maneuverability.

Jedaiyen is a Seventh Circle t'skrang Boatman.

Jedaiyden Westhrall

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 5
Social Defense: 13
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 38 (80)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 5/D8*
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (65)

* Jedaiyen knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 34
Full Movement: 68

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Boatman Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (6): 13/D12+D10
Avoid Blow (7): 14/D20+D4
Cast Net [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Climbing [D] (8): 15/D20+D6*
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Engaging Banter [D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Evaluate [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Haggle [D] (7): 15/D20+D6
Heartening Laugh (7): 15/D20+D6
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Melee Weapons [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Pilot Boat [D] (9): 15/D20+D6 (Assault)
Second Weapon [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Speak Language (7): 14/D20+D4
—Human (Dinganni, Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Windling
Swimming [D] (7): 12/2D10
Thread Weaving (River Weaving) [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Throwing Weapons (7): 14/D20+D4
Unarmed Combat (7): 14/D20+D4
Wound Balance [D] (7): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.
* Adjusted for +1 Climbing rank bonus from thread boots.

Skills

Artisan:
Mapmaking (6): 13/D12+D10

Knowledge:
Daiche Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
Riverboat Trade Routes (4): 11/D10+D8
Serpent River Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
T'skrang Politics (4): 11/D10+D8

General:
Fishing (4): 11/D10+D8
Navigation (4): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang



Tactics (4): 11/D10+D8
Trading (4): 12/2D10

Equipment

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)

Barbed Net (Damage 7/D12; Entangle 14)
2 × Barbed Throwing Nets (Range 7–11–14; Entangle 11)
Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
Casting Net (Entangle 10)
2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Tail Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 11/D10+D8; Tail Damage 7/D12; w/scabbard)
2 × Spears (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 18–30–36)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Craftsman Tools
Fishing Kit
Giant Crocodile teeth necklace
Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case
Painting Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

Gold nose ring, chain, and earring (worth 50 silver pieces), 230 silver pieces

Legend Points

1,450 Legend Points

Notes

Jedaiyen possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 5/D8).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests

Astendar's Desire

Base Price: NA

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 21/21

Hull:
Armor: 16 **Ramming**: 28
Cargo: 45

Damage:
Derelict: 68 **Critical**: 21
Destroyed: 75

Crew:
Captain: 7 (15) **Crew Size**: 75
Crew Skill: 3 **Crew Rating**: 18
Morale: 74

Special

Milo, Questor of Floranuus (9): 9
—Increase Stamina, Increase Speed (9): 17/D20+D10,
Speed Ship (9): 15/D20+D6

Milo can use the Speed Ship power to increase the Speed and Maneuverability of the *Astendar's Desire* by distributing his 9 Questor Ranks between these two characteristics. For example, he could add +6 to the ship's Speed and +3 to the ship's Maneuverability steps, or all +9 to either the ship's Speed or Maneuverability step. This effect lasts for a duration equal to the Speed Ship Test result in hours.



House Henghyoke

In recent years the crews of the mysterious House Henghyoke, the House of the River Otter, have acquired a reputation as the most bloodthirsty and rapacious pirates anywhere in Barsaive. The reputed cruelty of Henghyoke's river raiders exceeds that of Theran slavers. Henghyoke's riverboats have raided settlements and attacked vessels along every mile of the Serpent and its tributaries, and even prey upon the fierce t'skrang of House Ishkarat. Typically, Henghyoke river raiders descend on their victims like thieves in the night. Captives seized in their raids never return, and the raiding parties vanish without leaving any clue to their movements. They seem to strike at random from their secret base, presumably located somewhere on the Serpent River. No known village pays House Henghyoke tribute or claims association with the mysterious *aropagoi*.

Unlike the crews of other *aropagoi*, House Henghyoke's crews do not observe the rules of *bakshevas*. Instead, they take everything they can lay their hands on and destroy whatever they cannot take. Their favorite booty includes riverboats, slaves, and the egg-hatching pools of t'skrang villages; the latter has fueled much speculation about the nature of House Henghyoke.

They are actually quite a bit of fun to be around, let me tell you. You just need to know how to talk to them is all.

—Theormaz, T'skrang River Pirate

One striking feature of the t'skrang of House Henghyoke is their absolute silence. Those who have fought against them report that Henghyoke warriors never cry out, even when wounded or surprised. Captured Henghyoke *aropagoinya*

never crack even under the most severe interrogation, and mind spells directed against Henghyokian subjects invariably induce comas or death in their targets.

Every *aropagoinya* of House Henghyoke wears a silver collar around his neck. These collars are fashioned to resemble an impossibly elongated river otter swallowing its own tail, and fetch 100 silver pieces or more in the larger markets along the river. However, any attempt to wrest the collar from a captured raider produces hideous effects on the captive. The collars have no locks or latches and must be cut off by a metalsmith. In addition to the obvious hazards of this procedure, most captives deprived of their collars immediately go insane or catatonic. Occasionally they erupt into berserk furies, threatening foe and friend alike.

This mysterious *aropagoi* received the name "Henghyoke" from victims who observed Henghyoke raiding parties using huge, trained river otters during raids. In t'skrang legends, the "henghyoke" were a race of shapechanging river otters known for their playful pranks and magical knowledge. Apparently, the raiders of the House Henghyoke keep trained river otters as pets and servants. Reportedly, some of these otters have been bred to unusually large sizes—anywhere from five to seven feet long—and trained to assist in raids. No record exists of House Henghyoke prior to the Scourge. Just after the Scourge, piracy became a common practice along the Serpent River as villages came out of hiding and took up the old ways, so it is hard to pinpoint when the first Henghyoke attack occurred. The Henghyoke escalated their raids at the same time the Therans returned to Barsaive, which has fostered speculation that House Henghyoke, like House K'tenshin, is aligned with the Theran Empire. However, Henghyoke raiders regularly prey on both K'tenshin and Theran traders. In fact, the Therans offer bounties for the apprehension of Henghyoke raiding parties.

After the Theran War and the signing of the Free Trade Compact, the other *aropagoi* began to cooperate to repel Henghyoke raids, which seemed to subside for a while. Soon, however, it became apparent that the Henghyoke were simply redirecting most of their attacks against settlements and traffic along the Serpent's tributaries. More than half of the Serpent's tributaries enter the river west of Lake Ban in the vicinity of the Servos Jungle, leading many observers to speculate that the Henghyoke headquarters lies somewhere in the maze of waterways that snake through the jungle.

The paucity of facts available about the Henghyoke has fueled many theories about the *aropagoi*'s structure and origins. One apocryphal story claims that the Shivalahala Henghyoke is actually the last of the magical henghyoke from t'skrang folk tales. Evon Tyrlath, a noted scholar from Urupa, has advanced the theory that the Shivalahala Henghyoke is a powerful Illusionist who has hidden her village from the eyes of her fellow Name-givers. Tyrlath suggests that the raiders' primary settlement actually lies right in the middle of the river, but the *shivalahala*'s magic causes boats to pass by it every day without seeing or bumping into it.



For someone to think that the dishonorable "House" of Henghyoke has a shivalahala *at all is simply preposterous. This so-called scholar certainly has a lot to learn about the t'skrang race.*

—G'klak Mooneya Syrtis



Adventure Hook

While traveling near the Servos River, the adventurers are attacked by a band of vicious velos (see the **Gamemaster's Compendium** on p. 350). Seemingly from out of nowhere, a solitary t'skrang with a silver band on his neck rushes into the fray and wards off the attackers with a strange, feathery medallion. Their new silent companion stays with them, motioning for food and water on occasion, but pointing out dangerous plants and other hazards to aid them. As the group arrives at a small village to cross the river (or continue their journey by riverboat), they notice their companion wears a scarf around his neck that had been absent before.

Once on the ship, the t'skrang seems very edgy and always stay close to the group so they can speak for him if need be. However, before long he is confronted by the crew of the ship and taken below the deck without much explanation. Soon, a V'strimonian warship pulls up and after an exchange between the captains the characters witness their benefactor carried onto the warship. The merchant captain then politely asks them to come quietly and leads them to the warship captain, who has a few questions for them. Any aggressive moves at this point will bring down the crews of both ships to help subdue the characters.

Throughout this interrogation they will find out fragments of their benefactor's allegiance with House Hengjyoke, hopefully in time to distance themselves from him. Their sympathies for him will only cause suspicion and the V'strimonians will continue to watch the characters after their release, which occurs after arrival at the Floating City. Any attempts to free their benefactor will bring them up against both the authorities of V'strimon and of Throal—who are questioning this pirate in the Floating City itself...

A Tour of the Serpent

The Serpent seems a rather appropriate Name for many reasons, not the least of which is that it seems the very things that one casts upon the waters, come back to aid, or more often, to bite one.

• Shivalahala Syrtis •



The North Reach

The North Reach is one of the most dangerous stretches of the Serpent River. For much of the river's length, isolated settlements are the only signs of Name-giver civilization. Following the Serpent north toward the edge of the province, it passes through rugged canyons, then into uncharted lands where its mysterious source lies.

The confluence of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers marks the southern boundary of the North Reach. West of that point, the river enters Lake Vors, home of House Ishkarat. This *aropagoi* conducts trade like the other *aropagoi* of the Serpent, but it has also closely allied itself with the Denairastas clan of the city of Iopos. As a result, Ishkarat riverboats often ferry spies, informants and others working for the Denairastas while ostensibly making trading runs. These services enable Denairastan spies to move along the entire length of the Serpent River with ease, which, in turn, keeps the clan's leaders well-informed about *aropagoian* politics. The alliance has proved profitable for the Ishkaratans as well; Denairastan advice has greatly aided House Ishkarat in its campaign to expand its influence by taking control of nearby t'skrang river villages.

Two hundred miles west of Lake Vors, the Serpent curves south around the wooded hills of Glenwood Deep. More than 30 windling clans make their homes in the trees of the Deep, forming the largest concentration of windlings in Barsaive. Fierce rivalries among these clans occasionally erupt into open warfare, but like most windling endeavors, these disputes are quickly resolved and forgotten. The windlings of the Deep are also known for their wanderlust, and their extensive travels allow them to spread their intense dislike of the House Ishkarat t'skrang across Barsaive.

If ever you have an urgent need, a quest for consolation, magical aid, or wisdom, then go to the faeryfolk who live in the heart of the Glenwood Deep. The dangerous journey is worth it. Frightful spirits, dark shadows that haunted our dreams and took our children, were plaguing my village. We had no other recourse and so I set out to find if the stories of kind and powerful folk in this deep woodland were true. Never have I found myself so listened to and understood, never so taken aback by the sincerity of the reply. If ever, you are in need my friend, go and ask the winged ones who but for stories will cast their spells on your behalf. Let their light hearts lift yours and so keep their legend alive.

—Ellainor, Elder of Buranth

As the river winds north from Glenwood Deep, it enters the shadow of the Scol Mountains. Here, the river narrows—often to a width of a mile or less—and deepens. Its banks become steep walls of rock, occasionally broken by waterfalls and terraced cataracts created by small tributaries that flow out of the nearby mountains. T'skrang river villages grow increasingly isolated here, and riverboats commonly travel two or more days at a time before passing a settlement.

The surrounding lands are largely uninhabited, but the nearby Scol Mountains are home to isolated trollmoots. The trolls of the region do not possess airships, but conduct raids astride massive thundra beasts. All attempts to contact these trolls have so far ended in angry threats and violence.

North Reach
Serpent River
Poison Forest
Jeris
Liaj Jungle
Serpent River
Iopos
Elf Queen's Palace
Blood Wood
Mathingale River
S.R.
Eidolon
Ishkabat
Lake Vors
Serpent River
Mountains of Kadath
Glenwood Deep
Eidolon Mountains
Shattered Towers
Delphon River
Dache
Kratos
Sarkos River

More than a thousand miles northwest of Lake Vors, the river passes near the city of Iopos, whose population exhibits a fanatical loyalty to the city's rulers, the dynastic clan of Denairastas. Recently, thousands of men and women have begun digging a massive canal designed to link Iopos to the Serpent River. A few hundred miles north of Iopos, the river passes through the Grand Cataracts, a towering cascade of water more than a hundred feet high and half a mile wide. Beyond the cataracts, the river continues up into the mountains and quickly becomes unnavigable. The source of the Serpent lies somewhere in this region, but has not yet been found.

Lake Vors

Lake Vors takes its Name from the t'skrang word *vors*, which translates as "deep." The lake is 20 miles wide at its widest point and more than a thousand feet deep at its center. The cold depths of the lake foster some unusual species of fish and freshwater mollusks, including an edible snail that grows as large as a troll's fist. The snails are considered a delicacy at the Elven Court. A perceptible current, which runs from west to east along the lake's 60-mile length, circulates the water. The north bank of the lake consists of high bluffs that rise two to three hundred feet above the water's edge. For centuries the area remained largely uninhabited, until the Ishkaratans constructed the town Axalekso atop the bluffs. The hills to the north of these bluffs hold rich deposits of rare metals. At one time these hills contained considerable deposits of orichalcum as well, but these were depleted before the Scourge. The lake's south bank forms the bottom of a vast basin that curves gradually up to the Tylon Plateau. During the annual rainy season, the lake overflows the south bank and deposits several feet of fertile mud along the bottom of the basin.

Near the western shore of the lake, a rock outcropping juts up from the depths of the lake like a massive, roughly hewn pillar. Atop this outcropping lies the Citadel of House Ishkarat, formerly the Fortress Isle of Maratha. The t'skrang of House Syrtis built the fortress many centuries ago, selecting the site for its commanding view of the lake. The Syrtisian leaders then deeded the fort to the Maratha *niall*, in exchange for a vow to protect the lake from pirates and other enemies of House Syrtis. The fortress remained in Marathan hands until a few years ago, when House Ishkarat captured it.

Along the shores of Lake Vors lie several small villages inhabited by t'skrang, dwarfs, elves, and humans. These village residents are a mix of Throalic settlers, elven refugees disenchanted with the corruption of the Blood Wood, t'skrang from the lower castes of House Syrtis seeking a better life for their hatchlings, and former residents of kaers located in the surrounding hills. An uneasy peace prevailed among the villagers when the lake was under the dominion of the Maratha *niall*, although disputes between miners occasionally led to some bloodshed on the north bluffs. Generally, the Marathans focused their energies toward rebuilding the Scourge-ravaged river villages between Lake Vors and the River Mothingale, leaving the lake villages relatively free to conduct their own affairs.

The *niall* occasionally exacted tribute from the lake villages or enlisted their help to fight off pirates, but otherwise interfered little with village life. Life under Ishkaratan rule has proved quite different, however. Shortly after assuming control of the lake, the Ishkaratans began rounding up all able-bodied adult villagers. These unfortunate Name-givers were then forced to work as laborers in the construction of Axalekso, during which many of them died. Additionally, the Ishkaratans exact exorbitantly high taxes from the villages and regularly execute dissenters.

In addition to the lakeshore settlements, several isolated villages lie along the small rivers and streams that branch out from Lake Vors and the nearby sections of the Serpent River. None of these rivers are navigable by riverboat, so



visitors must use barges, canoes, or footpaths to reach these hinterland settlements.

The Mid Reach

The Mid Reach of the Serpent River, the so-called Silver Crescent, describes a wide arc that stretches from the wild lands of north central Barsaive down to the lowland settlements near Lake Ban. Traditionally, the confluence of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers, just south of the Blood Wood, marks the northern boundary of the Mid Reach. Here sits the fortress known as Kaer Eidolon, where Syrtisian riverboats and troops from the Blood Wood stand watch against the warships of House Ishkarat.

From the plains south of the Blood Wood, the river passes between the Scytha, Caucavic, and Throal mountain ranges, drawing strength from numerous alpine tributaries. Here the river passes through wooded hills dotted with river towns and villages fortified against the fierce raiders who live in the surrounding highlands. In pre-Scourge times these hills were among the most scenic in Barsaive. Their green expanses and the snow-capped mountain peaks that rise behind them like pale shadows inspired the famed Theran poet, Iagen of Parlainth, to write that "the land has been sculpted by a supernatural genius whose first intent was to arouse in the observer a true appreciation of the power of nature and its supremacy over mortal concerns."

Attracted by the beauty of the land and the abundant game animals in the woods and waters, many wealthy Therans, who came to Parlainth during the Theran annexation of Barsaive, built private retreats in the region's hidden valleys and woodland dales. Dozens of towns and villages arose along the Serpent's banks as the region's native inhabitants grew the food and made the goods that kept life comfortable for the Theran colonists.

As the Scourge approached, the Therans abandoned their sprawling villas, which now lie in ruins. The wooded hills have begun to regain their green mantles, but much of the area's wildlife remains warped and feral and many of the tributaries flowing out of the Caucavics remain choked and filthy. Even on the river, where the t'skrang hibernated through the long years of the Scourge, many a village tower stands empty—a silent memorial to the victims of those terrible times.

A bit of Barsaive's pre-Scourge splendor survives in the Cliff City of Lalai Gorge, which is universally recognized as one of the province's architectural marvels. Located just south of the Caucavic Mountains, the Cliff City is home to House Syrtis, the House of the Dragon Moon. The Serpent's oldest *aropagoi*, House Syrtis has controlled the Mid Reach for millennia and continues to dominate that stretch of river.

South of the Cliff City, the Serpent passes into the foothills of the Throal Mountains. Here, small independent colonies of elves, dwarfs, humans, and t'skrang raise livestock, grow tea, and cultivate vineyards that produce some of Barsaive's finest wines. The area is also home to the dwarf settlement of Tansiarda and the t'skrang village of Denlikiyan, which is renowned for its boatyards.

The River Mothingale

The River Mothingale and its tributary, the Lesser Mothingale, have connected the elven civilization of the Blood Wood with the Serpent River system since the dawn of Name-giver history. In ancient times, elven trading ships plied the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers and even ventured out into the Aras Sea. As t'skrang power grew along the Serpent, tensions between the elves and the t'skrang inevitably increased, culminating in open warfare between the two Name-giver races, as commemorated in the t'skrang legends of the War Against the Elves (for more information, see **House Syrtis** on p. 179). As elven power waned, the elven fleet slowly shrank. However, elven vessels remained a common sight along Barsaive's rivers until the Elven Queen Alachia's decision to isolate her kingdom from the rest of Barsaive. At that time, the Queen ordered her subjects to destroy all remaining elven ships. Now, Masae Seorach and his *Mallornica* (see **The Coil River** on p. 229), and the ruined shipyard at the southern edge of the Blood Wood remain the only traces of the elven kingdom's once proud fleet.

The ruins, located along the Mothingale, are all that remain of an ancient shipyard unlike any other in Barsaive. The elves abandoned the yard and destroyed all of its magical devices when their queen ordered the destruction of the elven fleet. Explorers who have visited the ruins say an atmosphere of loss and sorrow hangs over them, as if something vital to the elven race was destroyed along with the docks and equipment.

As the Mothingale exits the Blood Wood and flows toward the Serpent River, it passes through rough steppes and withered highlands. The Mothingale runs swift here, but remains navigable. Its banks are desolate and uninhabited, and the stretch of river contains little of interest to travelers save for an ancient obelisk that rises some 26 yards from the middle of the river about 70 miles north of the confluence of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers. The downstream face of the obelisk is covered with carved t'skrang pictographs, and its upstream side bears an inscription in archaic *Sperethiel*. Scholars who have translated the elven script say it describes a peace treaty between the Queen of the Wyrm Wood and the Shivalahala Syrtis, and identifies the obelisk as a marker that indicates the boundary beyond which no t'skrang riverboat may trespass. Many t'skrang who have journeyed to the site believe the obelisk is historical evidence of the legendary War Against the Elves.

Kaer Eidolon

At the confluence of the Mothingale and Serpent Rivers lies Kaer Eidolon, a site of great historical and strategic importance in northern Barsaive. Originally, the site was occupied by a small group of elven exiles who fled the Wyrm Wood shortly before Queen Alachia instituted the Ritual of the Thorns. The Elven Court kept no record of these mysterious individuals, but their story is truly remarkable. Judging by the archaeological evidence, the group traveled nearly four days from the Wyrm Wood to reach the site, transporting all the supplies they would need to erect a kaer, and then somehow completed two-thirds of their kaer before finally succumbing to Horrors. Appropriately

Middle Reach
Serpent River
Gauchvic Mountains
Blood Wood
Seytha Mountains
Serpent River
Thoal Mountains
Lalai Gorge
Gauchvic River
Sirius
Cliffs of Sirius
Rhystadon
Jalidar River
Barterstown
Coil River
Darrani's
Lake Bay
Serpent River
Vosk
Tenlik'han
Vistrimon
Galanga River
Griffon Falls
Servos River
Mathingale River
Fidolon
Ishkarat
Lake Vors
Serpent River
Sylor Mountains
Shattered Towers
Daiche
Talon River
Krotas
NORTH
W
E
S

enough, the first explorers of the Blood Wood region Named the site *eidolon*, the elven word for phantom.

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On the fourth day of my assignment to Kaer Eidolon I already grow sick and tired of these lizards! I fear their ruckus and tomfoolery will be the end of us. Though some think the Queen's policies unreasonable, the more I see of the outside the more I understand the true depths of her wisdom. How I wish for the days of our elders, when elves had the skill to tame these waters! But to duty, Guardian Bird would be appalled at my aim of late. These cursed waters play their own tricks, but the others tell me it only takes a few weeks to grow accustomed to them. Weeks... the thought already makes me long for the woods again.

—From the Journal of Alevar, Woodsman

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Nearly a century later, Kaer Eidolon became the site of the first elven military installation constructed outside the Blood Wood in modern times. Some observers even claim that the fort at Eidolon, the result of a Syrtisian/elven alliance, may herald the end of the Elven Court's long, self-imposed isolation.

The origins of the fort can be traced back approximately 10 years, when emissaries from House Syrtis arrived at the Elven Court bearing a proposal from the Syrtisian High Chamber. In that proposal, the Syrtisian leaders suggested that the elves and t'skrang of House Syrtis set aside their historical animosities and join in a defensive pact to check the expansion of House Ishkarat. At that time, the Ishkaratans had recently seized the headquarters of a Syrtisian *niall* based at Lake Vors and had begun taking control of Serpent River villages east of the lake, causing great concern in the Syrtisian High Chamber. Certain Syrtisian leaders concluded that the Ishkaratans intended to seize control of the Mothingale and Serpent confluence, and they correctly judged that the elves of the Blood Wood would be greatly disturbed by such a prospect.

The Elven Queen, fearing that the River Mothingale would provide an ideal springboard for an Ishkaratan invasion of the Blood Wood, quickly sent a reply expressing her interest in the proposal. Within weeks, elven and Syrtisian military engineers had begun to lay the foundations of a new fortress on the walls of the abandoned kaer.

The unique fortifications at Kaer Eidolon reflect a marriage of t'skrang and elven architecture. The fort's stone and earthen ramparts are reinforced with wood and vine, and the fort was outfitted with such marvels of engineering as



a system of retractable piers that can be pulled out of the water in the event of an amphibious assault and special fire cannons that can strike at enemies up to 700 yards away.

The troops stationed at the fort, an unprecedented mix of Syrtisian and elven soldiers, also reflect the unique nature of this joint venture. Kaer Eidolon's elven troops primarily consist of elves born outside the Blood Wood, who journeyed to the Elven Court to see for themselves the corruption of the Ritual of the Thorns and to draw their own conclusions about the Elven Schism. Apparently, Queen Alachia chose to station such cultural pilgrims at the kaer to minimize the chance that their influence might disrupt the status quo in the Blood Wood.

The joint venture proved its worth in 1502 TH when a Syrtisian fleet, backed by Kaer Eidolon's impressive fortifications and river patrols, soundly defeated an Ishkaratan force at the Battle of Sejanus. Since that time, House Ishkarat's warships have restricted their activities to Lake Vors and the Serpent River west of the lake.

Additionally, the project has provided unforeseen benefits to both the elves and Syrtisians. A genuine camaraderie has developed between the t'skrang and elven troops, particularly the elves from outside the Blood Wood, which has done much to break down the distrust and animosity that has separated the two Name-giver races for centuries. The fort has also provided the Syrtisian military with an excellent place to train the new common-born officers it so desperately needs to bolster its command ranks, which still contain many feeble-minded Syrtisian noblemen.

In recent years, however, the rose that blooms in Kaer Eidolon has begun to show thorns as well. The rivalries between the Syrtisian *nialls* burn brightly within the t'skrang ranks, and the rivalries lead to serious incidents at times. Mock battles between the riverboats of rival *nialls* occasionally produce casualties, and the constant competition between officers from rival *nialls* often hampers the readiness of the t'skrang forces. Understandably, several of Queen Alachia's officers have grown disenchanted with the Syrtisian command of the fortress and have begun pushing for a rotation that would put Kaer Eidolon under elven command for part of each year. Additionally, many of the fort's elven troops choose not to renew their commissions. As a result, replacement troops arrive almost daily, severely reducing the effectiveness of those troops. Finally, all of these various tensions have been exacerbated by the lack of Ishkaratan attacks in recent years, a phenomenon that has made the elves' and t'skrang's common enemy seem increasingly remote.

Kaer Eidolon has also become the center of a black market that shuttles goods between the Blood Wood and House Syrtis. Although Queen Alachia's long-standing edicts expressly prohibit all nonessential contact between her elves and outsiders, the t'skrang have always associated the word "forbidden" with "profitable." The fraternization of elven and t'skrang troops, combined with the elven regiment's rotating roster, has provided an irresistible opportunity for black marketeers. The t'skrang have even found the perfect cover for their secret operations: the t'skrang tradition of *tessesta*, exchanging gifts with departing comrades-in-arms. Typically, the fort's t'skrang troops begin planning their *tessesta* months before their elven colleagues depart for the Blood Wood, so that they can realize the most profit from their chance to trade t'skrang goods for elven ones. Such trade has become so lucrative that many t'skrang officers engage in the practice themselves or accept bribes from their troops in exchange for their silence on the matter.

MARREK

The city of Marrek lies on the patch of land between the Caucavic and the Serpent Rivers, marking all that is left of this once-proud human kingdom. Marrek prospered after the Orichalcum Wars, explored lands, fought wars, and gained a reputation for assassinating nobles from other kingdoms. When Marrek became involved in the assassination of a Theran councilor, they lost the support of the Theran Empire. Thera's feelings remained hurt for centuries, and they eventually decided Marrek could do without their magical protections from the Horrors. Today, scholars say the kingdom of Marrek exists in Name only, having been completely ripped apart during the Scourge.

The Kingdom of Marrek was known for its shrewd dealings in many areas, trade and politics prominent among them. It is said Marrek knew secrets from the inner circles of every kingdom in Barsaive. Some claimed they even knew the daily habits, routines, and favorite dishes of every major noble in the province. This outstanding intelligence is the suspected source of Marrek's success in foreign assassinations. Its spies, reflecting the flexibility and resourcefulness common to humankind, were quite adept at infiltrating every level of rival kingdoms. Many claim these spies were most often followers of the Journeyman Discipline, able to pick up not only new skills, but also whatever magical abilities would be most useful along the way. While this seems unlikely, it has not stopped a number of Journeymen from searching Marrek's old territories in hopes of learning the secrets of possible ghostmasters.

While flexibility certainly played a role, Marrek's prowess in alchemic pursuits is also credited for the kingdom's murderous achievements. Potions, poultices, and charms of all sorts were a major export of the kingdom, some rumored to grant incredible strength, speed, or even intellectual ability for a time. Many powerful alchemic items are said to have their origins or major production there. Records of illicit sales of poisons also have come to light over the centuries since the Scourge began.

Appropriately enough, these facets continue on in the present day city of Marrek. While still only a relatively small city, it boasts a lion's share of alchemists' shops, with exotic ingredients, talismans, and baubles from all over Barsaive and beyond. The magical community often wonders how much the myths of Marrek's history of alchemy have been exaggerated to increase sales. In addition, the cooperation of Name-givers on equal terms is an impressive feature of the growing community. Marrek boasts an airship, a large drakkar Named *Truthbringer*, manned by an alliance of lowland trolls and human airmen. The chief of the city watch is a former ork scorcher chieftain Named Durmoot Snarltooth, who, along with some loyal friends, remained in the city's service as many orks left for Cara Fahd. A small

trade covenant of displaced t'skrang has recently opened up shop in the city; further adding to the mix that is Marrek.

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The Truthbringer's *first mate is a madman through and through. He loves to jump off the side of the blinking ship with only a small rope round his waist! I swore he was a goner or a fool until he set foot on the other side of the ship. He nearly got an axe in the head! And the crew is just as crazy, thinking they can prove trolls can be civilized and all, through their respectful trading. Never did understand those honor-less lowlanders. At least they can sail well enough; they still have some of the mountain blood in 'em, it seems.*

—Belwharg of the Stoneclaws

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The city's origins remain mysterious, however. The ruling family supposedly arrived a few decades after the opening of Throal and began as poor traders, taking the Name of the ancient human kingdom that once prospered on this land. Their current wealth makes many wonder at the possibility of ancient Marrekan treasure hiding in the hills and forests; indeed, adventurers occasionally go questing in the wild lands that once made up the kingdom. Currently, the rulers are working to solidify their minor trading agreements and alliances with the nearby powers of House Syrtis and Throal. It appears they may still fear the wrath of Thera over their Namesake's actions.

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My latest theory is that Marrek's rulers are actually Marrekan nobles reclaiming their heritage after a stint living in the kaers of others. Haven't been able to find any manifests to prove it yet, but I believe it's just a matter of searching hard enough. A mysterious family of well-to-do humans is likely to have made a kaer's record books.

—Kallarian, Scholar of Jerris

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The Pilgrimage Route

For millennia t'skrang from all over Barsaive have traveled to the Mid Reach to walk the Pilgrimage Route, which stretches from Ayodhya to the Cliff City of House Syrtis. The ancient footpath runs close by the Serpent River for 15 days' journey and passes through some of the most revered t'skrang sacred sites. On nights of the full moon, it is said that the path's smooth white paving stones glow with a soft light.

T'skrang say that those who tread the white stones walk a path of purity and communion with the Passions, and observations of magicians who have visited the path seem to support that contention. The route passes several places that were warped or corrupted by Horrors, but even in such areas the path itself remains safe ground where magicians can cast raw magic without risking the usual dangers.

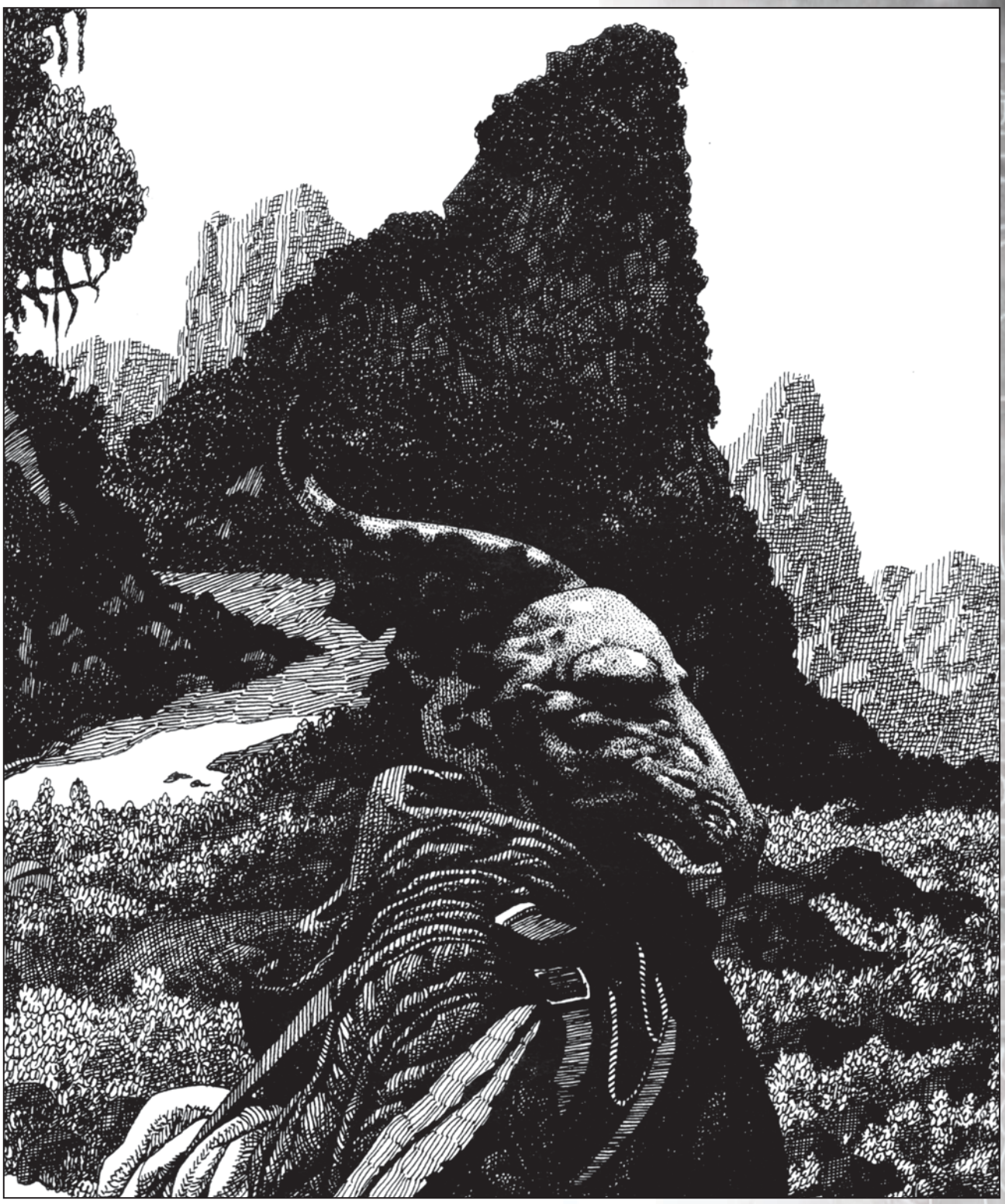
Unfortunately, the pilgrimage route begins at the hill of Ayodhya—which is where the Therans landed their massive behemoth that marked their return (see **The Fortress City of** Triumph on p. 235). No one has been able to walk the pilgrimage route since.

Ayodhya rises more than 160 yards from the plains southwest of Lake Ban and dominates the surrounding landscape for miles. According to t'skrang legend, the Old Man of the Nets ordered his children to carry his chair to Ayodhya and build his funeral pyre atop the hill when he knew his time had come to die. (Ayodhya literally translates as spirit chair.) When they had finished doing as their father had asked, the Old Man's children turned to him for guidance, but found he had died while they worked. They placed his body and chair in the middle of the pyre and set the wood ablaze. Although the Old Man's body burned to ash in the flames, his wooden chair resisted the fire. The children then carried the chair back to the Island of Reeds in Lake Ban and set it at the foot of the table in their *niall's* dining hall. On certain days of the year, the Old Man's spirit appeared in the chair during the evening meal, dispensing wisdom and retelling the tales of his many adventures. To this day many t'skrang *nialls* set aside a chair for the *niall's* ancestral spirits, should they decide to visit.

Interestingly, obsidimen also revere Ayodhya. Obsidiman pilgrims often climbed the spiraling path up the hill to the Liferock located at its top. The Liferock is home to a brotherhood whose members include the merchant Omasu (see **How It Came To Pass** on p. 31 of the **Player's Compendium**). Why the obsidimen venerate the hill remains unknown, but the Theran's life-draining magic has been depleting the energies of the Liferock and a number of obsidimen trapped inside since the behemoth landed. These obsidimen are imprisoned forever, and the spirit of the Liferock is doomed to wither away to nothing.

A small shrine to the spirit of the Earth, Shivos, marked the beginning of the t'skrang Pilgrimage Route at the base of the Liferock. The path then wound down the hill's steep slopes to the river's edge, now mostly obscured by the Theran fortress. The route follows the Serpent's contour to a shrine to the Old Man of the Nets on the south shore of Lake Ban. From there, pilgrims boarded a small, oar-driven ferry that carried them to the Floating City of House V'strimon. Typically, pilgrims spent a day visiting each of the towers of the city, then boarded another ferry that took them to the mouth of the Coil River on the northwest shore of the lake. There, on the sandy white shoreline, lies a massive flat black rock that contains a fossilized impression resembling a grossly oversized t'skrang footprint. According to t'skrang legend, Shivoam, the dragon-spirit of the Serpent River, made the footprint when she came to her husband's marriage bed for the very first time.

From Shivoam's Footprint, the path heads north along the lakeshore, then closely follows the contours of the Serpent River. Along this stretch, pilgrims commonly passed travelers on a dwarf caravan road that runs parallel to the pilgrims' path. In several places, only a few yards separate the two routes. The two routes never intersect, however, for the dwarfs took great care not to cross the sacred t'skrang path when they built their caravan road (even when doing



so required impressive feats of engineering).

On the fifth day of the journey, the path enters a stand of trees called the Grove of Memory. Those who pass through the grove receive visions of the past. Adepts have discovered that by carrying a magical item through the grove, one can occasionally receive insights into one of the item's Key Knowledges. Several years ago a wizard Named Talmagore attempted to turn this little-known fact to his own gain. He set up a stall just outside the Grove of Memory and promised customers that he could penetrate the deepest mystery of any magic item by carrying it into the trees. He enjoyed considerable success for his first two years in business, realizing enough profit to replace his ramshackle stall with a beautiful house. Then one day he walked into the grove and never returned. His faithful servant, Grimaud, now tends Talmagore's house. Grimaud offers bed and board to all pilgrims but refuses to set foot inside the grove for any reason.

A few days north of the Grove of Memory lies the river village of Kralipur. Kralipur is home to the Sacred Flame, which has been vigilantly guarded by the independent Unnao *niall* and its *lahala* for centuries. The source of the

ever-burning flame is said to be a scale from the carapace of the Dragon of the Sun, T'schlome. Pilgrims would write prayers on reed paper, then toss them in the flame. The resulting ashes reputedly acted as charms powerful enough to ward off the undead and lesser Horrors.

As the path enters the Throal Mountains, it passes through a cave where an ancient sculptor has carved the images of the Four Founders, the legendary great dragons that created heaven and earth. The images of Shivoam, T'schlome, Shivos, and Syrtis, each as large as life, are carved in bas relief into the walls of the cavern. Legend has it that the eyes of these carvings were immense opals, each the size of dinner plate, but thieves stole them long ago. The legends go on to say that when a worthy pilgrim passes under the gaze of the Four Founders, the spirits of the first dragons will bestow a special gift of strength on him. Since the opening of the kaers, however, no pilgrim has ever reported receiving such a gift.

Deep in the mountains, the path reaches the Pool of Floranuus. The waters of this spring collect in a deep pool, and the bright red sand at the bottom of it gives the water the appearance of freshly spilled blood. Pilgrims would dive into the pool to grab a handful of this sand, for it is said a pouch of it placed under one's pillow protects against nightmares of all kinds (see the **New Goods and Services** chapter on p. 288).

Farther north, the path enters the Canyon of a Thousand Voices. This narrow canyon acts as a natural amplification and echo chamber. A single shout may bounce between the canyon's sheer stone walls until it becomes nearly a thousand times louder. Occasionally, a pilgrim who cries out a question would hear a second voice giving him an answer amid the echoes of his own voice.

As the path nears Lalai Gorge, it crosses over the Alidar River on a natural stone bridge. The rock formation, which arches several hundred feet above the river, is wide enough for only one person to cross at a time. Tradition states that while crossing this bridge, a pilgrim will confront a vision of his greatest fear, which he must overcome to get to the other side.

The Pilgrimage Route ends at the Pinnacle Gate of the Cliff City. From the Pinnacle Gate, the pilgrim could take in a breathtaking view of the wide ribbon of the Serpent River below him, the Caucavic Mountains across the gorge, and the highest peaks of the Throal Mountains behind him. At the Pinnacle Gate, House Syrtis maintains a large shrine to Shivoam, the dragon-spirit of the Serpent River. An attendant at the shrine greeted every pilgrim with gifts of food and an offer of shelter. Additionally, any pilgrim who could show he has visited each of the sacred places on the path received a silver medallion bearing the sign of the Dragon of the Moon.

The attendant then arranged private audiences with the Shivalahala Syrtis for all pilgrims who had completed the path. Those individuals were escorted to a special audience chamber deep inside the Cliff City. The high ceiling of the chamber contains numerous openings that channel cascades of water from the Serpent, which collects in basins on the chamber's floor. Within this web of waterfalls, the *shivalahala* would await the traveler. She would speak the pilgrim's Name and bless his journey. The pilgrim could then ask one question of the *shivalahala*, which she must answer if she could divine a true reply. Very few questions had ever gone unanswered, and no answers had ever been false—although quite often the *shivalahala*'s replies were maddeningly obscure.

This practice inspired the popular Troubadour's tale of Loloish of Framling. According to the tale, Loloish was a common-born t'skrang who fell desperately in love with the



Shivalahala Syrtis. In an effort to prove himself worthy of the *shivalahala's* love, Loloish worked his way through the ranks of the *aropagoi* until he became captain of a riverboat. He dedicated his life and his crew to the service of the *shivalahala*, and eventually his Name became known to her. He revealed his heart to the *shivalahala* on many occasions, but she would make no answer one way or another. After much introspection, he disguised himself as a pilgrim and set out on the Pilgrimage Route. When he completed the journey, he asked his one question of the *shivalahala*: "Shivalahala of the Moon, dost thou love me as I love thee?" Forced to reveal the truth, the *shivalahala* revealed her love for Loloish, and the two lived ever after in the trust of one another's souls.

Settlements of the Mid Reach

South of the Cliff City and north of Lake Ban, the Serpent enters the foothills of the Throal Mountains. The isolated pastures of this region are ideal for raising sheep and goats, and fields of green tea and some of Barsaive's most renowned vineyards flourish in the deep, rich topsoil. The region's natural bounty has attracted elven, dwarf, human, and t'skrang settlers, who live in small villages and terraced farms perched along the Serpent's steep banks and the surrounding hills. These Name-givers live side by side in mutual tolerance and abide by the laws and customs of Throal, but they pledge allegiance to none of Barsaive's major powers.

Denlikiyan

The village of Denlikiyan, one of the wealthiest river settlements in Barsaive, lies along this stretch of the Serpent. The hero Shen Denlikiyan, chief engineer and advisor to the Syrtisian *nialls* during the War Against the Elves, claims a prominent place in t'skrang legends and his descendants take great pride in their heritage. The shipyards of Denlikiyan are among Barsaive's finest, and the village's engineers are responsible for the innovations that led to the creation of the renowned *shimoram* riverboat design. Indeed, Denlikiyan's yards represent most of the handful of yards that can build a fire engine—and thus, a complete riverboat—from scratch. Rumor has it that after nearly a century of shipbuilding, Denlikiyan now sits on top of one of the largest stashes of gold coin in all of Barsaive.



During the past decade or so, the village's expert shipwrights and rumored wealth have attracted numerous well-organized raids, including two staged by Henghyokian pirate vessels, one staged by an Ishkaratan raider masquerading as a crippled V'strimonian riverboat, and four by mercenary bands of adepts—one of which claimed to have been in the pay of King Varulus III. So far, however, the village has successfully resisted all attempts to wrest away its secrets and gold.

—Rhouven, Vorst Engineer



Tansiarda

Just south of the confluence of the Onman and the Serpent Rivers lies the town of Tansiarda, home of a consortium of dwarf engineers and magicians embarked on one of the most ambitious endeavors in Barsaive's history—to bridge the Serpent River. The Old Theran Road to Parlainth runs through the town, and a well-traveled dwarf caravan route passes near the riverbank opposite Tansiarda. Additionally, the town lies close to a set of abandoned t'skrang village towers, which the dwarfs plan to use as piers to support their bridge. Although the plan seems technically feasible, it has aroused the ire of House Syrtis' Wavram *niall*, which is based in the area. Tensions have been running high between Tansiarda's dwarfs and the t'skrang of nearby villages.

On the trading route between Tansiarda and the Kingdom of Throal, the trading town of Ardanyan flourishes from the traffic. Founded by a group of wealthy merchants, the town boasts above-average defenses and provides travelers with a safe haven from the ork scorchers threatening the area.

Other Settlements

As the river flows northwest of the Lalai Gorge, settlements grow increasingly sparse and better fortified. Although many maintain docks, most are set hundreds of yards back from the river's banks. Here, pioneer farms give way to communal settlements, whose inhabitants tend common fields by day and retreat to homes protected by thick walls as night falls. Most of these settlers are survivors from kaers in the Caucavic foothills who have come to the water's edge to escape the highland raiders; they live mainly by trade with passing riverboats. The southern banks of the river are also home to dwarf mining camps, full of prospectors who pan the river's water for the precious minerals that wash down from the nearby mountains.

In these parts, danger may come from any direction—the hills, the woods, the river, even from neighboring towns. The highland raiders of the nearby Throal and Caucavic Mountains, some of the most savage and desperate folk in all of Barsaive, are particularly feared. These primitive bands of humans, dwarfs, and orks strike with weapons of stone and bone, but the ferocity of their attacks more than compensates for their unsophisticated arsenals. Typically, a highland raiding band tries to kill every able-bodied defender, then carries off a village's food supplies and remaining inhabitants before torching the settlement's huts. Most settlers believe that the raiders use their unfortunate captives as slaves, but some suspect that the raiders worship the Horrors and sacrifice their prisoners to these evil entities.

After a riverboat of human raiders struck at several villages in the past few months, settlers have also begun to watch the river with increased vigilance. No one has been able to identify the riverboat by Name, however, and none of the crew covenants of the Mid Reach have reported any of their boats missing. The dwarfs of the region have expressed surprise at the lack of response by the Syrtisian t'skrang, but the t'skrang seem to believe that they are the only Name-givers capable of maintaining a fire engine for more than a few months. They contend that the human raiders will

Coil River
Serpent River
Darrans
Coil River
Stros Jungle
Serpent River
Lake Ryos
Hyodha
Lake Bari
Vstrimon
(Sleeping City)
Vost
Denlikigan
Serpent River
Aravacai
Coil River
Thunder Mountains
Utupa
Aras Sea

eventually run out of fire or run aground and have to abandon their riverboat.

Given these dangers, it should come as no surprise that the inhabitants of the region view all strangers as potential threats.

Lake Ban

As the largest freshwater lake in Barsaive, Lake Ban is home to the Floating City of the t'skrang House V'strimon (see p. 196). The city is built entirely on platforms made of woven reeds growing upward from the lake bottom. Lake Ban's location—midway between Throal and Urupa, at the junction of the Coil and Serpent Rivers—has made it a major economic and cultural crossroad. The Floating City, along with the bustling towns and villages along the lake's shores, makes Lake Ban the undisputed heart of the Coil River Valley, as well as one of Barsaive's most civilized regions.

The landing of the Theran fortress of Triumph at Ayodhya has had a strong impact on the region, as the V'strimon have marshalled their warships to protect their city from attacks by the Therans and their allies, House K'tenshin. The K'tenshin seized control of the Serpent River between Lake Pyros and Lake Ban during the Theran's arrival, which in turn led to open hostilities between the two houses.

The Coil River

The Coil River is one of the most prosperous stretches of the entire Serpent River system. From its source in the Throal Mountains to the Aras Sea, the Coil runs as swiftly and strongly as the Serpent and is home to more people than the rest of Barsaive's mightiest waterway. Once considered unnavigable for much of its northern length, the river "smoothed out" during the Scourge. Riverboats can now sail north up the Coil, then ride its underground tributaries through the mountains to the Kingdom of Throal.

Midway through its course, the Coil flows into Lake Ban, connecting the Coil with the Serpent River. From Lake Ban, the Coil flows southeast through the fertile steppes between the Serpent River and the Aras Sea. Shortly before it enters the sea, the river divides into three branches, which form the Coil Delta. At the confluence of the central branch and the Aras lies the city of Urupa, Barsaive's foremost seaport. Situated under the steep cliffs that border the sea, Urupa was first settled by former kaer dwellers who arrived shortly after the Scourge ended.

Despite its relative youth, Urupa has quickly grown into one of the province's richest cities. Its strategic location and the high volume of lucrative trade conducted along its docks have attracted the attention of most of Barsaive's major trading companies, as well as the Kingdom of Throal and even the Theran Empire.

Adipae Rapids

The Coil River is more densely populated than any comparable length of the Serpent, primarily because the steep banks and deep channel keep the river from flooding even during the wet season. Because flooding is so rare, numerous frontier towns populated mainly by dwarfs from Throal have sprung up all along the Coil's northern banks.

Tradition has it that before the Scourge, the Coil's farthest navigable point north was at Adipae Ford, about 50 miles upstream of Lake Ban. Even today, the rapids at Adipae look intimidating, so it is not surprising that the first explorers from House V'strimon assumed the Adipae rapids were impassable. Early in the Theran War, however, the Shivalahala V'strimon ordered Captain Westhrall to find a river passage to Throal. After exploring all the tributaries that enter the Serpent from the Throal Mountains, Westhrall faced the unpleasant prospect of crossing the rapids at Adipae.

According to the legend, Westhrall had anchored *Astendar's Dart* just south of the rapids and sent a scouting party up along the banks to gauge the condition of the river upstream when a K'tenshin warship suddenly came surging up from behind. Realizing that his crew, split between the land and the water, was grossly outnumbered by the approaching K'tenshinians, Westhrall reportedly said, "Damn the rocks! Full speed ahead!" The K'tenshin captain watched aghast as his enemy entered the torrid waters of Adipae, and suddenly lost his nerve for pursuit. Westhrall, meanwhile, discovered that the turbulent water of the rapids actually covered the rocks to a considerable depth. He passed upstream without incident and went on to discover five different underground rivers leading to the Kingdom of Throal.

Once underground, Westhrall discovered a world utterly different from the one to which he was accustomed. The underground rivers proved to be a labyrinthine puzzle enshrouded in darkness, which concealed their peculiar dangers. After several successive journeys through the maze, Westhrall discovered that the rivers changed course over time, and found himself doubly lost. Eventually, the dwarfs of Throal had to maintain a series of stations along the underground rivers to guide the riverboats to the cities of Throal. These underground rivers are all but impassable now and used only by those rare riverboats given express permission to do so by King Neden.



Ah, go find my third cousin, for he is master of those waters. Pah! Never mind Neden's permission; go find Hodanticus, he knows a secret way in. Mind you, it requires a little hiking and the stomach to brave some choppy waters, but is nothing compared to what I and my kin have faced day in, day out in the Tylon. It nearly killed us all years back. Anyway, he'll get you in, and he even charges less than I do. Just make sure and tell him I sent you now, lad.

—Cousin Vodanicus



Darranis

Today, the rapids at Adipae are so well mapped that few riverboat captains fear them. Upstream of the rapids, the river is wide open for another 250 miles, with no appreciable hazard before it reaches the town Darranis. At Darranis,

a major caravan route winds down from the highlands out of Bartertown. In the years since the Theran War, the Darranis road has become a vital link between Throal and the Serpent River system, and the town has grown explosively.

Many Name-givers come to Darranis in search of work that merchant houses and independent caravan owners have to offer—mainly for transporting goods from Darranis north to Throal and vice versa. The steady demand for workers feeds many people, but forces many to spend most of their time on the road, leaving their women with the burden of raising their families. Payment is low because many people are able and willing to join a caravan, what makes for poor living conditions for the families left behind.

On the other hand, specialized crafters and the owners of the many taverns and trisnaries have a higher income and live in much better conditions than most of Darranis' inhabitants. Even though social unrest is a growing threat (fueled by a recent uprising demanding higher wages and better living conditions for the caravaners), the majority of Darranis' population keeps their mouthes shut.

Since the landing of the Theran behemoth, Darranis became a hotspot for spies and smugglers. While the former use the town mainly as a retreat to deliver reports and keep their heads low, the latter provides enchanted weapons forged in Throal to support the Liferock Rebellion and agents of House V'strimon.

Most important merchant houses from Throal and their competitors like the Overland Trading Company don't have warehouses and offices in Darranis, because most of the goods that arrive in Darranis are transported further into Barsaive.

Westhrall's Passage

The opening of the river north of Adipae led to the construction of new t'skrang river villages for the first time in more than a millennium. Even today, new village towers are going up along the stretch of river now called Westhrall's Passage. Apparently, so much time has passed since the t'skrang constructed a village that the engineers and Elementalists on the project are working from ancient texts and the ancestral memories of Lahala Desti Denvis. The *lahala's* involvement in the project is quite controversial, for she has abandoned her village to participate in this task.

Axalalail

The Coil's southern course between Lake Ban and Urupa is lined with farming villages, nestled behind stockades for protection against ork scorchers from the surrounding plains. This part of the river contains only one remarkable town, the so-called Swinging City of Axalalail, which translates from the t'skrang as "New Lalai." The town is built entirely on platforms suspended in a grove of massive trees that grow at the site. The town's t'skrang residents, who built the town with the aid of a windling clan, use rope swings to move from platform to platform.



After I was familiar with using the ropes to get from one platform to another, I enjoyed every moment of my visit in Axalalail. Traveling by foot seems dull afterwards.

—Gillian, Human Thief



A handful of Elementalists are responsible for overseeing the trees and to make sure that the platforms and buildings are well maintained. The most experienced one, a t'skrang named L'tskarr, plays an important role in local politics and spends much time debating with city officals over the building of new platforms. Rumours say that L'tskarr is getting tired of his work and will retire soon, even though it is unclear who will follow in her footsteps.

The unsual architecture of Axalalail has lead to an ever increasing number of visitors, most of them coming by riverboat. While most trade takes places close to the docks, many taverns and trisnaris are found throughout the whole city. Most offer not only delicious meals, but also a spectacular view over the surrounding landscape. Due to the hazards of getting around in the city, most inhabitants don't drink much alcohol, or only watered-down ale.

Axalalail serves as a trade hub for the southern stretch of the Coil River. It is the only major settlement between Urupa and Lake Ban, and most riverboats traveling between these destinations make a stop in Axalacail to offer their goods. People from the surrounding villages travel to Axalacail each day and sell livestock, vegetables, and other trade goods—some of which are actually taken to Urupa and the Floating City of House V'strimon at Lake Ban. The famous crayfish and several of the t'skrang's spices can be found in the shallow river bays close to Axalalail make the town a main producer of the famous t'skrang spices (see p. 455 of the **Player's Compendium** for examples).

Adventure Hook

A Throalic merchant hires the characters to bring a charge of enchanted weapons to Darranis and deliver them to a t'skrang merchant there. The t'skrang is an agent of House V'strimon planning to deliver the weapons to rebels hiding in the jungle near Lake Pyros. A group of Theran agents in Darranis gets wind of the deal, however, and kills the t'skrang merchant a few days days before the characters arrive—waiting for them in ambush ...

Showboats

House V'strimon, the Kingdom of Throal, and the Fenestral chamber of House Syrtis have recently begun an unusual joint venture to build five open-air amphitheaters along the west bank of the Serpent's Mid Reach, near well-settled areas along the Serpent and the Coil River. They intend to offer these facilities to passing showboats in return for a share in the gate receipts.

The only amphitheater completed so far, about a mile north of Tenshi Landing on Lake Ban, resembles the Aulcroft Amphitheatre in Urupa, and seats 5,000.

Many observers have voiced doubts about the profitability of this ambitious project, pointing out that fewer than 5,000 people live near enough to the finished theater to attend performances, even if they wished to spend the time and money. Confidence in the project has steadily declined over the past few months, and work on a second site near the town of Axalalail has been suspended.

Urupa

Founded less than 100 years ago by residents of seven nearby kaers and citadels along the shores of the Aras Sea, the port city of Urupa lies at the confluence of the Coil River and the Aras Sea. Although considerably smaller than the great cities of Barsaive such as Travar, Iopos, and Bartertown, Urupa is the province's fastest growing metropolis.

Located on a peninsula that shelters one of the finest harbors on the Aras Sea, Urupa is separated from the mainland by 500-yard cliffs. Additionally, a 6-yard wall that contains five 24-yard watchtowers surrounds the city. In the mouth of the city's harbor lies a compact but imposing fortress called Shabira's Redoubt, which bristles with steel spikes and fire cannons. The city's military numbers more than 2,000 soldiers, and citizens who wish to vote in local elections must pay for the privilege by contributing enough money to arm and supply one soldier or sailor in times of war.

Urupa's fleet contains eight airships and five naval vessels, including two V'strimon warships that each boasts 40 fire cannons. Despite its impressive military forces, Urupa's main business is trade, not conquest, and the city's location serves its commercial ambitions well. The city's harbor provides ideal shelter against the severe storms common to the Aras Sea, and the Urupan peninsula juts into the Aras about a half a mile north of the mouth of the Coil River's main branch. Urupa therefore lies at a natural crossroads. Goods from all across Barsaive are transported down the Serpent and Coil Rivers, then pass through Urupa and on to distant ports all around the Aras Sea. At the same time, exotic goods from foreign Aras ports are transported to Urupa and up the Coil and Serpent Rivers to Throal, the Blood Wood and other Barsaivian cities.

Urupa's burgeoning power as Barsaive's dominant Aras Sea port and its strategic location have drawn the attention of groups from all over Barsaive and beyond. Thera and Throal, Iopos and Travar, the t'skrang *aropagoi*, the Elven Court of the Blood Wood, and countless others have all made a place for themselves in the crowded streets of Urupa. The city is home to every Name-giver race in Barsaive, from windlings to obsidimen. In turn, Urupa's diverse population lends the city a cosmopolitan air matched by few other Barsaivian settlements.

Crowded as it is, Urupa can hardly be called one of Barsaive's more beautiful cities. Although it contains much to please the eye and ear, such as the Aulcroft Theater and the Three Temples to the Passions, the city's architecture and layout are less than inspired. Built to last of available materials, with little thought to the aesthetic pleasure of future generations, Urupa's square, solid buildings are constructed of unadorned blocks of stone cut from the drab gray cliffs that loom over the city. Even new buildings display few architectural flourishes, because the city's inhabitants rarely choose to fund ambitious architectural projects with money they can spend on business enterprises.

Let me tell you of the beauty of Urupa. Oh, it lies not in the city and its buildings, but in the sea itself. Never in all my days in Barsaive have I seen more beautiful waters! The sweet, fresh air blowing in your face off the shining, frothing sea is the best way to wake up! And the ships that ply its waters, with their billowing sails, illustrious curves, and purposeful bustle, have a life about them that is all their own. The place will always hold a certain magic for me, and I hope through my words it will for you. So, let me sing you the tale of how such a marvelous place came to be ...

—Beldeaux of Ar Kham

The Chief Councilor of Urupa is Named Fellidra Jer, a masterful Troubadour who has led the council for the past eleven years and enjoys great popularity among Urupa's citizens. Among her chief concerns is the flow of trade between the city of Urupa and the rest of Barsaive. Both the Theran/K'tenshin and Throal/V'strimon trading alliances are attempting to negotiate an exclusive arrangement with Urupa to secure that city's rich Aras Sea trade for their ships. So far, Fellidra Jer has manage to keep the council neutral on the issue. The influx of unique merchandise from across the Aras Sea has already drawn many more merchants and traders from all over Barsaive than Fellidra believes is good for Urupa. Even the local merchants worry that the outsiders will open permanent shops and take up residence in the city.

Recently, Fellidra received word that several cities across the Aras Sea have come under attack by an army approaching from the east. In response to this news, she has hired a group of adventurers to seek out the truth of it.

The Aras Coast

Aside from Urupa, a few scattered fishing and trading settlements, and the recently re-settled t'skrang village of P'shestis, the rugged Aras coast of Barsaive is largely uninhabited. The village of P'shestis is located near the confluence of the Coil River and the Aras Sea.

The village's original inhabitants abandoned the site at the time of Urupa's founding, but in recent years a small community of t'skrang, which calls itself the Loyal Order of the Shining Crescent, has reopened the village's towers. Deriving its Name from a P'shestis riverboat lost in a storm on the Aras Sea in 1498 TH, the Loyal Order is actually a monastic community dedicated to the Passion Upandal, rather than a true t'skrang crew covenant or foundation. Reportedly, each member of the order shares a vision received in a dream of the lost riverboat returning to P'shestis from out of the deep sea. Although such beliefs may seem strange to outsiders, the t'skrang of the order are friendly and welcome visitors at all times.

The order's founders, who emigrated from Urupa's P'shestis sector, cleared the abandoned village's *t'slashina* and began to cultivate t'skrang spices. The sale of spices now serves as the order's sole source of income and has proved lucrative enough to enable the t'skrang of P'shestis to begin refurbishing the abandoned village's shipyard. Apparently, the community seeks to establish a facility for building and repairing fire engines that will rival the shipyards at Denlikiyan and Tremeer.

The ruins of Kaer Otosk, the second major landmark of the Aras coast, lie about 300 miles southwest of Urupa at Aras Nehem, in an area of jagged cliffs and deep caverns filled with an unusual variety of enchanted and elemental life forms. The surrounding coastline makes navigation extremely treacherous for air and water ships alike, and black storm clouds seem to perpetually fill the skies above the long-abandoned kaer. A row of five cavernous openings that emerge from the cliff some 160 yards above the surging waters mark the entrance to Kaer Otosk.

Those who have survived the approach to the cliffs report that one can feel and hear an enormous rush of wind sucking into the five caverns. Others have reported visions of the Mad Passions Dis, Raggok, and Vestrial. According to legend, the cliff-side kaer contains the Abyss of Aras Nehem (see p. 494 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), a massive rift in the Earth that exposes a limitless void in which the Horror Ristul resides.

South of Aras Nehem, the coast contains a few small towns and villages that have sprung up since the Scourge. Most of these are concentrated near the delta of the Dragon Mountain River, which flows from the mountain range of the same Name. Most of these settlements maintain fishing fleets, which harvest fish from the Aras. A few of these towns have begun to trade with the People From Across the Aras Sea. Twice a year, vessels from these towns make trade expeditions to Urupa and the scattered fishing settlements along the Aras coast.

These coastal fishing villages, most located at the confluences of the hundreds of small rivers that flow into the Aras, are the most fascinating of all the coastal settlements. Centuries of isolation have left these communities untouched by much of the outside world. Throal and Thera are no more than vague rumors to these fisherfolk, who provide a fascinating window into Barsaive's distant past. Although the customs of these people may seem rustic and their dialects barely comprehensible, a patient traveler who makes the effort to seek them out may be rewarded with strange and rare gifts or trade items. In fact, the Aras coast is the location of the fabled River of Gold. It is said that gold can be scooped from the river like fish and that the precious metal is so plentiful that the local people trade with it as if it were common iron.

Masae Seorach and the Mallornica

The *Mallornica*, which sails the Aras Sea, is believed to be the only elven sailing ship still in existence. The sole surviving example of the legendary elven vessels described in t'skrang and elven lore, the *Mallornica* features a sail woven with elemental air, which catches the slightest breath of wind, and a keel carved from a single tree and coated with thin layers of elemental wood.

The *Mallornica* is a remarkable sight, with a hull made of wood as white as the clouds, a high curving prow that actually bears leaves in the summer months, and three masts that each tower more than 16 yards above the ship's deck. The front mast is lateen rigged, and the two rear masts bear square-rigged sails and an enormous spinnaker sail that serves as a second rudder.

The *Mallornica* also boasts fire cannons and two ballistae that propel enormous harpoons. The ballistae are used to hunt leviathan in the deepest parts of the Aras Sea. In addition, the entire crew of the *Mallornica* is trained in the use of the elven warbow.

Masae Seorach

Masae Seorach's Name translates as "birth seed of the sundering," apparently an assumed Name. According to rumor, no one save the Elven Queen knows his true identity. Seorach is free of the thorns that mark the elves of the Blood Wood, but no one knows where he might have sought shelter during the Scourge. At every port on the Aras Sea he has left a standing offer of an orichalcum coin as a reward for any information that might lead to the discovery of a way to reverse the Ritual of the Thorns. However, Seorach denies any association with the Seekers of the Heart. The captain does not appear to follow the path of any particular Discipline, leading some to speculate that he is one of the few Barsaivian elves who have set foot on the Path of Lords.

Masae Seorach is an elf Ninth Circle Woodsman, Seventh Circle Songsmith, Seventh Circle Archer, Seventh Circle Elementalist, and Seventh Circle Swordmaster, following the *Sa'mistishsa* path of the Journey and the Wheel (see p. 44 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). He is currently on the Path of Lords.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (15): 6/D10
Willpower (15): 6/D10
Charisma (18): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 16
Initiative: 8/2D6
Spell Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 3
Social Defense: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 32 (95)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 5/D8**
Unconsciousness Rating: 24 (78)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** Masae knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Archer Talents

Bank Shot [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Call Arrow [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Direction Arrow [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Flame Arrow [D] (7): 13/D12+D10 (Explosive Flame Arrow, Fire Arrow)
Stopping Aim [D] (7): 14/D20+D4

Thread Weaving (Arrow Weaving) [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Throwing Weapons [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
True Shot (7): 14/D20+D4

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Elementalist Talents (Knacks)

Air Speaking [D] (7): 13/D12+D10 (Far Speaking, Whispered Conversation)
Astral Sight (7): 13/D12+D10
Elemental Hold [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Elemental Tongues [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Enhanced Matrix (7): 7
Read and Write Magic [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Spellcasting [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Spell Matrix (7): 7
Spell Matrix (7): 7
Spell Matrix (7): 7
Spell Matrix (7): 7
Summon (Elemental Spirits) [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) [D] (7): 13/D12+D10 (Create Orichalcum)
Willforce (7): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Songsmith Talents

Abate Curse (7): 13/D12+D10
Disguise Self [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Enduring Art (7): 14/D20+D4
Engaging Banter (8): 15/D20+D6
First Impression [D] (10): 17/D20+D10
Forge Blade (7): 13/D12+D10
Haggle [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Item History (7): 13/D12+D10
Mimic Voice (7): 13/D12+D10
Performance [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Read and Write Language (8): 14/D20+D4
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Resist Taunt [D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Speak Language [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Thread Weaving (Art Weaving) [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Winning Smile (8): 15/D20+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Swordmaster Talents (Knacks)

Disarm [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Maneuver [D] (2): 9/D8+D6
Heartening Laugh (7): 14/D20+D4
Riposte [D] (7): 14/D20+D4 (Claw Riposte)
Second Weapon [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Taunt (7): 14/D20+D4

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Woodsman Talents (Knacks)

Anticipate Blow (11): 17/D20+D10
Avoid Blow [D] (12): 19/D20+2D6 (Cover)
Cat's Paw [D] (9): 16/D20+D8 (Cat's Skill)
Climbing [D] (10): 17/D20+D10*
Creature Analysis [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Detect Weapon [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Dominate Beast [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Durability (7/6) (9): 9
Endure Cold [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Karma Ritual (9): 9
Leadership (8): 15/D20+D6
Lion Heart (9): 15/D20+D6
Lizard Leap [D] (9): 14/D20+D4
Melee Weapons (12): 19/D20+2D6
Missile Weapons (10): 17/D20+D10
Mystic Aim (10): 16/D20+D8
Second Attack (10): 17/D20+D10
Sense Danger [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Sprint (10): 17/D20+D10
Thread Weaving (Forest Weaving) [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Tracking [D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Tiger Spring (9): 9
Wood Skin (9): 15/D20+D6
Wound Balance [D] (11): 16/D20+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.
* Adjusted by +1 Climbing rank bonus from thread boots

Skills

Artisan:
Arrow Fletching (4): 11/D10+D8
Craftsman; Woodworker (4): 11/D10+D8
Mapmaking (5): 11/D10+D8
Robe Embroidery (4): 11/D10+D8
Sail Embroidery (4): 11/D10+D8
Tattooing (5): 12/2D10
Weapon Rune Carving (3): 10/D10+D6
Wood Carving (5): 12/2D10

Knowledge:
Aras Sea Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Blood Magic Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Blood Wood History (5): 11/D10+D8
Dragon Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Ritual Magic Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Urupa Lore (3): 9/D8+D6

General:
Fishing (5): 11/D10+D8
Navigation (5): 11/D10+D8
Read River (5): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Sailing (10): 17/D20+D10
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Sperethiel
Streetwise (3): 9/D8+D6
Swimming (10): 15/D20+D6

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13/D12+D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)

2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 24–40–48)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 11/D10+D8; w/scabbard)
Elven Warbow (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 80–160–320)
Quiver (w/40 warbow arrows)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)
Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; Charisma-only Tests +1)
Thread *Mallornica* Keel (Rank 4; *Mallornica* Maneuverability +4 when Seorach is at the helm)
Thread *Mallornica* Sail (Rank 4; *Mallornica* Speed +4 when Seorach is at the helm)

2 × Booster Potions
2 × Carving Tools
Climbing Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
3 × Craftsman Tools
Elfweave Robe
2 × Embroidery Tools
Fletching Tools
Fishing Kit
Forge Tools
Grimoire
2 × Healing Potions
Last Chance Salve
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Quiet Pouch
Tattooing Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Waterskin
Writing Kit

Spells

Air Armor [M], Beastform, Calm Water, Crunch Climb, Dispel Elementalism Magic, Earth Blend, Earth Darts, Fireball [E], Flame Darts, Flame Strike [M], Flameweapon, Gills [M], Great Sticky Vines, Grounding, Hunter's Sense [M], Icy Surface, Lightning Bolt, Living Wall, Nutritious Earth, Plant Feast, Plant Talk, Purify Earth, Purify Water, Repair, Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Resist Poison, Root Trap, Shield Willow, Snuff, Thrive, Tree Merge, Weapon Back

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.

Loot

155 gold pieces

Legend Points

7,670 Legend Points

Notes

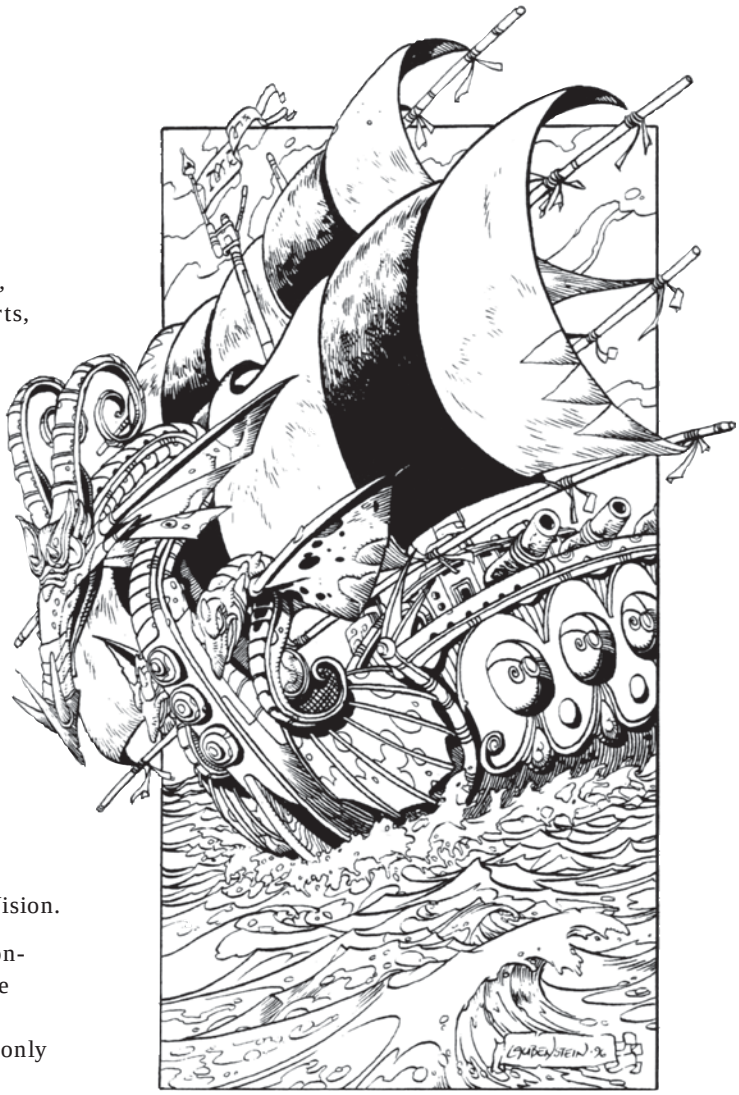
Masae possesses the elf racial ability of Low-Light Vision.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity- and Perception-only Tests; Evaluate Item (1 Damage Point); Enhance Senses (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma- and Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense; Fire and Ice (1 Damage Point)
Seventh Circle: +1 Spell Defense; Karma on melee and missile weapons Damage Tests; Karma on Artisan Tests
Ninth Circle: +1 Initiative step; Karma on Recovery Tests

The Mallornica

As magnificent as it is, the vessel was only one of nearly a hundred elven sailing ships that plied the waters of the Serpent River and the Aras Sea in pre-Scourge times. When the Elven Queen Alachia began to isolate the Wyrm Wood from the outside world, she ordered the destruction of all elven ships and shipyards. According to the story, the *Mallornica's* captain, Masae Seorach, and his crew so loved their ship that they could not allow its destruction. Their defiance made them outcasts, banished from Wyrm Wood for eternity. The *Mallornica* continues to sail the Aras. To date, Masae Seorach has not taken the vessel up the Coil River into Barsaive proper, apparently out of concern that the Elven Queen may attempt to destroy the ship.

The *Mallornica* moves four ranks faster than a standard sailing ship at every wind speed (see p. 160 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). In addition, the ship may move even faster when Seorach is at its helm.



Base Price: NA

Speed: 4+wind speed*
Maneuverability: 4+wind speed*
Firepower: 13/13

* See the Sailing Speed Table on p. 146 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**.

Hull:
Armor: 17 **Ramming**: 21
Cargo: 120

Damage:
Derelict: 73 **Critical**: 23
Destroyed: 80

Crew:
Captain: 10 (17) **Crew Size**: 50
Crew Skill: 2 **Crew Rating**: 18
Morale: 79

Special

Elven Archers grant a separate 15/15 firepower attack usable only against enemy crew (note that only 20 crew members may fire bows at any one time), while the two ballistae act as separate 12/15 firepower attacks.

THE FORTRESS CITY OF TRIUMPH

Clearly visible from the Serpent River, the grounded behemoth towers over the nearby landscape. Travelers and Name-givers approaching the area in the direct vicinity of Ayodhya will be stopped and questioned by Theran patrols if they can't be identified to belong to the Theran military. If a traveler doesn't have a good reason to be here, he will be escorted away from the fortress (as long as he doesn't pose a threat, which will be met with force).

The Therans rely on trade with the locals, and barter with Barsaivians of any race for goods, slaves, and information—the Therans even employ Barsaivians (including local adepts) to further their goals. The Therans are cautious, however, and never allow any non-Therans wander around on the premises of their fortress alone.

The fortress is also home to literally hundreds of support personnel, including diplomats, couriers, scribes, scholars, and nearly two-dozen spies. The spies report to Spymaster Gendel (see p. 240 for game statistics). In turn, Gendel reports directly to General Nikar. Most of these spies are Third Circle adepts of the Thief and Scout Disciplines.

Within scant hours of the behemoth's landing, the stone walls and towers of its foundation were growing and digging themselves into the ground—as if the fortress was sending roots into the earth! The outer walls stretched and expanded slightly to encompass the upper portion of the hill, establishing the Theran military city of Triumph *overnight.*

—Brazak Skar, Human Axemaster

Triumph's Defenses

The central part of the behemoth-turned-fortress includes the keep and towers of the former airship. Elemental magic was used to anchor the vessel's walls once it landed to provide additional stability. Also, the foundations of the towers and walls extend deep into the hillside to provide a strong defense and (so rumor has it) numerous secret tunnels and passages under the fortress city. The city contains considerable room for expansion, and slaves are imported daily to work at fortifying the new citadel.

Each of the fortress' perimeter walls is made of solid stone, roughly 355 yards long, 30 yards high and 2 yards thick. Each wall has Physical Armor of 25 and a Death Rating of 85 (see **Barriers and Structures** on p. 106 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). Additionally, the walls have been magically reinforced; each has a Spell Defense of 24.

The east, west, and north walls each contain a magically enhanced wooden gate with a Spell Defense of 18. Each gate is reinforced with metal bands that provide Physical Armor of 11 and a Death Rating of 35. Additionally, each gate is guarded at all times by a patrol of five soldiers that includes two or three adepts (see **Ground Troops** on p. 245). At least 10 additional five-man patrols perform guard duty at the fortress at all times, five outside the city's perimeter and five inside the fortress.

Each of the four perimeter walls houses 10 fire cannons on pivoting mounts that enable defenders to aim at individuals as well as at airships. To attack a single character or creature with a fire cannon, the attacker makes a Missile Weapons Test against the target's Physical Defense. This Attack Test requires use of the Called Shot combat option (see p. 152 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), and thus incurs a –3 penalty and causes the attacker 1 Strain Point of damage. This penalty can be increased at the gamemaster's discretion, as per the normal rules for Called Shots (see p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**). A Good result on the Attack Test inflicts an Armor-Defeating Hit.

Any individual hit by a fire cannon suffers Step 18/D20+D12 damage. If the Missile Weapons Test fails with a Poor result, the fireball strikes within 3 yards of the target and causes Step 9/D8+D6 damage to the target and anyone else within 3 yards of the impact point.

Twelve guard towers are located along the city's perimeter: one at each corner and two along each wall. Each tower contains a team of three soldiers and a special light quartz that can shine a focused beam of light onto the ground below or into the air. These lights are used to forestall ground attacks and to help guide airships to the fortress at dusk and during stormy weather. All of these towers are manned at all times.

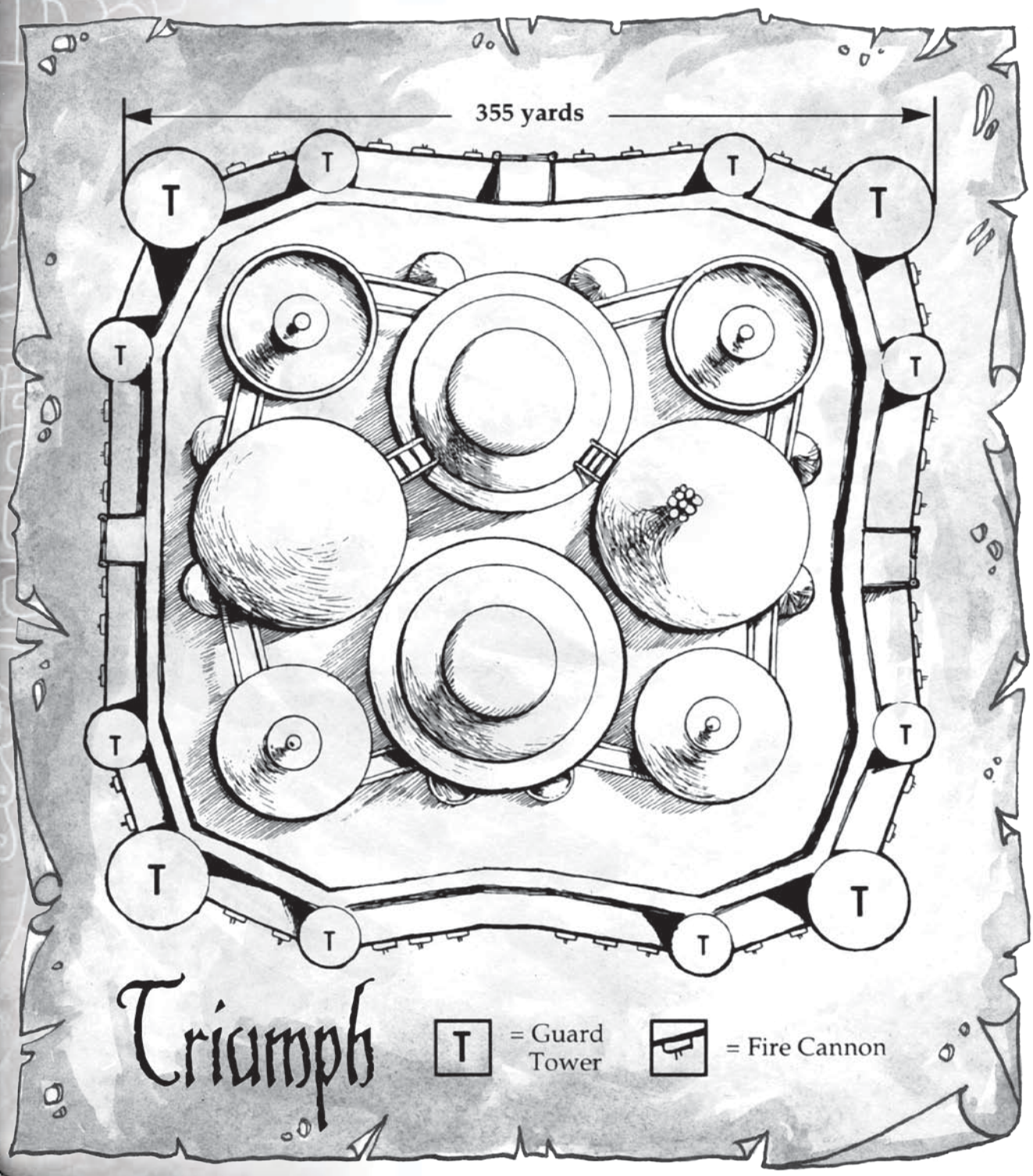
Finally, the fortress is surrounded by a dome of elemental air that acts as a barrier to airships and any other flying objects larger than the average Name-giver. Airships can enter the dome by using a spell known only to Azim Keel and his Elementalist assistants (see **Magical Support** on p. 246). The dome has a Spell Defense of 24, Physical Armor of 25, and a Death Rating of 100 against airship attacks.

General Nikar Carinci

"Thera will reclaim this rebel province and re-establish the rule of Imperial law. Your struggles are futile against the power of our glorious army. But by all means fight; your vain attempts to resist the might of the Empire will make our victory all the more glorious."

General Nikar Carinci has led a long and glorious career in the service of the Empire. Unlike most of his brethren from House Carinci, Nikar has never displayed interest in matters of trade. Always a warrior at heart, Nikar enlisted in the Theran army at a young age and worked his way up through the ranks of the cavalry to become one of Thera's elite *k'stulaami* griffin riders. He advanced in his Discipline as he saw combat in many of the Empire's far reaches, eventually receiving command of his own wing of riders and later rising to the command of an entire division.

Though his abrupt and abrasive manner have lost him points in Theran social and political circles, Nikar's daring exploits have earned him the admiration and loyalty of his comrades-in-arms, as well as considerable fame among Thera's general population. These characteristics made the flamboyant Nikar an ideal choice to lead the Theran operation in the rebel province of Barsaive. (The fact that the mission removed the ambitious and restive general to one



of the Empire's outermost provinces for an undetermined length of time also contributed to the First Governor's decision.)

General Nikar has taken to his assignment with his usual zeal. Undoubtedly, he views it as an opportunity to earn himself further fame, influence, and wealth, but he also wishes to avenge the death of his former comrade and fellow t'skrang, Go'lan. Go'lan died when House V'strimon Elementalists downed the Theran airship he commanded over Lake Ban. Nikar considers the destruction of the airship treachery against the Empire and has hoped for an opportunity to face the rebels of Barsaive on the field of battle ever since his friend's death.

As military commander of Triumph, Nikar is technically outranked by Overgovernor Kypros. In practice, however, the arrogant Nikar can do whatever he wants in Barsaive and Kypros must comply, because Nikar enjoys the favor of the First Governor and the Empire. Overgovernor Kypros is fiercely jealous of Nikar's popularity with the First Governor and the citizens of Thera; he anxiously awaits the day that Nikar makes a fatal mistake and falls from grace. Then Kypros can reassert his authority over all of Barsaive.

General Nikar is a Tenth Circle *k'stulaami* t'skrang Cavalryman.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (18): 7/D12
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 15
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 9
Social Defense: 11 (16)[P]
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 39 (109)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 11
Knockdown: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (91)

[P] Enhanced by +5 through place True pattern (see Notes, below).
* Nikar knows the Sure Mount talent.

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Karma Points: 25
Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents (Knacks)

Animal Bond (9): 17/D20+D10
Armor Mount (10): 16/D20+D8
Avoid Blow (10): 17/D20+D10
Blood Share[D] (10): 17/D20+D10
Call Mount[D] (10): 17/D20+D10
Champion Challenge (10): 18/D20+D12
Charge[D] (10): 17/D20+D10
Dominate Beast (7): 13/D12+D10
Down Strike (10): 17/D20+D10
Durability (7/6) (10): 10
Empathic Command[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Fearsome Charge[D] (10): 16/D20+D8
Karma Ritual (10): 10
Lasting Impression (10): 18/D20+D10
Leadership (8): 15/D20+D6
Mount Durability (6/5) (10): 10



Melee Weapons (11): 18/D20+D12
Missile Weapons (10): 17/D20+D10
Rally[D] (10): 18/D20+D12
Resist Taunt[D] (9): 15/D20+D6
Spirit Mount[D] (11): 18/D20+D12 (Air Mount, Water Mount)
Sure Mount[D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Trample[D] (10): 10
Thread Weaving (Rider Weaving)[D] (10): 17/D20+D10
Trick Riding[D] (11): 18/D20+D12
Wheeling Attack (9): 16/D20+D8
Wheeling Defense[D] (8): 15/D20+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Leatherworker (4): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
K'stulaami Lore (5): 12/2D10
Military Procedure (3): 10/D10+D6
Theran Military Organization (7): 14/D20+D4
Theran Politics (6): 13/D12+D10

General:
Air Sailing (4): 10/D10+D6
Animal Training (4): 12/2D10
Etiquette (3): 11/D10+D8
Gliding (6): 13/D12+D10
Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (5): 12/2D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Troll, T'skrang (*K'stulaami*), Vasgothian
Swimming (4): 11/D10+D8
Tactics (7): 14/D20+D4

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Thread Hardened Leather (Leatherwing; Rank 6; Phys 8; Myst 4; Init 0; Customized for tail and winged membranes)

Thread Charge Sword (Windclaw; Rank 4; Forged +3; Damage 18/D20+D12; w/scabbard; +1 bonus to Damage Tests when above opponent; –2 penalty to Attack Tests when dismounted; see p. 315 of the **New Magical Treasures** chapter)
2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 10/D10+D6; Tail Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 14/D20+D4; Range 70–140–280)
Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Thread Behemoth Stone (Minor Pattern Item; Rank 5; +5 bonus to General Nikar's Social Defense while he is in the Triumph fortress)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1; Climbing (1): 8/2D6)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

3 × Booster Potions
Climbing Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
Craftsman Tools
2 × Healing Potions
Last Chance Salve
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Griffin (Lightwing; combat-trained):
Bit, Bridle, and Harness
Saddle, Stirrups, and Blanket

Loot

89 gold pieces

Legend Points

4,060 Legend Points

Notes

Nikar possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 7/D12). Nikar has woven a Rank 5 thread to the pattern of the Triumph. This thread is attached to his Social Defense and is effective while he is within the citadel's walls. This bonus appears as a number in parentheses in the above statistics. He may weave other threads once the new Theran base is firmly established. The general has also discreetly put word out that he would be most interested in acquiring a House V'strimon pattern item.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on mount Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Commentary

General Nikar is a *k'stulaami* t'skrang, born with a gliding membrane stretching from each wrist to each hip. This allows him to glide using his Gliding skill. In fact, Nikar's love of flight and open spaces initially led him into the cavalry. The general carries a curved cavalry blade Named Windclaw. Nikar maintains a Rank 4 thread attached to the weapon that has been forged three times to Damage step 12. In battle, he generally wears threaded hardened leather armor Named Leatherwing that gives him Physical Armor of 8 and Mystic Armor of 4; this armor does not interfere with his gliding abilities, and carries no Initiative penalty. Nikar also wears a pair of magical bracers with a Rank 4 thread woven to them that adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense. Nikar's mount is a combat-trained griffin (see p. 309 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) Named Lightwing. Nikar has used his Mount Durability talent to give Lightwing a Death Rating of 110 and an Unconsciousness Rating of 93.

Theran Activity

The mere presence of the Theran forces at Triumph forcefully reminds Barsaive's people of the Theran Empire's power, but the Therans at the fortress are by no means idle. As mentioned before, the Therans provide military muscle for House K'tenshin ventures. Theran troops and airships regularly escort K'tenshin riverboats and maintain watch over the South Serpent River. Additionally, the Therans have begun to conduct more trade with House K'tenshin, and through them with several towns and villages along the Serpent River and on the shores of Lake Ban. Additionally, Theran forces based at the city are performing elemental mining in the area.

Patrolled Territory

The area controlled by the Therans reaches to the Servos Jungle on the west, Lake Ban on the east, and the Badlands on the south. Apart from the slave business, there is little

to none Theran activity on the river and lakes, who prefer to leave the military operations in these areas to their allies of House K'tenshin.

The area within half a day's walk from the fortress city is clearly under Theran control. The behemoth arrived with two full cohorts of Theran troops—nearly a thousand warriors. Half of these were brought in from the Theran Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point; and the remainder from the Fifth Legion transported to Barsaive aboard General Nikar's flotilla. The soldiers patrol the plains north of Triumph up to the Adipae Rapids (see p. 229). In addition, the Therans have several vedettes on patrol duty (see the **Airship Fleet** section on p. 241 for more information and game statistics). There is a pattern in their patrol routes, although it changes regularly.



General Carinci's forces have established a number of outposts at strategic positions or near local villages. Each outpost acts as a base for about 120 soldiers. Usually, one half of the stationed soldiers man the outpost at all times while the other half patrols the surrounding area. The patrols limit most of their activities to daytime, returning to the outposts or Triumph for the night. All outposts are permanent settlements, fortified with wooden palisades and a surrounding trench. For more information and game statistics, see **Ground Troops** on p. 245.

Between a half a day's and a day's walk from the fortress, foot patrols regularly visit the villages along the river or the plains to the north. The Therans have taken responsibility for these settlements and protect them from harm. T'skrang *nialls* are controlled by House K'tenshin, however, backed up by Theran soldiers if need be (the unruly *nialls* were usually affiliated with House V'strimon prior to the behemoth's landing).

Slaves

The flotilla brought approximately 200 slaves from Thera and Sky Point to help construct the city and serve the needs of its Theran inhabitants. Additionally, the Therans have established an open slave market in the town of Servalen (see p. 250 for a description) to bolster the city's work force and supply slaves for export to Vivane and other Theran slave markets. The city's slavemaster is an elf Named Mabon Ardos, a Sixth Circle Beastmaster and Rank 7 questor of Dis (see p. 262 for game statistics). Ardos rules the slave pits under the city with an iron hand, treating his charges as if they were animals.

The Elite

The six Fifth Circle adepts of the Elite answer directly to General Nikar. This group undertakes special assignments for the general, such as special-delivery courier services, reconnaissance missions, assassinations, and thefts. The group also performs jobs for Azim Keel as needed. The members of the Elite have formed a group True pattern, and each has woven threads to it.

The Elite have served as a special task force for the nobles of House Carinci for the past several years. Like most of the forces at the Theran fortress, the Elite were stationed at Triumph at Nikar's personal request.

Affern, a human Archer who is also a long-time acquaintance of both Nikar and Windsearcher, leads this group. The rest of the team are Oortaal, an ork Nethermancer from Vasgothia; Landrial, an elf Scout from the Theran province of Creana; Gradan Sharpaxe and Larm Keenedge, a dwarf Warrior and Weaponsmith respectively, brothers from southwestern Barsaive; and Praylar Sightshifter, a troll Illusionist from the Caralkspur Mountains in Vivane province.

Use the statistics starting on p. 236 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium** for these adepts. Additionally, the members have formed a group True pattern, to which each of them has woven two Rank 3 threads. The gamemaster determines the specific talents, characteristics, or abilities to which each member has woven his threads.

Elemental Mining

The Therans have been quick to exploit the rich deposits of True elements in the region surrounding the fortress. The Therans claimed rights to these deposits as soon as they landed and began mining them almost immediately. Theran vedettes skim the surface of Lake Ban and the Serpent River, dredging for True water, while slaves work tunnels into Ayodhya to mine True earth, living crystal, and other valuable minerals from the roots of the Liferock. The obsidimen within the Liferock are aware of what is going on above them, but are powerless to stop it.

Expeditions of Theran troops and Elementalists gather kernels of True wood in the Servos Jungle, while vedettes comb the skies over the fortress during storms and high winds to net kernels of True air. Additionally, Theran slaving raids on the Scavian communities in the South Reach and mining expeditions in the area of Death's Sea net small catches of True fire.

The collected elements are stored in the tower of Azim Keel, who uses them to bolster the fortress city's defenses and take care of other magical needs. Surplus elements are shipped back to Vivane and other regions of the Empire for sale to merchants and magicians.

Searching the Mist Swamps and the Badlands

Theran exploration parties also venture out into the Mist Swamps and the outskirts of the Badlands near the South Serpent River. These parties are searching for ruins and lost kaers that may contain treasures to be sent back to Thera.

One particular group, under the supervision of Azim Keel, is looking for the ruins of an ancient Theran magical laboratory that dates to a time before the Scourge. Reports of such a find have made their way to the Great Library of Throal and the Therans are determined to locate the laboratory before anyone else does.

Many local inhabitants fear that the Theran intrusions into the Mist Swamps may anger the great dragon Aban, who dwells in the swamps. Even the Shivalahala K'tenshin has warned the Therans that their expeditions may invoke the dragon's wrath, but General Nikar ignores her protests.

Trading of Goods and Slaves

The fortress city of Triumph also provides a way station and central hub for Theran merchant and slave ships from Vivane and Sky Point. The base enables the Therans to extend their slaving and trade activities deeper into Barsaivian territory, reaching all the way to Parlainth and Urupa. Goods flow from Vivane through Triumph, while slaves, elemental kernels, and toll money flow back from Triumph into the Theran Overgovernor's hands.

In fact, the expansion of Theran trade and influence facilitated by the base constitutes as much of a threat to Throal and its allies as the increased Theran military presence. To counter the economic threat, Throalic and V'strimon merchants have redoubled their efforts to solicit the business of other cities and merchant guilds along the Serpent. Both the Theran/K'tenshin and Throal/V'strimon trading alliances are attempting to negotiate an exclusive arrangement with Urupa to secure that city's rich Aras Sea trade for their ships. So far, Urupa has carefully remained neutral on the issue and stalled the emissaries of both alliances.

Upgraded Intelligence Gathering

General Nikar and his spymaster Gendel are using the rapidly expanding Theran trade network as a cover to create a network of spies to report activities across Barsaive. House K'tenshin's Naxos Foundation has provided invaluable aid in this effort by helping the Therans infiltrate observers and informants into the various merchant ships and caravans that pass through the region controlled by Theran forces.

However, the Liferock Rebellion and the Eye of Throal have also begun to infiltrate agents and cultivate informants among the various merchant groups. Thera's enemies use these agents and informants to keep abreast of Theran activities and to feed false intelligence to the Theran spies.

Spymaster Gendel

Gendel is the *akarenti*, or spymaster, of the Theran fortress city. As such, he oversees a large network of spies and contacts throughout central and eastern Barsaive. Though Gendel answers first to Nikar, he also reports to General Illfaralek, the Theran spymaster of Vivane. Gendel's contacts in Barsaive include numerous agents in many towns and cities, such as Travar and Urupa, as well as Agramen, a Theran sympathizer and operative in Haven (see p. 23 of the **Adventure Compendium** for Agramen's description and game statistics).

Gendel is a Seventh Circle human Scout.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12 — **Strength** (13): 6/D10
Toughness (15): 6/D10 — **Perception** (15): 6/D10
Willpower (12): 5/D8 — **Charisma** (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 16 — **Initiative**: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 10 — **Physical Armor**: 9
Social Defense: 7 — **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 37 (79)* — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 — **Knockdown**: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 29 (64)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 36 — **Full Movement**: 72

Karma Points: 37 — **Karma Step**: 5/D8

Talents (Knacks)

Astral Sight [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Avoid Blow [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Climbing [D] (8): 15/D20+D6* (By The Fingernails)
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Detect Trap [D] (6): 12/2D10

Endure Cold [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Great Leap (7): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Lock Sense (5): 11/D10+D8
Maneuver (3): 10/D10+D6
Melee Weapons (8): 15/D20+D6
Read and Write Language (7): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Riposte (7): 14/D20+D4
Silent Walk [D] (8): 15/D20+D6 (Shadow Hide)
Speak Language (7): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Sprint (7): 14/D20+D4
Thread Weaving (Scout Weaving) [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Tracking [D] (8): 14/D20+D4 (Identify Tracks)
Trap Initiative [D] (6): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by +1 Climbing rank bonus from thread boots.

Versatility (2): 2
Item History [V] (4): 10/D10+D6
Weapon History [V] (4): 10/D10+D6

[V] Indicates a talent learned through Versatility.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Wood Carving (4): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Akarenti Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Haven Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Parlainth Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Travar Lore (4): 10/D10+D6
Urupa Lore (4): 10/D10+D6

General:
Conceal Weapon (3): 10/D10+D6
Disarm Trap (6): 13/D12+D10
Lip Reading (3): 8/2D6
Lock Picking (5): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language (1): 7/D12
—Theran
Read and Write Magic (3): 9/D8+D6
Resist Taunt (2): 7/D12
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
—Human, Theran
Swimming (1): 7/D12
Streetwise (5): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/ Cloaksense Brooch)
Hardened Leather (Phys 5; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/scabbard)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)

Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Adventurer's Kit
3 × Booster Potions
Wood Carving Tools
Climbing Kit
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Quiet Pouch
Thieves' Pick and Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Points

1,100 Legend Points

Notes

Gendel possesses the human racial ability of Versatility. Gendel has used his Versatility talent to learn the Item History and Weapon History talents, both at Rank 4. In addition, Gendel has a Rank 4 thread woven to magical bracers and a Rank 4 thread woven to a pair of thread boots (see p. 174 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). These threads give Gendel a +5 bonus to his Physical Defense and a +2 bonus to his Spell Defense.

Fourth Circle: Enhance Senses (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Seventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Airship Fleet

The fortress city of Triumph is home to an air fleet composed of two Theran kilas and six stone vedettes, all with full crew complements. Most often, the kila known as the *Righteous* is stationed over the confluence of the South Reach of the Serpent River and Lake Ban, and the vedettes transport crewmen and supplies between the kila and the fortress city as needed. Captain Drak Windsearcher commands the *Righteous*. Captain Solen Ogani commands the second kila, the *Defiant*, which typically patrols the length of the south Serpent River. If the *Righteous* is assigned other duties, the *Defiant* takes up the post at Lake Ban. (For kila game statistics see p. 156 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

The vedettes stationed at the fortress city include four vessels from the Seventh Fleet at Sky Point: two mining ships, the *Amethyst* and the *Moonstone*; and two combat vedettes, the *Dauntless* and the *Ferocious*. Generally, three vedettes patrol the perimeter of the fortress city, while the other three perform elemental mining and courier duties. From time to time, the vedettes also escort Theran ground forces or K'tenshin riverboats on trips to some of the less hospitable regions of the Serpent River.

Generally, the patrols will not bother travelers unless they directly oppose the Theran forces. It is unlikely a vedette will land to interrogate a small band of travelers, for example—as they're alert for serious threats to their presence in Barsaive. Of course, the patrols are also a show



of force to the people living on the land claimed by the Therans.

Captain Drak Windsearcher

"You think the pirates of this backwater are dangerous, sailor? Obviously, you have never seen a shipful of mad Vasgothian raiders howling for your blood."

Captain Drak Windsearcher and General Nikar are old friends who have served together for many years. When the First Governor chose Nikar to lead a mission to Barsaive, the general wanted his old comrade at his side and chose Windsearcher to command the kilas and vedettes assigned to the fortress.

Windsearcher is originally from Vasgothia, a Theran province near Barsaive. Raised in that savage, Horror-scarred land, he learned little of the pleasantries of the Theran court. His love of travel and a fascination with the airships of the Empire led him to join the Theran navy as a lowly crewman. Determined never to return to Vasgothia, he patiently learned the Way of the Air Sailor as taught by his Theran superiors and became a skilled fighter and sailor. Eventually, his faithful service to Thera earned him his present rank.

The troll captain is utterly loyal to General Nikar, whom he respects and considers a friend. Windsearcher is not as pleased about the prospects of this mission as Nikar, but he keeps his opinions to himself. He feels that the rebellious factions of Barsaive should be crushed as quickly as possible, and he believes that the Empire is not taking strong enough measures to that end.

Drak Windsearcher is a Seventh Circle troll Air Sailor. He commands the kila *Righteous*.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 **Strength** (19): 8/2D6
Toughness (20): 8/2D6 **Perception** (13): 6/D10
Willpower (13): 6/D10 **Charisma** (13): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 (13)[P] **Initiative**: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor**: 8
Social Defense: 10 **Mystic Armor**: 4 (8)[P]

Death Rating: 37 (79)* **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 13 (17)[P] **Knockdown**: 8/2D6**
Unconsciousness Rating: 29 (64)*

[P] Enhanced by +4 for place True pattern (see Notes, below).
* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** Drak knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 3/D4

Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (8): 15/D20+D6
Air Dance (7): 13/D12+D10*
Air Sailing[D] (8): 14/D20+D4 (Assault)
Avoid Blow[D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Climbing[D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Great Leap[D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Melee Weapons[D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Riposte (7): 14/D20+D4
Second Weapon (7): 14/D20+D4
Speak Language[D] (7): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Talean, T'skrang, Windling
Taunt (7): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving)[D] (7): 13/D12+D10

Throwing Weapons (6): 13/D12+D10
Unarmed Combat (7): 14/D20+D4
Wind Catcher [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Wound Balance [D] (7): 15/D20+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by –1 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Mapmaking (4): 10/D10+D6
Wood Carving (2): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Airships (5): 11/D10+D8
Beast Lore (3): 9/D8+D6
Military Procedure (4): 10/D10+D6
Theran Military Organization (3): 9/D8+D6
Vasgothian Lore (4): 10/D10+D6

General:
Read and Write Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Vasgothian
Speak Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Theran, Troll, Vasgothian
Tactics (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Blood Pebble (Phys 5; Myst 3; Init 1; 4 Damage Points)
Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; ST 19)

Thread Curved Broadsword (Windrazor; Rank 4; Forged +2; Damage 18/D20+D12; w/scabbard; see p. 315 of the **New Magical Treasures** chapter)
Troll Sword (Forged +4; Damage 18/D20+D12; w/large scabbard)
2 × Troll Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Troll Spears (Forged +4; Damage 17/D20+D10; Range 18–30–36)

Thread Skull Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Kila Stone (Major Pattern Item; Rank 4; Add +4 to Captain Drak's Physical Defense, Mystic Armor, and Wound Threshold +4 while he is on the *Righteous*)

Death Cheat Charm (3 Damage Points)

4 × Booster Potions
Carving Tools
Cloaksense Brooch
2 × Healing Potions
Quiet Pouch
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

210 silver pieces

Legend Points

1,825 Legend Points

Notes

Drak possesses the troll racial ability of Heat Sight. Captain Windsearcher has woven three Rank 4 threads to the True pattern of the kila he commands, the *Righteous*. These threads increase his Mystic Armor, Wound Threshold, and Physical Defense while he is aboard the kila. The modified characteristics appear in parentheses in the statistics above.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests

Commentary

Surprisingly swift and graceful for a troll of his size, Windsearcher wears blood pebble armor implanted in a series of colorful Vasgothian patterns across his skin. He normally enters combat wielding a footman's shield and a curved broadsword Named Windrazor, the twin of Nikar's Windclaw. The broadsword is a Damage step 10 threaded weapon in Windsearcher's hands. As a simple action causing him 1 Strain Point of damage, Drak can add a Step 3/D4 Electric Die to the Damage step of the sword for one round. The troll captain also wears a Death Cheat charm.

Solen Ogani

Solen Ogani is the captain of the *Defiant*, one of the Theran kilas stationed at the Triumph fortress. A Fifth Circle human Air Sailor, Ogani originally hails from the province of Talea. He joined the Theran navy at a young age and quickly established himself as a natural leader, fighting alongside Drak Windsearcher in several battles in recent years. When General Nikar was selecting the officers for his airship fleet, Windsearcher suggested Ogani, who readily accepted the post as captain of the *Defiant*.

Though he doesn't consider Barsaive an important province, Ogani is loyal to both Windsearcher and Nikar and would never question or refuse their orders.

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Strength (14): 6/D10
Perception (15): 6/D10
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Initiative: 6/D10
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 34 (64)
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (51)

* Solen knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 36
Full Movement: 72

Karma Points: 24
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents (Knacks)

Acrobatic Strike (5): 12/2D10
Air Dance (5): 11/D10+D8*

Air Sailing [D] (7): 12/2D10 (Assault)
Avoid Blow [D] (5): 12/2D10
Climbing [D] (5): 12/2D10
Durability (6/5) (5): 5
Great Leap [D] (5): 12/2D10
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Melee Weapons [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving) [D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Throwing Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Unarmed Combat (5): 12/2D10
Wind Catcher [D] (5): 10/D10+D6
Wound Balance [D] (5): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
* Modified by -1 armor Initiative Penalty.

Skills

Artisan:
Mapmaking (3): 9/D8+D6

Knowledge:
Military Procedure (3): 9/D8+D6
Talea History (3): 9/D8+D6
Talea Politics (3): 9/D8+D6
Theran Military Organization (2): 8/2D6

General:
Heartening Laugh (3): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Talean, Theran
Speak Language (4): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Talean, Theran
Tactics (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Thread Crystal Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 3; ST 17)
Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 3; Phys 7; Myst 2; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4; w/scabbard)
Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Forged +1; Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48)

2 × Booster Potions
Cloaksense Brooch
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

450 Legend Points

Notes

Solen possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Griffin Riders

A wing of 12 *k'stulaami* griffin riders augments the city's airship defenses. Typically, pairs of griffin riders accompany vedette patrols. In addition, each kila carries two pairs of griffin riders when on patrol. The griffin riders are under the personal command of General Nikar and serve as his honor guard, though the second-in-command, *strategos* T'char, oversees the wing's regular operations. When the griffin riders operate independently, they are on special missions—often to survey an area requested a ground patrol or to scout areas that cannot be covered by the vedettes. While a group of rebels may be able to avoid foot patrols, evading the watchful eyes of a Griffin Rider is much harder to achieve.

The griffin riders are all Fifth Circle *k'stulaami t'skrang* Cavalrymen equipped with broadswords, thread hardened leather armor, and rider's shields.

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 **Strength** (18): 7/D12
Toughness (13): 6/D10 **Perception** (11): 5/D8
Willpower (16): 7/D12 **Charisma** (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 **Initiative**: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor**: 10
Social Defense: 9 **Mystic Armor**: 4

Death Rating: 35 (70) **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 27 (57)

* Griffin Riders know the Sure Mount talent.

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents

Animal Bond (5): 12/2D10
Avoid Blow (5): 12/2D10
Blood Share [D] (4): 10/D10+D6
Charge [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Durability (7/6) (5): 5
Empathic Command [D] (5): 12/2D10
Karma Ritual (5): 5
Melee Weapons (6): 13/D12+D10
Resist Taunt [D] (5): 12/2D10
Spirit Mount [D] (5): 10/D10+D6
Sure Mount [D] (3): 10/D10+D6
Thread Weaving (Rider Weaving) [D] (5): 10/D10+D6
Trick Riding [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Wheeling Attack (4): 11/D10+D8
Wheeling Defense [D] (4): 11/D10+D8

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Leatherworker (1): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
K'stulaami Lore (1): 6/D10
Military Procedure (1): 6/D10

Theran Military Organization (1): 6/D10
Theran History (1): 6/D10

General:
Air Sailing (1): 8/2D6
Animal Training (4): 11/D10+D8
Gliding (3): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (3): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, T'skrang (*K'stulaami*)
Tactics (1): 6/D10

Equipment

Thread Hardened Leather (Rank 3; Phys 7; Myst 2; Init 1)
Rider's Shield (Phys 3; Myst 1; ST 19)

Charge Sword (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6; +1 Damage Test bonus when above opponent; –2 Attack Test penalty when dismounted)
2 × Daggers (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
Flail (Damage 12/2D10)

Booster Potion
Cloaksense Brooch
2 × Craftsman Tools
Traveler's Garb

Griffin (combat-trained):
Bit, Bridle, and Harness
Saddle, Stirrups, and Blanket

Loot

80 gold pieces

Legend Points

340 Legend Points

Notes

Griffin riders possess the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 7/D12).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Ground Troops

Approximately one-fifth of the troops are adepts of Second Circle or higher. The remaining Theran troops comprise an even mix of non-adept human, elf, and dwarf infantrymen, along with an occasional ork or troll.

Theran Soldiers

The following statistics apply to non-adept Theran human soldiers. Gamemasters may adjust them as appropriate for non-human soldiers if desired.

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Strength (14): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10*
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Skills

Artisan:
Craftsman; Leatherworker (1): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Military Procedure (1): 6/D10
Theran Military Organization (1): 6/D10

General:
Acrobatic Strike (3): 9/D8+D6
Air Sailing (1): 6/D10
Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6
Climbing (2): 8/2D6
Great Leap (2): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (3): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Human
Tactics (1): 6/D10
Throwing Weapons (3): 9/D8+D6
Unarmed Combat (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Hardened Leather (Phys 5; Init 1)

Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Net (Entangle 12)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Craftsman Tools
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

None

Legend Points

70 Legend Points

Magical Support

The city's chief magician, Azim Keel, commands a team of 16 Fifth Circle Elementalists. Two Elementalists are assigned to each of the eight troop divisions based at Triumph. One of these usually accompanies each kila and patrol vedette; the other Elementalists work on elemental mining operations, augment Triumph's magical defenses,

and assist Azim Keel in his experiments and summonings as needed. The fortress also contains several Wizards, as well as a pair of Nethermancers. Each of these magicians is Third Circle or higher.

Azim Keel

"There must be some way to remove the True earth from the Liferock. Certain legends that I have studied suggest some possibilities, but none of these provide as elegant a solution as I would like. Obviously the matter calls for more careful study."

Azim Keel is a *ghareez*, the corrupted windling race that dwells in the Theran Empire. Also known as "the Ice Magician," Azim is chief magician for Nikar's forces. He commands a small cadre of Elementalists that handles the expedition's magical needs and oversees most magical operations in Triumph, as well as elemental mining operations within and outside of the city. He advises Nikar in all matters magical and, when not attending to his other duties, spends his time in seclusion and magical experimentation. He is particularly interested in discovering ways to tap into the elemental powers of the Ayodhya Liferock and extract the potent kernels of True earth that it holds.

As pale as a ghost, with milk-white hair and skin and translucent wings, Azim shuns the light of day. He prefers to remain indoors, and conducts most of his business by night. Some suggest that he keeps his quarters in Triumph cold more to drive away visitors than for his own comfort. Nearly all residents of Triumph fear the *ghareez* and deal with him as little as possible. No one willingly disturbs the mage's solitude save for General Nikar. Even the general is uneasy around Azim, though he never lets his true feelings show. He allows the Elementalist considerable latitude in his experimenting and research but demands obedience from him when important matters arise. Azim has little use for military protocol, but he obeys Nikar's orders out of gratitude for the autonomy Nikar allows him.

The windling magician is the opposite of a typical windling in almost every way. He is dour and humorless, with a solitary and unpleasant disposition. In many ways, however, Azim is fairly pleasant for a *ghareez*, displaying little interest in interrogations or the subtleties of pain that characterize so many members of his race. Indeed, he has little use for other Name-givers one way or another. He reserves a particular dislike for other windlings, considering them fools and simpletons. He displays no interest in any of the pleasures of life apart from accumulating magical knowledge and performing his duty to the Empire. Toward these ends, Azim has learned a great deal about Barsaivian legends and lore, and is hungry for any valuable kernels of information.

Though Azim is a highly capable magician, he displays what many Barsaivian Elementalists would consider a shocking lack of respect for the elemental forces with which he works. The *ghareez* cares nothing for the feelings or thoughts of the elemental spirits that he routinely enslaves, and the balance of the elements interests him only to the extent that he can exploit it for his own uses. Azim Keel is a Ninth Circle *ghareez* windling Elementalist.



Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (19): 8/2D6
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 11
Initiative: 7/D12
Spell Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 7
Social Defense: 8
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 33 (73)*
Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9
Knockdown: 4/D6**
Unconsciousness Rating: 25 (55)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** Azim knows the Unshakable Air talent.

Combat Movement: 16/36*
Full Movement: 32/72*

* The second value is Azim's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 59
Karma Step: 6/D10

Talents (Knacks)

Air Speaking D (6): 14/D20+D4
Armored Matrix (5): 5
Astral Sight (9): 17/D20+D10
Cold Purify D (9): 17/D20+D10
Durability (4/3) (10): 10
Elemental Hold D (9): 17/D20+D10
Elemental Tongues D (7): 15/D20+D6
Enhanced Matrix (9): 9

Barterkown
Coil River
Daeran's
Adiappe Rapids
Lake Bard
Vostrimon
Thunder Mountains
Griffon Falls
Jungle
Lake Pyres
Serpent River
Galanga River
Skios
Servos River
Kyenshin
Byrose River
Fallam
Tylon Mountains
Shattered Towers
Daicite
Krataş
Tylon River
South Road
Serpent River
Trosk
Lowros River
Ancient Scavia
Mist Swamps
Badlands
Sea

Enhanced Matrix (9): 9
Fire Heal [D] (6): 14/D20+D4 (Wound Heal)
Karma Ritual (9): 9
Metal Ward [D] (4): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language (8): 16/D20+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Read and Write Magic [D] (9): 17/D20+D10
Safe Path [D] (5): 13/D12+D10
Spellcasting [D] (9): 19/D20+2D6* (Anchored Spell, Spell Design)
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Spell Matrix (9): 9
Summon (Elemental Spirits) [D] (9): 17/D20+D10 (Bind Spirit)
Temperature [D] (9): 17/D20+D10 (Air Conditioning)
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) [D] (9): 17/D20+D10 (Create Spell Matrix Object, Create Thread Item, Talent Linking)
Unshakable Air (9): 13/D12+D10
Willforce (9): 17/D20+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent
* Talent Modified by +2 Spellcasting bonus from thread wand

Skills

Artisan:
Elemental Sculpture (5): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Barsaive History (5): 13/D12+D10
Legends and Heroes (4): 12/2D10
Magical Lore (6): 14/D20+D4

General:
Conversation (4): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 9/D8+D6
—Theran
Speak Language (3): 11/D10+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Windling
Throwing Weapons (5): 12/2D10

Equipment

Sapphire Elemental Plate (Rank 7; Phys 7; Myst 7; Bound Strength 3 Elemental spirit Named Voor'oosh)

Thread Frost Pouch (Rank 5; 1 Strain Point and Throwing Weapons Attack Test to use; Damage 17/D20+D10 or Freezing Frost 17 DN; Range 15–25–30)
Thread Spell Matrix Torc (Rank 6; Two Rank 3 spell matrices)
Thread Tower Stone (Rank 4; adds +4 to Disarm Difficulty of traps in Tower)
Thread wooden Wand with blue gems (Rank 4; Spellcasting rank +2; spell Effect Tests +1; SpellDef +1)

Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
2 × Healing Potions
Quiet Pouch
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Spells

Air Armor, Air Blast [M], Blizzard Sphere [A], Cloud Banish, Crunch Climb, Drastic Temperature, Earth Blend, Earth Darts, Heat Food, Ice Mace and Chain, Ice Spear, Icy Surface, Perimeter Alarm, Porter [M], Puddle Deep [M], Purify Earth, Purify Water, Repair [M], Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Sterilize Object [M], Stone Cage [E], Storm Manacles [E], Uneven Ground [M]

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix (note that Azim Keel has four Rank 9 spell matrices and two Rank 3 spell matrices available).
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.
[A] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Armored Matrix.

Loot

55 gold pieces

Legend Points

9,390 Legend Points

Notes

Azim possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle Elementalist: Fire and Ice (1 Damage Point)
Seventh Circle Elementalist: +1 Spell Defense
Eighth Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests

Commentary

Azim always wears an elaborately decorated chest plate carved from a single piece of sapphire. The chest plate is a thread item, and Azim has woven a thread to it so that it provides Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 7 protection.

Additionally, the chest plate contains a Strength 3 water spirit Named Voor'oosh, which Azim has trapped within. The spirit possesses the following powers: Aid Summoner (3), Astral Sight (3): 8, Detect True Water (3): 8, Enrage Element (3): 8, Manipulate Element (3): 8, Share Knowledge (3), and Spear (3): 7. Azim frequently uses the spirit's Share Knowledge ability to keep abreast of events on Lake Ban and the Serpent River, and he uses its Detect True Water power to lead him to sources of the True element in the lake. Azim can also use any of the spirit's other powers.

Generally, Azim keeps the following spells in his matrices: Blizzard Sphere (armored matrix); Storm Manacles and Stone Cage (enhanced matrices); Air Blast, Porter, Puddle Deep, and Uneven Ground (spell matrices); and Repair and Sterilize Object (torc matrices; see Notes, above). He knows all Elementalism spells concerned with air and water, most earth spells, and a few wood/plant spells. He generally avoids fire spells. In combat, Azim commonly uses his frost pouch and the Spear power of his water spirit, followed by spells such as Blizzard Sphere and Stone Cage to entrap and disable opponents.

Notes

In addition to the thread woven to his armor chest plate, Azim has woven threads to several magical items that he uses in his work. These include a carved wooden staff, which would serve as little more than a wand to most Name-givers, set with pale blue gems. Azim has a Rank 4 thread woven to this item, which grants him a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting talent, a +1 bonus to his spell Effect Tests, and adds +1 to his Spell Defense. He also has threads woven to a frost pouch (see p. 183 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) and a silver torc. The frost pouch has a Rank 5 thread; the torc is a Rank 6 spell matrix object (see p. 178 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) holding two matrices, each Rank 3. Additionally, he maintains a Rank 4 thread connected to his tower in Triumph; this thread adds to the Disarm Difficulty of the tower's magical wards and traps.

The South Reach

The northern boundary of the Serpent's South Reach is Lake Pyros, whose shores of rich jungle soil are dotted with the homes and farms of settlers from all over Barsaive. As the Serpent flows west from Lake Pyros, it becomes a lazy, winding river, at times more than four miles wide. Here it passes through the southern edge of the Servos Jungle, a forbidding region sparsely populated by primitive t'skrang and human tribes. The riverbanks contain few civilized settlements here, save for the occasional K'tenshin plantation or trading post. After leaving the Servos, the river enters a 100-mile stretch where four of the Serpent's largest tributaries—the Byrose, Servos, Iontos, and Tylon Rivers—enter the Great River. The waters of these rivers dramatically increase the speed of the Serpent's current and the river widens to more than six miles across. A few miles down the Byrose River lies the wealthy trading city of Travar, the largest Barsaivian citadel to withstand the Scourge. Near the confluence of the Serpent and Servos Rivers lies the headquarters of House K'tenshin, the *aropagoi* that dominates trade on the South Reach. The shores of the Tylon River contain the hunting grounds of the Dinganni people; the reputed headquarters of the renegade House T'kambras; and Kratas, the City of Thieves.

Shortly after it converges with the Tylon, the Serpent passes through the shadow of the eastern spur of the Twilight Peaks, which rises to the north. Here, the waters of the river lose their blue-green cast and take on the reddish brown color of the nearby Badlands. As the river continues, its waters heat up and the river becomes enshrouded in thick morning fogs that remain well past noon. Eventually, the river enters the Mist Swamps, where it divides into ever-smaller branches and its banks become a spongy morass.

Despite the forbidding terrain of the Badlands and the Servos Jungle and large numbers of House Henghyoke raiders, the South Reach remains a prosperous region. The powerful trading companies of Travar and crew covenants of House K'tenshin fuel robust trade along the southern part of the river, and the rich farmland surrounding Lake Pyros continues to draw settlers from across Barsaive.

Lake Pyros

As the Serpent River exits Lake Ban and flows toward Lake Pyros, it passes by eight t'skrang villages known as the Stolen Nialls. Before the Scourge, these villages fell under the control of House K'tenshin, but since the end of the Scourge they have pledged their allegiance to House V'strimon. The reasons for the change are clear: House K'tenshin treats its subsidiary villages with contempt, while House V'strimon treats its villages with respect. Changing allegiance has brought enormous prosperity to these villages, which now compete directly with House K'tenshin to supply lumber and wooden items to much of Barsaive. The trade covenants at two of the villages, P'santos and Delenn, have devised ingenious sawmills that use the force of water running down the village towers to spin their cutting wheels.

As the river flows west of Ayodhya, it enters a densely forested region that gradually gives way to impenetrable jungle. About a hundred miles southwest of Ayodhya, the Serpent empties into the third and smallest of the Serpent Lakes, Lake Pyros. "Pyros" means flame, a Name derived from the fierce light emitted by the thick layer of phosphorescent algae that covers the bottom of the lake. The terrain around the lake, which is 55 miles long and 25 miles wide, varies. The lake's eastern banks consist of firm ground and dense forest, while an impenetrable jungle and wetlands that extend many miles inland cover the western banks.

The land around the eastern end of Lake Pyros contains some of the most fertile soil in Barsaive. During the wet season, the lake rises 3 yards, then subsides to leave behind a rich layer of muck and mud. Farmers have a saying that "you can plant a lump of coal by the shores of Lake Pyros, and by autumn you'll have swords and armor sprouting up through the ground." Stories like these have sparked a land rush in the area, and waves of immigrants are competing fiercely for whatever farmland they can get.

The first post-Scourge settlers along Lake Pyros were elves who survived the Scourge outside the Blood Wood. When the Scourge lifted, they returned to the court of the Elven Queen, then fled in horror at what they found. These settlers came to the Servos in the hope of establishing a new elven community along the fringes of the jungle. They had hoped to keep their little portion of the Servos as close to its natural state as possible, with wide swaths of forested land between their scattered settlements. As successive waves of immigrants arrived, however, the elves retreated further inland so that they could continue living in the untouched forest. The elven villages around Lake Pyros have since become a vital center of the living legend cult known as the Seekers of the Heart.

Among the second wave of settlers were large numbers of deserters and refugees from Overgovernor Pavelis' Grand Theran Armada, which disintegrated while marching toward Throal. Mostly humans and orks, these refugees were in no hurry to return to Vivane and labor once more for the Overlord of Sky Point. Upon discovering the beautiful land around Lake Pyros, they settled down, hung up their arms, and got down to farming. These immigrants carved out private homesteads, expanding their acreage with each passing year by clearing a few more trees.

The third wave of settlers included members of all the Name-giver races, lured by the promise of prosperity on the shores of the lake. This wave included the Throalic dwarfs who harvest the phosphorescent algae from the lake's bottom with ingenious mechanical suction devices that enable them to pull the glowing algae up to the lake's surface through tubes. They then separate the algae from the mud, package it and send it to the many dwarf communities all across Barsaive that cannot afford light quartzes. Along with the dwarfs came hunters, fishermen, lumberjacks, and farmers to reap the natural bounty of the land. During this wave, House K'tenshin also began to carve out plantations from the shores of the lake and extort taxes from nearby settlements. This third wave of immigrants have had the greatest impact on the area by far. They arrived in large numbers and built entire villages in the space of a year, peeling back the jungle from the shore and setting up fences and boundaries. At this time, the last of the area's original inhabitants—primitive t'skrang and human hunter-gatherers—retreated to the swampy western shores of the lake.

Today, the haphazard development of the region and its rapidly growing population have led to tensions between the various immigrant and native groups. The shores of Lake Pyros have also become favored hunting grounds for the raiders of House Henghyoke. Although the different groups of settlers remain suspicious of one another, they regularly cooperate to defend themselves against Henghyoke pirates.

Numerous t'skrang village towers dot the shores of Lake Pyros. According to all accounts, however, every one of these villages was lost during the Scourge. The advent of the Henghyoke raiders led settlers to carefully explore the village towers for signs of habitation, but all of them are apparently abandoned.

Servalen

The original settlers of Servalen were human, elven and windling, with a scattering of dwarfs and few of other races. Once the village became a going concern, scorcher tribes returning from raids near Death's Sea and in the southern mountains began setting up a permanent camp for their people. T'skrang also began to frequent the town as river trade picked up. Even back then, Servalen was a rough place, home to the lowliest scum of Barsaive (even rivaling Kratas, except for its size).

The Theran Army—together with its allies of t'skrang House K'tenshin—are now in control of the former rough town. The Therans have a tight grip on Servalen and turned it into a slave market to serve Triumph's growing need for slaves. Most of the old taverns and brothels were closed down, as many former inhabitants left the town or got enslaved themselves.

While the original elder council is no more, the remaining permanent residents both love and hate Servalen's new rulers. Some see them as a connection to a new world, while others regard them as a necessary evil they must put up with to help them sell their goods and harvests. It is rumored that a number of farmers aid the rebel groups of adepts that hide in the Servos, although House K'tenshin has put a price on the head of any rebel and anyone caught aiding them.

As everywhere, there are opportunists among the villagers, who have sided with the Therans. Once all but ignored,



the elf Valarin became quite fond of his growing influence as an enforcer of Theran policies. His enforcers, mostly mercenaries hired with slave trading coin, had a large part in his recent successes, much to the chagrin of the populace.

The streets of Servalen are filled with mercenaries looking for employment, riverboat crewmen on shore leave, explorers staging expeditions into the nearby jungle, and slavers bringing in fresh meat nearly every day. While most slaves are sold to the Therans directly, the market is open for everyone. Servalen, despite its frightening reputation, is still an important market for the nearby villages loyal to Thera and House K'tenshin, which trade for other goods and services.

Only a handful of the residents work actively against the Theran occupation, as most of the others are either too frightened or too greedy to change the status quo. On two occasions since the Therans arrival, a Liberator sparked a riot in the slave camps and was able to lead a couple of slaves into freedom. However, since the riots lead to open bloodshed and public executions, more people died than were saved in the end. Most inhabitants wish that the Liberator doesn't return.



Rumor has it that both Liberator story interventions were staged by the Therans to inspire fear into the inhabitants and discourage other Liberators from trying the same. Might be the fault of those Theran windling twins responsible for interrogating captured freedom fighters and putting their dead bodies on public display…

—Gillian, Human Thief



House K'tenshin regularly sends heavily armed riverboats down the river to hunt down river pirates and bring in supplies for the Theran army. Telanis Unkuren, a veteran dwarf Warrior, is in command of the Theran forces stationed in Servalen. However, most of the day-to-day business is overseen by his right hand, an ambitious and cruel human Named Dorram (who was "promoted" to this position after an incident with the daughter of a Theran noble back home). Quite naturally, Dorram thinks of his job as a punishment and lets his anger overcome him on every occasion.

The Servos and Galanga Rivers

Just west of Lake Pyros, the Serpent River runs into the Servos Jungle, the second largest continuous woodland in Barsaive next to the Blood Wood. The word "servos" means "isolated," and the jungle is indeed a separate wilderness kingdom. Here, the river slows to a crawl. Sandbars and mud flats rise up from the bottom, seemingly intent on ensnaring hapless travelers, and the river's banks become treacherous jungle swamps that penetrate miles under the canopy of trees before giving way to dry ground. Hundreds of streams and rivers, some navigable only by canoe, flow out from the river to crisscross the jungle.

Within these swamps and along these jungle streams lie many long-forgotten t'skrang river villages, abandoned during the Scourge. Now these forbidding sites are home to some of the most cutthroat pirates on the Serpent River. Rumor has it that somewhere in this morass lurk the dreaded pirates of House Henghyoke.

Navigating the Serpent in this area is dangerous. Although the river spans four miles in places, the actual navigable channel for riverboats is seldom more than a few hundred yards wide. Furthermore, this channel follows a crooked and ever-changing path, so it takes a skilled and attentive boat crew to make it from Lake Pyros to House K'tenshin without running aground at least once.

Those who wish to travel into the heart of the Servos Jungle must embark north on the Servos River. The Servos is nearly as wide as the Serpent, but its banks are firm and steep. The banks of the Servos and its tributaries are dotted with the villages of primitive t'skrang and human tribes that apparently survived the Scourge without the aid of the Therans. Originally, these tribes also inhabited settlements along the lower courses of the Servos and Galanga Rivers, but they abandoned these settlements as Theran and K'tenshin slavers gradually advanced up these rivers.

This migration into the upper reaches of the river system has led to inter-tribal tensions, which have been exacerbated by slavers who regularly hire the fiercer tribes as field agents. The slavers supply cheap labor to the growing number of farms and plantations that are chopping away at the tree-lined banks of the Servos Jungle.

Flora and Fauna of the Servos Jungle

The tribes of the Servos speak of the trees of the jungle as sister-trees, mother-trees, and grandmother-trees. The sister-trees are the undergrowth; the mother-trees form the dense canopy 20 to 30 yards up that darkens the jungle floor to near twilight; and the grandmother-trees are the tallest specimens that poke up through the canopy like tent poles. Nearly all the jungle tribes, the Cathan in particular, worship the grandmother-trees as intermediaries between themselves and the God of the Tree, whom Barsaivian scholars have tentatively identified as the Passion Jaspree. The Cathan believe that encroaching settlers, who are cutting down trees to uncover the land for planting, threaten the Tree God and must be punished for destroying the grandmother-trees. This belief lends a certain air of fanaticism to the growing tribal raids on pioneer settlements in the Servos.

The swamps along the Serpent contain low canopies of half-submerged mangrove and cypress trees. The primitive t'skrang of the swamps revere certain mangroves as elemental spirits, often making offerings and even ritual sacrifices to win their intervention and support. The roots of these trees have evolved both heat-sensing organs and powerful pinion jaws that devour offerings and give these rituals a dramatic flair. Reportedly, some jungle tribes sacrifice Name-givers to the mangroves.

My first journey into the Servos was my last. We had been warned about the spiders and their vast webs, and the ambushing attacks of the inshalata, but nothing prepared us for what we encountered. Our Scout, a young elf, became caught, in a web… or so he cried out. As we rushed to free him, watching the canopy above us for the waiting spider, the very bushes themselves came to life! Within moments, our two fighters were down. I barely escaped the scraping, clawing vines myself. I tell you, the plants are just as bad as the creatures—even worse for the element of surprise!

—M'jontass, T'skrang Adventurer



The variety of trees in the Servos is uncountable. Ramos of Travar, in his lexicon of the Cathan language, lists more than 500 different words for trees. The wood of some trees is as light as a feather, while the wood of others is as heavy as iron. The jungle t'skrang hollow out a tree called the *shivoam* to make their canoes. The Cathan use the bark of the *clematha* tree to create close-fitting suits of armor. The bark becomes as pliable as cloth when soaked in water, and as tough and resilient as dwarf chain mail when dry, although it wears out after a few years of heavy use. The jungle t'skrang make knives and axes from the wood of the *g'nomsha* tree. Tempered by fire, a *g'nomsha* blade will hold a much keener edge than any stone implement. Servos natives also use the leaves of certain trees as crockery for cooking and serving food, as the source of extracts to make poisons and medicines, and as roofing material for their homes. The trees of the Servos truly provide life to the jungle's inhabitants. The fruits of the trees serve as food, the branches as building materials, the roots as medicines. In fact, the jungle t'skrang call themselves *chreostomas*, or "tree-herders."

The Servos is also home to an incredible menagerie of animals and monstrous creatures. The air vibrates with the calls and wing beats of hundreds of species of birds, whose plumes command handsome prices in Barsaive's markets. Apes and monkeys are the most prevalent animal family in the Servos, however, with the smallest no larger than a man's fist and the largest—the gorillas—powerful enough to take on a troll. The jungle's animal population also includes big cats such as tigers, leopards, jaguars, and black pumas. Deer and gazelle are plentiful as well, along with many varieties of water buffalo in every color and pattern. A patient hunter may even be treated to an occasional glimpse of the Servos elephant, prized for its ivory tusks.

Lizards, however, dominate the waterways of the Servos. Servos crocodiles typically exceed 15 feet in length, and sightings of specimens as large as 50 feet are not uncommon. The waterways swarm with snakes (see p. 344 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) of every size and color as well—constricting, poisonous, and a few relatively harmless varieties. The banks of the Servos' many rivers house colonies of duck-billed hadrosaurs, 15 to 20 feet tall, which graze among the trees that hang over the water. Behemoths (see p. 280 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), massive creatures resembling a cross between a hippopotamus and an alligator, wallow in these rivers, their long necks sticking up six feet out of the water and their feet planted firmly in the river bed 10 or more yards below. Ramos of Travar has recorded one behemoth specimen 110 feet long from tail to head. Despite their formidable size, however, these plant-eating behemoths do not attack Name-givers or riverboats. Indeed, rumor has it that the Servos contains Beastmasters who have mastered the behemoths.

The monsters of the Servos are more rare, and far more dangerous, than legends paint them. Many of the Servos' predators were twisted by the Horrors during the Scourge. Certainly the crojen (see p. 292 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) are a constant threat to all living things in the jungle. Relentless hunters, these small jungle cats become frenzied at the smell of blood, making their attacks more fearsome than that of the largest tiger. The Cathan have devised cunning crojen snares, although they keep the secret of their snares to themselves. The tallest of

the jungle trees are home to wyverns, who swoop down from the canopy to attack their victims. Although blood monkeys (see p. 281 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) are extremely rare in the Servos, the Servos blood bat swarms from the trees in the same manner as its terrifying cousins in the Blood Wood.

Three of the most dangerous Servos predators, however, are insects. The giant spider (see p. 305 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), which can reach the size of a troll, builds its thin, near-invisible webs in the gaps between the jungle's mother-trees. The unwary traveler may easily get caught in the sticky web of a giant spider, destined to become a desiccated husk dangling from the spider's lair. The very appearance of the death moth (see p. 293 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) can paralyze an observer with fear. The underbelly of the moth is naturally shaded to resemble a skull, which can trick an observer into believing a disembodied head is flying toward him. The moth then attacks its frightened prey with a potent venom. The venom contains the creature's eggs, which incubate within the victim. The moth larvae then consume the victim's internal organs and emerge from his dead body. The inshalata (see p. 314 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), or stalking mantis, as the Cathan call it, is a giant praying mantis that disguises itself by remaining perfectly still. Passersby typically mistake the mantis for a part of the jungle landscape, perhaps a vine or leafy tree. As the unlucky traveler passes, the mantis grabs him from behind and attempts to fasten its outer mandibles around the hapless prey. Thus fastened, the creature uses a pair of razor-sharp arms to slowly slice the victim apart, piece-by-piece, and consumes as much of its prey as possible.

As the Galanga River winds its way through the foothills of Throal, it tumbles 70 yards downward at a place called Griffin Falls. The falls are Named after the Servos' only colony of jungle griffins (see p. 315 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). Like all of their kind, these griffins prefer to frighten off trespassers or hypnotize them and send them away from the griffins' nesting area. Certain tribal shamans send their students to Griffin Falls to gather a fallen feather from a jungle griffin as a test of their aptitude. Such feathers are considered powerful Nethermantic totems.

Perhaps the most feared of the Servos hunters are the giant predatory t'skrang that the Cathan call the velos (see p. 350 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). For years, scholars dismissed the Cathan tales of killer t'skrang with rows of sharp teeth and feet studded with razor-sharp claws. Now, however, most scholars accept the existence of these carnivorous t'skrang, who prefer the taste of Name-giver flesh to any other meat. The velos walk upright, craft spears that they throw with considerable force and accuracy, and live in scattered villages across the jungle. Recently, a band of 40 Theran slavers discovered and attempted to raid a velos village. Only two slavers survived the encounter.

Settlements in the Servos

Aside from the isolated villages of the jungle tribes, the Servos contains several K'tenshin plantations and a few scattered independent t'skrang villages. Master farmers from House K'tenshin's Meru *niall* supervise the K'tenshin plantations, which lie along the banks of the Serpent and Servos Rivers. The Meru currently run 30 plantations in the area and have enlisted merchants from Travar in the construction of 20 or so more. The plantations supply much-needed rice, beans, and vegetables to communities along the Serpent's South Reach. Once cleared of trees, the land will grow almost any crop, including bananas, coconuts, corn, cotton, sugar cane, flax, spices, and tea. Additionally, the climate of the Servos allows for two growing seasons each year.

When choosing a plantation site, the Meru builders look for an easy approach from the water, a thick layer of good topsoil, and as few grandmother-trees as possible. Then they call in workers from the Henika *niall* to deforest 40 to 50 acres, pull the stumps, turn the earth, and build a central stockade. The plantation organizers then recruit craftsmen from river villages and the city of Travar to contribute members to form a self-sufficient community. The typical plantation seed colony numbers 20 to 50 individuals and usually includes a carpenter, a blacksmith, a stablemaster, a baker, a cook, a fisherman, and a healer. After the seed colony has been assembled, the first planting goes into the newly turned soil. The community then constructs homes, using wood from the plentiful jungle hardwood trees. At the first harvest, the slavers from House K'tenshin's Abanos *niall* appear with a contingent of slave labor to bring in the crop. The slaves remain after the harvest to work the plantation as needed.

The layout of a plantation has much to do with the lay of the land and the racial composition of the community. The Meru prefer to divide their fields with 10- to 15-yard swaths of small trees, which act as windbreaks and reduce soil erosion. Particular care is taken when constructing the docking facility on the water's edge. The river is generally very shallow along the jungle banks, and so the plantation docks may extend as far as 35 yards from the shore to keep approaching riverboats from running aground.

If the community is mostly t'skrang, it builds a central plantation house with rooms for every free citizen, communal kitchens, and dining rooms. If the community has more racial diversity, each family builds its own house around a central square. Typically, a small road paved with cut hardwood timber connects the settlement's docks to its homes. The stockade built in a community's first year becomes the slave compound. Each evening, when their work is done, the slaves are corralled into the compound for the night. The compound is guarded by slave foremen, who ensure against escapes. Additional foremen are required to supervise the work in the fields each day. A typical plantation keeps no more than two slaves for each free person in the community—any more is considered a security risk.

Admission to a plantation seed colony is a highly sought-after privilege on the South Reach of the Serpent. Such communities are run much like t'skrang trade covenants, with every member of the community sharing in the fruits of its labor. Although the first year requires much hard work, after the first harvest a plantation dweller can generally settle into a life of relative luxury, with slaves to attend his household and a generous stipend from the plantation's annual profits. Even in years of poor harvests, plantation communities rarely go hungry. Of course, the entire planta-

tion system depends on the seemingly inexhaustible supply of slave labor, and many individuals leave plantation life after experiencing the reality of a slave society and its manifold suffering.

The rivers of the Servos also contain numerous t'skrang village towers, but the domes of most of these villages flooded during the Scourge. Explorers report that the walls of these domes are perforated with thousands of tiny holes, and that the domes themselves do not contain the bodies or bones of their onetime inhabitants. Scholars believe a Horror found a way to breach the defenses of these village kaers during the Scourge.

A few isolated t'skrang villages that survived the Scourge are believed to remain in the Servos, most located far upstream on the minor tributaries of the Servos and Galanga rivers. These independent villages typically take extraordinary measures to conceal themselves from outsiders. Villagers usually dock their riverboats in hidden coves and lagoons and conceal all above-water activity, so that their villages resemble the area's numerous abandoned t'skrang settlements. They survive by raiding K'tenshin riverboats and plantations; according to rumor, these villagers imprison or execute any outsider who learns of their existence.

The Jungle Tribes

The only remaining indigenous inhabitants of the Servos Jungle are the human tribes known as the Cathan and several small t'skrang tribes. All of these Name-givers live in villages, which they build alongside the jungle's rivers and streams. All are hunter-gatherers who primarily subsist on fresh meat, fish, fruits, wild tubers, and nuts gathered from the jungle. A few Cathan villages cultivate tubers or beans to supplement their diets, but most of the jungle's people have never learned farming or animal husbandry. These Name-givers fashion tools of flint, wood, and bone. For shelter, they construct thatched huts. The Cathan generally build on dry land, while the Servos' t'skrang partially submerge their homes in the water. All use canoes to travel the jungle's waterways.

For centuries, the Servos' humans and t'skrang lived in apparent harmony. Both groups survived the Scourge by taking refuge in a maze of natural caverns, which the tribal shamans sealed against the coming Horrors. (The entrances to these underground caverns still exist but the jungle people refuse to enter them, perhaps because they still contain Horror constructs.) Many scholars believe that the t'skrang somehow shared their ability to hibernate with the humans, for the Cathan often use the term *ixtixtaaqitl,* or "long sleep," to describe the Time of Hiding. During the long years in the dark, the Horrors breached the tribal shamans' crude seals on several occasions, and the Cathan in particular suffered terribly from it. According to the legends of the jungle t'skrang, on several occasions Cathan led Horrors to t'skrang hiding places in exchange for their own lives. These stories explain the source of the current friction between the two groups.

Relations between the human and t'skrang tribes have steadily declined since slavers began to ply their trade in the jungle. To avoid becoming slaves themselves, many Cathan villagers serve as guides for Theran and K'tenshin slavers, and usually direct their employers to t'skrang villages. The jungle t'skrang consider such actions declarations of war and often gather war parties from neighboring villages to attack the villages of their Cathan betrayers. Although the jungle t'skrang outnumber the Cathan, the humans tend to be better warriors and so such conflicts usually degenerate into drawn-out feuds that last until the warriors of the opposing villages exhaust themselves.

The jungle people follow the Disciplines of the Archer, Scout, Warrior, Nethermancer, and Shaman (see p. 210 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). The Cathan are particularly dangerous bowmen. Tribal magicians are most often Shaman adepts, and they generally pass on their knowledge to no more than two other individuals in their tribes. The village Shaman occupies a place of honor just below the village elder or *lahala*. Often these magicians have access to powerful Ghost Masters (see p. 425 of the **Player's Compendium**) whom they can contact to help guide themselves and their tribesmen in their quest for knowledge and advancement.

For additional descriptions of the Cathan and t'skrang of the Servos Jungle, see the **Name-giver's Compendium**.

The Gray Ones

According to the legends of the Servos tribes, Horrors destroyed the jungle during the Scourge. Cathan stories, for example, say the Horrors "devoured the jungle like locusts." The basis of these legends is easy to surmise. Almost all Name-givers are familiar with the physical destruction the Horrors wrought on the lands of Barsaive, and it seems likely that the Horrors destroyed much of the Servos' plant and animal life during the Scourge. According to legends, the jungle people restored their habitat with the aid of strange visitors known as the Gray Ones.

In all the tales so far recorded, the Gray Ones appear at the edge of a village during the last hour before nightfall. They appear as a pair of Name-givers, always of the same race, one male and one female, dressed in plain gray cloaks. The visitors share stories with the villagers, instructing them in the ways of the mother-trees and the rejuvenation of the jungle. Every village that received the Gray Ones was said to be free of the threat of the Horrors for a year and a day. Soon the green returned to the land of the Servos just as the Gray Ones had prophesied, and the people built their homes under the eaves of the newly grown trees.

Most scholars scoff at the legends of the Gray Ones, pointing out that the Servos Jungle is much too large to have grown up from nothing within a scant few Name-giver generations. The tribes of the Servos, however, remain convinced that the tales are true.

The Tylon River

The Tylon River, which runs swiftly down from the Tylon Mountains, is the largest tributary in the Serpent's South Reach. The Upper Reach of the Tylon, which stretches from the river's source to the 130-yard falls at Daiche Canyon, flows through densely forested hillsides and verdant valleys that are considered some of the most beautiful wilderness

in Barsaive. The Tylon's Lower Reach meanders through the rugged plains where the Dinganni wander. At the southern end of Daiche Canyon, the city of Kratas has built the colony called Daiche, which has become a locus of trade and controversy.

According to local legend, the Tylon River was controlled before the Scourge by the t'skrang House T'kambras, the House of Swift Waters. Eventually, the T'kambrian *aropagoi* came into conflict with House K'tenshin, as the latter *aropagoi* attempted to expand its influence by seizing control of trade on the Tylon. After House K'tenshin failed to persuade House T'kambras to allow its riverboats into the Tylon, House K'tenshin declared all-out war against the T'kambrians. For five years the warships of the *aropagoi* clashed. Finally, with the aid of its Theran allies, House K'tenshin prevailed. K'tenshin warships seized control of House T'kambras' home village, located at the southern end of Daiche Canyon about a mile downstream of the cataracts.

Enraged at the T'kambrian resistance, the Shivalahala K'tenshin resolved to make an example of House T'kambras that would strike fear into the hearts of all who thought to oppose her *aropagoi*. The K'tenshinians proceeded to sell every T'kambrian prisoner into Theran slavery. They seized the riverboats of T'kambras and its allied villages for their own war fleet and executed the *lahalas* of those *nialls*, effectively destroying the ancestral memories of House T'kambras and its allied villages. As a final act of disdain, House K'tenshin used explosive charges of elemental air and fire to destroy the village towers of House T'kambras. To this day the place is called "Shattered Towers." It is said the Shivalahala T'kambras was a Troubadour of great power, and as she watched the murder and enslavement of her people and the destruction of her home, she sang her ghost song before she too died. Legend has it that the cataracts of Daiche Canyon repeat that song under the darkness of the new moon for any who have ears to listen.

Daiche

Daiche Canyon remained largely uninhabited, and the river rarely traveled, until the end of the Theran War. At that time, Garlthik One-Eye, who had rousted the Therans from Kratas, decided that his city could no longer sustain itself simply on the loot recovered from the ancient citadel. Realizing that Kratas lay in the middle of trade routes connecting the lands around Vivane with Throal and the Serpent's Mid and South Reaches, Garlthik surmised that a nearby port on the Tylon River could enrich his city. After opening communications with the weakened House K'tenshin, Garlthik immediately sent one of his best lieutenants, the dwarf Sagramon Steeltoe, to supervise the construction of the colony town now called Daiche. Garlthik then encouraged his many friends among the merchants (fences all, of course) to join Sagramon in a "legitimate and profitable enterprise"—namely, sending all the stolen and looted goods accumulating in Kratas back into Barsaive's markets through Daiche.

Within a few short years Daiche had become a fabulous success. Although the town has fewer than a thousand inhabitants, it boasts architecture of stone and mortared brick, as well as impressive fortifications and ample housing. Each trading company in Kratas maintains its own warehouse in Daiche, and the town's docks are always bustling with riverboats. But the center of attention in town is the ever-expanding castle that Sagramon has built for his ever-expanding family, which now boasts eight children and 14 grandchildren.

The Byrose River

The northern stretch of the Byrose bustles with activity between Travar and the rest of the Serpent. Merchant ships, dwarf barges, *aropagoian* warships, and ferries flood its waters. The roads lining the river also are well worn from the transport of goods and livestock to the metropolis that is Travar. The river's banks are high enough to avoid flooding in all but the wettest years, and as a result farming villages have their fields reaching nearly to the edge of the water. Even from such vantage points, the opposing bank often shrinks to a line in the distance.

Hundreds of tiny settlements dot the 200-mile journey to Travar. All of the Name-giver races save obsidimen and windlings find members among these villages, to the point where it is difficult to count which race is dominant along the river. These settlements range from communal homes of extended families to central trading and meeting areas for a score of families. They are known for both their hospitality and their negativity, and are quite used to visitors from along the roads and from the busy waters, often enticing visitors in to hear the latest gossip and hawk some of their crops or wares. Despite the villages' obvious relation to Travar, the inhabitants are careful not to play favorites to ships from Throal, K'tenshin, or elsewhere on the Serpent. The farmers and their neighboring herders further inland are notorious for their excuses and complaints about their crops. In part this is due to the fierce competition and stingy markets in Travar, but lately murmurs of the Badlands encroaching upon the lands along the banks of the Byrose are being taken more seriously. Trading houses from Travar have begun to send adepts, especially Wizards and Elementalists, to look into these claims.



Byrose's villages are interesting places. Sure, they seem open and care free, but I quickly came to notice how many of their young men would conveniently find work to do near the main gathering area in case of trouble. Once a drunken friend of mine made a pass at one of their young ladies and had a young man's blade to his throat before I could tell him to go walk it off. They watch out for their own they do. Just don't ask them about their crops or you'll never hear the end of it.

—Lognar Devia, Dwarf Barge Captain



Whereas in the past all the river traffic had led to numerous skirmishes and the occasional collection of *bakshevas*, despite the Free Trade Compact, recently tensions have risen with the growing prominence of House K'tenshin and

the Therans on the South Reach. Travar has even begun turning to airships to bypass the heavy taxes on the river and the stifling company of rival riverboats. Such a practice is considered a risky gambit by a vocal minority among the trading companies in Travar, but so far this has not dampened the fervor of its proponents.

Beyond Travar, the traffic lessens, but many villages maintain small barges and canoes to speed their trade with the big city. The closer one approaches to the river's source, the louder the thundering of the nearby Thunder Mountains echo in the background. Every farmer or herder you'll meet has his own tale of the mountains, if you can get him to talk that is. For the area's people are quiet folk, content to farm and herd away from crowded civilization. This hill country contains some patches of rich pastureland, drawing the intrepid few who are brave or desperate enough to try and make their own way in the world. The settlements here are not without their caution however, for these lands often see strange creatures wandering in from the Badlands and the Thunder Mountains and their late-night stories speak of careless villages which fell prey to Horrors for lack of vigilance. In addition, feuds have been known to erupt over choice pieces of land or access to good watering holes, for while rich in places, this area also has spots that are equally barren.

Travar

Travar is one of Barsaive's largest cities. Located on the west side of the Byrose River, about 200 miles south of the Serpent, Travar retains all of its pre-Scourge splendor and grace. The city is famous for the impressive wealth of its citizens, the golden roofs of its towers and spires, and the bizarre spectacle of its annual political contest, known as the Founding.

Three magistrates share power in Travar. One magistrate oversees the court system, the second runs the civil services, and the third is free of civic duties and may pursue his own business affairs. At the end of each month, the three magistrates meet to establish new policies and laws based on unanimous consensus. Then they trade places. This arrangement allows each magistrate to serve the city and yet still attend to his personal affairs every third month. Each magistrate holds office for three years, and each year one magisterial post goes up for election. The election process, however, is unique.

The city of Travar retains a group of magicians, known as the Body of Five, at the public's expense. Each year, the Body of Five makes all preparations for the Founding. A spectacular tournament involving magic, wild beasts, puzzles, and traps, the Founding is usually held during the first two weeks of the autumn. Candidates for one of the magistrate positions must hire a champion or champions to compete in the tournament. The champion who wins the Founding wins the seat of magistrate for his employer—and presumably a handsome reward as well. As a result, Travar is almost always filled with freelance warriors, a condition that saves the city the expense of maintaining a standing army.

The Travarian Magistrate currently consists of Lord Alderac Windspear, Xoros Honeyed-tongue, and Niss Reeves. A pragmatic human who has won his seat in the Magistrate last year, Lord Alderac Windspear is an adept—a Swordmaster who has combined his adventuring contacts with his fortune to gain his office. He is a natural mediator and shrewd negotiator. His title is not Travarian; his family claims decent from the nobles of Landis.

Xoros Honeyed-tongue, a surprisingly mellow ork, made his fortune producing arms. Controlling a large number of smithies, Xoros holds the charter for the largest fire cannon industry in the province. He won his seat in the Magistrate two years ago, and many of his more powerful clients have since left for Cara Fahd. While his position is safe for now, he is worried about next year's Founding.

The most powerful Travarian magistrate, however, is Niss Reeves, a troll Weaponsmith who has all but abandoned her Discipline to become one of the premiere jewelers in Barsaive. A gregarious troll by nature, she enjoys the job very much. Within the city she is known as "Sparkling Niss," for she has unusual elegance and charm for a troll. Wearing the finest gowns and a coy smile to match her sparkling eyes, she cuts an oddly elegant figure for a troll and uses her charm to get her way in political matters. Niss has won a magistrate position for four consecutive terms, a total of twelve years. This remarkable feat was made possible by her connections in the adept community from her adventuring days. Her Founding Champions are consistently a cut above others, mainly because adepts and magicians enjoy working with her. She supports free trade and a free Barsaive, and she has expressed publicly her loathing of the Therans. Despite these public proclamations, she has resisted the attempts of fellow magistrates to incorporate Throalic law into the code of Travar.

Travar's streets are home to several of the most successful trading companies in Barsaive. If something can be bought or sold, one can find it somewhere in Travar. This includes slaves, though the slave market remains outside the city walls, and the city tax on slaveholders makes slave ownership a luxury available to only the very wealthy. Despite the city's ambivalent attitude toward slavery, several crimes, including theft and adultery, carry the penalty of enslavement under Travar's legal code. However, almost all of Travar's industries use free labor to produce their goods. Many households buy individuals from the slave market, free them from bondage, and then bring them into the city, where they employ them as servants and pay them room and board.

Travar's air fleet consists of six drakkars and four galleys, although more vessels are slated to join. The airships provide the city's merchants with a welcome alternative to the K'tenshin riverboats that monopolize trade on the Byrose. The growing air fleet has kept freight costs competitive, prompting House K'tenshin to seek other ways to profit from its monopoly of the Byrose, such as its passenger service between Travar and the Floating City of House V'strimon in Lake Ban.

The city imports its food from hundreds of farming villages along both sides of the Byrose River. Regular ferry service is available to cross the river at the city itself, and good systems of roads line each riverbank. The soil of the Byrose valley produces excellent crops of cotton and grain,

and the lowlands of the nearby Thunder Mountains provide pasture for sheep, cattle, and horses. In the past several years, however, the soil on the west bank of the river has grown depleted. Area landowners blame the depletion on poor farming techniques, but the tenant farmers whisper that the Badlands are reaching out toward the river.

Omasu

The wealthiest Name-giver in Travar is the obsidiman Troubadour Omasu, founder of the Overland Trading Company. Originally from the Liferock at Ayodhya, Omasu displays no political opinions whatsoever. His company trades all across Barsaive, from Vivane to Throal to Iopos, in every good and service imaginable. The Overland Trading Company now boasts a staff of more than 20 merchants, with caravans leaving Travar every two to three weeks. The company has forged an agreement with House K'tenshin to allow three company-owned galleys to travel the South Reach—something no other trading company has ever accomplished. Initially Omasu traveled widely and did his own trading, but in recent years he has divided his time between his expansive house inside the city walls and his rambling estate on the east side of the Byrose River across from Travar.

As ruthless in his secret rebel activities as he is in his business dealings, Omasu makes a useful ally or patron for a group of player characters. His skills as a Troubadour adept make him a charismatic and likable leader, and he generously rewards any adepts willing to smuggle information and supplies into and out of Vivane. Additionally, Omasu pays high prices for any information about the strengths and weaknesses of the Theran fortress and the fate of the obsidimen trapped within the Ayodhya Liferock.

Omasu is a Seventh Circle obsidiman Troubadour.

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (22): 9/D8+D6
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 12
Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 9
Social Defense: 11
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 39 (81)
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 14
Knockdown: 9/D8+D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (66)

Combat Movement: 16
Full Movement: 32

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 3/D4

Talents (Knacks)

Disguise Self [D] (2): 9/D8+D6
Durability (6/5) (7): 7
Emotion Song [D] (9): 16/D20+D8 (Epic, Songs of Inspiration, Telling the Tale)
Empathic Sense [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Engaging Banter [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
First Impression (7): 14/D20+D4
Haggle (9): 16/D20+D8
Incite Mob [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Item History (7): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Melee Weapons (8): 13/D12+D10
Mimic Voice [D] (2): 9/D8+D6
Missile Weapons (7): 12/2D10
Read and Write Language [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Obsidiman, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang
Resist Taunt [D] (7): 13/D12+D10
Speak Language [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang
Taunt (7): 14/D20+D4
Thread Weaving (Story Weaving) [D] (7): 14/D20+D4
Throwing Weapons (7): 12/2D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills

Artisan:
Entertainer (Singing) (6): 13/D12+D10
Storytelling (4): 11/D10+D8

Knowledge:
Caravan Trade Routes (6): 13/D12+D10
Liferock Rebellion Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
Overland Trading Company Finances (6): 13/D12+D10
Obsidiman Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
Serpent River Trade Routes (3): 10/D10+D6
Travar Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
Vivane Resistance Lore (3): 10/D10+D6

General:
Conversation (6): 13/D12+D10
Etiquette (6): 13/D12+D10
Evaluate (6): 13/D12+D10
Heartening Laugh (3): 10/D10+D6
Lip Reading (3): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Rhetoric (3): 10/D10+D6
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Obsidiman
Streetwise (4): 11/D10+D8
Trading (6): 13/D12+D10

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/ Cloaksense Brooch)
Fernweave (Phys 2; Myst 3)

Troll Sword (Forged +4; Damage 19/D20+2D6; w/ scabbard)
2 × Troll Daggers (Damage 12/2D10; Range 9—15—18)
2 × Troll Spears (Damage 14/D20+D4; Range 18—30—36)
Medium Crossbow (Damage 14/D20+D4; Range 70—140—

280)
Quiver (w/15 medium crossbow bolts)

Thread Gold Amulet with Amber Gem (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)
Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1; Climbing (1): 6/D10)
Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Adventurer's Kit
3 × Booster Potions
Climbing Kit
Quiet Pouch
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin
Writing Kit

Loot

8 gold rings with different colored embedded gems (worth 1,600 silver pieces), 460 silver pieces

Legend Points

840 Legend Points



Notes

Omasu possesses the obsidiman racial abilities of Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on supporting another character's social Action Test

Commentary

Omasu is the head of the Overland Trading Company. Apart from being a wealthy and influential obsidiman merchant, he is one of the most powerful people in Barsaive. Since he is also a member of the Brotherhood of the Ayodhya Liferock, on which the Therans landed the behemoth Triumph, Omasu has formed an underground movement to fight the Therans, known as the Liferock Rebellion.

Omasu uses his own influence and resources to aid House V'strimon and House T'kambras, the anti-Theran *aropagoi* of the Serpent River, the Kingdom of Throal, and other anti-Theran factions by pressuring ship-building companies to speed production on galleys and galleons for Throal's navy, arranging for overland shipments of supplies and goods to anti-Theran forces, and even hiring ork raiders to disrupt Theran caravans and slaving operations.

In return, these factions provide the Liferock rebels with safe haven, transportation, and other support. The characters can easily become involved with the Liferock Rebellion and its continuing fight against the Therans in a number of ways. For example, they may be hired for missions (by Caedrus, for example; see p. 49 of **Ardanyan's Revenge**), or, depending on their ideals and beliefs, join the Rebellion on their own initiative.

The Iontos River

Once a prosperous branch of the Serpent river system, the Iontos now quietly flows from its source in the Dragon Mountains. Rumors are the river begins amidst a lush forest full of dragons, or at least dragon-like creatures, though few claim to have ever returned from the place. While the river swells to a few miles across long before it reaches the Serpent, it sees little traffic these days. The Badlands have claimed it in most people's minds and indeed it seems to shrink in its banks more and more each year. This is especially evident where the River of Bones, a dank, metallic tributary spawned within the Badlands themselves, joins it, turning the dark blue waters of the Iontos red and brackish until the taint dissipates in the larger river. The Scavians are among the few who still regularly ply the Iontos' waters, for they traded extensively with the many wealthy villages that once maintained ports on its shores. Rumors even circulate that they occasionally trade with a few mysterious ships from further up the river, but the Scavians return such suggestions with fiery stares.

With some frequency, groups of adventurers use the river as a launching point into the Badlands. Some even go hunting for remnants of a number of Theran villages that used to line the river, which traded with the surrounding

cities and House K'tenshin before the Scourge. Those few who have returned from such quests have come up empty handed and disenchanted. Such journeys on the Iontos pose hazards as new sandbars and hidden rocks come closer to the surface, and only the Scavians seem to be able to keep track of the changes. There are those who have thought to gain from others' misfortune on the river, but for some mysterious reason the grounded ships are not so easily found.

I set out once on such a fool's errand! Looking for lost magical items and orichalcum at an ancient Theran settlement called Vahnia. No sooner had we landed than we were set upon by packs of vicious Horrors, I came to know later as Gnashers. In our flight further up the Iontos we came across the ruins of an ancient t'skrang river village. Odran, our Thief, decided to go exploring to make our trip worth it at least. I still cannot bear to speak of what happened, but suffice it to say that I'd never again venture to those ruined towers or even tell someone how to find them—not for all the orichalcum in Barsaive.

—Rowan Daggertree, Retired Human Adventurer

Farram

The liveliest part of the Iontos is actually where it meets the Serpent itself. Here the small town of Farram boasts a disproportionate amount of trade due to its positioning near the confluence of the Iontos, the Tylon, and the Serpent Rivers. Due to trade with Daiche and Travar, almost any goods imaginable can be found in the small settlement. Founded by a small group of retiring Throalic merchants not long after the Scourge ended, it testifies to the old dwarf axiom: "Location is everything; goods, while vitally important, come second." While most of these founders had passed away before Farram's current bustle, its focus has always been on trade and hospitality. The large number of inns of varying qualities and corresponding prices further highlights this history.

The Scavians (see **On the Scavians**, p. 260) have been rumored to meet with the rebels of House T'kambras at Farram. The townspeople suspect these dealings are the reason a number of t'skrang traders took up residence in town rather suddenly; whispers of their possible connections to the Naxos *niall* have even reached Travar. The locals worry about the danger this might bring to their small settlement, but so far have been happy enough with the extra business. One dwarf in particular, a retired Weaponsmith Named Hancar, is quite pleased with his fortunes of late, as his inn, the Friendly Forge, has seen more patrons than it previously had in years.

My fellow townspeople ignore me, and I must admit: with good reason much of the time. But this time is different! Caravans, I tell you! Coming up from the south, they are meeting warships on the river. It will be the end of us, I tell you, the end! No, I didn't see them meet any ships actually. But I did see the caravans, loaded to the gills with all manner of provisions and weapons ... and all the guards! How do you explain them? No, you must believe me this time!

—Darlon, Rumormonger and Village Idiot

Approaching the Mist Swamps

The last 100 miles of water between the Serpent's confluence with the Iontos River and the edge of the Mist Swamps represent the last navigable, and perhaps most desolate, stretch of the river. The easternmost ridge of the Twilight Peaks extends along the Serpent's north banks, and on the south bank the hideous Badlands creep right up to the water's edge. The waters of the Great River change from blue-green to the reddish-brown of the Badlands in this region.

At one time the stronghold of Theran influence on the Serpent, this stretch of the river once contained seven river villages. The mines in the Twilight Peaks were rich with ores, the soil was fertile and easily worked, and the ancient Kingdom of the Scavians to the west provided ample supplies of elemental fire and air. With Theran aid, the settlements in the region constructed lavish kaers. When the Horrors entered Barsaive, however, these lands were the first to fall. Now the area is desolate, with only abandoned kaers and mine shafts left to testify to its long-lost prosperity.

Only the very foolish and the very powerful take up residence along this stretch of the river. A single K'tenshin riverboat patrols the area for escaped slaves attempting to flee into the Badlands. Slaves who survive a foray into the Badlands usually make their way back to the river as soon as they realize the hopelessness of crossing the wastes.

Portage

Only two Serpent River settlements of any consequence lie between the Tylon River and the Mist Swamps. The first town of note is Named Portage, and is located only a few miles from the junction of the Tylon and the Serpent. Portage is the trailhead of one of the best caravan routes between the South Reach and Vivane. The route follows a Theran road built before the Scourge, skirts the northern edge of the Twilight Peaks, and joins a trail from Kratas somewhere near the boundary of the ancient kingdom of Ustrect. Caravans can hire Dinganni guides to help them make the passage safely. In recent years, however, this southern route has fallen into disuse because of increasing ork attacks on caravans. (Rumors say that Garlthik has bribed a number of ork raiders to move away from the Kratas route and south toward the Portage road.)

Trosk

The second settlement is the small town of Trosk, located on the ruins of a pre-Scourge port city. The inhabitants of Trosk are all questors of Jaspree and their servants. The Troskians believe they have a sacred duty to find a way to stop the growth of the Badlands, though no one can tell how much success they are having.

Tales abound of magicians who have built secret strongholds in the Badlands, but only one is known to have done so. A t'skrang Elementalist Named Sevastos has built a house in the ruined tower of what was once the nearest t'skrang river village to the Mist Swamps. He calls his tower "The Last Homely House in Barsaive," and he has filled it with all manner of magical oddities. Although he lives in virtual isolation, Sevastos is more than happy to entertain guests, and he can be a valuable source of information for travelers entering the Mist Swamps.

On the Scavians

The Scavians are descendants of the ancient city-state of Scavia which used to be within what are now the Mist Swamps, and mined elemental fire on the Scarlet Sea. Unfortunately, their Kaer was breached during the Scourge, and they suffered greatly. Among other things, they lost the secrets of building barges that could sail the molten lava seas.

Plying the Tylon River in huge, stone-bottomed barges, the Scavians make their living from fishing and trading along the river. These barges, more than forty in number, double as villages for the Scavians, each holding up to a hundred Name-givers. While the barges are covered with rickety shacks and lean-tos, they are sturdily built and are well armed with fire cannons. Further, most of the flamboyantly dressed Scavians are well trained in the use of the crossbow and other missile weapons. They frequently butt heads with the t'skrang, especially those of House K'tenshin. For more information on the Scavians, see p. 57 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**.

The capital of ancient Scavia is uninhabitated today and only adventurers, explorers, and the desperate wander its ruins. Even though the treasures of the Scavians were transported into their kaer at Dead Man's Gullet, many adventurers search for riches that might otherwise have been forgotten. The remote location of these ruins made them an attractive place for Name-givers who need to hide or who have business that calls for secrecy.

Recently, the Order of the Scavian Guard made several raids on the ramshackle tents found beteen the ruins, in an attempt to take the ruins back under control. However, their efforts weren't met with success, because the residents either fled before the Order arrived or hid too well.

It is rumored that members of the Order were bribed. Looks like the Scavians intend to return to their capital and re-build it at some point in the future.

—H'atschi, Windling Wizard

The Mist Swamps

None can truly say where the Mist Swamps begin. As the Serpent passes by Sevastos' abode, the fog on the river grows increasingly thick. The river begins to divide into myriad branches, which in turn divide into smaller branches. The riverbanks grow increasingly spongy, until water and earth merge into one continuous bog. The ever-present fog, heated by the fires of the Death's Sea to the west, reduces visibility to a few feet.

Very few explorers have ever ventured into the Mist Swamps and returned, and so little is known for certain about this harsh environment. Some explorers, however, claim they have glimpsed the dark spires and menacing walls of the Castle of Assassins through the mists. The castle is reputedly the training ground for the secret society known as the Hand of Corruption. This dreaded cult, whose self-appointed task is to cleanse the world of all Name-givers, is among the most loathed and feared in Barsaive.

Adventure Hook

Recently, Kela Vorga, a female Scavian Warrior adept and Questor of Lochost is strongly opposed to Scavian culture and thinks of the strict roles attributed to gender among the Scavias as tyranny. She has won over some of her people, but the leaders of the Scavians are strongly opposed to her, and shun both her and her followers. Fearing that she is diluting their culture, already in jeopardy because of many younger Scavians marrying outside the tribe, and losses to the t'skrang. The most strongly opposed to her is Yagal Trona, leader of the Scavian Guard—elite warriors descended from the former Imperial Guard of Scavia, that defended the Scavian kaer at Dead Man's Gullet during the Scourge. Each village barge hosts a few members of the Guard, all of which meet at least once a year to adopt new members, and make other decisions that affect the Scavians as a whole.

To demonstrate to the rest of the Scavians that she is not trying to destroy their way of life, Kela Vorga is venturing into the Mist Swamps to recover as much from the ruins of ancient Scavia as possible, hoping to find more detailed information on the construction techniques for the lava sea barges. She will hire the player characters to accompany her on this dangerous mission, as her followers cannot leave their barges.

In a savvy political move, she also attempts to find any of the trappings of the Scavian's old king. Should she find his crown, scepter, or throne, she will present these to Yagal Trona. In addition to the regular dangers of the Mist Swamps and the Death's Sea, the kaer may still be Horror-infested. Should Yagal accept them and crown himself the new king, he cannot but accept her legitimacy as well.

Adventures on the Serpent

Now lad, the Serpent ain't the place for real adventures. Just a bunch of barges and boring sailing is all. If you want real adventure, why not head northeast…?

• Brainbiter, Troll Innkeeper •



This chapter advises gamemasters on how to use the Serpent River in their **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. Using the presented material as a setting or backdrop for adventures and campaigns can be challenging, but this section will help gamemasters take the fullest advantage of the opportunities the Serpent River can provide.

Experienced **Earthdawn** gamemasters know the Serpent River as an ever-present place in their adventures, as the river runs through all of Barsaive. It's a place of trade and home to the majority of Barsaive's population. The Serpent River is where anyone goes if he wants to travel the province, and player characters in many current campaigns are likely to have some time aboard a riverboat. As this book shows, however, countless possibilities for adventure exist along the Serpent's shores.

Adventure Frameworks

The following adventures are presented in an adventure framework format. Adventure frameworks serve as blueprints that outline the basic events of a story line, which the gamemaster can flesh out according to his own tastes. The framework is a middle step between the brief adventure ideas presented elsewhere in this book and fully dramatized adventures like **Infected** or **Blades**. If you like lots of dialogue and narration prepared in advance, you can create your own detailed notes to supplement the adventure framework. If you prefer to run your game by the seat of your pants, simply glance at these outlines, get the adventurers into trouble, and enjoy the fun.

Adventure Framework Format

No two gamemasters design adventures in the same way. Some prefer to plan for every possibility they can foresee in advance, leaving as little as possible to chance. Others prefer a looser style, where they plan the most significant events in the adventure and improvise the rest. To aid gamemasters in preparing adventures, we have devised the adventure framework format. Gamemasters can use this format to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they like. The four parts of the adventure framework are the **Setup**, **Events**, **Climax,** and **Sequels**.

Setup

The **Setup** describes how the adventure begins and how the characters become involved in the story. This section may also include events that have led to the adventure and background on other ideas touched on in it. This section is often the longest and most detailed in the framework.

Events

Each **Event** describes encounters and events that occur during the course of the adventure. These may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists, creature encounters, or simply unexpected occurrences. Events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

Climax

The **Climax** is the conclusion or resolution of the adventure. It describes the most likely resolution based on actions that the gamemaster expects the players to take, and so it may differ considerably from the way the adventure actually ends. Because player groups often take unexpected actions, we suggest that the gamemaster plan for more than one possible climax.

Sequels

Sequels are stories that might happen after or as a result of the adventure. Sequels may be adventures that fea-

ture the same gamemaster characters or include a magical item discovered in the first adventure and help to create a sense of continuity in a campaign.

See **Adventures and Campaigns**, starting on p. 97 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**, for more information about creating **Earthdawn** campaigns and maintaining campaign continuity.

The Heart of Triumph

The characters disguise themselves as slaves and infiltrate the heart of the Theran fortress in an attempt to contact the obsidimen trapped within the Ayodhya Liferock. The characters hope the obsidimen can provide valuable information about the fortress and its defenses.

Setup

The adepts are contacted by agents of the Liferock Rebellion and meet with Omasu (see p. 257). The obsidiman merchant wants the adepts to act as his agents for a particularly dangerous mission. According to the plan, the characters will pose as slaves and be taken to the fortress of Triumph. Once inside the fortress, they will infiltrate the slave pits and contact the obsidimen within the Ayodhya Liferock that lies buried under the citadel.

Omasu teaches the characters a song that will allow them to awaken the obsidimen and call them to the surface. The characters are to gain any information the trapped obsidimen can provide about the state of the Liferock and the Theran fortress, then escape the fortress city.

In exchange for this service, Omasu will pay the characters a total of 5,000 silver pieces and let them select one of the thread items he owns. Omasu isn't likely to budge from his terms, but if the characters insist on haggling he may increase his offer to 6,000 silver pieces.

Event One

An agent loyal to the Liferock Rebellion arranges to slip the characters into a K'tenshin slave shipment from the towns alongside Lake Pyros. The characters receive cover identities and stories but are told to rely on them as little as possible to avoid being caught. The characters are taken upriver to the shores of Lake Ban and then to Triumph, where they are sent into the slave pits of the massive fortress.

Event Two

The characters are assigned to the mines under the watchful eye of the Theran slavemaster, Mabon Ardos. The adepts work in the mines ceaselessly during their shift, then are brought to the slave quarters to rest and eat before the next shift begins. The work is grueling and puts considerable strain even on the healthiest characters.

The overseers cannot watch all of the slaves constantly, which provides the characters with brief unsupervised periods. Additionally, the characters might be able to slip away from the slave quarters during sleeping hours.

During their time in the mines, the characters witness some of their fellow slaves being worked to death or simply killed outright by overseers as examples to the other slaves. Adepts who try to interfere may attract undue attention, especially if they use any of their magical talents. Therefore, they must decide if they will act in the short term or patiently carry out their mission.

Mabon Ardos is a Sixth Circle elf Beastmaster and questor of Dis. The other Theran slavers are human non-adepts.

Mabon Ardos

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 — **Strength** (16): 7/D12
Toughness (15): 6/D10 — **Perception** (15): 6/D10
Willpower (18): 7/D12 — **Charisma** (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 — **Initiative**: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 10 — **Physical Armor**: 5
Social Defense: 8 — **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 38 (80) — **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 — **Knockdown**: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (66)

* Mabon Ardos knows the Wound Balance skill.

Combat Movement: 34 — **Full Movement**: 78

Karma Points: 25 — **Karma Step**: 4/D6

Talents

Animal Bond [D] (4): 8/2D6
Animal Training [D] (4): 8/2D6
Borrow Sense [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Cat's Paw [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Claw Shape [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Dominate Beast [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Durability (7/6) (6): 6
Endure Cold (6): 12/2D10
Frighten Animals [D] (5): 9/D8+D6
Heal Animal Servant [D] (5): 11/D10+D8
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Lizard Leap [D] (6): 13/D12+D10
Questor of Dis (7): 7
—Confusion, Enslave, Living Death (7): 13/D12+D10
Thread Weaving (Beast Weaving) [D] (6): 12/2D10
Tracking (6): 12/2D10
Unarmed Combat (6): 13/D12+D10

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Skills

Artisan:
Tattooing (3): 7/D12

Knowledge:
Interrogation (3): 9/D8+D6
Slave Trade Routes (3): 9/D8+D6
Torture (3): 9/D8+D6

General:
Avoid Blow (3): 10/D10+D6
Detect Weapon (3): 9/D8+D6
Disarm (3): 10/D10+D6
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6

Pin (3): 10/D10+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Theran
Streetwise (3): 9/D8+D6
Throwing Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6
Wound Balance (3): 10/D10+D6

Equipment

Hardened Leather (Phys 5; Init 1)

Whip (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; Entangle 9)
Bola (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12–20–24; Entangle 9)
Dagger (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
Net (Size 6; Range 6–10–12; Entangle 12)

Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Bandana
Light Chain (3 yards)
Peasant's Garb
Rope (6 yards)
Tattooing Tool

Rat Animal Companions

Loot

None

Legend Points

535 Legend Points



Notes

Mabon possesses the elf racial ability of Low-Light Vision.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower -only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Theran Slavers

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (16): 7/D12
Toughness (17): 7/D12
Perception (14): 6/D10
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Social Defense: 5
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 40
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 11
Knockdown: 7/D12*
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

* Theran slavers know the Wound Balance skill.

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Skills

Artisan:
Tattooing (2): 6/D10

Knowledge:
Interrogation (2): 8/2D6
Slave Trade Routes (2): 8/2D6
Torture (2): 8/2D6

General:
Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6
Detect Weapon (3): 9/D8+D6
Disarm (3): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Pin (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Riposte (3): 9/D8+D6
Speak Language (3): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Theran
Streetwise (2): 8/2D6
Throwing Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Unarmed Combat (6): 12/2D10
Wound Balance (3): 10/D10+D6

Equipment

Bola (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12—20—24; Entangle 9)
Dagger (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9—15—18)
Net (Size 6; Range 6—10—12; Entangle 12)
Whip (Damage 10/D10+D6; Entangle 9)

Bandana
Light Chain (3 yards)
Peasant's Garb
Rope (6 yards)
Tattooing Tools

Loot
None

Legend Points
180 Legend Points

Event Three

Once the characters figure out a way past the guards and overseers to reach the Liferock, they can attempt to use Omasu's song to call forth the sleeping obsidimen and communicate with them. When the characters do so, the faces of two obsidimen emerge slowly from the Liferock.

The rockmen are weary and worn from the torture their Liferock is undergoing, and their dreaming has been disturbed and painful. However, the obsidimen are able to tell the adepts that Theran magicians are tapping into the elemental power of the Liferock to power the fortress city's magical defenses and traps. They also tell the characters that the invaders have removed the True air from the behemoth and replaced it with True earth in an effort to root the citadel to the hill and increase its size and fortifications.

Climax

Once the characters have learned what they can from the obsidimen, they still have to engineer their escape. Nearly any escape plan will be dangerous and virtually impossible to accomplish without attracting the attention of the Theran slavers. The characters might be able to foment a slave uprising to serve as a distraction, but many of the slaves will die in the process and the characters will still have to slip past the Theran guards and soldiers.

Efforts to stir up a rebellion in the slave pits may also draw the attention of the Passion Lochost, who may choose to aid the adepts in the effort (granting them the Inspire Rebellion ability or adding steps to their Charisma Tests, for example). Lochost may even appear as a child wearing broken chains to aid and encourage the characters. Lochost's intervention, in turn, may draw the attention of Dis, who may act through the Theran slave master Mabon Ardos. The interventions of the two Passions may result in a conflict between them that will be talked about for some time to come.

Additionally, the characters might be able to seize one of the Theran vedettes and escape from Triumph by air, resulting in a chase and aerial battle as they flee from the fortress. In any case, an open rebellion and escape should touch off major battles within Triumph and possibly provide the opportunity for the player characters to confront one or more of the major Theran characters in the fortress.

Sequels

Successfully completing their mission can earn the adepts Omasu's gratitude and further work for the Liferock Rebellion. Characters might become involved in helping guide rescued slaves to safe havens around Barsaive where they can further aid the Rebellion. The capture of an intact Theran stone airship will undoubtedly interest Throalic leaders, who would want the ship so their Elementalists could examine its construction and design. Other potential sequel developments include avenging or rescuing befriended slaves who remain in Theran bondage or fulfilling the last requests of characters who die during the breakout attempt.

The characters' actions may earn them favor from Lochost (leading a slave rebellion constitutes a Zealous Act of Devotion to Lochost—see p. 470 of the **Player's Compendium**). They may also draw the attention of prominent Liberators seeking allies in their cause against the Therans. Of course, their actions may anger Dis, who might attempt to thwart the characters at some future date.

Gone Fishing

Throal and House V'strimon learn that Theran forces at Triumph are attempting to salvage the vedettes that crashed in Lake Ban when the *shivalahala* and her Elementalists disabled them during the first Theran War (see p. 201). The player characters are asked to locate the ships before the Theran forces do so, thus allowing House V'strimon to salvage the airships for the Kingdom of Throal.

Setup

A t'skrang fisherman comes to the Shivalahala V'strimon after witnessing a late-night foray by Theran forces on Lake Ban. He says that the Therans appeared to be dredging the lake bottom. Realizing that the Therans are attempting to locate the vedettes, the *shivalahala* asks the characters to accompany the fisherman out on his boat the next night to examine the spot where the fisherman saw the Therans. She also provides the characters with their choice of magical potions or swimming charms (see p. 290 of the **New Goods and Services** chapter), which will enable them to breathe underwater for several hours.

Event One

A sliver of moon illuminates the calm and quiet surface of the lake as a humble t'skrang fisherman appears at the dock. The characters climb aboard his boat, the *Net of Reeds*, and the group makes its way to the spot where the Therans were seen. As they float across the surface of the lake, the fisherman gives one of the adepts a reed bracelet of the style worn by the t'skrang of House V'strimon and tells the adepts it can bring them luck if tossed into the lake. The characters down their potions or activate their charms and dive into the dark waters.

Deep beneath the surface of the lake they see the dark hulk of one of the Theran airships, entangled in a mass of reeds. Light crystals carried by the characters cast a watery glow over the hull of the ship and illuminate the bones of the Theran sailors and slaves trapped aboard.

Unfortunately for the characters, the hull of the ship is lying in a large bed of tentacular kelp (see p. 286 of the **New Creatures** chapter). The kelp resembles normal kelp, but it is covered with tiny suction cups on one side. When touched, the suction cups seize a target and inject a paralyzing venom.

Event Two

After examining the ship, the characters make their way back to the surface. There, they discover a Theran vedette hovering overhead. The fishing boat is nowhere in sight. The Therans lower ropes to the characters and demand they climb aboard. If the characters attempt to escape, the Therans send a water elemental to capture the characters and bring them aboard the ship.

Once aboard the vedette, Drak Windsearcher, who is personally commanding the expedition, interrogates the characters. He asks them what they saw on the lake bottom. With or without the player characters' aid, the Therans quickly locate the downed ship. The Elementalist aboard Windsearcher's vedette uses magic to raise the ship to the surface of the lake, though it remains unable to fly.

Water Elemental (Strength 4)

DEX: 7 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 10
Damage:
Unarmed: 4

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 28 (56)
Wound Threshold: 7
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown Step: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 19 (39)

Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Karma Points: 8
Karma Step: 7

Powers:
Aid Summoner (4)
Detect True Element (4)
Engulf (4): 9
Manifest (4)
Search [T] (4): 9
Spear (4): 8
Astral Sight [T] (4): 9
Durability (4): 4
Find (4): 9
Manipulate Element (4): 9
Share Knowledge (4)
Spellcasting (4): 9

Legend Points: 365

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

The spirit's Physical Defense is used in astral space as well as when physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the water spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Water elementals can only manifest from a source of water. The size of the water source has no bearing on the Strength Rating of the water elemental that may manifest from it. Even a drop of water is sufficient to spawn the mightiest of water spirits.

Vulnerability to Air: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a water spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with an air-based weapon or spell.

Climax

From out of nowhere, the *Net of Reeds* appears and collides with the low-flying Theran vedette. The crash sends crew members falling to the deck and gives the characters an opportunity to escape. The t'skrang fishing boat looks too badly damaged to outrun Windsearcher's ship, but the characters can try to get away on the newly raised vedette. They can use the Air Sailing or Pilot Boat talents (or Willpower in the absence of either talent) to pilot the salvaged vedette along the lake's surface. Meanwhile, the Therans quickly regroup and pursue the characters, attempting to capture them before they can reach safety behind the *refs* of the Floating City. This pursuit can lead to a running battle between the two ships. Though the vedette has no functional weapons, the characters can use their own spells and talents to repel the Therans.

If the character carrying the fisherman's lucky reed bracelet casts it into the lake, a stand of strong, tough reeds bursts from the surface of the water and entangles the pursuing Theran vedette, buying extra time for the characters to reach the Floating City. Only upon their return to House V'strimon do the characters discover that the real captain of the *Net of Reeds* is still in the city and missed the rendezvous. The characters have, in fact, encountered the spirit of the Old Man of the Nets, who seeks to help his people against the Therans.

If the adepts manage to get the Theran ship to the Floating City, the t'skrang Elementalists are unable to restore its flight capabilities, but they can stabilize it enough to traverse the river safely. The characters are then charged with the task of conveying the ship to the Kingdom of Throal and preventing any Theran attempts to recapture it from them. House V'strimon arranges an escort of two warships for the journey. Because of the vedette's poor condition, the trip takes two days, during which the characters face a number of challenges from the Therans as they attempt to prevent the ship from falling into Throalic hands. (General Nikar sends the Elite, p. 239, to lead the Theran effort.)

The characters may also encounter the Old Man of the Nets in a different guise when the wily spirit requires their help again.

Spies Up a Creek

A member of the Syrtisian spy network enlists the characters to deliver a message to an agent in Axalekso. They are caught and mysteriously carried aboard an Ishkaratan warship. Their contact has followed them, however, and ends up with them on a mission sneaking up the Mothingale River to sabotage relations between the Syrtisians and the Elven Court.

Setup

An important message is to be delivered to an elven woman Named Talara, who is a key contact on Ishkaratan territory for the Syrtisian spy network. She is, in actuality, Ar'yana Marrek, an accomplished human Illusionist and daughter of one of the rulers of the City of Marrek. Only the *shivalahala* and the Marrekans know her true identity and

the extent of their recent alliance. Ar'yana is in the midst of uncovering a plot by the Ishkaratans to send a rowboat with crewman posing as Syrtisian spies past Kaer Eidolon and as far up the Mothingale River as possible. The Ishkaratans' hope is that relations with the Elven Court will deteriorate, allowing them to capitalize on the unrest and extend their forces into the Mid Reach. Unfortunately, Ar'yana's cover as Talara has been compromised and the Ishkaratans are watching her, waiting for her next contact with any suspicious visitors.

Event One

An official under the command of Admiral T'kraidos seeks out the characters. He asks them to deliver a message on behalf of House Syrtis to a fair-haired elven woman in the town of Axalekso. He provides the characters with details of the meeting place—an inn called the Swinging Sailor—and her Name: Talara. Obviously, secrecy and discretion are required and the reward will be consummate. The Admiral offers a good sum of silver to the group as upfront payment, with the promise of considerably more should the characters return swiftly with the woman's reply. Should the group travel by river, the characters will find their ship accosted and taxed by an Ishkaratan ship while on their way to Lake Vors. The characters themselves are directly threatened and charged a tax as well-to-do adventurers, and warned that they will be watched in Ishkaratan territory.

Event Two

Once the characters arrive in Axalekso, it becomes apparent that they are being tailed. The group should take the opportunity to explore the town, while trying to avoid their observers. Despite the characters' best efforts, however, Ishkaratan troops burst into their meeting with Talara. Following the resulting tussle, the characters and Talara find themselves bound and gagged, after which they notice one of the troops excuses himself hastily. The prisoners are subsequently escorted to a military post near the docks to be interrogated, and lose track of Talara in transport. As their examiner is preparing to do his worst, an Ishkaratan warship captain enters and has the characters hooded. They are taken below decks on a riverboat and feel it immediately disembark.



Event Three

The captain briefly confronts the characters about the woman and how she might have escaped, but will soon realize they know little of her. The characters are left in the dark, weaponless, and with a few meager rolls and bowls of stale water. Before long another t'skrang enters, seeming to be berating and further questioning them, but drops obvious hints regarding their message to the elven woman in Axalekso. At an inopportune time the captain returns, wondering about the presence of one of his crewman here. Depending on the characters' reactions, they may give away their contact, Talara herself, who is now in the guise of an Ishkaratan boatman.

Ar'yana "Talara" Marrek

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (11): 5/D8
Toughness (15): 6/D10
Perception (17): 7/D12
Willpower (17): 7/D12
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 11
Initiative: 5/D8
Spell Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Social Defense: 10
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 37 (69)*
Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 10
Knockdown: 5/D8**
Unconsciousness Rating: 29 (53)*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.
** Ar'yana knows the Wound Balance talent.

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60
Karma Points: 40
Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents (Knacks)

Astral Sight [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Dead Fall [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Disguise Self [D] (9): 16/D20+D8 (Angelic Appearance)
Durability (4/3) (8): 8
Engaging Banter [D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
Enhanced Matrix (8): 8
False Sight [D] (8): 8
Fast Hand [D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Karma Ritual (8): 8
Read and Write Language (8): 15/D20+D6
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Read and Write Magic [D] (8): 15/D20+D6
Speak Language (8): 15/D20+D6
—Human (Scavian), Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, *Sperethiel*, Theran, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Slough Blame [D] (8): 14/D20+D4
Spellcasting [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Spell Matrix (8): 8
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) [D] (9): 16/D20+D8
True Sight [D] (8): 8
Willforce (8): 15/D20+D6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Versatility (6): 6
Cast Net [V] (5): 11/D10+D8
Melee Weapons [V] (5): 11/D10+D8
Mimic Voice [V] (5): 12/2D10
Pilot Boat [V] (5): 12/2D10
Swimming [V] (5): 10/D10+D6
Wound Balance [V] (5): 10/D10+D6

[V] Indicates a talent learned through Versatility.

Skills

Artisan:
Mapmaking (4): 11/D10+D8
Robe Embroidery (4): 10/D10+D6

Knowledge:
Blood Wood History (4): 11/D10+D8
Marrek Lore (4): 11/D10+D8
T'skrang Politics (4): 11/D10+D8

General:
Navigation (4): 11/D10+D8
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Read River (4): 11/D10+D8
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Streetwise (4): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1; w/Cloaksense Brooch)
Thread Padded Leather Armor (Phys 5; Myst 3)

Broadsword (Damage 10/D10+D6; w/scabbard)
Casting Net (Entangle 10)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)

Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1; Climbing (1): 7/D12)
Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; Charisma-only Tests +1)

Adventurer's Kit
Climbing Kit
Craftsman Tools
Embroidered Robes
Embroidery Tools
Grimoire
Quiet Pouch
Navigation Charts (in map/scroll case)
Painting Tools
Rope (6 yards)
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Spells

Astral Shadow, Bellow of the Thundras, Best Face, Catseyes [M], Conceal Tracks, Displace Image, Enter and Exit, Ephemeral Bolt [M], Form Exchange [E], Improved Alarm, Innocent Activity, Light, Nobody Here, Rope Guide, Silent Stampede, Switch [E], Tailor, True Ephemeral Bolt [M], Unseen Voices, You Got Me [M]

[M] Denotes a spell currently attuned to a Spell Matrix.
[E] Denotes a spell currently attuned to an Enhanced Matrix.

Loot

340 silver pieces

Legend Points

5,155 Legend Points

Notes

Ar'yana possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Fourth Circle: Glamour (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Event Four

The characters are brought up to the deck at twilight and the captain informs them that they have been poisoned with slow-acting venom that will kill them within the week if they do not cooperate. The characters are required simply to row a large rowboat under the direction of three Ishkaratan boatmen for a few days and then the antidote will be provided to them, and they will be free to go their way. The poison will actually give the characters little more than a fever to scare them into obedience. If Talara was revealed she also is sent with the characters as a captive rower, otherwise they notice the t'skrang who berated them is one of the three assigned to direct them. The characters are sent out to the east after being tied to their benches on the boat, and hug the southern bank until they turn and head north up the Mothingale under cover of darkness.

Climax

After a few hard days of rowing and gruff responses from their escorts, the characters reach an obelisk covered with pictographs. Before long, they will be attacked by blood warders with bows from the banks of the river. This attack should precipitate a fight for the characters' freedom with Talara's/Ar'yana's aid. Ar'yana will reveal herself, if unknown, leaving the characters to evade the blood warders and travel to Kaer Eidolon. Subduing the two Ishkaratans is a priority, for all aboard the rowboat think the potions they hold are truly the antidote to the poison. Along the river, the warders continue accosting the characters all the way to Kaer Eidolon, where Ar'yana hopes to convince the Syrtisian authorities of her and the characters' allegiance to House Syrtis, and prevent this Ishkaratan ploy from hurting the alliance with the elves. Latent tensions may yet erupt at Kaer Eidolon itself if the characters do not tread carefully.

Sequels

Through this adventure the characters have gained the attention of Ar'yana Marrek and may be called upon if the Marrek family seeks aid. In addition, depending on the outcome, Admiral T'kraidos may be indebted to the characters and hire them for more work in the future. Lastly, some of the blood elves at Kaer Eidolon could approach the characters and involve them in the elves' illicit trade with the outside world.

New Creatures

Then there was that time we got attacked by blood bats. Pesky things chased us from our camp toward the river. Twenty of them took down Rogaas, but the rest of us made it to the bank of the Serpent just fine. Well, we would *have been fine if we hadn't disturbed that giant crocodile. Just two bites and we lost both Firgin and S'race. I didn't know I could swim so fast!*

• Deen Quaran, Retired Explorer •



The caverns of the dwarf kingdom and the Serpent River are home to a wide variety of unique plant and animal species. This section describes a number of plants and animals commonly encountered in Throal, in the jungles of Barsaive, and along the shores of the Serpent River (many mentioned in earlier chapters of this book), and includes game statistics and other information for these different species.

For explanations of the statistics used in this chapter, see p. 266 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**.

Creature Descriptions

The following creatures inhabit various parts of the Kingdom of Throal, the Serpent River, and surrounding areas. Like several plant species, some of these creatures are treated as poisons or traps for game purposes.

Azontu

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 8 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 11
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack (1): 8 (see text) **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (1): 3 **Mystic Armor**: 1
Spine (4): 6 (see text)

Death Rating: 19 **Recovery Tests**: 1/2 days
Wound Threshold: 3 **Knockdown**: 3
Unconsciousness Rating: 10

Combat Movement: 43 **Full Movement**: 86

Powers: Dead Fall[S] (2): 8, Poison (SD 6; Debilitation)

Legend Points: 85

Equipment: None

Loot: 20–30 spines worth a total of 2–3 silver pieces.

Commentary

The azontu is an excellent example of how the animal life of Barsaive adapted to survive the Scourge. Descended from the common field mouse, the azontu is small enough to fit into the palm of a hand. Holding it would be an uncomfortable experience, however, as the mouse is shrouded in a blanket of spines. These spines each have a wicked barb on the end and detach easily from the animal when tugged sharply. When a larger animal attempts to bite the azontu, it instead gets a mouthful of spines that cannot be removed without either tearing the flesh or using a sharp knife to carefully cut them out.

The azontu likes to forage in dense undergrowth and is often found along the edges of trails through woods and jungles. Mounts or Name-givers stepping too close to the edges of trails put themselves at risk of taking one or more spines in the ankle, should they encounter an azontu. Figuring out what has caused the damage may be difficult, as the mouse usually makes itself scarce after the encounter. Captured azontus will sometimes feign death, however, hoping they will be left alone. Being lamed by a spine will certainly slow down a Name-giver's travels; removing spines is difficult to do without causing further injury, but if they are not removed promptly, infection may set in, resulting in fever, dizziness, nausea, and weakness of the muscles.

The Cathan and other primitive peoples of the jungles and southern plains find the azontu quite useful. Its spines make excellent needles for leatherwork, and can also be used as stitching to hold items together. For the latter use, spines are run through the layers being stitched, then the barbs are clipped off and the ends smeared with glue to hold the spines in place.

Rules

While the azontu can use its teeth to deliver a painful bite, the mouse's spines are both its greatest defense and offense.

Wicked Spines: Anyone who picks up an azontu without wearing adequate hand protection, or a mount or other creature that steps on one, risks getting pierced by Step 4/D6 spines. The gamemaster makes a separate Attack Test for each spine. Unless the victim was aware of the azontu, these attacks are made as if the victim were Blindsided (see p. 407 of the **Player's Compendium**). Taking one or more spines in the leg or foot reduces the victim's Movement rates by 25 percent. Taking one or more spines in the arm or hand causes the character to be Harried when performing any actions using that limb (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). Removing each spine requires a sharp knife and a successful Physician (7) or Dexterity (12) Test. An Average result removes the spine, but causes Step 4/D6 damage to the victim; a Good or better result removes the spine with no additional damage. A Poor result, or simply tearing the spine out, removes it, but inflicts Step 8/2D6 damage to the victim. No armor protects against this damage. Failure to remove a spine within an hour requires the victim to make a Toughness (7) Test to resist a Step 6/D10 debilitation poison, representing the high probability of infection (see p. 122 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

BLOOD BAT

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 3

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 3
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 11

Recovery Tests: 1/2 days
Knockdown: 2

Combat Movement: 18/46[+]
Full Movement: 36/92[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen) (1): 6, Locate Target (1): 6

Legend Points: 35

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

From their perches high in the jungle canopy, Servos blood bats swarm from the trees in a similar manner to their terrifying cousins in the Blood Wood, the blood monkeys. Normally inactive during the day, unless provoked, the bats spend the warmer hours hanging in colonies of up to 100 animals high in the treetops, where they are safe from ground-roaming predators. In the evenings, however, the bats seek prey on which to feed. True to their names, blood bats prefer the warm blood that courses through the veins of others. Normally they derive nourishment from the herbivores that roam the jungle floor—tapirs, boars, and other mammals—but they will also feed on monkeys and even larger animals, like panthers and tigers—even Name-givers.

Blood bats attack their prey with sharp incisors, sucking out blood until they are dislodged or become sated. Unless quickly killed or driven off—blood bats have a fear of fire, and even a torch-wielding Name-giver can keep them at bay for a short time—more bats from the same or other colonies will quickly join in to feed, usually within minutes.

Like normal bats, blood bats are blind and "see" by bouncing high-frequency sounds off objects or prey. This sonar acts as a mundane version of the Locate Target power. Smaller than other types of bats, blood bats lack the Blood Veins power. Instead, they usually lick or sip blood from the cuts they inflict with their sharp little teeth, although every now and then a bat will bite too deep and become attached to its victim.

Rules

Individually, a single blood bat is not a tough opponent to dispatch, especially for an armed Name-giver. Even when blood bats do manage to successfully use their bite attack, the damage they inflict is minor, unless they cause a Wound (see below). However, because they attack in numbers, their opponents are usually quickly Harried (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**), making it easier for the bats to bite them. The collateral effect of blood loss to their victim soon causes unconsciousness—and not long after that, death. A typical bat is no more than a foot long, and up to 18 bats can attack a Name-giver at a time.

Sucking Grip: In their feeding frenzy, some bats will occasionally bite so deep that their fangs get locked into their victim. This happens when a bat inflicts a Wound. The bat's reflex action causes it to suck blood aggressively from its victim as it tries to free itself. This inflicts 2 Damage Points per round to the victim. No armor protects against this damage. Killing the bat loosens the grip sufficiently for it to drop off. Otherwise, the bat will manage to pull itself free in Step 4/D6 rounds.

CRAG

DEX: 4 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 12
PER: 2 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (8): 12

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 2
Social Defense: 2 (see text)

Damage:
Fist (5): 15

Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 62 (74)
Wound Threshold: 21
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (65)

Combat Movement: 18
Full Movement: 36

Powers: Durability (2)

Legend Points: 260

Equipment: None

Loot: Some crags have gold nuggets embedded in their stony bodies, worth D6 × 20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

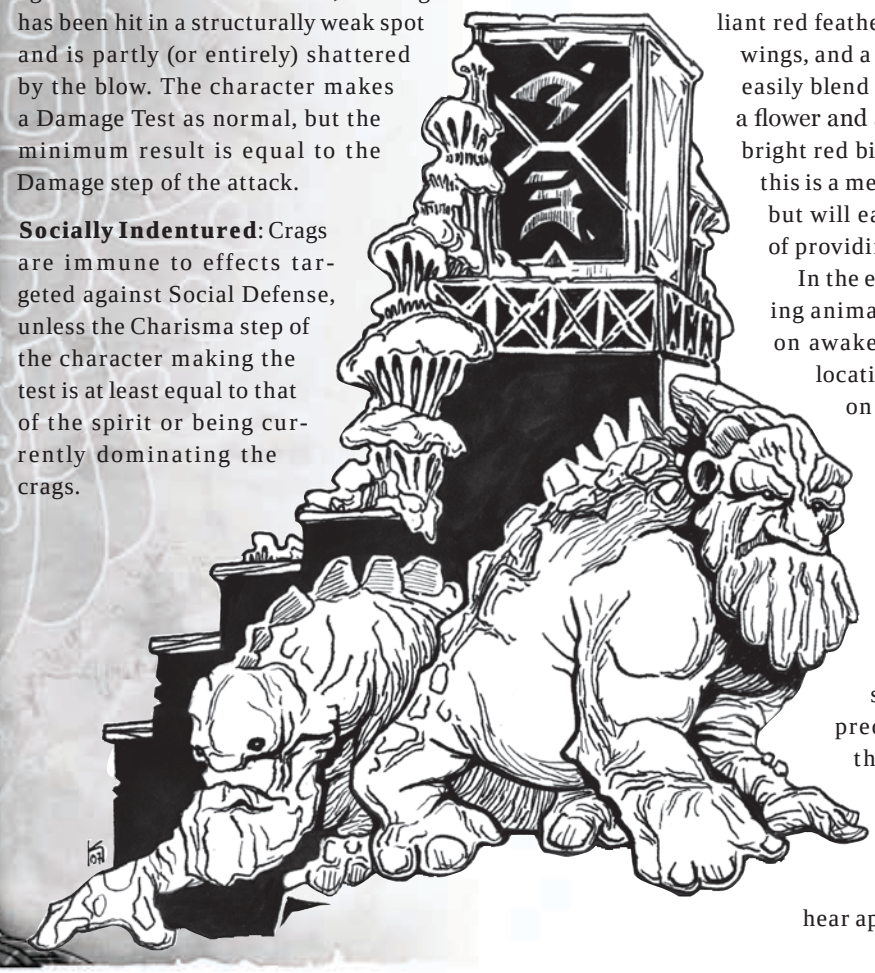
Commentary

Crags are mysterious elemental beings that serve powerful elemental earth spirits. Spirit-like, but not true spirits themselves, they look like misshapen parodies of dwarfs made out of stone. They cannot speak, have little intelligence, and are easily dominated by major elemental beings. Elementalists, obsidimen, and those with an appropriate Knowledge skill have heard of crags. They know that crags are rare and usually appear as thralls of some powerful elemental spirit or force.

Rules

Unlike obsidimen, crags are solid rock instead of rock-like flesh. If a character achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit against one of these creatures, the crag has been hit in a structurally weak spot and is partly (or entirely) shattered by the blow. The character makes a Damage Test as normal, but the minimum result is equal to the Damage step of the attack.

Socially Indentured: Crags are immune to effects targeted against Social Defense, unless the Charisma step of the character making the test is at least equal to that of the spirit or being currently dominating the crags.



DIVA BIRD

DEX: 7
STR: 2
TOU: 3
PER: 6
WIL: 4
CHA: 5

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 4

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 24
Wound Threshold: 5
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Combat Movement: 18/46✦
Full Movement: 36/92✦

✦ The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Booming Screech (10): 12, Camouflage (4): 8

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The bird known as *leavy'g'deeva*, "Large Song of the Morning", is also called the diva bird, after the term applied to large, loud singers in the music halls of Throal. While the name may not fit this bird physically, what the diva bird lacks in stature, it more than makes up with enthusiasm. Growing to only two-thirds of an elven hand span in length, the diva bird is medium brown in color, plumed with brilliant red feathers on its head, leaf green feathers on its wings, and a deep brown tail. When motionless, it can easily blend into nearby vegetation, appearing to be a flower and a cluster of leaves on a short branch. Its bright red bill is long and sharply hooked at the end; this is a meat eater. The diva bird hunts for its meals, but will eat fresh carrion. It has a unique method of providing itself with fresh meat.

In the early morning, the diva bird looks for grazing animals that have wandered off by themselves on awakening. The bird notes the presence and location of any nearby predators, and perches on the side of the herbivore furthest away from the predator. It then makes a booming noise that has been compared to "a troop of crystal raiders pounding their shields and screaming for battle while their galley tumbles down a mountain, breaking all the glassware aboard and enraging the brithan in the cargo hold." The sheer volume of the sound normally stuns the intended victim, and every predator in the Servos seems to recognize the call of the diva bird as an announcement of easy prey. Even if the herbivore is not stunned, and flees the sound, it runs straight into the waiting claws of the predator, who it will usually fail to hear approaching. Thus, for a few minutes' work

spying out the terrain, and just a single cry, the diva bird may eat its fill from the kill of another animal. The effect is temporary under normal conditions; otherwise, every living thing in the Servos would soon go deaf.

Fortunately, these birds lay only one to three eggs in a clutch. Many of the larger animals in the jungle find the diva to be a tasty snack, which further keeps their numbers down.

Rules

The diva bird has a sharp bill, which can deliver a nasty bite. It also possesses the Booming Screech power.

Booming Screech: The diva bird makes a Booming Screech Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each creature within 40 yards. An Average or Good result Stuns the victim for one round (see p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**), and causes temporary deafness for a number of rounds equal to the bird's Booming Screech rank—the victim incurs a -3 penalty to all hearing-based Action Tests. An Excellent result Stuns the victim for two rounds, and deafens him for Booming Screech rank minutes; an Extraordinary result Stuns the victim for three rounds, and deafens him for Booming Screech rank hours. The sound from a diva bird's screech carries clearly up to 200 yards, but can be heard by creatures as far as 400 yards away.

GELTECKIN

DEX: 7 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 5
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Bite (6): 9
2 × Tentacles (3): 6

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 3
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 30/36[+]
Full Movement: 60/72[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Camouflage (4): 9, Poison (SD 7; Paralysis), Silent Walk[S] (3): 10

Legend Points: 150

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Inhabiting the jungles of southern Barsaive and the Mist Swamps, the gelteckin is a terrible hazard to travelers. It poses less of a threat to the natives of these areas. Resembling a jellyfish, the gelteckin's body is round, and built much like a sack turned upside down, with dozens of threadlike tentacles dangling from the lower edge all around.



In the center of the underside is a beak resembling that of a parrot. Colored a pale green, with brown streaks and dark green patches, the gelteckin blends in well among the foliage of the trees where it floats quietly, waiting for prey.

The creature produces a lighter-than-air gas within its body, which it secretes into several bladders. This gas holds the gelteckin aloft where it drifts like a cloud, at the mercy of the winds, although it can use its tentacles to clutch at nearby branches and tree trunks, pulling itself deftly around the jungle foliage. If enough bladders are punctured, the creature cannot remain in the air and will collapse to the ground. A grounded gelteckin is far from harmless, however. It can still move around the ground on its tentacles when downed. Also, care should be taken in piercing the bladders, as the gas is highly flammable. Elementalists would no doubt have a use for something which catches alight so

readily, but other Name-givers should be wary of the beast's explosive nature.

Because of the creature's mode of flight, it has a terrific fear of open flames. As such, it will not approach a village with cooking fires lit, or a campsite with a fire going. Cathan hunting parties carry unlit torches magically prepared to blaze up at a spoken command to ward off the creatures. The slightest flicker of fire appears to be enough to ward off the creature, although with its coloration and absolute quiet when moving, its approach is hard to detect.

Rules

Glands along the edge of the beast secrete a virulent toxin that trickles down the gelteckin's tentacles and paralyzes the beast's prey. Additionally, the tentacles deliver a stinging electrical jolt of obviously magical origin on contact. Once the prey is paralyzed into immobility, the gelteckin vents enough levitating gas to descend onto the helpless victim and feed.

Each Wound done to a gelteckin punctures a bladder, which leaks gas into the immediate vicinity. Any open flame source or spark will set fire to the gas, causing the gelteckin to explode like a fireball, doing Step 13/D12+D10 damage to everything in a 3-yard radius. Physical Armor protects against this damage. After three Wounds, the gelteckin no longer has enough intact bladders to remain aloft, and sinks or drops to the ground at a rate of 1 yard per round.

Giant Cave Cricket

DEX: 11 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 4 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 10 (13) **Physical Defense**: 14
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 5
Attack (2): 13 **Social Defense**: 5
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 6
Bite (2): 7 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 32 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 86 **Full Movement**: 172

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6, Surprise Attack (3)

Legend Points: 105

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These insects are the size of large dogs, stone gray with pure white eyes. Totally blind, they rely on sound and scent to locate their prey, and chitter constantly during combat. Light-based attacks will not affect them. Savagely hungry, they will fight to the death in hopes of a meal.

Giant Crocodile

DEX: 7 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 12
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7 (9; see text) **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (6): 13 **Social Defense**: 9
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 9
Bite (6): 19 **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 62 (98) **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: 18 **Knockdown**: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (85)

Combat Movement: 43/36[+]
Full Movement: 86/72[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (6), Surprise Attack (2), Swimming[S] (2): 15

Legend Points: 300

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The alligators of the Servos are large, aggressive predators, challenged by few creatures. The giant crocodile not only challenges alligators, it regularly preys on them, although it prefers other meat, such as the flesh of the hadrosaurs that frequent the jungle's waterways. Approximately 14 to 15 feet in length, with a thick, scaly hide, and rows of sharp teeth set firmly in its blunt-nosed face, the giant crocodile is feared by almost every creature in the Servos. Like alligators, giant crocodiles lie submerged and barely visible in the water. Willful and cunning reptiles, giant crocodiles are afraid of nothing, and will attack any creature that comes within reach.

The statistics above are for an "average" 15-foot-long crocodile. Many have been known to grow as long as 50 feet in length (the gamemaster is encouraged to modify these statistics for a nastier encounter, using the guidelines presented in the **Creatures** chapter on p. 272 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Rules

Sight-based Perception Tests made to detect a partially submerged crocodile require a Good result. Even if detected, a giant crocodile's initial attack is extremely sudden; the crocodile gains a +2 bonus to its first Initiative Test. The crocodile's favored attack strategy is to capture prey using a Bite and Hold attack (p. 416, **Player's Compendium**) against a (usually) Surprised victim, dragging it underwater to drown.

Aquatic: Crocodiles require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result. A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to its Toughness step before drowning.

HADROSAUR

DEX: 6 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 13
PER: 4 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (5): 20

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 9

Death Rating: 64 (94)
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 57 (82)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 19

Combat Movement: 22/38[+]
Full Movement: 44/76[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (2): 6 (Listen, Smell), Swimming[S] (5): 20

Legend Points: 360

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The banks of the Servos' many rivers house colonies of duck-billed hadrosaurs, 15 to 20 feet tall, which graze among the trees that hang over the water. Hadrosaurs graze in packs of three to five animals. A hadrosaur's long neck allows it to reach plants up to 10 feet in height or distance away from the river. The reptile's mouth features front teeth that are made for clipping leaves and twigs, and back teeth that are used for chewing and grinding food. These are ideal for first procuring food and then, after fleeing the largest river predators, including the giant Servos crocodiles, chewing food later in safety. The large hadrosaur is surprisingly agile in the water, using its webbed duck-like feet to run in the shallows and swim in the deeper sections of the river. Its large reptilian body mass contributes to its buoyancy in the water.

Usually gentle, hadrosaurs will react angrily if attacked, reaching their long necks out and biting their attackers or fleeing if they cannot reach or if their attackers are larger than them. The hadrosaur is highly sought by river Cavalrymen due to its maneuverability in the water and great strength.

Rules

The hadrosaur is a strange creature that is difficult to train due to its bizarre mix of bird-like and reptilian traits and unusual morphology. Any characters using talents or abilities to train a hadrosaur must achieve one result level higher than normal. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a hadrosaur, however, requires a Good result.

HUNGERFISH

Traveling in schools of 100 or more, the creatures known as hungerfish are a well-known danger in t'skrang kitchens. On the outside, hungerfish resemble plain silver fish with small fins. On the inside, they have no organs. Harmless enough to swimmers and fishermen, hungerfish are only a threat to those who eat them. Within an hour of eating a hungerfish, a victim's appetite comes back. He will then start eating as much as he can, whenever he can. In advanced stages of this unnatural hunger, a victim may turn to cannibalism to satisfy his appetite or, in the absence of normal food, may eat leaves, grass, or even dirt. The effect lasts approximately one day per fish consumed. Once a victim recovers, he can return to his daily routine none the worse for the experience (provided, of course, that he did not consume a neighbor or a loved one in the meantime).

According to rumors, certain *trisnari*, or restaurants, along the river add minuscule portions of hungerfish to their entrees to inspire their customers to eat more (and thus pay more) than they otherwise might.

HUNGERFISH POISON

Type: Special
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: 1 day

Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 8

Make an Effect Test once per day for each fish a character has eaten. The test result represents the degree of gluttony and bloating the effect creates in the character.

JACOTI

STANDARD JACOTI

DEX: 7 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 15
PER: 5 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Bite (2): 16
Tail (4): 18
Charge (6): 20

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 74 (80)
Wound Threshold: 21
Unconsciousness Rating: 67 (72)

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 49 **Full Movement**: 98

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7

Legend Points: 475

Equipment: None

Loot: None

ALBINO JACOTI

DEX: 8 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 13
PER: 7 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (6): 14
Damage:
Bite (2): 14
Tail (4): 16
Charge (6): 18

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 64 (70)
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 57 (62)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 55
Full Movement: 110

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 9, Spellcasting (5): 12, Thread Weaving (Elementalism) T (5): 12, Zap (2): 12

Spells: Fog Cloud (Smoke Cloud), Uneven Ground

Legend Points: 570

Equipment: None

Loot: Three horns, worth 100 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Standing seven feet tall at the shoulder and weighing over 2,000 pounds, an adult jacoti is a force to be wary of. Its deep green hide is rough in texture, and thickens into armor-like plates over most of its vulnerable areas. Its neck is protected by a bony plate that sweeps up and back from the head. At the end of its massive, reptilian tail is a large bony knob that strikes with all the impact of a mace. Projecting from the top of its snout and from over each eye are horns, not compressed hair like the horn of a rhinoceros, but true horns, with needle-sharp points.

The jacoti's teeth consist primarily of molars, for grinding its leafy diet, and shovel-shaped incisors, which are best suited to separating plants from their roots. While not suited to the tearing of flesh like the teeth of carnivores, the jacoti can still deliver a fearsome bite to anyone who approaches too closely.

Jacoti enter their mating season approximately every six months. During this time, the females are anxious to produce offspring, but will not accept any male that they have not seen prove himself in combat. Thus, for two weeks out of every six months, every male jacoti of breeding age is spoiling for a fight, preferably in front of a female. Travelers would do well to learn to tell the gender of a jacoti from a distance, and to avoid the vicinity of the females no matter how arduous the alternate route.

In combat, the jacoti attacks by charging with head lowered, aiming its horns at the widest part of its target. Once it has closed, it will rake with its horns and use its tail club to tear and pound its enemy into submission. Jacoti are fierce and stubborn, and will not give up a fight unless mortally wounded. Even then, they do not flee abjectly, but make a fighting withdrawal, continuing to threaten their foes until no longer in range.

Females will normally bear a single young. Twin births are highly uncommon, and multiple births have never been observed. Birth weight averages 200 pounds. The young are able to defend themselves within a day or so of birth; the mother will stay with her young until they achieve half their adult growth, usually a period of 10 to 12 months. Females do not enter the mating cycle again for two years after giving birth.

Jacoti bulls are highly territorial. They each stake out an area a half-day's walk in all directions, and do not tolerate other bulls in their domains. They tend to react to thundra beasts as they would to other jacoti, dominating the females with ritual aggressive behavior and attacking the males. The only time bulls are normally found within each other's territory is during the mating season. Young bulls must carve out their own territories in a series of fights, or wander far afield from their birth areas to find unclaimed land. Older bulls have been known to attack anything approaching their size, becoming more defensive of their domains as they age.

One out of every 100 jacoti is born an albino. These white jacoti are smaller and less physically powerful, but are blessed by Jaspree with powerful magic to make up for their size and coloration. Albino jacoti have been observed causing minor earth tremors by pawing the ground and enshrouding themselves with mist and fog to render combat a chancy business. As well, the horns over the eyes store magical energies. If an albino strikes with both of these horns, the energies are discharged into the target, causing grievous wounds. Magicians prize these horns and pay a high price for them. So, too, do the hunters, often paying the final price once they locate an albino jacoti and try to relieve it of its horns.

While there may be predators in the Servos Jungle, both four- and two-footed, that represent a grave danger to travelers, the charge of the jacoti remains the most fearsome onslaught likely to be faced in this part of Barsaive.

Rules

The albino jacoti can store magical energies in their two eye-horns that can be discharged into those struck by their Charge attack.

Zap: A target struck by the Charge attack of an albino jacoti may also be subjected to a discharge from one of its two eye-horns. The albino jacoti makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is zapped by an electrical discharge from the horn; the jacoti makes a Zap Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metallic Physical Armor protects against this damage. The albino jacoti can only use Zap twice: once for each eye-horn. The jacoti can recharge one horn per hour by resting and sacrificing a Recovery Test, but only if the creature has no Current Damage or Wounds.

JIDWAR

DEX: 8
STR: 2
TOU: 2
PER: 4
WIL: 6
CHA: 2

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 11

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 3

Damage:
Bite (7): 9

Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 32✦
Full Movement: 64✦

✦ This is the creature's swimming and wet ground Movement rate.

Legend Points: 150

Equipment: None

Loot: None, although the remains of their victims, found at the bottom of their pools, may have some items of worth.

Commentary

The jidwar is a small beetle, approximately the length of a finger, with a dark brown shell. Instead of legs, the jidwar is equipped with flippers like an aquatic turtle, giving it great mobility in water and a passable rate of progress across mud or marshy ground. Its mandibles are large, extending nearly a third of its body length, and razor sharp.

Making its home in the swamps and marshes of southern Barsaive, the jidwar feeds on anything that happens its way. If there were only one in a given pool, perhaps its voracious eating habits would not be such a problem, but jidwars are encountered in swarms of 30 to 100 insects. They attack by swarming, reacting instantly to any disturbance in the water. A horse putting a foot down wrong and getting its hoof mired in the bottom muck can have its leg stripped to bone before the rider can dismount and free the animal.

Fortunately, while the jidwar is prolific, it has great difficulty traversing land and, despite its aquatic nature, remains an air breather. The combination of the two restricts jidwars to connecting bodies of water, and renders them vulnerable to oil poured carefully across their habitat. It is not necessary to set the oil aflame, only to wait for a short while, as the oil prevents the insects from breathing. They drown quickly, and the area may then be crossed in relative safety. As well, if no food wanders into the jidwars' pool for a time, they will turn on each other, keeping their numbers down. The simple expedient of tossing a small bit of wood into suspicious waters will reveal the insects, as they mistake the wood for something edible, and will churn the water to foam around the twig for a few seconds before realizing that it is not food.

Rules

The game statistics above represent a swarm of 30 or so jidwars. The gamemaster should adjust these statistics for larger swarms.

Adventure Hook

The group is hired to retrieve the cargo of an airship that went down in the swamps. The crash of the ship stirred up the local life forms, especially the jidwars. The abrupt arrival of so much food (in the form of the crew, all killed in the crash) has resulted in a population explosion, and swarms of jidwars have taken up residence in the waters surrounding the wreck. The merchant hiring the characters has put a deadline on the cargo retrieval, as his market will not wait forever. The airship is wooden, and thus flammable, so speeding up the common method of dealing with jidwars by setting oil on fire will not have desirable results. Waiting for the jidwars to turn on each other is also not an option, as that will take too long.

KYGREN

DEX: 4
STR: 5
TOU: 6
PER: 4
WIL: 6
CHA: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 9
Damage:
Beak (3): 8

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Combat Movement: 6/28✦
Full Movement: 12/56✦

✦ The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The kygren is one of the largest of the fish-eating birds that inhabit the banks of the Serpent River. Its brilliant white plumage is set off by black feathers at the tips of its wings and black edging on its tail. Unfortunately, as far as appearance goes, its plumage is its best asset. The kygren's head is narrow, coming nearly to a point at the apex, and its beak is enormously long. The lower beak is but a frame for a pouch of skin that can distend to hold many small fish or one very large one.

As a flier, the bird is at best passable. It frequently misjudges distances from its wingtips to the water or other obstructions, such as boats or other kygren, and the resulting collisions can be quite spectacular. On occasion, a kygren will become so intent on tracking the fish it sees just under the surface that it will fail to notice what is in its path until far too late. Kygren have been known to break windows and ports, punch holes in sails, entangle themselves severely in rigging, and knock sailors overboard.

On land or in the water, the birds are no more dexterous than in the air. Bad landings with much tumbling and shedding of feathers are the rule rather than the exception. Taking off requires a short run. On land, this is simple enough, needing only a stretch of ground a few paces long with no obstructions—trees, shrubs, rocks, other kygren. On water, this results in a comical display as a kygren tries to pick up enough speed to rise out of the water, and then maintain its balance running across the top of the water until it reaches sufficient speed to become airborne. On occasion, the kygren will strike a wavelet or dip a wingtip into the water, lose its balance and tumble beak over tail-feathers.

Such an inept bird would normally not survive well, but

given the vast amount of fish in the Serpent, finding food is not difficult. The kygren's size leaves it few natural enemies, its primary predators being the ufghant and a few species of lizard that find its eggs a tasty meal. Kygren mate only for the season, but only with birds of their own generation, never with those of previous or later years. How they tell the age of prospective mates is unknown. Both birds will attack viciously to defend the nest.

Rules

In a fight, the kygren will stab with its beak if on land or water, rising up on its legs with much flapping of wings to balance itself before the strike. If airborne, the kygren prefers a Swooping attack (see p. 418 of the **Player's Compendium**) with a strike from its beak.

KYRELL

DEX: 3 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 4
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 3 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (10): 13 **Social Defense**: 9
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (3): 6 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 28 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Combat Movement: 8 **Full Movement**: 16

Powers: Camouflage (2): 6, Climbing[S] (2): 5, Poison (SD 13; Death), Silent Walk[S] (2): 5

Legend Points: 130

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The kyrell is one of the deadliest serpents in the Servos jungle. Its poison can kill a troll in seconds, and its appearance is deceptively innocuous. Attaining a maximum size of two feet in length and a girth no greater than a human's last finger, its smallness leads Name-givers to underestimate its lethality. The distinctive pattern of red and yellow bands on a black background make the kyrell stand out in grasses or under rocks, but among the flowering plants of the Servos it is easy to miss. Like all snakes, the kyrell is fond of dark, damp places. It reproduces by laying eggs, and the female broods on the nest until hatching, striking instantly at anything coming within reach. Baby kyrells are hatched with full venom sacs, and can slay a human newborn from the egg. Travelers in the region of the Servos should take note of the native habits of turning over rocks and breaking up brush-piles from a distance, usually with a long stick, and of shaking out clothing and boots in the morning before putting them on. Picking up these habits could save a life.

Rules

The kyrell can only use its Camouflage power near flowering plants of a similar color.

PENCARRIG

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 8
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 9
Attack (2): 8 **Social Defense**: 5
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (4): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 4

Death Rating: 32 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 22/38[+]
Full Movement: 44/76[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 8, Entrancement (10): 14

Legend Points:

Equipment: None

Loot: Tail feathers, worth D6 × 10 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).



Commentary

Before the Scourge, the marshes on the northwest fringe of the Mist Swamps were inhabited by a variety of water birds, including the pencarrig. Its long legs and widely splayed feet gave it excellent mobility in the uncertain ground, while its binocular eyesight and long, sharply pointed bill made it an effective predator. Its primary diet consisted of frogs, fish, and the occasional lizard. It had the notable habit of spearing its victims with its bill, then tossing its prey into the air and catching the falling meal in its open beak.

Now, after the Scourge, the bird and the marsh are still present, but neither is the same. The Mist Swamps are inhabited by fell creatures warped by the passing of the Scourge, the very ground rendered unhealthy. The pencarrig likewise has been tainted by the Horrors, quite possibly deliberately. While the bird's anatomy remains more or less the same, its plumage, formerly a brilliant white tinged with blue at the edges of wings and tail, is now a dusky gray, the highlights turned the reddish-brown of dried blood.

Its feeding habits, also, have changed. While the pencarrig still hunts amphibians and fish, and still maintains the odd habit of tossing its meals into the air, it hunts larger game now. When Name-givers are passing nearby, the bird hides itself in the dense marsh grass and makes a sound like an anguished moan. This sound plucks at the heartstrings of anyone with even a thought for their fellow Name-givers, urging them to find the injured person and assist them. The bird uses the moaning to lure people into marshy ground, where they become trapped. The pencarrig then feeds on the body after the Name-givers die. Occasionally, the bird will attack trapped animals and smaller Name-givers, striking for the eyes and throat, doing horrific damage with a beak capable of stabbing through a frog in one stroke.

Only those of strong will, or carrying magical protections, can resist the moaning cry of the pencarrig. There are tales of the birds cooperating, working together to lure in groups of people to a watery grave. Fortunately, the bird does not migrate, and so is not found outside the southern swamps.

Rules

The pencarrig has special Entrancement rules (see p. 275 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), as follows.

Entrancement: Name-givers who fail a Willpower Test against the pencarrig's Entrancement Test result, must follow the sound it makes. The bird will lead anyone following it into the swamps, hoping to get them mired. A character following the bird may make a Willpower Test against the Entrancement result each round to break the enchantment. He may also make a Perception (6) Test each round to avoid getting mired. If this test fails, the character steps in the wrong place and becomes mired. Characters mired in swamp are Harried (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**), and may not use any talent or maneuver that requires leg movement, such as Air Dance or the Giving Ground combat option (see p. 405 of the **Player's Compendium**). The pencarrig may attack at that point, striking first to blind, then to kill. Escaping the mire requires a successful Dexterity or Strength (13) Test, adjusted by the Initiative Penalty of any armor that the character is wearing.

Adventure Hook

Evidence is brought to light that a Major pattern item for a Horror was lost in the Mist Swamps shortly after the Scourge. The Horror is still at large. The route to the last known location of the item leads past a pencarrig nesting ground. Getting past the birds will be difficult, especially if the group has not heard of the birds. The moaning cries could easily be mistaken for cries for help from a previous expedition that the adventurers were told of—an expedition that never returned.

RIVERSTALKER

DEX: 8 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 5
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 8 (10)
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (3): 11
2 × Claws (1): 9

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 34 (40)
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (31)

Combat Movement: 55
Full Movement: 110

Powers: Durability (1), Surprise Attack (2), Swimming^{S} (2): 10

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: Two sets of gills, worth 25-100 silver pieces per set (see text; counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

A riverstalker is a cat-like creature, looking similar in shape to a panther, jaguar, or other large hunting cat, but with a mostly hairless body, rudimentary gills on the sides of the neck, and noticeably webbed feet. Riverstalkers are covered in a grayish-black skin, which lightens significantly in color when submerged. Although newborn cubs are born with fur over their entire bodies, resembling any other large kitten, tufted ears and tail, and sometimes shaggy fur around the forelegs are the only vestiges of fur remaining on an adult riverstalker's body.

Typically collecting trinkets to decorate its underwater nest, a riverstalker usually attacks only for food, defense, or if it spots something particularly shiny or colorful. Riverstalkers typically hunt in packs—called "prowls"—of two to six animals, and prefer to attack by surprise, stalking their prey beneath the river's surface before leaping out to make the kill. Dawn and dusk are the times that riverstalkers favor for hunting, with daylight hours used primarily for sleep.

A riverstalker has two sets of gills that are prized as

elements in magic and research related to underwater breathing. Removing the gills requires a successful Dexterity (10) or an appropriate Artisan Skill (6) Test. Depending on their condition, the gills can be sold for 25-100 silver pieces per set (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Rules

When attacking from underwater, a riverstalker gains a bonus of +2 to Initiative Tests. This ability can only be used when attacking from surprise. In any combat round, a riverstalker may attack using both of its front paws, raking its claws across its target (see p. 417 of the **Player's Compendium**), or make a single bite attack (see p. 416 of the **Player's Compendium**). After a successful bite attack, often a riverstalker will keep hold of its target and attempt to drag the victim underwater.

Spoogra

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 12 **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 5
Attack (2): 10 **Social Defense**: 10
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (1): 4 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 23 **Recovery Tests**: 1
Wound Threshold: 5 **Knockdown**: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Combat Movement: 52 **Full Movement**: 104

Powers: Climbing^{S} (2): 10, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The Servos Jungle is home to a wider variety of small lizards than are found anywhere else in the province. The heat and humidity, together with the vast population of insects, have encouraged a burgeoning of the form and diversification into the hundreds. While this plentitude can keep a naturalist contentedly busy for months, perhaps even years, to the common Name-giver it is no more than an annoyance. Possibly the most annoying in everyday life of all these lizards is the spoogra.

Tiny and bright orange, never growing to over three inches in length, spoogras infest every area where Name-givers live in or near the Servos. They have a love of salt, which leads them into many places where they are not wanted. Food must be locked up in stout wooden or metal boxes, especially travel rations, which are normally dried and salted. The pests will chew on anything salt-bearing, which puts armor straps, shoes, and dirty laundry in peril, as well as saddles and tack, documents written in saline ink, and even containers that might have something salty in them. The little beasts will chew their way into a bag on the off chance that it contains something tasty.



Dealing directly with spoogras is not terribly difficult: just toss them out of the way. Their bite is no more than an annoyance to even the frailest of Name-givers. Killing them is another problem entirely. Spoogras are quick enough that even the deftest Swordmaster will have difficulty striking one. They ignore most poisons, but are partial to cyanide salts for obvious reasons. So far, no one has devised a perfect solution to the problem the spoogras pose. The best offense seems to be a good defense, in this case: lock up everything that the lizards might find attractive, in containers that they cannot easily gnaw their way into, and hope that they do not slip past the barricades.

Certainly, Jaspree knew what he was doing when he created the spoogra. If only he would tell the world his reasons...

Stonecrusher

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 14
PER: 9 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 68
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 61

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 78
Full Movement: 156

Powers: Climbing[S] (3): 13

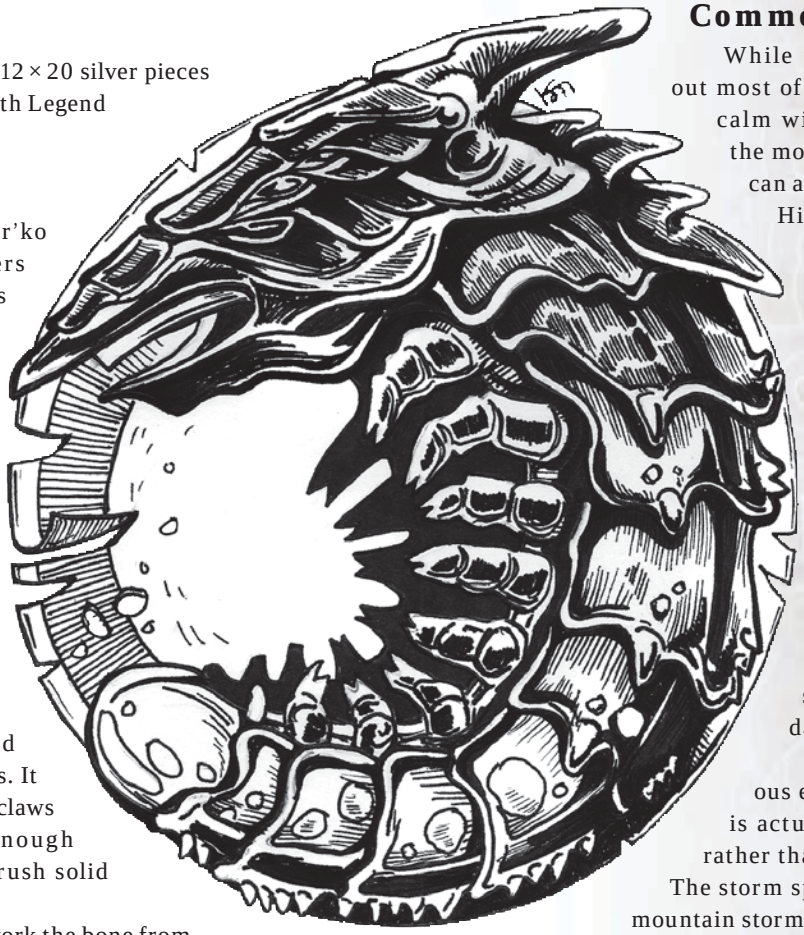
Legend Points: 520

Equipment: None

Loot: Claws worth 2D12 × 20 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The Horror Emr'r'ko created stonecrushers in its own image. As big as a warhorse, the stonecrusher is shaped like a large beetle, with a bony carapace covering its head and back. Rows of short, stout legs run down both sides of its body, giving it excellent balance and making it hard to knock over. Its glowing red eyes are set deep behind protruding bony plates. It has two massive front claws sharp and strong enough to cut through and crush solid rock.



A Bonesmith can work the bone from a stonecrusher carapace into a set of armor (see **New Armor Materials** on p. 288 of the **New Goods and Services** chapter).

STORM SPIRIT

DEX: 14
STR: 12
TOU: 16
PER: 14
WIL: 13
CHA: 17

Initiative: 16
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 22
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 76 (157)
Wound Threshold: 22
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 98[+]
Full Movement: 196[+]

[+] This value is the Horror's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 30
Karma Dice: 12

Powers: Befuddle (7): 20 (see text), Durability (9), Forge Horror Construct (6): 20, Manifest (9), Panic (3): 20 (see text), Spellcasting (3): 17

Spells: Hail 13, Lightning 18

Legend Points: (3): 10,965

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

While the climate throughout most of Barsaive is generally calm with little variance, in the mountains severe storms can and do frequently occur. High winds and driving rain are accompanied by the stabbing forks of lightning and the crash of thunder, often loud enough to set off rockslides on steep slopes. Travel during such climatic outbursts is difficult enough already, but the presence of the entity called the storm spirit can make being out in such weather doubly dangerous.

A terrifically dangerous entity, the storm spirit is actually a type of Horror, rather than an elemental spirit. The storm spirit manifests within mountain storms of already forbidding savagery. Once present, the spirit whips the storm into a frenzy, raising winds that can sweep horses, and even thundra beasts, off their feet. Hail falls like sling bullets, denting metal armor and injuring unprotected flesh. Lightning strikes with uncanny aim.

Therein lies the true danger of the storm spirit. In the midst of all of the storm's fury, a reaction of fear and confusion is to be expected. The storm spirit enhances these feelings, raising fear to stark, unreasoning terror. In the grip of panic, Name-givers and their mounts make serious, often deadly mistakes, plunging to their deaths in crevasses and over cliffs. Powerful magics are needed to protect oneself from a Horror of this type.

Rules

The storm spirit can attack up to three different targets with its 3 actions, with no penalty to its Spellcasting step.

Hail: The storm spirit can strike up to two targets with Hail each round. The storm spirit makes a Spellcasting Test against each target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit makes a Hail Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Lightning: The storm spirit may hit one target with Lightning each round. The storm spirit makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit makes a Lightning Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metallic Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Befuddle: The storm spirit can use its Befuddle power only after a target has been struck by its Hail or Lightning spells. The storm spirit can only make a Befuddle Test versus one target's Spell Defense per action. On an Average result, the target becomes Harried for two rounds. On a Good result or better, the target is Harried (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**) and also becomes confused and unable to take any actions unless it is able to make a successful Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the storm spirit's Befuddle result.

Panic: The storm spirit can use its Panic power only after a target has been struck by its Hail or Lightning spells. The storm spirit can only make a Panic Test versus one target's Spell Defense per action. On an Average result, the target becomes Harried for two rounds (see p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). On a Good result or better, the target is Harried and must flee the area unless it is able to make a successful Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the storm spirit's Panic result. Finding a safe path to flee requires a successful Perception (6) Test.

Forge Horror Construct: A storm spirit can create stormwraiths (see p. 456 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) by corrupting elemental air within a storm. A maximum of three stormwraiths can be created per storm.

TABRI

DEX: 8 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 7
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (1): 8
Talons (4): 11

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7

Legend Points: 90

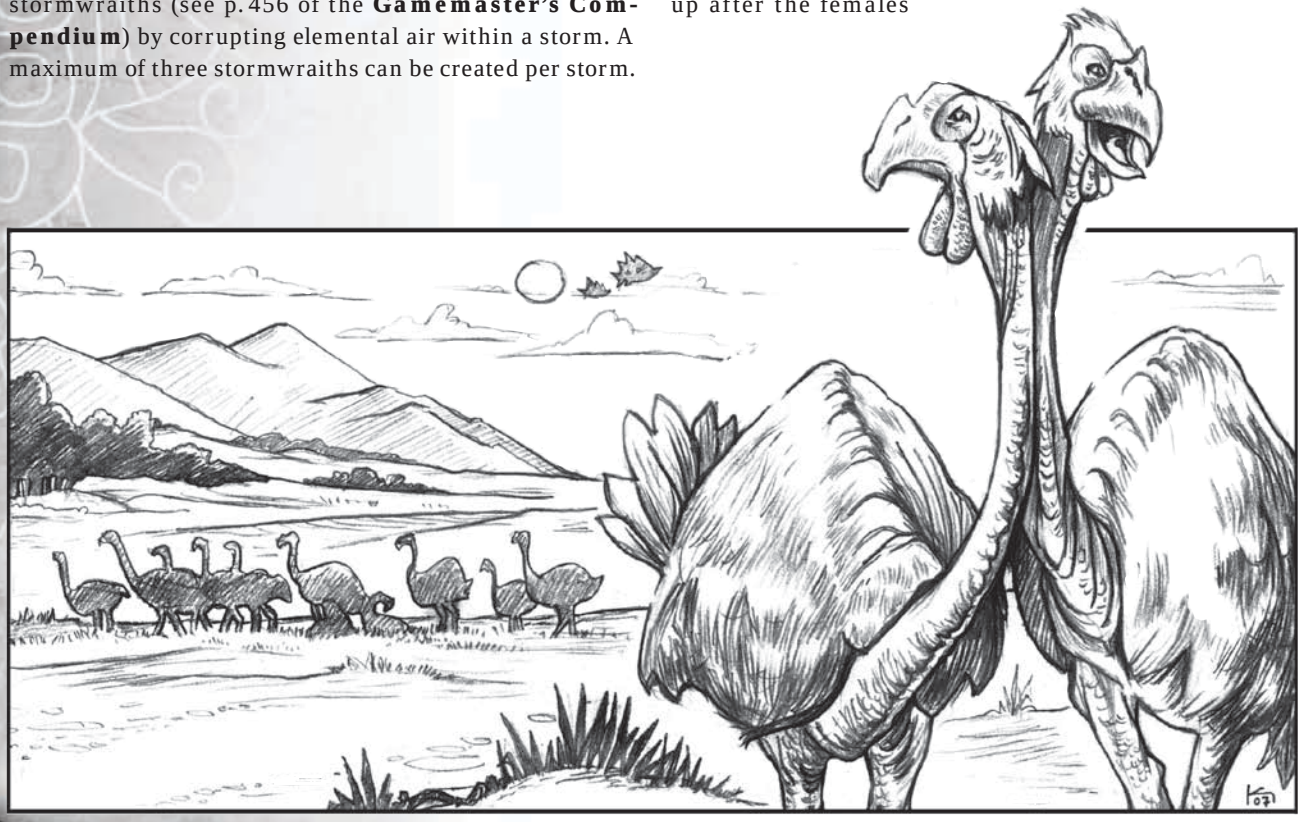
Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The tabri are large flightless birds that travel in flocks or herds, much like the grazing mammals that are also found on the plains. Long of leg and neck, their skin is a medium gray, while their plumage is a medium brown. Males have fan-shaped tails whose feathers are tipped with white, which they display during courtship behavior. The tabri move in small groups led by a dominant male, easily spotted as the largest bird in the flock.

The tabri are polygamous. The males fight viciously during mating season to gain control of coveys of females. New coveys are formed each season, the coveys breaking up after the females



are fertilized. Within a herd, several coveys can coexist, although not peacefully during the rut, as the males will contest with each other to gain control of their rivals' females. Equipped with talons on the middle toe of each foot the size and sharpness of a dagger, the males' courtship fights frequently draw blood and sometimes kill. These same talons can do serious damage to Name-givers and their mounts if battle is joined.

Fortunately, like most herding animals on the plains, flight is the primary mode of defense. Tabri only attack if flight is not an option, as when defending a nest or their young. While their eggs are edible, and reportedly something of a delicacy, obtaining them is a very risky proposition. If an aggressive response is seen, serious consideration should be given to backing away, unless the Name-giver in question is willing to tangle with an animal that kicks with the strength of a horse, is armed with the equivalent of a pair of daggers, and moves quickly and with surprising agility. The nomadic peoples of the plains hunt tabri with spears and bows, only when found in large groups and never during the mating season.

Adventure Hook

A merchant in Throal has found a market for tabri eggs. She provides the group with several cold chests—large boxes with elemental air woven into them, that keep their interiors cold but above freezing—and wants them returned full of eggs. Raiding the nests wholesale will put the group at odds with the Dinganni and other plains nomads, who count on there being a large hatching each year. Taking the eggs will greatly reduce the size of next year's flocks, something the group perhaps might not have considered or thought irrelevant when they accepted the contract.

TIGATHNA

DEX: 7 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7 (9)
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Bite (5): 9

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 43/16[+]
Full Movement: 86/32[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Camouflage (2): 8, Climbing[S] (4): 11, Surprise Attack (2)

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The natives of the Servos refer to this beast as *lektas'tigathna*, literally the "surprising ankle biter". The tigathna reaches a maximum size of three elven hand spans in diameter, and appears to be a harmless ball of fur. However, hidden underneath the fur are six quite powerful, if short, legs, and a mouth nearly half the length of the creature, filled with teeth sharper than a well-forged blade.

Wont to dig a burrow alongside a game run, the tigathna will lie at the top of its burrow and hold itself motionless, its green-tinged brown fur giving it the appearance of a moss-covered stone. When a game animal passes by, the tigathna pops up out of its burrow and clamps its teeth on its victim's leg, usually severing the tendons on the first bite. Thus crippled, the victim has little defense against further slashing attacks, which usually target the throat. Frequently, tigathna will work together in packs of three or four to bring down a large animal, and divide the spoils among themselves. Even predatory animals are vulnerable to the pop-up attack; tigathna rarely check to see what is passing, only noting whether or not it is within striking distance.

Tigathna are mammals, and have litters of two to five kits once per year. They mate only for the season. Males are highly conscious of status within a pack, and frequently quarrel to establish their places. Females do not normally take part in pack status, but there are rare exceptions. Packs tend to be loose in structure, coming together as needed and separating again after a successful hunt. Thus, before a group hunt can be undertaken, the status order of the newly brought-together pack must be established. Listening for the snarling of a tigathna pack can give warning of a group hunt.

At least partly because of tigathna, the natives distrust the game trails, preferring to travel through the upper branches of the trees. When walking on the ground, they poke at anything suspicious with the butts of their spears, constantly looking for unpleasant surprises.

Rules

Once a tigathna has latched onto an opponent, it must make a Willpower Test against its remaining Death Rating to let go before the opponent falls. If the victim falls down, or someone else attacks the tigathna, it may change its attack strategy as it sees fit. Thus, if a tigathna bites your ankle, if you fall down intentionally, it will probably let go. However, its next move is probably to go for your throat...

TONDUY

DEX: 10 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 7 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
Bite (3): 9

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 74 **Full Movement**: 148



Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 12, Great Leap[S] (2): 12, Enhanced Senses (Sight, Smell) (2): 9

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A large animal, approximately the size of a small hunting cat, the tonduy is built lean and long. Its muzzle is roundly pointed like a rodent's, its eyes set forward for binocular vision. Some experimentation has proven that the animal can see colors. A long, bushy tail gives the tonduy excellent balance for scampering along narrow tree limbs or leaping from tree to tree.

The tonduy's forelimbs are highly developed, being smaller than the hind limbs and having grasping paws nearly as dexterous as a Name-giver's hands. Indeed, the animal has proven itself capable of amazing feats of ingenuity. In an environment rich in food sources, the tonduy has become choosy, picking its diet with the manner of a rich merchant browsing the selections his cook has prepared. Tonduys have been known to use sticks to dig termites out of their mounds, stones to crack nuts, and bits of animal bone to dig for roots on their occasional trips to the jungle floor. By no means are the tonduys Name-givers in their own right, but they are quite clever and capable of using primitive tools. Their diet is highly varied. Tonduys will raid on bird nests for eggs and stalk lizards for meat. Nuts, berries, and roots are all included in the tonduys' diet.

Tonduys' smoke-gray fur blends in well with the shadows under the leaves, making them difficult to spot. Like many arboreal rodents, however, they let trespassers know their displeasure with showers of twigs, stones, nut shells, and whatever else comes to paw at the moment. Tonduys tend to live in large groups, being generally unhappy on their own. They can be encountered in the singular, but never far from the main group. Like blood monkeys, they will rush to each other's aid when a distress cry is heard.

Windlings should avoid these creatures at any cost. Tonduys are fascinated with butterflies and other brightly colored fluttering things. They don't eat them, but will play with them, sometimes destructively. A windling coming too close to a tonduy could find himself an involuntary toy, possibly resulting in serious injury.

Tonduys can learn simple behaviors by observation and imitation: drinking from a cup, opening doors, untying knots, etc. Name-givers other than windlings may find their gear in danger when traveling through the Servos. The usual expedient of securing things in a canvas bag tied to a tree with stout rope and complex knots may not protect them from the tonduy, especially if it sees you tie the knots.

Rules

Tonduys can make a Perception Test against the Social Defense of any Name-giver to copy simple behaviors, such as drinking from a cup or opening a simple catch. Once successful in imitation, no roll is required to repeat the behavior.

Turfcutter Beetle

DEX: 9 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9 (17) **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (9): 18 **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 8
Bite (6): 16 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 52 **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 15 **Knockdown**: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 45

Combat Movement: 55 **Full Movement**: 110

Powers: Camouflage (8): 13, Climbing[S] (8): 17, Surprise Attack (8)

Legend Points: 715

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Not all threats are immediately visible. Even out on the southwestern plains, where there is very little cover but long grass and the occasional gentle rise of the land, danger can lie hidden. Such is the turfcutter beetle, a hazard that rarely fails to take its victims by surprise. The adult turfcutter grows to a length equal to that of a large dog. Such a large creature requires a good deal of sustenance. The turfcutter has a means of hunting that is not normally seen in anything this large, likely evidence of interference by a Horror.

The beetle uses its long, curved mandibles to slice a disc out of the sod, cutting through the thick mat of prairie grass roots. It then hollows out a cavity in the soil large enough for it to crouch in, and pulls the sod over itself, creating a trapdoor. When anything large enough to make a mouthful wanders by, the beetle pops up from its hiding place and seizes its prey, usually slicing it into multiple pieces with the first stroke of its scythe-like mandibles. The beetle does not hesitate in attacking very large animals. I have seen a turfcutter lunge from its hollow and neatly remove the leg from a tabri, then slice off the bird's long neck as it fell. Strong bone will stop the beetles' jaws, but a horse attacked will normally be hamstrung, so the fact that the leg is not severed is moot.

Fortunately, the beetles only spawn once a year, in the middle of the rainy season, and only after a series of courtship battles in which the males compete savagely for the few available females. Turfcutter grubs, the size of rats and dark brown with lighter brown banding, make a feast for the region's birds, further reducing the number of young beetles. The odds of encountering a turfcutter beetle are thus very slender, yet still great enough that travel across the plains can become a nervous business.

Adventure Hook

A Horror has been encouraging the breeding of turfcutter beetles, causing severe trouble for the plains nomads. The adventurers are contacted and offered a generous reward, including tribal friendship, if they can eliminate the Horror and reduce the beetles to their normal population. Getting to the Horror will be half the fun, as the beetle population density increases near the Horror's lair. The entrance cavern has been transformed into a beetle hatchery, and is swarming with grubs and adult beetles.

UFGHANT

STANDARD UFGHANT

DEX: 8 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8 (12)
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (5): 13
Damage:
2 × Bite (1): 11

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 14
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 51 (63)
Wound Threshold: 14

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11

Unconsciousness Rating: 44 (54)

Combat Movement: 52[+] **Full Movement**: 104[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (2), Poison (SD 10; Paralyzing), Surprise Attack (4), Spellcasting (5): 10, Swimming[S] (5): 15

Legend Points: 320

Equipment: None

Loot: Venom or poison sacs (see text; counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

BULL UFGHANT

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 10 (14)
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (5): 15
Damage:
2 × Bite (1): 13

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 59 (77)
Wound Threshold: 17

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (66)

Combat Movement: 70[+] **Full Movement**: 140[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (3), Poison (SD 10; Paralyzing), Spellcasting (5): 11, Surprise Attack (4), Swimming[S] (5): 17

Legend Points: 480

Equipment: None

Loot: Venom or poison sacs (see text; counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The ufghant has a slender, torpedo-shaped body with a distinctive hump on the upper back. This hump is protected by tough hide and dense bone; and well it should be, for the creature's brain is here, and not in either of its heads. Four paddle-like flippers propel the beast through the water. These limbs are totally unsuited for movement on land, and an ufghant removed from the water is effectively immobilized. It can, however, still attack. Extreme caution must be used.

The ufghant's two narrow, snakelike heads are supported on long, supple necks that provide excellent mobility. While its bite is painful, and it can strike the same victim twice in the time that most creatures can only strike once, its venom makes it a feared competitor for mastery of the river. The toxin affects breathing, the beating of the heart, and the ability to move, retarding all severely. As well, poisoned Name-givers will find it difficult to concentrate, and thus to take complex actions or to defend themselves with magic. Healing magics are effective against this venom, but must be applied swiftly.

The ufghant's venom may be delivered by bite, or by projection; the creature can spit a stream of venom a good 6 yards with reasonable accuracy. The venom is a contact

poison, and remains viable for up to an hour. If the ufghant can see its target with both heads, it can deliver a devastating crossfire of uncanny accuracy. It is this crossfire that the ufghant uses against its preferred prey: the large, fish-eating birds that nest on the banks of the Serpent. The ufghant will lie just below the surface, with only the tops of its heads exposed, and drift, waiting for a bird to pass within range. Then, quick as a snake, its heads rise up, and the bird is caught at the crossing point of the ufghant's venom streams and drops into the water, to become dinner.

Ufghanti have been known to attack riverboats in packs of up to 20, driven by an older bull. T'skrang boats are favored because of the crew's habit of swinging out over the water, thus making good targets of themselves. The attack is led by the younger ufghanti, partially out of fear of the bull. If the bull can be killed—no easy proposition, as he will stay at the rear of the attack and lie low in the water—the attack will disorganize and usually break off in the face of stiff opposition.

Ufghant venom is a primary ingredient in poultices used against poisons, and brings a high price: up to 300 silver pieces for a small jar of preserved venom, and up to 1,000 silver pieces for the preserved intact poison sacs of an ufghant (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). Unfortunately, ufghant poison sacs are very delicate and therefore extremely difficult to remove, and their venom loses potency within an hour of exposure to air.

Rules

The brain hump is treated as having +4 Physical Armor. Called Shots (see p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**) to the hump are thus exceedingly difficult to achieve. Because it has two heads, ufghants can bite twice each round.

Spit Poison: An ufghant can spit poison at its enemies once per round, instead of biting. The ufghant makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is hit by the ufghant's venom.

Vofoq

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (3): 9 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (4): 6 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 24 **Recovery Tests**: 1
Wound Threshold: 5 **Knockdown**: 3
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Powers: Climbing^{S} (3): 9, Spellcasting (8): 14

Legend Points: 135

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Not all of the unusual animals of Barsaive are found out in the wilds. Some have adapted quite well to life among the Name-giver population, moving into the towns and cities and finding their niche in the urban setting. People familiar with pests like the rat and the spoogra may be happy to know that when such animals are present, sooner or later a predator will appear. In the southwestern regions of the province, Name-givers have come to know the vofoq as a sometimes uncomfortable but nonetheless useful neighbor.

A small mammal with a lean build, the vofoq has a pointed muzzle with long whiskers. Its eyes are set wide and well forward in its skull, under large, rounded ears. Its forepaws are small and dexterous; the rear paws being larger and longer at the end of strongly muscled legs. Its plushly furred tail is usually carried erect, but is held straight out when the animal is stalking its prey. The vofoq's fur is light gray with dark gray banding across the shoulders and haunches, dark rings down the tail, a black mask across its face, and dark fur surrounding its eyes and extending up its ears.

During the day, the vofoq sleeps, its preferred home being a burrow under the foundation of a building, or a nest in straw or other loose vegetation. At twilight, it comes out to hunt, its principle diet being small rodents and the occasional lizard or large insect. Dwellers in the cities of the southwest have grown accustomed to seeing the vofoq prowling about in the shadows, stalking and pouncing, and welcome its presence for its abilities at pest control, despite its one odious habit.

The vofoq secretes a foul, sticky liquid from glands under its tail, which it can squirt with terrific accuracy when irritated or marking its territory. The odor of vofoq musk is unmistakable and detectable from a good distance, making it easy to know when one is in the claimed hunting territory of one of the animals. The musk does not wash off with even the strongest of lye soaps, the oily liquid sinking quickly into skin, leather or cloth, and the smell taking days to dissipate. Even if it refrains from using its musk, a vofoq's bite can be quite painful. Given a choice between an infestation of rats and spoogras or the scent of vofoq musk in the background, most Name-givers opt for the lesser of the two evils and learn to live with the vofoq

Rules

As noted above, the vofoq squirts a foul musk to deter opponents.

Musk Spray: Vofoq musk can be sprayed to a distance of 6 yards. The smell causes revulsion and nausea. The vofoq makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The target must make a Willpower (14) Test. Failure means the target is Harried and can take no action besides vomiting until a successful Willpower (14) Test is made. The scent of a vofoq's musk typically remains for its Spellcasting rank in days.

Adventure Hook

The group is on its way to deliver a shipment of fabric for a merchant when a vofoq makes its nest in the cargo.

Removing the animal before it shreds the fabric too badly, without resulting in the vofoq fouling the cargo or the adventurers, will be quite a challenge. For an additional complication, the vofoq in question is female, pregnant and about to have kits.

VULJECN

DEX: 9 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 3
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 9 (12)
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 11 (see text)
Damage:
Bite (2): 5 (see text)
Death Rating: 23
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 3
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3

Combat Movement: 28/61✦
Full Movement: 56/122✦

✦ The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 5, Surprise Attack (3)

Legend Points: 250

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The vuljecn is a small bird approximately the size of a troll's hand. Its body is compact and muscular, but streamlined, allowing it to reach terrific speeds in a dive. It inhabits the Servos jungle and the cooler regions of the Mist Swamps, and has been seen aboard and from riverboats plying the southern and western reaches of the Serpent. Prior to the Scourge, the vuljecn was probably a seed eater, using its bill to crack open pods and nuts. Now, however, it serves a much more dangerous purpose.

The vuljecn has developed a taste for meat, and specifically for the flesh of Name-givers. Surely this is the work of a Horror, as no animal naturally preys predominantly on Name-givers. Covered in light brown plumage with hints of darker brown at wingtips and tail tip, the bird blends in well with the foliage, holding itself motionless in the treetops as it searches for food with remarkably keen eyesight. When the bird spots a Name-giver, or any large warm-blooded beast, it drops from its perch, folds its wings tightly, and dives on its prey. Reaching amazing speed in the descent from treetop to ground, it aims itself like an arrow, using its long, sharply pointed beak to spear its victim. Generally aiming for an eye, the vuljecn can do horrific damage in its first attack, frequently striking through the eye and into the brain, causing death instantly.

Lacking a distinct call, and remaining still and silent while watching for prey, the vuljecn is difficult to detect before it makes its attack. Fortunately, it doesn't always make its strike, as large changes of course become impossible during its dive. If the intended victim moves sharply to one side right before the attack, the bird will normally miss. Also, if it fails to kill its prey with the first strike, it leaves itself highly vulnerable to a return stroke from paw or blade.

The Cathan tend to walk with a staggering pace, lurching frequently to one side or the other, in order to ward off attacks by vuljecn. They also post guards within traveling groups to keep watch above, and warn the group if any of these birds drop out of the trees.

Rules

Vuljecn have special rules for their diving attack.

Dive Attack: The velocity of the vuljecn's Dive Attack adds a +7 bonus to its Attack and Damage steps. The Swooping attack combat option (see p. 418 of the **Player's Compendium**) cannot be used with a Dive Attack. This attack cannot be performed in consecutive rounds.

PLANT LIFE

The following plants grow in various regions up and down the length of the Serpent River, or in the caverns of the Throal Mountains. For game purposes, many of these plants work best treated as creatures, while some work best treated as traps. For an explanation of trap statistics, see the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 108 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**.

Characters with the Wilderness Survival skill or Knowledge skills in areas such as Botany or Nature Lore can identify these plants by using an appropriate skill to make a successful test against a Difficulty Number of 8 or 9. Where appropriate, the specific Difficulty Number for identifying a plant appears in the plant's description.

BLOOD ALGAE

Thin layers of green to blue-green algae cover the surface of countless stagnant lagoons along the length of the Serpent. Generally, such algae is harmless. Certain lagoons in the upper reaches of the Serpent, however, contain layers of blood algae, a type of Horror construct. When floating on the surface of water, blood algae resembles harmless dark green algae. If brushed aside, however, blood algae leaves a thin, oily, rust-colored sheen that glistens briefly and then fades. Any Name-giver or creature that drinks from or bathes in a pool covered with blood algae becomes infected with blood algae spore. Additionally, any water drawn from such a pool contains blood algae spore that remains potent for one day after being removed from its source.

The first sign of infection from blood algae is an unquenchable thirst. An infected character will drink water by the gallon, yet still complain of thirst. Next, the infected character's skin takes on a ruddy cast that resembles mild sunburn. As the infection causes the character's blood to thin, any cuts or bruises the character has suddenly become much more severe. Later, blood begins to leak steadily from the character's ears, nose, and mouth. The character loses his power to speak and reason, and begins to experience convulsions. In its final stages, the infection liquefies every

bone and organ in the character's body. The character's skin breaks into countless small wounds that leak green-tinged blood. This bleeding may last up to 10 minutes, during which time the character's entire body deflates like a balloon with a hole in it.

Blood Algae

Type: Debilitating
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: 1 day
Spell Defense: 10
Step Number: 7

If a character ingests or is exposed to blood algae, make a Step 7/D12 Effect Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. No armor protects against this damage. Any damage caused by blood algae can be healed only by a questor of Garlen or with healing salve brewed from the freshly picked petals of the mahogany trinrose (see p. 131 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). All other forms of healing—magical or otherwise—are completely ineffective.

Questors of Raggok are said to harvest blood algae during the lunar eclipse and distill its essence into a poison. The resulting poison is a special kind of Damage Poison with a Spell Defense of 10 and a Step Number of 8. Any target wounded by a weapon coated with this poison suffers Step 2/D4–1 damage per round until he can staunch the bleeding with a healing aid or bandages.

Razorgrass

Razorgrass grows in clumps in the lowland marshes that line the banks of the Serpent. Like many of the tall marshland grasses, razorgrass is normally indistinguishable from other grass species to all but experienced basket makers and skilled botanists. In fact, many Name-givers pass through razorgrass colonies without ever realizing the danger, because the grass exposes its razor-edged inner leaf only when strong winds cross its surface. However, characters caught in razorgrass seldom survive the experience unscathed.

The scholar Shev Allondargha deduced that a razorgrass colony develops the species' characteristic red plume only after blood has fallen on its roots. River folk prize such plumes for the bright red dye that can be extracted from them. Red razorgrass plumes are worth 80 silver pieces per pound.

Razorgrass

Detection Difficulty: 11
Disarm Difficulty: NA

Trap Initiative: 10/D10+D6

Trigger Condition: Strong winds plus close contact

Trap Effect: The leaves cut into the target, inflicting Step 20/D20+D8+D6 damage per round of exposure. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Tangleweed

Numerous varieties of tangleweed grow both above and below the surface of the Serpent's waters. The most common variety grows in 10-foot thick clumps in the river's shallows. The vines of tangleweed plants entangle anything—including Name-givers—that comes into contact with them. The vines' grip may seem quite gentle to a character caught in a tangleweed, but any struggling simply causes the vines to tighten their grip until they literally tear their victim to pieces. And if a victim's struggles break a tangleweed vine, two vines take its place. As a result, escaping from a tangleweed's embrace is difficult even for a victim with the strength of a troll.

The safest method of escaping tangleweed is to remain perfectly still and wait for night to fall. At night, tangleweeds slowly release any victims they hold and retreat under the surface of the river.

Any character who becomes entangled by tangleweed is automatically grappled. Make a Step 7 Strength Test for the vines to determine the Entangling Difficulty (p. 411, **Player's Compendium**). Whenever additional vines grapple the victim, make a new Strength Test with a +1 bonus for each additional vine. To cut through tangleweed vines, a character must make a successful Strength or Attack Test against the plant's Physical Defense of 6. Each vine has an Armor Rating (Physical and Mystic) of 0 and a Death Rating of 10. When a tangleweed vine takes 10 points of damage, it is cut or torn in half and the Strength step of the entire plant is reduced by –1. This respite is temporary; if the character does not free himself of all of the vines entangling him within 3 rounds, two more vines will take the place of each vine that he cuts free. Regardless, a single character can never be grappled by more than 6 vines at a time.

Tangleweed

Detection Difficulty: 8
Disarm Difficulty: NA

Trap Initiative: 10/D10+D6

Trigger Condition: Encountered randomly on river

Trap Effect: Grapples the victim with a Strength step of 7. Each additional vine adds +1 to the Strength step; each vine cut or removed reduces the plant's Strength step by –1.

Tentacular Kelp

Tentacular kelp grows from the bottom of the Serpent River, usually in the deeper parts of the river. Typically, tentacular kelp grows alongside harmless kelp plants in large groves near the center of the river. One side of tentacular kelp leaves is covered with adhesive suction cups. Whenever a creature brushes against a leaf, these suction cups grab the creature and a tiny spine in the center of each cup injects the victim with paralyzing venom. T'skrang villages that cultivate harmless kelp species are very careful to weed the tentacular variety out of their kelp groves, but the river is dotted with the *t'slashina* of villages abandoned during the Scourge. Those *t'slashina* often contain groves of excep-

tionally large and hungry tentacular kelp plants.

In game terms, tentacular kelp acts more like a trap than a creature. Tentacular kelp cannot be disarmed, and so no disarm difficulty is listed in the following game statistics. Characters may remove tentacular kelp leaves or cut leaves without making tests.

Tentacular Kelp

Detection Difficulty: 8
Disarm Difficulty: NA

Trap Initiative: 10/D10+D6

Trigger Condition: Touch

Trap Effect: Target is struck by kelp leaf, which injects the victim with a Paralysis poison.

Kelp Leaf Poison

Type: Paralysis
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: Effect Test hours
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 10

Thunder Tree



Scattered throughout the jungle, but thankfully rare, is a variety the natives call *shi'raksen*, the thunder tree. It is easily recognized by bark and foliage. The bark of the trunk is a dark gray in hue, smooth and ringed horizontally with ridges approximately the width of an elf's finger, spaced a bit less than two elven hand spans apart. The leaves are pinnate and serrate, growing in clusters of six and groupings of five clusters, and reaching a maximum length about half again that of an elf's middle finger. Blooming occurs year-round, with the flowers sprouting from the center of the leaf groupings. The blooms themselves have five outer petals and four inner, of deep rose and pale blue respectively, with a deep calyx of a golden hue. The stamens have golden stems and are tipped with bright blue. Once fertilized, the flower closes and begins to harden into a seed pod.

It is the fruit of this tree that makes it worth noting, as a travel hazard and a biological curiosity. The pod grows to about the size of an elf's fist, and has a shiny, very dense skin of a deep blue color. Inside, the seeds are embedded in pulp of surpassing sweetness. Some natives use the unripe seeds to brew wine of amazing potency. When the seeds ripen, however, the pod's connection to the branch shrivels. The pulp inside quickly decays and ferments, producing a large quantity of gas. The skin is so dense that most of the gas is trapped inside the pod. Eventually, the process of decay begins to attack the skin itself from the inside, making it thinner and thinner. Some of the pods will burst simply from the pressure contained inside, as it passes the ability of the skins to contain it. This normally happens with the pods near the top of the tree; warmed by sunlight, the pressure builds rapidly during the day, and in the late afternoon, the pods begin to explode with reports like small fire cannons.

The pods in the lower branches, however, do not receive enough sunlight to warm them to bursting. The usual circumstance is that they fall from the tree, as the stems wither, and explode upon striking the ground, scattering their seeds. These falling pods pose some hazard to Namegivers, for the escaping gas flings the seeds with such force that they can do injury to those nearby. If close enough, an exploding pod can drive its seeds through leather armor, possibly even through metal if a seed were to find a seam or other weak point. Natives have been known to use these pods as weapons, harvesting them before they are fully ripe and carrying them with extreme caution. Hurling or dropping a pod near an enemy is sufficient to cause great injury, considering the natives have little concept of armor.

Travelers in the Servos are warned to avoid passing near to these trees, especially if they are riding large animals, as the vibrations in the ground from their passing can shake down a pod or two, certainly sufficient to spook the riding beasts and possibly cause grievous injury. As well, one should be cautious about engaging the natives in combat; if battle becomes unavoidable, watch for a native attempting to throw an object at the party. The hurled object could be merely a stone or throwing axe, or it could be one of the thunder tree's explosive pods.

Rules

An exploding pod inflicts Step 6/D10 damage, and attacks with either the skill/talent of the wielder, or with Step 8/2D6 if falling from a tree. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Harvesting a ripe pod requires a successful Dexterity (5) Test to avoid a premature explosion. Harvesting unripe pods does not require a Test, but a successful Botany (6) Test is required to distinguish ripe pods from unripe. Carrying ripe pods into combat requires a successful Dexterity (5) Test each round to avoid jostling the pods and setting them off by accident.

New Goods and Services

It's true. You can purchase anything *in Bartertown. For a price…*

• Tendis Marka, Dwarf Merchant •



This chapter describes new goods and services that characters might encounter while adventuring—or spending some free time shopping—on or near the Serpent River and its tributaries, or in the Kingdom of Throal.

All items follow the rules presented on pp. 432–433 of the **Player's Compendium**, with regard to availability and quality. A selection of different goods and services are presented in this chapter, to supplement those described in the **Player's** and **Name-giver's Compendiums**.

Alternative Materials

The following materials supplement those presented in the **Alternative Materials for Weapons and Armor** chapter on p. 291 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**.

New Weapon Materials

The Weapon Conversion Table shows the characteristics of weapons crafted from the different materials below. See **Crafting Weapons** on p. 293 of the **Name-giver's Compendium** for more information.

G'nomsha Wood

The wood of the *g'nomsha* tree is capable of holding a sharp edge if treated properly. The t'skrang of Servos Jungle make various weapons from this wood. In recent years, *g'nomsha* has seen a rise in popularity among certain circles of Woodsmiths. It has become a sport for them to venture to the Servos to find *g'nomsha* wood, from which they craft, present, and compare weapons.

Because of the increasing number of visitors to the jungle, the t'skrang of the Servos are no longer friendly to those laying hands on a *g'nomsha* tree without asking permission. In turn, this simply encourages the Woodsmiths by making their expeditions more challenging. The jungle t'skrang are not as unfriendly towards those who ask politely or offer to share a tree with them.

G'nomsha weapons do not suffer a penalty to their Damage step. However, they retain the other disadvantages of wooden weapons (being fragile when used against harder materials), have an Availability Rating of Very Rare, and cost 150% of the price of the base weapon.

Shivoam Wood

The wood of the *shivoam* tree is extremely light. Jungle t'skrang use it to craft canoes (see p. 319 of the **New Riverboats** chapter). S*hivoam* wood is not commonly used to create weapons, but some jungle t'skrang do, in the absence of better materials. *Shivoam* weapons retain the other disadvantages of wooden weapons, but receive another –1 to the Strength Minimum required to wield them, and also reduce their Damage step by a further –1.

New Armor Materials

The Armor Conversion Table shows the characteristics of armor crafted from the different materials below. See **Crafting Armor** on p. 294 of the **Name-giver's Compendium** for more information.

WEAPON CONVERSION TABLE

Material	Damage Step	STR Min.	Size	Cost	Weight	Availability
G'nomsha Wood	—	–1	—	150%	75%	Very Rare
Shivoam Wood	–2	–2	—	75%	75%	Unusual

Clematha Bark

The Cathan tribes of the Servos use the bark of the *clematha* tree to craft very resilient suits or armor. When using *clematha* bark to craft wooden armor, the suit produced does not suffer a penalty to its Physical Armor rating. However, if the armor gets wet, it softens, and its Physical Armor is reduced by –3 until it dries out. The armor has an Availability Rating of Very Rare and costs 200% of the base price of the armor.

Cathans and many other jungle-dwellers know the *clematha's* weakness, and characters with the appropriate Knowledge skills or Disciplines can make an Action Test against a Difficulty Number determined by the gamemaster to learn this information.

Clematha is prized among Woodsmiths for the bright color it shows when properly treated, a trait uncommon to other wooden armors. At the gamemaster's discretion, an Extraordinary Craft Armor Test result might result in a suit of armor as bleached as bone, with the wearer receiving the social advantages of bone armor where appropriate (but never those of both wood and bone at the same time, and never towards someone who pays the armor close or educated attention).



Shivoam Wood

The wood of the *shivoam* tree is extremely light. As with weapons, s*hivoam* wood is not commonly used to create weapons, but some jungle t'skrang do. *Shivoam* armor retains the other advantages and disadvantages of wooden armor, but reduces its Physical Armor rating and Initiative Penalty by a further –1, and has an Availability Rating of Rare.

At the gamemasters discretion, the jungle t'skrang might regard the *shivoam* as a holy tree, unsuitable to be used by any outsiders. This might negate the social advantages of normal wooden armor, or even worse.

Stonecrusher Carapace

The carapace of the stonecrusher (see p. 278 of the **New Creatures** chapter) is a prime source of material from which Bonesmiths can craft bone armor. Because of the magical nature of the creature, the resulting suit of armor protects its wearer against spells and magical effects. The armor has a minimum Mystic Armor rating equal to half its Physical Armor (rounded up), but costs 400% the price of the base armor, and has an Availability Rating of Very Rare.

As stonecrushers are Horror constructs, many Bonesmiths will not work with the carapace, although there have been no reports of any side-effects from wearing such armor.

Magical Equipment

Some items of magical equipment are common magical items, like blood charms or potions (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 443 of the **Player's Compendium**). Other magical treasures, like thread items, general treasures, and unique treasures, are described in the **New Magical Treasures** chapter on p. 295.

Blood Charms

Blood charms are magical items that draw on the magical power within the wearer's blood. See p. 443 of the **Player's Compendium** for details on how charms work.

Cropdiver Charm

Cropdiver charms are common magical tools in t'skrang villages. When one of these blue-crystal charms is placed inside a character's mouth, it allows the wearer to stay underwater for an extended period. Normally, a character can remain underwater for a number of rounds (minutes, for t'skrang) equal to his Toughness value before he starts to drown (see **Drowning** on p. 248 of the **Player's Compendium**). For 2 Strain Points of damage, a cropdiver charm

ARMOR CONVERSION TABLE

Material	Physical Armor	Mystic Armor	Initiative Penalty	Cost	Weight	Availability
Clematha Bark	— (–3; see text)	—	—	200%	100%	Very Rare
Shivoam Wood	–2	—	–1	200%	50%	Rare
Stonecrusher Carapace	–2	50% (see text)	–1	400%	50%	Very Rare

allows a character to stay underwater for a number of minutes equal to his Toughness value (Toughness value × 6 minutes for t'skrang).

By embedding a cropdiver charm as a blood charm in the cheek, palate, or neck, a character receives greater benefit from the charm. Embedding a charm causes 2 permanent Damage Points to the character, but increases the time he can remain underwater to a number of hours equal to his Toughness step (including t'skrang). The character takes 2 Strain Points of damage each time he uses it, as normal.

T'skrang often use cropdiver charms when tending the underwater crops grown in their *t'slashinas*. In fact, many *nialls* routinely implant such charms in hatchlings.



Platinum Torc of House Henghyoke

The platinum torcs worn by the *aropagoinya* of House Henghyoke are exceptionally powerful blood charms that rob their wearers of the ability to speak or be understood by any means, including magic (although rumor has it the *lahalas* of House Henghyoke can communicate with the wearers of these charms). Any character wearing a torc becomes vulnerable to all Beastmaster talents as if he were a beast himself, but he also gains some beast-like qualities. The wearer gains the Enhanced Senses (see p. 275 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) and Regeneration (see p. 277 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) creature powers at Rank 2. He also ignores Action Test penalties from the first 3 Wounds he receives, instead of just the first Wound (see **Wound Effects** on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). Implanting this charm causes the wearer 3 permanent Damage Points.

Removing a torc inflicts Step 28/D20+2D10+D8 damage to the wearer, permanently reducing his Death and Unconsciousness Ratings by the result. No armor protects against this damage. Removing a torc also permanently reduces the wearer's Perception and Willpower values by –5 each; this also affects the character's step numbers and characteristics. After the torc has been removed, the character makes a Willpower Test against the torc's Spell Defense of 16. If the test fails, the character becomes insane, his mind becomes altered to the state of a savage beast.

Swimming Charm

A swimming charm enhances a character's ability to swim. These blood charms are usually embedded on the character's back. For 3 permanent Damage Points, the character gains a +3 bonus to his Swimming Tests and any Toughness Tests he makes to avoid Strain damage from swimming. For 2 Strain Points of damage, a character can also increase his swimming speed, doubling his swimming movement for the duration of the test (1 minute).

While t'skrang usually swim well enough to not need this charm, those who have to swim quickly, or for long periods of time without rest, often use them. Some riverboat crewmen have swimming charms implanted in case they fall overboard. Using this charm they can often catch up with their ships, or avoid drowning because their rings compensate for the weight of their armor.

Common Magic Items

The following common magic items perform specific functions. No special abilities or thread magic are required to use them, although some have restrictions on use or are difficult to obtain. See p. 447 of the **Player's Compendium** for more information.

BLOOD CHARM TABLE

Charm	DR	EDN	Cost	Weight	Availability
Cropdiver Charm	1	16	500	1	Unusual
Platinum Torc	0	Spec.	Spec.	3	Spec.
Swimming Charm	0	14	350	1	Unusual

DR: The value added to the character's Depatterning Rating (see p. 446 of the **Player's Compendium**).
EDN: The item's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see p. 275 of the **Player's Compendium**)
Spec.: Special rules apply to the creation or purchase of these blood charms. See the charm's description for details.

COMMON MAGICAL ITEMS TABLE				
Charm	**EDN**	**Cost**	**Weight**	**Availability**
Ashes from Kralipur	Spec.	Spec.	1	Unusual
Blood Pool Sand	Spec.	Spec.	3	Unusual
Coins of Chorrolis	Spec.	Spec.	Neg.	Rare
Chorrolis' Interest	Spec.	Spec.	Neg.	Very Rare
Enchanted Chamber Pot	15	300	10	Rare
Ring of Debate	14	200	1	Rare
Syrtis' Medallion	Spec.	200	2	Very Rare
Waterproof Parchment				
Parchment (1 sheet)	14	2	Neg.	Unusual
Enchanted Ink (vial)	14	5	1	Unusual

EDN: The item's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see p. 275 of the **Player's Compendium**)
Neg.: Negligible weight for encumbrance purposes. At the gamemaster's discretion, approximately 10 such items weigh 1 pound.
Spec.: Special rules apply to the creation or purchase of these items. See the item's description for details.

Ashes from Kralipur

Ashes from Kralipur are commonly found among the t'skrang of House Syrtis. These ashes function as talismans against Horrors. To produce the sovereign charm, a traveler must walk the Pilgrimage Route from Ayodhya up to Kralipur (see **The Pilgrimage Route**, p. 224). At Kralipur, the pilgrim must purchase a small scroll of paper made from the reeds of the Floating City and write a prayer on that scroll dedicated to the Dragon of the Sun. The pilgrim must then hold the paper in the Sacred Flame until it has completely turned to ash. The Sacred Flame draws on the life force of the pilgrim, causing him 2 permanent Damage Points that can never be healed. The character must keep the ashes in some sort of container until he uses them. The ashes work only for the character who made the pilgrimage, and characters can only benefit from one dose of ashes at a time.

Should the character encounter a Horror, he may use the ashes against it. To use the ashes, the character smears them on his forehead. Until his encounter with the Horror ends, the character gains a +2 bonus to his Physical, Spell, and Social Defenses, and a +2 bonus to any tests he makes against the Horror.

Once a character has used his dose of ashes, he can return to Kralipur and repeat the ritual, receiving a new dose upon completion. Performing the ritual again does not cause him any further permanent damage, but if he did not defeat the Horror during his encounter with it, he receives 1 permanent Damage Point that can only be healed after this new dose of ashes is used.

Blood Pool Sand

Bright red in color, blood pool sand is retrieved from the Pool of Floranuus on the Pilgrimage Route (see **The Pilgrimage Route**, p. 224), and usually stored in a small pouch. This item only bestows its benefits to the person who collected it while walking the Pilgrimage Route. If placed under one's head while sleeping, the sand protects the sleeper's dreams; the sleeper's worst nightmares are soothed, while lesser nightmares are never dreamed at all.

Although this effect is not widely known, the sand also protects the sleeper against attempts by others to enter or change his dreams. If such an attempt is made, the sleeper adds a +4 bonus to any tests he makes to resist it. If he normally cannot resist the attempt, he becomes entitled to an attempt, using his Willpower step with a +4 bonus. Regardless of the number of attempts resisted, he awakes in the morning with –1 Recovery Tests for the day.

Coins of Chorrolis

Coins of Chorrolis are regular coins of any type, depending on the authority that issued them, although in most cases they keep a gloss betraying their nominal value. They are created when the Passion Chorrolis blesses a coin in the hands of someone deemed worthy of such a gift. Chorrolis does not mind if this person sells the coin afterwards—after all, business is business. For 3 Strain Points of damage, the bearer of a coin of Chorrolis adds a +2 bonus to a single Haggle Test. If the test succeeds with an Excellent result, the price is modified by 10 percent in favor of the user, instead of just 5 percent. The coin can be used on consecutive Haggle Tests, but a perceptive individual might, at the gamemaster's discretion, notice its strenuous effects on the user.

Chorrolis' Interest

Besides the more common coins of Chorrolis, there are a smaller number of even more blessed coins called Chorrolis' Interest, often found in the hands of the Passion's questors. In addition to imparting the normal benefits of a coin of Chorrolis (see above), for 2 Strain Points of damage these special coins grant a +1 bonus to a single Questor Power Test. Obviously, this bonus only applies to Chorrolis' questor powers. Chorrolis' Interest are seldom sold, and when they are, it is usually only from one questor of Chorrolis to another. (If sold to anyone who is not a questor of Chorrolis, these coins might lose their special power, at the gamemaster's discretion.) Only a questor of Chorrolis can tell one of these special coins from a regular one.

Enchanted Chamber Pot

These special chamber pots are common to the houses of Throal's wealthier citizens. Their use has also passed to other cities, such as Urupa and Travar. Not considered prestigious items, enchanted chamber pots are rarely ornamental, and easily pass as normal chamber pots. The enchantment serves two valuable purposes: it prevents foul odors escaping from the pot, and ensures that pots never stain through use.

Ring of Debate

Rings of debate are of Throalic origin and made to specific request. They usually mimic an heirloom or feature a family signet, so as to look like normal rings and therefore not give away their true power. The wearer of a ring of debate adds a +2 bonus to any Conversation Test he makes. Using such a ring is generally frowned upon, however, and the wearer's character is considered questionable. After all, if the wearer cannot hold himself in a debate without employing magic, using a ring of debate does not prove his point or make it any more valid—the ring's magic simply lets

it appear to be so. If the wearer is found to be using a ring of debate, the Attitude of his conversational counterparts toward him drops by two degrees. Any Attitude improvement gained through successful Conversation is also lost.

Legend tells that early versions of these rings required the wearer to raise his index finger to access the ring's power. Many Throalic citizens try not to wear obvious rings during conversations; in fact, some rid themselves of all jewelry completely, to avoid even the least suspicion. There may be some truth to this legend, as so far no one has been able to create this unique magical effect on any items other than rings.

Syrtis' Medallion

Pilgrims receive a Syrtis' medallion after completing the Pilgrimage Route, before meeting the Shivalahala Syrtis. Unlike other items obtained on the Pilgrimage Route, this silver medallion bestows some of its benefits to anyone who bears it, as not all of its effects are magical. When in conversation with a person who deems the Pilgrimage or one of its sites sacred, the bearer gains a +2 bonus to a single Interaction Test, except Intimidation Tests, against that person. This bonus can only be applied once against each character. Should the target discover the bearer did not complete the Pilgrimage—and he will likely ask questions about this common spiritual experience—his Attitude toward the bearer worsens by 2 degrees (see p. 90 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

A bearer who genuinely completed the Pilgrimage can use his medallion to gain a +3 bonus to any Toughness-based Test that is a last chance to save his life, such as a Life Check Test, a Recovery Test made from having a last chance salve applied, or the final Toughness Test to resist a deadly poison. If the bearer is unconscious at the time, the medallion automatically bestows this benefit. The medallion crumbles to dust when used in this way. It is said that anyone who sells Syrtis' medallion will suffer great misfortune should he attempt the Pilgrimage Route again.

Waterproof Parchment

Parchment and books that are usable in wet conditions are sought after by explorers and scholars alike and have become common in trade towns along the length of the Serpent River. It is rumored that the Great Library of Throal is considering equipping all expeditions with waterproof parchment. The pages are enchanted with Elemental water and are water-repellent, but can only be written on with enchanted ink.

Provender

The dwarf kingdom of Throal and the diverse cultures along the Serpent River enjoy many unique foods and beverages. The following types of food and drink expand the types of provender described in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 454 of the **Player's Compendium**.

Unless specified, prices for food are for a single serving for one human-sized Name-giver.

Royal Sausages

An assortment of pork and rind sausages, served with various sauces. This is a favored meal for orks in Throal, where specialist cooks create hot sauces to satisfy the palates of orks, but make the sausages inedible for most other Name-givers.

Fish-on-a-Reed

House V'strimon is the sole provider of this delicacy. Fish preserved in different spices is wrapped in a reed and roasted over a small flame. Different types of fish and spices create a broad range of flavors, thus making fish-on-a-reed a popular meal for all Name-givers.

Glowing Gulper

Said to be the byproduct of an alchemical experiment gone bad, this potent liquor has become common in the *trisnaris* of House V'strimon and Syrtis. The thick liquid glows the same color as Lake Pyros and can create minor (but harmless) illusions for untrained drinkers.

Tav's Delight

Without a doubt the strongest beer brewed in the Kingdom of Throal, this dark beer can knock out even the hardiest ork scorcher or troll crystal raider.

Scavian Crayfish

Found only in Scavian villages and barges along the Tylon River, these crayfish can compete in flavor with the spiced fish served by t'skrang *trisnaris*. Roasted over an open flame, Scavian crayfish are served with a river algae/



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weed assortment that looks disgusting, but adds a bitter-sweet taste that perfectly complements the sweet crayfish meat.

Roasted Insects

Common along the Servos River, roasted insects are viewed as unpalatable by many city-dwelling Name-givers. Cooked and deep-fried flies, spiders, and other insects are served with different sauces, varying from hot to sweet in taste. The jungle tribes see roasted insects as a delicacy and will pay well for exotic sauces, while many *trisnaris* and taverns along the river serve roasted insects as a sort of "test of courage" for travelers.

PROVENDER TABLE

Item	Cost	Weight	Availability
Royal Sausages	8	1	Average
Fish-on-a-Reed	3–10	8 oz.	Average
Glowing Gulper:			
Single Shot	1	NA	Unusual
Bottle	12	1	Unusual
Tav's Delight:			
Tankard	2	NA	Average
Keg	200	50	Average
Scavian Crayfish	3	NA	Unusual
Blood Ale:			
Tankard	1	NA	Average
Keg	100	50	Average
Sel'ecca:			
Single Shot	3	NA	Unusual
Long Shot	5	NA	Unusual
Bottle	20	1	Unusual
Roasted Insects	2–3	1	Average
Giant Crocodile Steak	8	1	Unusual
Tabri Egg Omelette	10	1	Unusual
T'sokata (Single Shot)	5	NA	Unusual

Blood Ale

A deep-red color gives blood ale its name. Blood is not one of the ingredients used in its production, however. Instead it gains the red color through the use of specially treated spices and other additives. The exact recipe is known only to the brewers of House K'tenshin, who sell kegs of blood ale along the length of the Serpent.

Sel'ecca

Sel'ecca is a sweet alcohol, treated with True water during creation. The resulting liquor is very strong and commonly served with fruit juice.

Giant Crocodile Steak

Many a young t'skrang from the settlements along the Servos River tries to impress his elders by hunting one of the most dangerous predators living in the region: the giant crocodile. As a reward for a successful hunt, the meat of the giant crocodiles makes excellent steak. They are traditionally served raw and bloody; if cooked, they are seared to seal in the juices.

Tabri Egg Omelette

Omelettes made from beaten tabri eggs have become the latest fashion among the dwarfs of Daiche and Darranis, even though the dangers of collecting the eggs makes them expensive.

T'sokata

A seasonal alcohol served in villages and ports along the length of the Serpent River, each shot contains a number of live pollywogs.

NEW MAGICAL TREASURES

No, sir. We have only minor magical items here. For something of greater power, you will need to venture to the other side of the bazaar. But, sir, I would strongly advise you to consider investing in a dozen of these small amulets instead—it is more economical to purchase in quantity, and there is safety in numbers, yes?

• Heeran, Trinket Vendor of the Grand Bazaar •



GENERAL TREASURES AND THREAD ITEMS

Rules for general treasures and thread items can be found in the **Magical Treasures** chapter, on p.161 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**.

ARMOR OF ELEMENTAL WATER

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

Armor of elemental water is constructed from overlapping scales of sculpted elemental water. The water carries a blue tint, and the scales appear to constantly surge downward from the neck like waves on the sea. The knowledge needed to create armor of elemental water was lost before the Scourge, and only a limited number of these suits of armor now exist.

Without a thread attached, armor of elemental water has the following characteristics: Physical Armor 4, Mystic Armor 0, Initiative Penalty 2, Weight 30. This armor comes with a helmet.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 5, Mystic Armor 1, and Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor now has no Initiative Penalty. If fully immersed in water, the wearer floats.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Elementalists from a long-dead kingdom near the Aras Sea created the suits. The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 6 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The Elementalists who created the suits enchanted them by trapping minor water spirits from the Aras Sea inside the armor. The wearer must discover the Name of the water elemental in his suit.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8. The armor absorbs some of the force of physical attacks; increase the result level needed to inflict an Armor Defeating Hit on the wearer by one level (from Excellent to Extraordinary, for example).

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must discover the exact location where the elemental spirit in his suit was captured.

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 4. The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests. The wearer can communicate with the captured elemental telepathically. If the spirit is treated well, it can use its Aid Summoner power once per week on the wearer. The wearer takes no Strain damage for activating the power, but suffers Strain damage for any Action Tests he makes (see p. 365 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). The elemental's Strength Rating is 3.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wearer must journey to the location where the water elemental was captured and release it from bondage, destroying the armor in the process.

Effect: Through their shared link, a portion of the elemental's essence stays with the character (who was previously the wearer). The character adds +4 to his Mystic Armor rating and +1 to his Initiative step. Additionally, the link allows the character to summon the elemental once a month to use its Aid Summoner power, as described above. At the gamemaster's discretion, the elemental's Strength Rating may rise over time as it becomes part of the character's legend. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Dagger of Ishkarat

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 9

The members of House Ishkarat wield powerful talismanic daggers as tokens of their *aropagoi*. The keen edges of these black obsidian knives are as sharp as most crystal weapons from the Twilight Peaks. Because each Ishkaratan *aropagoinya* Names his own dagger, the Naming character automatically knows the Rank 1 Key Knowledge.

Without a thread attached, an Ishkaratan dagger has the same characteristics as a normal dagger.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Deed: The wielder must enter the Ishkarat *aropagoi* and swear the oath of fealty to the Shivalahala Ishkarat. This Deed is worth 200 Legend Points.

Key Knowledge: The wielder must choose his *g'doinya* as the Name of his blade.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Avoid Blow talent (see p. 171 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 3.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The daggers are made by a small group of Weaponsmiths loyal to House Ishkarat. The wielder must learn the Name of the dagger's creator.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Riposte talent (see p. 197 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.



Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the location of the original Ishkaratan home village of Elekso. However, Elekso's location is a secret. Those who know its location will not divulge the information to others, because each *aropagoinya* must learn it for himself.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 4. The dagger's wielder may use a special ability, **Retributive Strike**, as a combat option (see p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the wielder attacks an opponent who has caused harm to House Ishkarat, or tried to learn its secrets, the wielder adds his Willpower step as a bonus to his Damage Test. Additionally, the wielder may spend 1 Karma Point on the Damage Test, if no other ability allows him to do so. Using this combat option causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wielder must visit Elekso, the Ishkaratan home village. There, he must renew his oath of fealty to the Shivalahala Ishkarat in a day-long ritual. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The dagger's **Retributive Strike** ability gains even greater power. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may now use this ability as a combat option against any enemy of House Ishkarat. When this improved ability is used with a successful attack on an opponent, the wielder's attack is automatically an Armor-Defeating Hit. Additionally, the wielder may choose to spend up to 3 Karma Points on the Damage Test, if no other ability allows him to do so. The dagger takes on a dark-green glow when the ability is used, and shatters after the first Damage Test it makes. If the wielder kills his enemy in single combat using the dagger's improved Retributive Strike ability, he may bring his enemy's weapon to the place where the dagger was created. There, the Ishkaratan Weaponsmiths forge the enemy's weapon into a remarkable thread weapon. To date, no such weapon has been seen anywhere on the river.

Net of Barbs

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 8

A net of barbs is made from razorgrass reeds that can cut an opponent to ribbons. Like the nets of defense, these are made for use with the Cast Net talent (see p. 261 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). A single character can combine the effects of a net of barbs with those of a net of defense (see below).

Without a thread attached, the net functions like a normal barbed net (see p. 285 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**), however this net is never destroyed or damaged in combat.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the net.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Cast Net talent.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The barbed net is now Damage step 3.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the net's creator.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Cast Net talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The barbed net is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the riverboat on which the net's creator served.

Effect: Any time the wielder successfully uses the net to entangle an opponent, he can immediately make a Damage Test to damage his opponent (see the Cast Net talent description on p. 261 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Net of Defense

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 8

Nets of defense are specifically designed as weapons for t'skrang Boatmen and are used in conjunction with the Cast Net talent (see p. 261 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). These nets are often decorated with ribbons and embedded crystals. A single character can combine the effects of a net of defense with those of a net of barbs (see above).

Without a thread attached, the net functions like a normal casting net (see p. 285 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**), however this net is never destroyed or damaged in combat.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the net.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Cast Net talent.

Thread Rank Two
Cost: 200

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Three
Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the net's creator.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Cast Net talent.

Thread Rank Four
Cost: 500

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Five
Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the riverboat on which the net's creator served.

Effect: Any time the wielder successfully uses the net to entangle an opponent's weapon, he may immediately make a Disarm Test to snatch the target weapon from his opponent's grasp. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Disarm talent for this test (see the Cast Net talent description, p. 261, **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Sextant
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

Sextants are equal in design and function to their mundane counterparts, although they are regularly more ornate and made partially from, or adorned with, precious metals—often, small amounts of orichalcum—or valuable gems.

Without a thread attached they are used as a normal sextant. Sextants are often given to Scouts and other Pathfinders in His Majesty's Exploratory Force.

Thread Rank One
Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the sextant.

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to his Navigation Tests.

Thread Rank Two
Cost: 500

Effect: The time required for the user to make Navigation Tests is halved (to 30 minutes).

Thread Rank Three
Cost: 800

Effect: The user gains a +2 bonus to his Navigation Tests. If the sextant is used daily to determine the user's position, he also gains a +2 bonus to his Mapmaking Tests.

Unique Treasures

The following items are unique magical treasures spoken of in the legends of the people of Throal, or in tales told around fires along the Serpent River and in the nearby jungles. Rules for unique treasures can be found in the **Magical Treasures** chapter on p. 161 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium.**

Horn of the Seven Winds
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

The Horn of the Seven Winds is made from the shell of a chambered nautilid, and is about two feet in diameter. The mouthpiece is made of brass, and the spiral is decorated with gold inlays. To invoke the horn's abilities, the user must blow a note on the instrument. There are seven different notes that the horn can blow, one for each of the Seven Winds.

Without a thread attached, the horn functions as a normal musical instrument.

Thread Rank One
Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the horn.

Effect: The horn's user may use the item like a crystal spell box (see p. 182 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) to capture one Elementalism spell. To capture a spell, the user blows the horn and makes a Spellcasting Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the result of the Spellcasting Test made to cast the spell. If this test succeeds, the horn "captures" the spell; the spell has no effect. Unlike a crystal spell box, to release and use a spell stored in the horn, the user must use his own Spellcasting and Willpower abilities to determine the spell's effect, but need not weave any threads.

Thread Rank Two
Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The user must discover the number of notes that the horn can produce.

Effect: The user gains a +1 rank bonus to his Spellcasting and Willforce talents when capturing spells into or casting spells from the horn.

Thread Rank Three
Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the Elementalist who created the horn.

Effect: The user may capture and store a second Elementalism spell in the horn.

Thread Rank Four
Cost: 1,300



Effect: The user gains a +3 rank bonus to his Spellcasting and Willforce talents when capturing spells into or casting spells from the horn that are related to the sphere of air. For example, Resist Cold, Path Home, Sky Lattice, Throne of Air, and so on.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: Each of the notes blown on the horn has a different Name in the ancient language of the kingdom where it was made. The user must learn the Name of each note.

Effect: The user gains a +2 rank bonus to his Battle Bellow talent (see p. 172 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the last person to bear the horn.

Effect: The horn allows the user to cast one of his own Elementalism spells into it. The Spellcasting Test is made against the horn's Spell Defense. Afterwards, the spell cast into the horn is considered to be a captured spell and released in the same way as any other captured spell.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The user must find a pack of storm wolves and follow them to a place of evil, which he must defeat. (The gamemaster determines what the evil is and how to defeat it.) This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The user may capture and store a third Elementalism spell in the Horn. The user can also use the horn to summon a pack of 16 storm wolves (see p. 347 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). The wolves escort the user for 24 hours, then disappear as suddenly as they arrived. If attacked, the wolves will attempt to summon a storm. The pack responds to only one such call per year.

Key to the Bazaar

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

The Key to the Bazaar is a small, ornate key, identifiable as a key for a high-quality lock. It is the key to the treasure chest of the Throalic merchant who proposed the creation of the Grand Bazaar, just inside the gates to the Kingdom of Throal. This merchant is said to have funded the establishment of the Bazaar to no small extent. He was revered as a great visionary by Throalic merchants for many years, and was known to every merchant in the Bazaar and throughout the Halls of Throal; and eventually, beyond Throal. It is said that no one knew the Bazaar like he did, that no one could out-haggle him, and that he could locate any item wanted by any purchaser.

Rumor has it the merchant's treasure chest still exists, filled with riches, and can be opened with this key. Descriptions of the merchant's riches range from piles of gold and gems, to a manual on trade, to shares in various Throalic companies, to an empty chest—the latter to encourage the finder's own trade or to show that a good merchant always invests his money, rather than leaving it to rot in a box.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the Key.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 rank bonus to his Haggle talent when in the Grand Bazaar.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 bonus to Trading Tests when in the Grand Bazaar. If the bearer does not know the Trading skill, he may use it as a Default Skill (see p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium**) when in the Grand Bazaar, using his Charisma step.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the merchant.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 bonus to Perception-only Tests when in the Grand Bazaar.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: When looking for an item in the Grand Bazaar, the bearer may make a Trading Test instead of the merchant. If the test succeeds, the bearer finds a merchant who has the item in stock or who knows the location of another merchant outside of Throal who has it. The gamemaster may still restrict what items are available on the open market.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the craftsman who created the merchant's treasure chest.

Effect: The bearer receives a +2 rank bonus to his Haggle talent and a +2 bonus to his Trading Tests when in the Grand Bazaar.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The maximum number of Haggle Tests the bearer can make per deal is equal to the greater of the highest thread rank the bearer has woven to the key or his Haggle rank. The bearer must still achieve an Average result to make consecutive tests, as per the description for the Haggle talent (see p. 187 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the merchant's full legend, including the biggest deals he made during his career, his style of business, and the history of his company.

Effect: The bearer adds +2 to his Social Defense when resisting other merchants' Haggle Tests. Additionally, all of the key's bonuses and abilities are now available to the bearer in any market or shop friendly to Throal.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The bearer must find and open the merchant's treasure chest. The gamemaster determines what is inside the chest and its size. This Deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The merchant's treasure chest can be used to create any non-threaded, non-unique item that will fit within it. The bearer puts money or valuables equal in value to the item's normal cost into the chest and locks it with the key. He then uses one of his available Recovery Tests and makes a Thread Weaving (7) Test, requiring a result appropriate to the Availability Rating of the item (see p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the test succeeds, when the bearer opens the chest with the key, the desired item is in the chest. Regardless of whether the test succeeds or fails, the money or valuables are gone. Also, the chest doesn't give change.



Leatherwing

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

Created by Azim Keel and Larm Keenedge, this suit of thread hardened leather armor is Named Leatherwing, and is worn by General Nikar Carinci (see **A Tour of the Serpent** on p. 236). The suit of armor has been modified by Larm Keenedge to accommodate the General's tail and *k'stulaami* wing membranes.

Without a thread attached, Leatherwing has the same characteristics as normal hardened leather armor.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 6.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Names of the armor's creators.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the person who customized the armor.

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 4 and has no Initiative Penalty.

Net of Dreams

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 19

The Net of Dreams is an intrinsic part of the legend of the Old Man of the Nets. Although the Net of Dreams looks like a ratty old fishing net with frayed edges and tangled webbing, the Old Man used it to gather the dreams of his family and his race, as well as fish. However, as his family grew older, the Old Man of the Nets cut up the net so that he could divide it among his 13 children.

Without a thread attached, the Net of Dreams has the same characteristics as an ordinary fishing net.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the net.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Mystic Armor and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wielder receives a +2 bonus to Willpower Tests when disbelieving and sensing illusions (see p. 322 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Mystic Armor and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the child who carried his part of the Net.

Effect: The net enhances the effects of natural healing on those who sleep under it, even if they are only partially covered. The wielder must be one of the characters covered by the net for this ability to work. Those who sleep under the net for at least 8 hours may add their Willpower step as a bonus to their first Recovery Test the next day.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder adds +3 to his Mystic Armor and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the tale of the Old Man of the Nets and his visit to the Illusionist D'rzaiya on her island in the Sea of Reeds. The tale says that D'rzaiya lured the Old Man away from his wife V'ranna by taking V'ranna's form. The Old Man remained under D'rzaiya's spell for a year and a day before he saw through the illusion. When he came home V'ranna was furious, of course, and refused to believe the Old Man's story until she heard it from the Illusionist's own mouth. So the Old Man had to return to the island and lay a trap for the old magician.

Effect: The wielder receives a +4 bonus to his Willpower Tests when disbelieving and sensing illusions. Also, the first Disbelief Test he makes to disbelieve an illusion does not cause him any Strain damage (see p. 322 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must find another part of the original Net of Dreams and weave his own net to it. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder can communicate, via his dreams, with any other character who has woven a thread to his net. Distance is not a factor, but both parties must be dreaming at the same time.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Effect: The wielder may use his own Thread Weaving talent to weave another character's pattern to the net. The wielder pays the Legend Point cost for the thread rank and makes any Thread Weaving Tests. Both characters must be present when the Thread Weaving Test is made. The other character need not possess the Thread Weaving talent to participate in this procedure, but still gains the benefits from having a thread woven to the net. The thread woven to the other character counts towards the maximum number of threads that the wielder may have active.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must bring his net to a great dragon (not necessarily the one who taught the Old Man how to weave). The dragon demands a service of the wielder, and if the wielder performs the service the dragon grants him knowledge of a dragon power locked inside the net. This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Key Knowledge: The Old Man learned how to weave the Net of Dreams from one of the great dragons. The wielder must learn the Name of the dragon.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his **Disrupt Fate** dragon power (see p. 397 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). The wielder must spend a Karma Point to use the power, but does not roll any Karma dice when making Disrupt Fate Tests.

Quill of the Great Library (The King's Quill)

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 23

The Quill of the Great Library is a worn quill pen made, like many others, from a goose feather. It was used by Varulus I to sign the order to create and expand the Great Library and was preserved by the first Master of the Hall of Records. After the scholar's death, it was returned to his family along with the rest of his belongings. After the Scourge, it was lost during the time of Throal's opening to the outside world. The quill is sought by the Throalic government, as it almost certainly is a Core pattern item for the Great Library of Throal.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the quill.

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to Artisan Tests made with the quill.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The user gains a +1 bonus to any Research Tests made in the Great Library, as long as he writes his notes with the quill.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the specifics of the quill's legend.

Effect: The Attitude (see p. 93 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) of any character who considers himself a scholar or learned individual is improved by one degree towards the user.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The user gains a +2 bonus to Artisan and Research Tests made with the quill.



Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the craftsman who made the quill, prior to the Scourge.

Effect: If the user is a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +2 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. If the user is not a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +1 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. When making tests, the user must write down notes with the quill to benefit from this bonus.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The user must convince the Royal Archives to show him Varulus I's original order. He must copy the order exactly—save for the signature—using the quill.

Effect: If the user is a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +3 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. If the user is not a Traveled Scholar, he gains a +2 bonus to his Knowledge Skill Tests. When making tests, the user must write down notes with the quill to benefit from this bonus.

The Armaments of Byrnicus

These armaments are the five legendary swords and shields created by Byrnicus (see the **Adventure Hook** on p. 15 of **The Dwarf Kingdom**). The Armaments of Byrnicus are rumored to be cursed by Tav Korelsed, the founder of Throal. Whether this is true or not is determined by the gamemaster, choosing one of the following options.

Option One

The Armaments of Byrnicus *are* affected by the curse of Tav Korelsed. Fearing the curse, Ambica, Korelsed's Warrior lover, had them sealed in the Last Place. To fully achieve the potential of these great Throalic artifacts, the wielders must find all five swords and shields, as well as a way to break the curse. As an example to break the curse, the wielders might use the swords or shields of Tav Korelsed to summon him and convince him to renounce his curse by showing him both the prosperity of the Kingdom of Throal and that the current King of Throal, Neden, is not one of his descendants.

Or perhaps the wielders summon Tav Korelsed and make a deal with him to fulfill his curse by helping him eliminate the last vestiges of his bloodline.

If the characters cannot summon Tav Korelsed themselves, perhaps Cibonicus has already summoned him. But Cibonicus, lacking a pattern item for the legendary dwarf hero, lost control of Tav's spirit and now Tav is trying to fulfill his vengeance (see the **Adventure Hook** on p. 15 of **The Dwarf Kingdom**). Again, in this scenario the wielders can either try to persuade Tav to renounce the curse or help fulfill it. When using this option, there are several suggested curse effects. The gamemaster is free to devise his own curses to complement or replace these.

Option Two

The Armaments of Byrnicus are *not* affected by the curse of Tav Korelsed. As a symbolic gesture of peace and an end to the war, Ambica sealed them in the Last Place. When using this option ignore the suggested curse effects and any Deeds dealing with the curse being broken in the treasure descriptions below.

GUARDCUTTER

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Guardcutter is a crystal short sword with a blade made from crystal and True earth and a sturdy stone hilt. The sword has sharp crystal barbs along the blade and top of the crossguard. Time has bent some of the barbs on the crossguard back towards the wielder's hands.

Due to the properties of his shield, Byrnicus' sword could not be made of metal, which is why he chose such an unusual material to forge the blade from. A troll Weaponsmith Named Keralniago taught his apprentice, the Weaponsmith Byrnicus, all of his weapon- and armor-making techniques—including working with crystal material—lessons which he applied in creating this sword. Byrnicus went on several expeditions underneath the Throal Mountains to gather living crystal and True earth to use in his armaments. Byrnicus forged this sword for himself, enchanting it with the power to slice through the armor of its wielder's enemies.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a crystal short sword (see p. 292 of the **Namegiver's Compendium**).



Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword's crystal barbs help it cut through armor more easily, reducing the Difficulty Number to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder's opponent by –1.

Cursed: The sharp crystal barbs turned backwards along the sword's crossguard jut painfully into the back of the wielder's hand. Whenever the wielder makes a successful attack, the barbs cause him 1 Damage Point. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to the next Attack Test he makes with the sword.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the troll Weaponsmith who apprenticed the sword's creator.

Effect: The sword's crystal barbs help it cut through armor even more easily, reducing the Difficulty Number to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder's opponent by -2.

Cursed: The sharp crystal barbs turned backwards along the sword's crossguard jut painfully into the back of the wielder's hand. Whenever the wielder makes a successful attack, the barbs now cause him 2 Damage Points. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must find the source of the elemental earth used to create the sword.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may attempt to cause a Bleeding Wound (see p. 401 of the **Player's Compendium**) on his opponent. The wielder must decide to do this before he makes his Attack Test. If the wielder inflicts a Wound, the sword's crystal barbs rip into his opponent, creating a gaping, bleeding injury, and causing him to take 2 Damage Points at the end of each round until he makes a successful Recovery Test, receives medical attention, or dies from blood loss. No armor protects against this damage.

Cursed: On any Damage Test that generates a bonus die, the sword's crystal barbs hook into the enemy or his armor so deep that the wielder must make a successful Strength Test against his opponent's Toughness step to pull the weapon free. If the test fails, he loses hold of the sword and is disarmed. He also takes 2 Damage Points from the crystal barbs on the crossguard ripping into his hand as he loses his grip. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must use crystal and True earth to repair the blunted and broken crystal barbs along the sword blade and remove or straighten those barbs bent back on the crossguard. This deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword's reforged crystal barbs help it cut through armor and shields alike. The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Spot Armor Flaw (see p. 203 of the **Player's Compendium**) and Shield Beater (see p. 200 of the **Player's Compendium**) talents.

Lodeshield

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14



Lodeshield is a blue-gray footman's shield made from a strange metal alloy known as magnite. Garaham's apprentice, Named Hoffmaier, originally found the ore while gathering True earth in the depths of the Throal Mountains. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created this shield from this alloy for himself, enchanting it with the power to counter metal weapons.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal footman's shield.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: When the shield is used, it attracts metal objects to it. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons suffer a -1 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be attracted toward the wielder, instead of the shield. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +1 bonus to their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a –1 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The shield's magnetic attraction increases. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons now suffer a -2 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be more attracted toward the wielder. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +2 bonus to their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a –2 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the type of metal from which the shield was made.

Effect: The shield's magnetic attraction increases further. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons now suffer a -3 penalty to their Attack Tests.

Cursed: The shield's curse causes metal objects to be even further attracted toward the wielder. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in ranged combat gain a +3 bonus to their Attack Tests. Opponents attacking the wielder with metallic weapons in close combat still suffer a -3 penalty to their Attack Tests, due to their weapons sticking to the target.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the miner who first discovered the metal used to make the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Magnashock** ability. The shield can now release electrical energy to shock those who strike it, in a similar way to the Lightning Shield spell (see p. 305 of the **Player's Compendium**). The Effect step is equal to the wielder's Willpower+2. Using this ability causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage to activate and is effective for one attack. Each time the Magnashock ability is used, reduce the magnetism of the shield by one degree—from Rank 5 to Rank 3, from Rank 3 to Rank 1, from Rank 1 to no effect—until the end of the round. For example, after using this ability once, the shield's magnetic effect would be equivalent to thread Rank 3 until the end of the following round. The shield rebuilds magnetism by one degree per round when this ability is not used. For example, the wielder uses the Magnashock ability three times over three consecutive rounds, reducing the shield's magnetic effect to nothing. It will take 3 rounds with no further use of the Magnashock ability for the shield to rebuild its full magnetic charge.

Cursed: Whenever a close combat attack strikes the shield, the wielder is shocked by the magnetic discharge and takes Step 3/D4 damage. No armor protects against this damage. A drop in magnetic effect does not reduce the negative effects of the curse.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder can use the shield to detect the presence of metal. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Gold Sense talent (see p. 187 of the **Player's Compendium**); this ability allows the wielder to detect precious metals and magnite, but not orichalcum or True elements. The wielder also gains a +2 rank bonus to his Detect Weapon talent (see p. 178 of the **Player's Compendium**); this ability only allows the wielder to detect metallic weapons.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must find a deposit of magnite ore, then use it to forge an additional band of metal to the protective layer of the shield. This deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The strengthened shield can better protect its wielder against metallic weapons. The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to the Metal Ward talent (see p. 192 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Bondforger

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Bondforger is a broadsword with a blood-red blade and a simple T-shaped brown crossguard and hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made this sword for Tav Korelsed, enchanting it with the power to persuade those whose blood has been spilt by it to join the wielder's cause.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Bloodbond** ability. Whenever the wielder cuts an opponent with the sword

for at least 1 Damage Point, he may attempt to bond his opponent to his cause. The wielder spends a standard action cutting himself on the blade, taking 1 Strain Point of damage, and mingling his blood with that of his opponent. He then makes a Charisma Test against his opponent's Social Defense. On a Good result, the opponent becomes Bloodbonded to the wielder. While the bond is in place, the Bloodbonded character will not willingly harm the wielder or his obvious friends; his attitude becomes Friendly toward the wielder. The effect ends if the wielder or one of his friends acts openly hostile toward the Bloodbonded character. The Bloodbond ability does not work against gamemaster characters who hold an Enemy attitude toward the wielder (see p. 90 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). Regardless of the outcome, the effect of this ability lasts for only a day.

Cursed: This ability only affects one opponent at any one time: the character last blooded by the blade. Whenever the wielder cuts a new opponent, the previously Bloodbonded character returns to his original Attitude. Even if his blood remains on the blade, the Bloodbonded character may make a Willpower Test against the wielder's Social Defense each round to try and break the effect. If the test succeeds, he returns to his original Attitude.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Tactics Tests (see p. 248 of the **Player's Compendium**) when leading Bloodbonded characters. If the wielder does not know the Tactics skill, he may use it as a Default Skill (see p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium**) for this ability, using his Perception step.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the blade's previous wielder and the Name of the last person that the previous wielder Bloodbonded.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Charisma-only Tests, including Bloodbond Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must discover the Names of all those who have been Bloodbonded to the sword. This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder may increase the duration of the **Bloodbond** ability using blood magic. For 1 permanent Damage Point, the wielder may extend the time that a Bloodbonded character remains Friendly to him to a year and a day. This damage can be healed when the Bloodbond ends. When the Bloodbond ends, even if the Bloodbond ends early through the wielder's actions or those of his friends, the Bloodbonded character's attitude toward the wielder will become Neutral (see p. 90 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Growler

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Growler is a body shield covered with a tanned hide bearing the face of a growling brithan. Tav Korelsed defeated a legendary brithan Named Brzexen, famed for its massive size and territoriality, in single combat, as part of his Warrior initiation. Tav had the brithan's head stuffed and mounted on his mantle. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus later used the stuffed brithan head to make a shield for Tav Korelsed, enchanting it with the power to strike fear into those who looked upon it.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal body shield.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Brithan's Gaze** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may present the shield's front face towards a close combat opponent. The wielder's opponent must be able to see the front of the shield. The brithan on the shield animates when this ability is used: its eyes

glow red, its nostrils flare, and its mouth grins wide, showing wickedly sharp teeth. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Frighten talent (see p.186 of the **Player's Compendium**). This effect frightens only one opponent per round.

Cursed: Friendly characters who view the shield may also be affected by fear. When scaring a friendly character this way, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the wielder's Frighten step.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Frighten talent when using the Brithan's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Frighten talent when using the Brithan's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7 and Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the legendary brithan who was defeated to make the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Brithan's Roar** ability. As a simple action, the brithan's mouth on the shield widens, growls, and gives out a loud roar. The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Battle Bellow talent (see p.172 of the **Player's Compendium**) when using the shield to Intimidate foes in this way.

Cursed: The wielder and any friendly characters who hear the roar are also gripped by fear. The gamemaster uses the shield's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the wielder's Battle Bellow step to determine if the wielder and friendly characters are affected. If Battle Bellow is used to inspire the wielder's companions, use this effect instead.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder becomes more courageous and less likely to succumb to fear or Intimidation. The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Lion Heart talent (p.190, **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must seek out and defeat a brithan in single combat. The gamemaster is encouraged to make this as difficult for the character as he feels appropriate, throwing other obstacles in the character's way as he seeks out the brithan. Once he has defeated the beast, he must return the body to Throal to be preserved and presented as a gift to the royal family. This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Champion Challenge talent (see p.175, **Player's Compendium**).

Bloodsong

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Bloodsong is a broadsword with a charcoal black blade, and a simple, T-shaped, red crossguard and hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made this sword for Thandos, enchanting it with the power to allow its wielder to relive the memories of those whose blood was spilt by it.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Blood Memory** ability. Whenever the wielder cuts someone with the sword for at least 1 Damage Point, he may attempt to access the target's memories. The wielder spends a standard action cutting himself on the blade, taking 1 Strain Point of damage, and mingling his blood with that of the

target character. He then makes a Perception Test against the target's Spell Defense. On a Good result, the wielder enters a trance and sees the target character's memories as if through the target's eyes. The wielder may ask one question of the target, which the character attempts to answer to the best of his ability, displaying memories to the wielder in response. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the sword's thread rank. Each round, the drops of blood on the blade sizzle and smoke, leaving a blackened residue on the blade. Using this ability is not without its dangers, as memories of painful events can inflict damage to the wielder in a similar manner to the Experience Death spell (see p. 346 of the **Player's Compendium**). This ability is not restricted to use only in combat; it can be used any time.

Cursed: When the **Blood Memory** ability is used, the wielder may also be exposed to false memories, forged in the dreams, nightmares, and delusions of the target. Nightmares are especially dangerous since these are almost always filled with terrifying and painful memories.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the blade's previous wielder and the Name of the last person that the previous wielder used the sword's Blood Memory ability on.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Perception-only Tests, including Blood Memory Tests.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must discover the Names of all those who have had their memories accessed by the sword's Blood Memory ability. This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Shared Blood Memory** ability. This works in the same way as the Blood Memory ability, except others may each use a standard action to cut themselves with the sword, taking 1 Strain Point of damage, then touch the wielder to "share" the target character's memory. Any damage caused by the target having dangerous memories is inflicted evenly among those participating in the shared experience. This greatly reduces the risk of major harm to the wielder and those present. The maximum number of participants that can share the memory is equal to the wielder's thread rank.

Mindreaver

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Mindreaver is a body shield covered with green scales and bearing the grinning face of a dragon. Thandos gave a dragon's head to the Weaponsmith Byrnicus to help make him a shield (how he got the head was never explained). Byrnicus used the dragon's head to make a shield for Thandos, enchanting it with the power to mesmerize those who look upon it, making them forget their purpose.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal body shield.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Dragon's Gaze** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may present the shield's front face towards a close combat opponent. The wielder's opponent must be able to see the front of the shield. The dragon on the shield animates when this ability is used: its irises glow a golden color and the eyes sway from left to right and back. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Mind Wave talent (see p. 192 of the **Player's Compendium**). This effect mesmerizes only one opponent per round.

Cursed: Friendly characters who view the shield may also be entranced. When mesmerizing a friendly character this way, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the wielder's Mind Wave step.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Mind Wave talent when using the Dragon's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Mind Wave talent when using the Dragon's Gaze ability.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the dragon who was defeated to make the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 8 and Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder becomes less likely to succumb to mind-affecting spells and talents. The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense when targeted by mind-affecting spells and talents, and a +3 bonus to his Willpower Tests to regain his memory or mental faculties.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must seek out a dragon and successfully engage it in conversation without succumbing to the creature's mind tricks. (If the gamemaster thinks it more appropriate, this could be a Horror instead.) This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Dragon's Stare** ability. This ability can only be used against an opponent who is currently under the effect of the Dragon's Gaze ability, and who can see the front of the shield. The wielder makes a Mind Wave Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target forgets the events of 1 minute for each result level achieved, in a similar manner to the Memory Blank spell (see p. 332 of the **Player's Compendium**). The effect is permanent, however, and not an illusion.

Thornwhistler

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Thornwhistler is a wooden short sword with many hollows in the blade, a small circular crossguard, and a leather-bound hilt. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus gathered branches and cones from a coniferous tree in the Throal Mountains, Named the Silarch tree, to make the sword. Byrnicus created this sword for Ambica, enchanting it with the power to strike enemies at a distance without being thrown.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a wooden short sword (see p. 292 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Air Slash** ability. When swung by the wielder as his standard action, the sword can generate a gust of air that strikes an opponent from a distance. The sword gives out a whistling sound as air passes through the hollows in its blade. Using this ability causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage. The wielder uses his Melee Weapons or Throwing Weapons step for the Attack Test. The Range of the attack is: Short 2-9, Medium 10-15, Long 16-18. If the attack hits, the wielder makes a Damage Test for the sword, as normal.

Cursed: When this ability is used, the sword generates a gust of air that strikes the wielder or a friendly character instead. The gamemaster uses the sword's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 for the Attack Test; the wielder makes a Damage Test for the sword.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to: Short 2—12, Medium 13—20, Long 21—24.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the sword was made.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to: Short 2-15, Medium 16-25, Long 26-30.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the tree whose wood was used to create the sword.

Effect: The Range of the sword's Air Slash ability increases to: Short 2-18, Medium 19-30, Long 31-36.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must locate and visit the Silarch tree, from which wood the sword was made. He must climb the tree and collect several handfuls of thorns from the branches that grow at the very top. These thorns must be implanted into the sword's blade and crossguard by a Woodsmith—a Weaponsmith who specializes in crafting weapons from wood (see p. 292 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

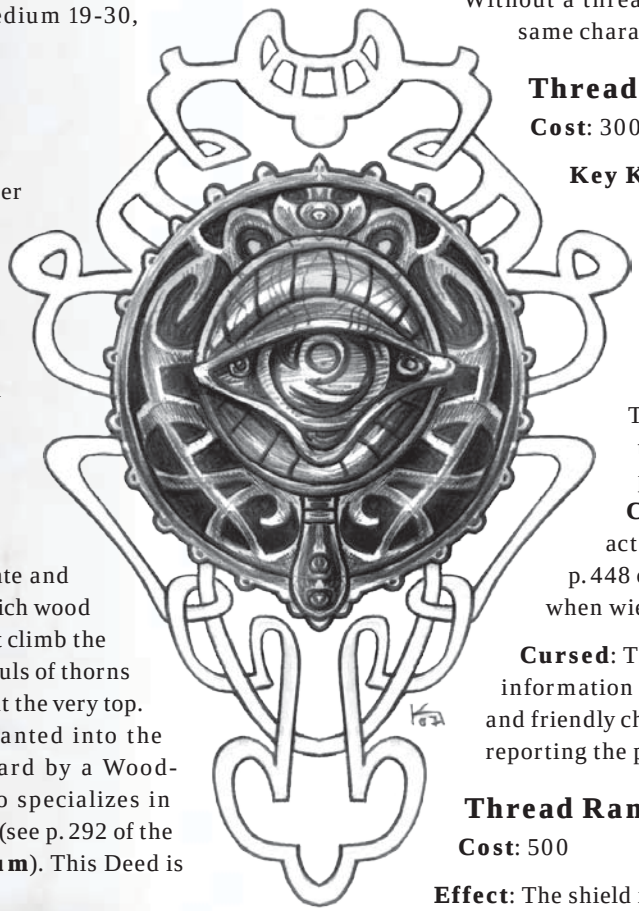
Effect: The wielder gains the **Thorn Flurry** ability. When the wielder uses the Air Slash ability, for +1 additional Strain Point of damage, he may fire a flurry of thorns towards one or more target characters. In addition to the Air Slash effect, the wielder makes a separate Melee Weapons or Throwing Weapons Test for each thorn. If the test succeeds, the wielder makes a Damage Test, treating each thorn as a Damage step 4/D6 throwing weapon. The maximum number of thorns that can be fired in a flurry is equal to the sword's Damage step. The wielder determines how many thorns are directed against each character. All of the targets must be within 2 yards of the target of the Air Slash attack. Each time the Thorn Flurry ability is used, the sword's Damage step is reduced by –1. Like all thread weapons, this damage is automatically restored at the rate of +1 Damage step per week (see p. 439 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the wielder causes the sword to lower its Damage step below 1 by using this ability, the weapon is destroyed.

Everwary

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Everwary is a buckler with a hole in the middle, revealing a strange amber eye. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created the shield by constructing a large cloaksense brooch and embedding it inside a buckler, rather than attaching it to a cloak. Byrnicus created this shield for Ambica, enchanting it with the power to watch for danger and disarm any who dare raise arms against its wielder.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal buckler.



Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The first thread activates the amber eye. The wielder gains the **Detect Intent** ability, and can sense the hostile intentions of others. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Sense Danger talent (see p. 269 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). The shield also acts like a cloaksense brooch (see p. 448 of the **Player's Compendium**) when wielded.

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the intentions of hostile and friendly characters, as well as erroneously reporting the presence of hidden attackers.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The shield can sense the presence of hidden weapons. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Detect Weapon talent (see p. 178 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the location of hidden weapons on hostile and friendly characters.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Warrior for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Disarming Shield** ability. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may use the shield to attempt to disarm one close combat opponent per round as a simple action. The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Disarm talent (see p. 179 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Cursed: The wielder risks disarming himself when he uses this ability. The gamemaster uses the shield's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the wielder's Disarm step.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 3.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn how the shield was constructed.

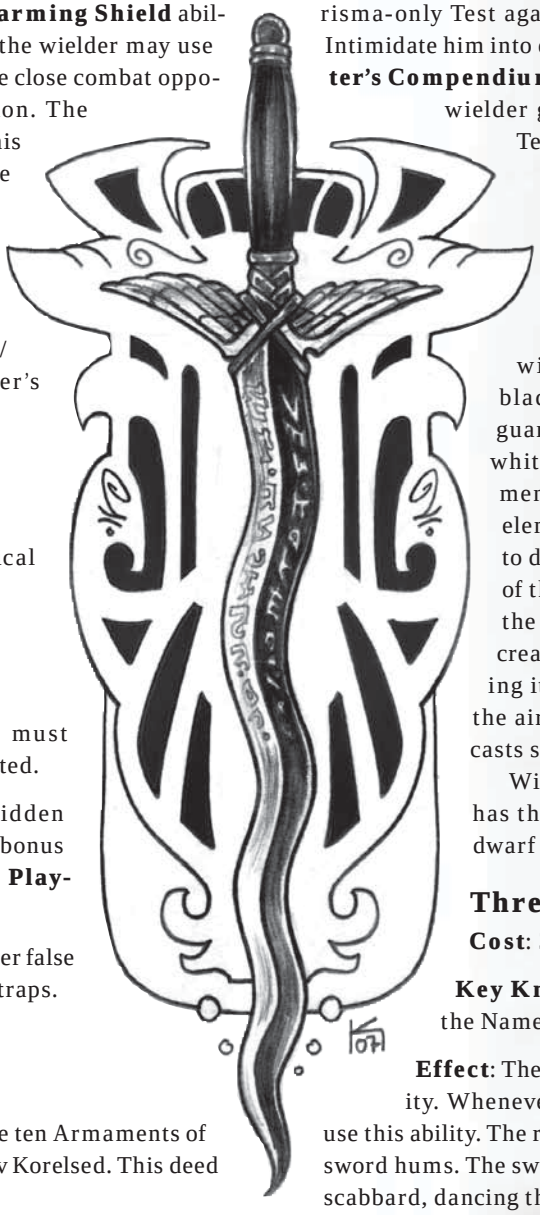
Effect: The shield can sense hidden traps. The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Detect Trap talent (p. 178, **Player's Compendium**).

Cursed: The shield gives the wielder false information about the location of traps.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.



Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 2. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: Byrnicus found the amber from which he made the eye in a cave, deep in the Throal Mountains. In this cave was a tree, guarded by three guardians, which he defeated. The wielder must find the location of the cave and defeat any surviving guardians. This Deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Disarming Glare** ability. As a standard action, the wielder may attempt to disarm one character within 10 yards' distance. The target character must be known to be hostile to the wielder and either have a weapon in-hand or be known (through an earlier Detect Weapon Test) to have a concealed weapon. He must also be able to see the front of the shield. As the wielder glares at his opponent, the amber eye animates and swirls about the shield in a maddening fashion. The wielder orders the target character to drop or discard his weapon, then makes a Charisma-only Test against the target's Social Defense to Intimidate him into doing so (see p. 93 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Charisma Test.

Spelldancer

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Spelldancer is a dwarf sword with a wavy, double-edged, silver blade engraved with runes; a cross-guard that looks like two fully extended white wings; and a black hilt. The Elementalist Garaham summoned an air elemental Named Celyjina, who loved to dance in the cold winds on the slopes of the Throal Mountains, to help create the sword. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus created the sword for Garaham, enchanting it with the power to dance through the air and slice at foes while the wielder casts spells.

Without a thread attached, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal dwarf sword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Spell Dance** ability. Whenever the wielder casts a spell, he may use this ability. The runes on the blade glow blue, and the sword hums. The sword leaps from the wielder's hand or scabbard, dancing through the air, and strikes any oppo-

nent within 2 yards of the wielder. The sword has an Attack step equal to the wielder's Dexterity step + thread rank. Use the sword's Damage step to determine how much damage is inflicted. Physical Armor protects against this damage, as normal. The sword can make one attack per round. The sword dances for 2 rounds before dropping to the ground at the wielder's feet.

Cursed: When the wielder casts a spell, the sword may attack the wielder or a friendly character in range. The gamemaster uses the sword's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the normal Attack step.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the sword.

Effect: If at least one thread is used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 3 rounds.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Elementalist for whom the sword was made.

Effect: If at least two threads are used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 4 rounds.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the air elemental who helped create the sword.

Effect: If at least three threads are used to power the spell being cast, the sword can now dance for 5 rounds.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Shocksword** ability. The sword can convert spell energy to create an effect similar to the Flameweapon spell (see p. 296 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wielder does not take damage if the die result is greater than 4. Add a Step 3/D4 Electric die to the Damage step of the sword for 1 round. If the sword is dancing, shorten the dance duration by -1 round when this power is used. The wielder takes 1 Strain Point of damage to activate this power.

Cursed: Whenever the Electric die result is greater than 4, the wielder is also shocked by the discharge and takes 1 Damage Point from electricity (even when the sword is dancing—electricity arcs to hit the wielder). No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: The wielder must find the air elemental who imbued the sword with some of its power. The wielder swears a blood oath (see p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**) to protect the air elemental from its enemies, and the elemental air deposits of the sky above the Throal Mountains from those who would steal them, such as miners and Therans. If the wielder breaks his oath, the sword immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair. This deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the **Blade Dance** ability. The wielder adds +5 to his Physical Defense when the sword is dancing. If an opponent attacks the wielder with a close combat Attack Test result at least equal to the wielder's normal Physical Defense, but less than his modified Physical Defense when the sword is dancing, he strikes the sword instead, which deflects the attack and then attempts to strike the attacker. The sword makes an Attack Test against the opponent's Physical Defense to determine if the counterattack hits. The sword can only make one counterattack per round. Further attacks that round can be deflected, however, the sword loses –1 round of dancing per successful deflection or counterattack.

Spellgorger

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

Spellgorger is a silvered buckler made from a unique combination of living crystal, elementally-charged earth, and metal, with a distinctive runic carving of an open maw with endless rows of crystalline teeth surrounding a forming spell pattern. The Elementalist Garaham summoned an earth elemental Named Tefmirgap, who protected the Throal Mountains, to help create the shield. The Weaponsmith Byrnicus made the shield for Garaham, enchanting it with the power to capture spells directed at the wielder for later casting, rather than deflect them like other silvered shields.

Without a thread attached, the shield has the same characteristics as a crystal buckler shield.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield.

Effect: The wielder may use the shield like a crystal spell box (see p. 182 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**) to capture one spell. To capture a spell, the wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the result of the Spellcasting Test made to cast the spell. If the wielder's test succeeds, the shield "captures" the spell; the spell has no effect. Unlike a crystal spell box, to release and use a spell stored in the shield, the wielder must use his own Spellcasting and Willpower or Willforce abilities to determine the spell's effect, but need not weave any threads.

Cursed: The shield no longer captures spells but instead eats them, the curse feeding on the magical energy of the spell. The shield may attempt to absorb spells cast by the wielder or spells cast by friendly characters targeting the wielder. To absorb a friendly character's or the wielder's own spells, the gamemaster uses the shield's Curse step of 14/D20+D4 in place of the wielder's Spellcasting step. The shield can successfully absorb one spell per round.



Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 2 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the Name of the Weaponsmith who created the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Spellcasting and Willforce talents when capturing spells into or casting spells from the shield.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 3 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Elementalist for whom the shield was made.

Effect: The shield now holds two spells.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the earth elemental who helped create the shield.

Effect: The shield now holds three spells. The wielder can release the magical energy held within the shield to power his own spells, as a simple action. For each spell released in this manner, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting, Thread Weaving, and spell Effect Tests.

Cursed: The gluttonous shield now attempts to absorb magical energy from its wielder if it hasn't fed on at least one spell per encounter. To absorb energy from its wielder, the gamemaster makes a Step 14/D20+D4 Curse Test against the wielder's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the magical drain could cause several effects, at the gamemaster's discretion. These effects could include the loss of a Karma Point or Recovery Test, a Step 14/D20+D4 Curse Damage Test, a penalty equal to the shield's thread rank on Talent Tests until a spell is absorbed, and so on.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must gather the ten Armaments of Byrnicus and break the curse of Tav Korelsed. This deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The shield grants elemental fortitude; the wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Knockdown and Recovery Tests.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Deed: It is said that Garaham had the support of the Throal Mountains themselves. The wielder must find the earth elemental who imbued the shield with some of its power. The wielder swears a blood oath (see p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**) to protect the earth elemental from its enemies, and the elemental earth deposits of the Throal Mountains from those who would steal them, such as miners and Therans. If the wielder breaks his oath, the shield immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair. This deed is worth 14,400 Legend Points.

Effect: By standing or sitting on the back of the shield, the wielder can move earth and mountains underneath him at will. The wielder gains a +4 rank bonus to his Moving Earth talent (see p. 193 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Tools of the Architect

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 21

The Tools of the Architect are a set of tools like those regularly used by architects. They include utilities for writing, drawing, measuring, and calculating, all stored in a wooden, metal-reinforced box. The box is worn, but intricately decorated. The tools are a craftsman's item, blessed by Upandal, and were the dearest possessions of the architect who designed the Inner Cities of Throal. Upandal blessed the item after the architect had already envisioned the Inner Cities, but had found it impossible to calculate their statistics and draw schematics to work with.

Few people know of the legend of the Tools of the Architect, although they are items of great power for the Inner Cities. The Tools of the Architect only grant their powers if all of them, including the box, are in the bearer's possession.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the tools.

Effect: The bearer receives a +1 bonus to his Talent and Skill Tests when in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the Name of the architect.

Effect: The bearer adds +1 to his Physical, Social, and Spell Defense when in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the details of the architect's most important designs.

Effect: When the bearer designs an item using the tools, he halves the design time required. Additionally, when the bearer crafts an item that he has designed using the tools, even with assistance from others, he halves the crafting time required.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The bearer gains a +1 bonus to his Talent and Skill Tests, and adds +1 to his Physical, Social, and Spell Defense, when in the Halls of Throal. These bonuses rise to +2 when the bearer is in the Inner Cities of Throal.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The bearer must learn the story of the tools after they left the architect's possession; in particular, he must learn which important designs were created with them.



Effect: When using the tools, the bearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Fortify Structure questor power (see p. 475 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the bearer does not know the Fortify Structure questor power, he may use it three times per day, as if he had the Questor talent at Rank 3.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The bearer must use the tools to help improve or complete one of the Inner Cities of Throal. The gamemaster determines how much assistance is required to complete the Deed. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The bearer may spend a Karma Point on his Talent Tests when in the Halls or Inner Cities of Throal.



WINDCLAW

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Created by Larm Keenedge, this thread charge sword is Named Windclaw, and is wielded by General Nikar Carinci (see p. 236 of the **A Tour of the Serpent** chapter).

Without a thread attached, Windclaw has the same characteristics as a normal charge sword (see p. 285 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's creators.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 10.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 11.

WINDRAZOR

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Created by Azim Keel and Larm Keenedge, this thread broadsword is Named Windrazor, and is wielded by Captain Drak Windsearcher (see p. 242 of the **A Tour of the Serpent** chapter).

Without a thread attached, Windrazor has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of the sword's creators.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 10.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wielder gains the **Shocksword** ability. The wielder takes 1 Strain Point of damage and uses a simple action to activate this power. For 1 round, he rolls a Step 3/D4 Electric die with the sword's Damage Tests. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

New Riverboats

Right my fine lads and lasses. Wait until you can count the buttons on their tunics before you open fire. Let's show these Henghyoke pirates how a real *warship fights!*

• T'slon Monsara, Captain of the *Serpent Fang* •



The standard ships of the Serpent River fall into two broad groups: the paddle-wheeled riverboats of the t'skrang and the galleys of the merchant cities. These two classifications contain a number of distinct ship types, such as warships, trading ships, pirate vessels, sailing ships, barges, and canoes.

Rules for ships and ship combat can be found in the **Airships and Riverboats** chapter, starting on p. 141 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**. This chapter provides game statistics for additional ship types.

Ship Profiles

The following profiles provide descriptions and game statistics for the most common types of vessels that travel the Serpent River system.

Aras Sea Galley

The People from Across the Aras Sea build massive seaworthy galleys, which are a common sight at the port of Urupa. Like typical Barsaivian war galleys, these closed-deck vessels feature two banks of oars. Because the People from Across the Sea forbid foreigners to board their ships, little is known about the interior design of these craft.

Most seem to possess crews of 300 men, and their hulls bristle with the ugly upturned snouts of fire cannons.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 5
Maneuverability: 6
Firepower: 22/22

Hull:
Armor: 24 **Ramming**: 24
Cargo: 120

Damage:
Derelict: 104 **Critical**: 28
Destroyed: 110

Crew:
Captain: 5 **Crew Size**: 300
Crew Skill: 1 **Crew Rating**: 18
Morale: 109

Freelance Pirate

The typical pirate vessel carries less armor than an *aropagoi* warship, but pirate captains usually try to outfit their ships with every fire cannon they can get their hands on. Most pirate crews have problems keeping a steady supply of ammunition for their cannons, however, and so cannot afford to fire them all at the same time.

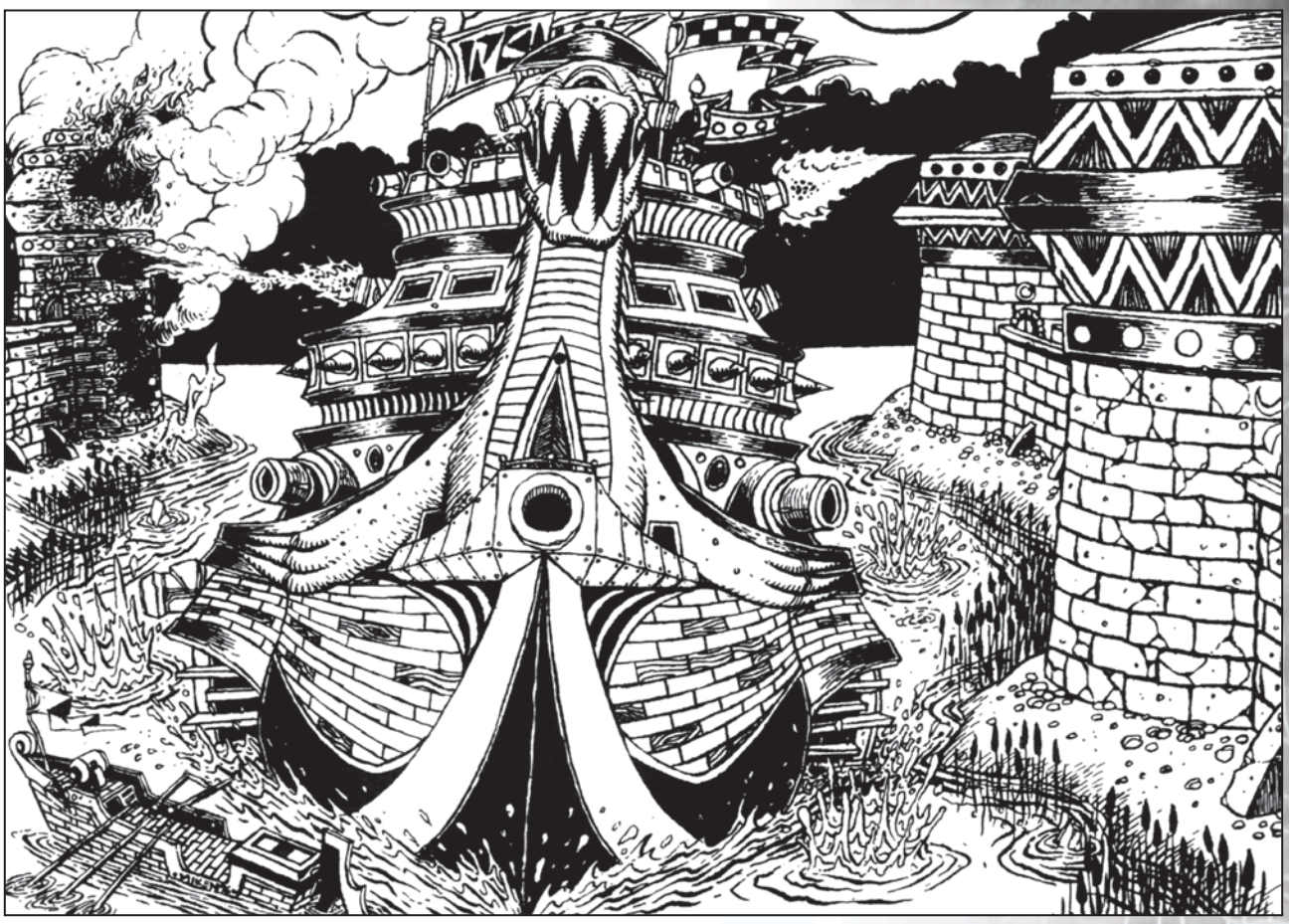
Keeping an adequate supply of fuel for their fire engines is also a problem for pirate crews. They also have few opportunities to overhaul their vessels' fire engines, which adversely affects their ships' maneuverability. As a result of these drawbacks, most pirate captains rely on board and storm tactics rather than firepower when engaging opponents.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 7 (6)
Firepower: 17 (13)/17

Hull:
Armor: 15 **Ramming**: 25
Cargo: 220

Damage:
Derelict: 65 **Critical**: 21
Destroyed: 72



Crew:
Captain: 5
Crew Skill: 1
Morale: 64

Crew Size: 30
Crew Rating: 16

Henghyokian Marauder

Henghyokian marauders are the most dangerous boats on the river. Fortunately, House Henghyoke appears to have only three or four of these remarkable ships. These marauders outclass their opponents on nearly every level. They exhibit superior speed, maneuverability, firepower, and crews, and they seem to possess an inexplicable ramming advantage. Some observers believe the Henghyokians use magic to augment their ramming attacks, because opponents who have experienced such attacks typically report seeing blue flashes just prior to impact. Additionally, Henghyokian captains regularly augment their crews with large battle-trained river otters (see p. 312 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Henghyokian marauders also seem to possess the ability to vanish without a trace when pursued. In game terms, add +5 to a Henghyokian marauder's Speed for Speed Tests made to avoid pursuit. If a marauder evades pursuit, add +5 to the Henghyokian captain's Pilot Boat talent when determining the Difficulty Number of any Read River Test the pursuer makes to track the marauder (see p. 148 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

Base Price: NA

Speed: 8
Maneuverability: 9
Firepower: 21/21

Hull:
Armor: 18
Cargo: 75

Ramming: 32

Damage:
Derelict: 77
Destroyed: 84

Critical: 23

Crew:
Captain: 7
Crew Skill: 4
Morale: 83

Crew Size: 200
Crew Rating: 20

Special

Henghyoke marauders add +5 to Speed Tests and the captain's Pilot Boat step when evading pursuit.

Ishkarat Warship

The warships of House Ishkarat contain a number of features that reflect the Ishkaratans' unique battle tactics. First, Ishkaratan vessels feature narrow, sleek hulls that enable them to close on unsuspecting opponents quickly and withdraw just as rapidly if the tide of battle turns. The sleek hull design also results in narrow decks, which make boarding an Ishkaratan vessel more difficult for opponents. And the low profiles of Ishkaratan ships provide smaller targets for enemy gunners.

The Ishkaratans consider their crews, largely composed of trained Swordmasters, the main weapons of their warships. To increase the effectiveness of boarding actions and allow their crews opportunities to fight, every Ishkaratan warship is fitted with a large, permanently attached gangplank called a corvus. The typical corvus is 5 yards wide and 10 yards long. Massive hinges and winch-operated swing lines connect the corvus to its warship. When the warship closes with an enemy, the Ishkaratan crew drops the corvus onto their opponent's deck. Iron spikes mounted on the underside of the corvus' far end ensure that the plank attaches firmly to the enemy vessel. Then the warship's Swordmasters swarm across the corvus and onto the opponent's ship.

The Ishkaratans consider fire cannons a secondary weapon, and so the cannons on most Ishkaratan warships are slightly smaller than those used by other *aropagoi*. As a result, the range and firepower of Ishkaratan fire cannons are slightly inferior.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 8
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 15/20

Hull:
Armor: 16 **Ramming**: 25
Cargo: 155

Damage:
Derelict: 69 **Critical**: 22
Destroyed: 76

Crew:
Captain: 6 **Crew Size**: 75
Crew Skill: 2 **Crew Rating**: 17
Morale: 70

Special

The corvus adds +3 to an Ishkaratan warship's Crew Rating during the first turn of any boarding action. Additionally, the device adds a +3 Difficulty Modifier to tests made by an opponent attempting to break off from an Ishkaratan boarding action.

Raft of the Pale Ones

The rafts built by the t'skrang known as the Pale Ones are remarkably tough and buoyant. Typically, a t'skrang armed with a long pole stands on each corner of the 7-yard-by-4-yard craft to push it along the water. The fifth crew member watches the water ahead and rests until one of his comrades requires relief. The raft can carry far more weight than seems possible. As the opponents in conflicts over territory, dwarfs have reported seeing as many as 30 warriors on a single raft. The numbers in parentheses represent the crew ratings of rafts fully loaded with passengers.

For more information about the Pale Ones, see pp. 138–140 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**.

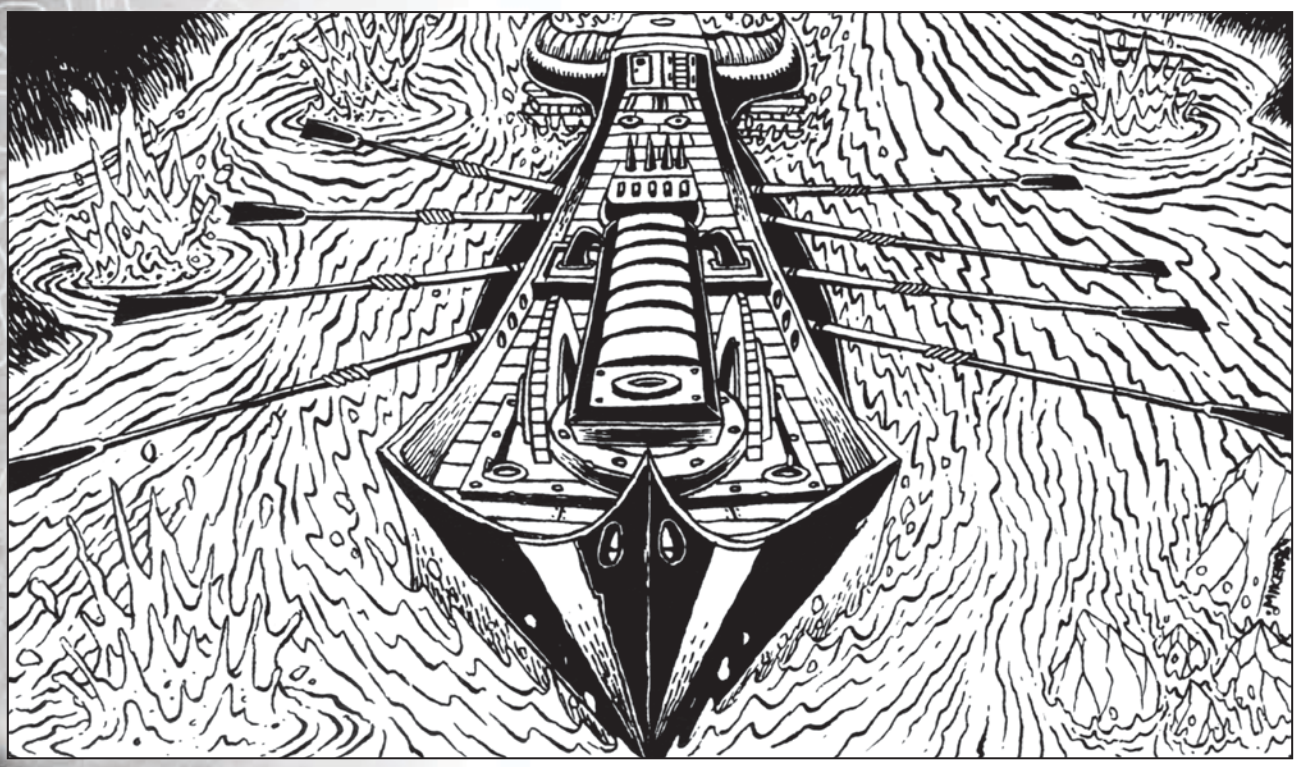
Base Price: 1,400

Speed: 4
Maneuverability: 4
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 10 **Ramming**: 14
Cargo: 25 (0)

Damage:
Derelict: 45 **Critical**: 15
Destroyed: 52

Crew:
Captain: 3 **Crew Size**: 5 (30)





Crew Skill: 1 **Crew Rating**: 9 (12)
Morale: 44 (51)

V'strimonian shimoram

The *shimoram* is a small V'strimonian attack ship built for speed and maneuverability. The word *shimoram*, in fact, means "eye blink," a reference to the quickness of these nimble vessels. Although the typical *shimoram* is less than 30 yards long, the ship packs a powerful punch.

The *shimoram's* keel, a unique feature among river vessels, and its light weight enable it to run and maneuver more quickly than virtually any other type of ship on the Serpent. And when fitted with its special, detachable ramming head, the swift *shimoram* is actually more dangerous than many larger vessels in ramming contests.

The *shimoram's* relatively small size limits the size of its crew, so most *shimoram* captains employ the so-called Westhrall principle when engaging in combat: never let 'em board your ship.

Base Price: 55,000

Speed: 8
Maneuverability: 8
Firepower: 17/17

Hull:
Armor: 16 **Ramming**: 28
Cargo: 50

Damage:
Derelict: 68 **Critical**: 21
Destroyed: 75

Crew:
Captain: 6 **Crew Size**: 150
Crew Skill: 3 **Crew Rating**: 19
Morale: 74

War canoe

These large canoes, typically used by the fierce jungle t'skrang, are so durable that they can even withstand the average damage caused by a fire cannon. When they attack in a group, they pose a serious threat despite the attackers' primitive weapons and equipment.

The war canoes race toward the target riverboat, ducking under the fire cannon barrage, then draw alongside the enemy vessel so that the crew can climb up the sides and storm the deck.

Base Price: 45

Speed: 3
Maneuverability: 4
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 5 **Ramming**: 8
Cargo: 1

Damage:
Derelict: 24 **Critical**: 8
Destroyed: 32

Crew:
Captain: 2 **Crew Size**: 10
Crew Skill: 1 **Crew Rating**: 11
Morale: 31

War Galley

The typical Barsaivian war galley is a closed-deck ship with two banks of oars. Two rowers man each oar in the top bank. War galleys are about the same size as t'skrang riverboats, but they possess slightly more armor and firepower. Although war galleys are slower and less maneuverable than *aropagoian* warships, the size and morale of their crews match those of *aropagoian* battle crews. As a result, a competently commanded war galley can fairly match nearly any *aropagoian* warship.

The war galleys of Urupa and the V'strimonian warship based in the city often stage mock battles to hone their skills—and the galleys emerge victorious as often as the warship.

Base Price: 195,000

Speed: 5
Maneuverability: 6
Firepower: 20/20

Hull:
Armor: 19 **Ramming**: 19
Cargo: 60

Damage:
Derelict: 82 **Critical**: 24
Destroyed: 88

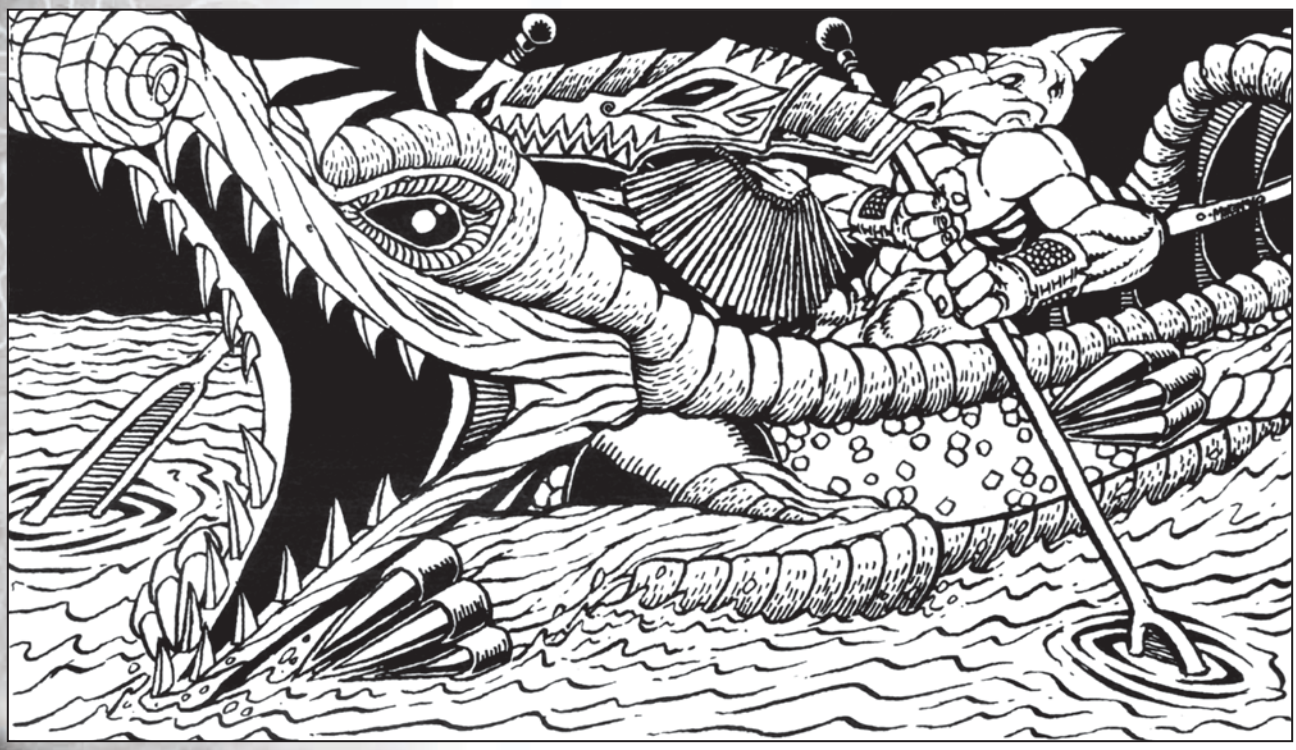
Crew:
Captain: 5 **Crew Size**: 150
Crew Skill: 1 **Crew Rating**: 19
Morale: 87

Riverboat Crew

The average Circle of crew members aboard a riverboat equals the Crew Skill rating listed in the ship's game statistics. Additionally, most riverboats have four officers—first mate, boatswain, quartermaster, and engineer—of at least Fifth Circle. The typical t'skrang captain is at least Seventh Circle. Boatmen prefer the broadsword and parrying net for melee combat and the spear for ranged combat.

All riverboat crewmen are considered Boatmen (see p. 168 of the **Name-giver's Compendium**). Typical statistics for t'skrang riverboat crewmen are shown on the following pages.

The values listed after each talent represent the average talent rank and talent step at a particular Circle. The first number is the talent rank, the second number is the talent step. Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle. Also included are a range of equipment options for different Circles



Typical T'skrang Riverboat Crewman

Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12 | **Strength** (13): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (13): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8 | **Willpower** (13): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (15): 6/D10

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	9	9	9	12	13	14
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	10
Social Defense:	8	8	8	9	11	14
Physical Armor:	8	8	9	9	9	9
Mystic Armor:	2	2	5	5	5	5

Initiative Step: 6/D10
Knockdown Step: 6/D10
Combat Movement: 34
Full Movement: 68

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	41	53	65	77	89	101
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	32	42	52	62	72	82

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	8	11	20	25	25	25

Karma Die: 4/D6

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Avoid Blow	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Climbing [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/16	9/18	11/20
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Pilot Boat [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Swimming [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Cast Net [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Haggle [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Wound Balance [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (Net Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Unarmed Combat	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Acrobatic Strike	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Evaluate [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Engaging Banter [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Speak Language	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Heartening Laugh	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Second Weapon [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Great Leap	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Disarm	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lion Heart [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Second Attack	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Detect Falsehood	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Swing Attack [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Defense [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Shield Beater	—	—	—	—	—	11/11

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.
Italicized talents require Karma.

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Fishing	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Maneuver	1/8	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Navigation	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Sailing	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Tactics	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Taunt	—	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9
Trading	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Knowledge:						
Botany	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Creature Lore	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Artisan:						
Entertainer (Singing)	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Mapmaking	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11

Loot	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Silver Pieces	35	75	145	295	655	1,565

Legend Points	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Legend Point Award	120	165	430	1,415	4,780	11,725

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Flowing Blade (Damage 11/D10+D8; w/scabbard), Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6), Casting Net (Entangle 10), Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Tail Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Spear (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36), Adventurer's Kit, Craftsman Tools, Fishing Kit, Trail Rations (1 week), Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Flowing Blade (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Cloaksense Brooch, Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case, Writing Kit

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Flowing Blade (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8; Tail Damage 8/2D6), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Flowing Blade (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10; Tail Damage 8/2D6), Barbed Net (Damage 8/2D6; Entangle 14), 2 × Barbed Throwing Nets (Range 7–11–14; Entangle 11), Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing step +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Longbow (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 60–120–240), Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows), Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; +1 Charisma-only Tests), Theft Proof Pouch

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2), Quiver (w/40 longbow arrows)

Notes

The adept possesses the t'skrang racial ability of Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10).

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Seventh Circle: Karma on melee weapon Damage Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; +1 Spell Defense
Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense; +1 Recovery Test (3)
Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense; +1 Recovery Test (4)

CHARACTER INDEX

Character? Hic! I'll sh-show ya character! Jusht as shoon as I sober up. Hey! While ya wait, could ya shpare an old dwarf soldier down on hish luck a coupla silvers for some ale?

• Old Darrik, Drunken Ex-Soldier •



The following tables list all the major characters introduced in **Nations of Barsaive: Volume One**, as well as a few characters from previous **Earthdawn** products who live in and around Throal and Bartertown or along the Serpent River. The characters appear in alphabetical order in each section, one for Throal and one for the Serpent River. Each listing includes the character's Name, a page number on which the character first appears, and a brief description of the character, including race, gender, official position (if any), and general personality.

These tables can be used to create stories. See **Using Characters to Create Adventures** on p.155 for more information on how to do this. Character Names in **bold text** are described with full game statistics in this book.

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Aessraeth	p.142	Clever astral Horror that can project its mind into animals, such as cats
Agak Plankhead	p.98	Imperious old ork woman; captain of Stinking Renders cavalry
Ajmar the Admirable	p.69	Ork man; pompous but skillful Court Spellcaster of Throal
Alfaliel	p.31	Quiet, apolitical elf woman; head of Circle Path Company
Allinia	p.85	Dwarf woman, articulate and dedicated advocate
Apulian Coriatus	p.90	Vain, resentful human man; unrecognized Theran "legate" to Throal
Arlorn	p.136	Elf man, agent of the Eye of Throal stationed in Bartertown
Aurbach	p.122	Humorless, beleaguered human woman; Chancellor of Tirtaga
Avanil	p.51	Human woman; bandit-turned-double-agent for the Eye of Throal
Azakis	p.78	Soft-spoken, empathetic dwarf woman; Officer of the Court in charge of race relations
Bazana Gems-Dripping	p.90	Shrewd, acquisitive ork woman; diplomat of Travar stationed in Throal
Belyawain	p.54	Angry, fanatical dwarf man; head of Ja'kotton philosophy movement
Beracia	p.29	Subtle, elegant dwarf woman; head of House Byril'ah
Beverun	p.98	Ork man given to wild mood swings; captain of Grinning Wounds cavalry
Bilmo the Braggart	p.110	Swaggering dwarf man, claims to be a re-Named legendary hero; runs the Fur-Covered Elephant inn
Brainbiter	p.135	Friendly troll man and retired adventurer, runs the Juggling Shadowmant tavern in Bartertown
Brolonicus	p.34	Wily, murderous dwarf man; head of Mogs, anti-reformist faction in Guild of Guildmasters
Budicett Ermine-Robes	p.103	Tubby, blustering dwarf man; dealer in inexpensive perfumes
Bujmon	p.14	Ancient dwarf king, promised dominion over Throal Mountains by the Passion Raggok
Buna Wordmaker	p.85	Ork woman; flamboyant, shameless advocate

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Buurtan	p.133	A brutal troll champion in a pit fighting arena in Bartertown
Charboyya	p.137	Wise, kindly dwarf man; prosperous silk merchant and leader of pro-annexation faction in Bartertown
Chardthom Mole-Spattered	p.90	Kind-hearted, spectacularly ugly troll man; senior diplomat and expert on Theran affairs
Chuhk Alabamarian	p.88	Pedantic and quarrelsome human man; Claims to be rightful ruler of Iopos in exile
Cibonicus	p.16	Misguided, irresponsible dwarf man; Nethermancer, obsessed with the events of the Founding
Cleotha Splayfoot	p.94	A merchant living in Haven and kaer dweller reporting to the Eye of Throal about Parlainth
Clifberz IV	p.123	Fretful, change-hating dwarf; Baron of Wishon
Clystone	p.128	Human man; corrupt, ruthless magistrate of Bartertown
Crarites	p.59	Apparently a troll trader, actually a manifestation of Raggok
Curticia	p.28	Warm-hearted, sensible dwarf woman; head of House Mikul; would rather compromise with Thera
D'Abrunia Koriaj	p.44	Dwarf woman; archconservative, hero-worshipping creator of brilliant mosaic murals
Dajag Treaty-Keeper	p.120	Steely, efficient ork; Baroness of Bethabal
Dalubian	p.78	Depressed, self-pitying dwarf man; Officer of the Court in charge of waste disposal
Dequaria Alando	p.91	Thoughtful, regal human woman; Urupa's ambassador to Throal, friend to Dollas
Derrisk	p.58	Widely celebrated, warmongering dwarf man; Grand Elder of Thystonius
Diona the Swift	p.89	Feisty, combative ork woman; Kratas' ambassador to Throal and a friend to Neden
Divuna Divunicus	p.121	Calm, motherly dwarf; presumptive Baroness of Hustane
Dollas	p.66	Dwarf woman; insightful, socially skilled queen-mother of Throal; wife of the late Varulus III
Drumilica	p.71	Foppish, inane dwarf man; courtier of House Pa'vas
Dwalis	p.110	Talkative, rumor-spreading ork man; proprietor of The Tasty Thundra Inn
Earal Bloodstroke	p.98	Bold, hearty ork man; commands the half of Terath's Chargers stationed outside Throal
Earthroot	p.151	Great Dragon; King of the Pale Ones
Ela Pono	p.41	Ork woman; corrupt apprentice of Thom and archivist at the Great Library
Elberia the Avenger	p.138	Taciturn, brooding blood-elf woman; leader of vigilante cult newly arrived in Bartertown
Elvak Questorsmasher	p.55	Hot-blooded ork man; legendary adventurer with a grudge against questors of Mad Passions
Emor Hawkcruncher	p.139	Troll man, slow-witted leader of the Grim Legion in Bartertown
Eyorgicus	p.92	Brilliant, dispassionate dwarf man; member of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, son of its head
Felerius	p.85	Dwarf man; witty, authoritative advocate
Fezulon	p.160	Old, male dwarf food seller; very talkative
Foellerian	p.95	Fierce, determined dwarf woman; Supreme General of the Arms of Throal
Garlthik One-Eye	p.170, p.255	Ork Thief and ruler of Kratas; Saved Varulus III during the Death Rebellion and remains an ally
Gesan and Trevas	p.46	Feuding husband-and-wife actors, both dwarfs
Geverian Half-Smile	p.88	Sardonic, dissolute elf man; Neden's drinking partner and ambassador from Blood Wood
Ghinez	p.60	Respected, successful dwarf man; architect and servant of Vestrial

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Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Gokvune	p. 35	Bombastic, fervent ork woman; head of Defiants faction in Guild of Guildmasters
Griforican	p. 144	Male, dwarf explorer and member of His Majesty's Exploratory Force
Grindo	p. 30	Risk-taking dwarf Swordmaster; head of House Neumani; he has adventured with King Neden.
Hamivar	p. 134	Handsome, spendthrift young dwarf man; second-in-command to the smuggler Shadowswift
Harchong	p. 61	Mad, doggerel-writing ork man of Bartertown; unwitting servant of Vestrial
Hedwenicus	p. 53	Disaffected dwarf man; member of Ja'kotton movement
Hithorn	p. 140	Windling man, merchant and information broker in Bartertown
Holli Ilfara	p. 109	Kind-hearted human woman, proprietor of The Sand Behemoth
Holomica	p. 43	Inarticulate, confused ork man; writes disturbing poetry
Hyondak	p. 49	Windling woman and philosopher, head of The Mirage; may be silly sensualist or shrewd criminal
Iaiah Hardstick	p. 107	Sour-faced dwarf man, frequently gets into tavern fights; runs a flop house in the dahnat
Ilio Shipwright	p. 88	Clever but lazy, elderly human man; Jerris' ambassador to Throal
Ilmorian	p. 97	Charismatic, conceited, and extraordinarily lucky elf man; General of Throalic Navy
Inder	p. 142	A Bartertown merchant looking to expand his shop
Isam Derr	p. 72	Pushy, single-minded obsidiman; Barsaive's senior Lightbearer and occasional consultant of Neden
J'Role the Honorable Thief	p. 94	Serene, elderly human man with a legendary past; Senior Gatherer of the Eye of Throal
Jada Denairastas	p. 163	Powerful magician and member of the Denairastas clan; magical assassin of former King Varulus III
Jarkna	p. 64	Working-class ork woman, can't hold her tongue during an argument
Javen	p. 43	Grouchy, intolerant elf man; maker of satirical pottery
Javira of Awett	p. 7	Plain-spoken dwarf woman; weaponsmith and adventurer from the hinterland, newly arrived in Throal
Jerriv Forrim	p. 39	Picky, exacting old dwarf man; Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library
Jeslar	p. 98	Sadistic ork woman with incongruous love of poetry; captain of Death's Lingering Kiss scorcher cavalry
Jihni Avacus	p. 103	Gregarious, likeable dwarf woman; dealer in inexpensive perfumes
Johurrus Johuricus	p. 107	Thin, wizened old dwarf man; drunkard, runs a flophouse in the dahnat
Jomikale	p. 109	Stern dwarf man; former corrupt Royal Guard, now the toughest of Throal's magistrates
Jorkan Foe-of-Chains	p. 57	Outspoken, radical ork woman; adventurer, foe of Thera and Grand Elder of Lochost
K'senkt Berius V'strimon	p. 91	Elderly one-armed t'skrang sailor; Floating City's representative to Throal
Kandor Lithcal	p. 100	Dwarf citizen of Throal
Karak Bloodeyes	p. 147	Implacable and possibly insane ork male; leader of the Skull Whargs; hates Throal
Kathieri	p. 110	Shy, beautiful young elf woman, dotes on her elderly parents; runs The Vine of Grapes Inn
Keinar	p. 131	Blustering, nervous, elderly human man; member of Bartertown's council of merchants
Kelassa	p. 73	Vibrant, politically astute dwarf woman; renowned poet, courtier and close ally of King Neden
Kossol	p. 142	Lazy, irresponsible human man; nephew of the Bartertown merchant, Inder
Kurtun	p. 122	Outcast highland troll man; recently opened an inn in one of the Inner Cities

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Character Name	Page Number	Description
Lagustan	p.36	Stern, male elf philosopher much respected for his dispassionate analyses of popular epic poetry
Lemak	p.145	Ambitious ork baron of the northwest quadrant of Throal's outlying communities
Lemora Wuculcian	p.160	Female Thief and undercover member of the Holders of Trust
Liltom	p.89	Young dwarf woman; Throalic ambassador to Kratas
Lochariel	p.122	Generous, portly old elf; Baron of Tirtaga
Lomron	p.28	Long-winded, smiling, elderly dwarf man; head of House Garsun
Lorinel	p.61	Self-deluded elf woman; Officer of the Court and unwitting servant of Vestrial; heads the Watchers
Mardek Silkback	p.122	Well informed, power-hungry ork; Baron of Valvria
Marruth	p.121	Matronly, intimidating ork woman; corrupt Chancellor of Oshane
Merrox	p.37	Stuffy, reserved dwarf man; Master of the Hall of Records, confidant of Varulus III and his son King Neden.
Mirial	p.92	Brilliant, arrogant dwarf woman; member of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps, daughter of its head
Morri of Bazrata	p.103	Ruthless, corrupt dwarf woman; head of merchants' guild
Neden	p.64	Young, hot-tempered, dwarf Warrior and King of Throal; philosophically much like his late father (Varulus III), but with a disdain for the subtleties of politics
Neyo Neyonicus	p.100	Inquisitive, fussy dwarf man; self-appointed solver of mysteries
Nurnborg	p.90	Boisterous male ork, Throal's ambassador to Travar, eloquently urges all cities to adapt the *Council Compact*
Obakavim	p.88	Human man; Throalic ambassador to Jerris
Oberh	p.156	Obnoxious but honest human man; head of Dream Spire Company
Oberliel	p.124	Irritable, frustrated elf man; master of the Royal Guild of Farmers
Oergesol	p.95	Charming, restless dwarf man; head of His Majesty's Exploratory Force
Ompaca	p.156	Obsidiman Warrior, known for testing the prowess of Barsaive's legendary champions
Osbaldo	p.71	Vulgar, rapacious dwarf man; purchased leadership of bankrupt House Pa'vas
Ouglah	p.157	Ludi representative; questor of the Passion Chorrolis
Oyalica	p.64	Well intentioned but easily baffled dwarf woman; commander of a Royal Guard unit
Pabumius	p.12	Stern, obese, elderly dwarf man; head of Royal Guild of Muckers
Pagion Pallaz	p.36	Enthusiastic, female student under Throalic tutors; hails from the village of Umril.
Pahoga Elcomi	p.141	Obsessed, eccentric dwarf woman; cut-rate sage of Bartertown with bizarre theories of history
Palaja Diamondarm	p.146	Competent troll baroness of the southwest quadrant of the outlying communities
Pavlak Greatgirth	p.135	Obese, unthinkingly violent ork man; heads a new and ambitious gang in Bartertown
Pepara	p.30	Intense dwarf man, hates slavery; joint head of House Yilwaz; brother of Umo
Philippa	p.109	Unemotional dwarf woman and magistrate; a good judge, but not so good at commanding guards
Pijian	p.109	Quietly stubborn dwarf woman; member of House Ueraven and magistrate of Bodal, Garaham and Upandal Halls
Quaavami Rockbreaker	p.98	Stern, self-controlled troll woman; General of Throalic Infantry
Ragaliel	p.53	Thoughtless young elf; nephew of Yonlediel
Rami	p.25	Mayor of the town of Oasis, north of the Liaj; allied with ork scorchers and bitter towards Throal's crafty traders.

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Character Name	Page Number	Description
Randova Brokensong	p. 61	Mute troll woman; former Troubadour, now serves Vestrial in hopes of recovering her voice
Reesha	p. 91	Throal's ambassador to Urupa, member of House Ueraven whose child was fathered by her ork lover
Rysil	p. 119	Grandmotherly dwarf woman; questor of Garlen and court healer who lives in the Royal Chambers
Sandahg	p. 98	Unusually beautiful, blond ork woman with a grudge against elves; captain of Elf Eaters scorcher cavalry
Schraerak	p. 98	Manipulative, drunken ork man; captain of Mud Beasts scorcher cavalry
Selenda	p. 75	Forceful, underhanded dwarf woman; head of House Ueraven, courtier and chief domestic opponent of the king
Shadowswift	p. 133	Young, vain human man; most feared smuggler and extortionist in Bartertown
Shalanya Piercecasket	p. 156	Human woman; legendary Throalic hero
Siggo	p. 107	Grim, tough human woman; runs a flophouse in the dahnat
Sinoricus	p. 145	Easygoing dwarf baron of the northeast quadrant of the outlying communities
Skaave	p. 123	Mystical, devout young troll Troubadour and Wizard; Baroness of Yistane
Skerrin	p. 106	Compassionate, friendly dwarf man; magistrate of the dahnat
Smilyada	p. 52	Outspoken, stubborn dwarf woman; founder of Self-Reliant school of philosophy
Snorutia	p. 28	Quarrelsome, dimwitted dwarf woman; wife of House Pa'vas leader (who wants her dead)
Solira the Green	p. 34	Energetic, merry dwarf woman; head of Guild of Guildmasters and Guild of Archivists
Sons of the Air	p. 61	A living legend cult of around thirty Air Sailors of the Throalic navy; unknowingly serve Vestrial
Stann Olowey	p. 121	Timid, easily manipulated human; Baron of Oshane
Stathina Goldheart	p. 107	Helpful dwarf woman, distrusts adventurers; devotee of Garlen and flophouse proprietor
Stawyri	p. 103	Blunt, uncompromising dwarf woman; magistrate of the Grand Bazaar
T'shan V'ruda	p. 17	T'skrang man; nethermancer who recently found Bozwicus's Cow in the Serpent River
T'shlea V'omponian	p. 135	Subtle-minded t'skrang woman; former merchant, now runs several gangs in Bartertown
T'venyoh	p. 54	Athletic t'skrang woman; star hach'var player
Taliel	p. 131	Strong-willed elf woman; leader of a consortium of gem merchants
Tavarlon Tributemaker	p. 136	Half-mad troll man; proprietor of My Dead Father, Bartertown's filthiest tavern
Terath the Contemplative	p. 98	Serious, thoughtful, aging ork man; head of Terath's Chargers
Terlesk	p. 158	One of the original members of the Handshake Cooperative, a group of mine prospectors
The Crimson Face	p. 114	Enigmatic elf woman whose face is hidden behind a mask of agate she never removes; Nethermancer and Horror Stalker
The Elite Guard	p. 117	A group of high-Circle adepts and former adventurers dedicated to protecting the king of Throal
The Five Sisters	p. 29	Stern, cautious, elderly dwarf women; joint leaders of House Chaozun
The Furious Laughers	p. 111	A windling living legend cult, devoted to curing Vestrial of his madness through bizarre acts
The Rememberers	p. 20	A living legend cult led by Nethermancers and composed of those rare survivors from the Weeping

THROAL CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Tholon	p.76	Conciliatory, patrician old dwarf man; head of House Elcomi and royal courtier
Thom Edrull	p.40	Silky-voiced, venal dwarf man; Scribe and Archivist of the Great Library
Thorapin	p.45	Frustrated, anti-royal dwarf man; well-known playwright
Titanstroke Greybeard	p.98	Famous, canny leader of the Thunderers ork scorcher tribe, currently pursuing an unknown agenda
Tramon	p.92	Cool-headed, calculating dwarf man; Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps
Trevas and Gesan	p.46	Feuding husband-and-wife actors, both dwarfs
Tyrul Boldwords	p.145	Ork woman; powerful Troubadour and Warrior, recently joined the Skull Whargs
Uilmaz	p.59	Watchful, sinister old dwarf woman; part Horror and servant of Raggok
Umo	p.30	Intense dwarf man, hates slavery; joint head of House Yilwaz; brother of Pepara
Urrif	p.157	Unbalanced human Archer; recently fired from the Dream Spire Company
Uvimir	p.105	Dwarf merchant; runs a sausage stand in the Hall of Tav
Uzarg	p.146	Ork baroness of the southeast quadrant of the outlying communities
V'sigar F'szaffinal Ch'othobi	p.160	A plain-spoke and bullying administrator of House Ishkarat; oversees their outlying villages
Vamban	p.28	Unpleasant, tricky, elderly dwarf man; head of House Ludi
Varulus III	p.23	Wise, reform-minded, former king of Throal; recently assassinated by the Denairastas of Iopos; father of Neden
Vazilia	p.83	Dwarf woman; unwavering royalist, Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guards
Veroxa	p.67	Eccentric, flamboyant dwarf woman; grandmother of King Neden
Volumnia	p.28	Perceptive, skeptical dwarf woman; aunt to Snorutia
Walsha	p.98	Greedy, clever ork man; captain of Golden Flashes scorcher cavalry
Wishten	p.77	Likeable, easygoing dwarf man; Chancellor of Throal and foremost adviser to the king
Xodath	p.59	Frightened, fastidious dwarf man; retired schoolteacher and follower of Dis
Yamin Wheelmaker	p.160	Troll trader who runs caravans out of Throal; bitter due to the death of his sons in the service of Throal
Yonaal	p.123	Pragmatic, capable troll woman; Chancellor of Yistane
Yonlediel	p.53	Rule-breaking, prosperous elf woman; bookmaker
Zamirica One-Knee	p.42	Intermittently sane dwarf man; apprentice archivist of the Great Library
Zarass Icethought	p.98	Cruel, insanely jealous ork woman; commands half of Terath's Chargers, is suspicious of Throal
Zendes	p.30	Reclusive dwarf woman; head of House Sarafica
Zeslericus	p.152	Lazy, light-minded dwarf man; son of Grindo, the head of House Neumani
Zomof the Unlucky	p.85	Cursed dwarf man with a faded reputation; cheap advocate-for-hire
Zudian Ludi	p.29	Young, wealthy dwarf nobleman; throws money around to get what he wants

SERPENT RIVER CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Acharuss	p.177	Captain of the Gorruus, as well as a merciless raider and accomplished Swordmaster, he is the bane of the North Reach
Aemilius Velluniium	p.188	A heart and reputation of gold and a true t'skrang hero fighting for the less fortunate, he is a Swordmaster and a Boatman
Affern	p.239	Human Archer; leader of the Elite; long-time acquaintance of Nikar and Drak
Agramen	p.240	Human merchant; a Theran sympathizer and operative in Haven; an agent of Gendel

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Alachia	p. 220	Elven Queen; jealously guards the Mothingale river; agreed to partner with the Syrtisians at Kaer Eidolon
Alevar	p. 222	Blood elven Woodsman; stationed at Kaer Eidolon
Alvar Otterpaw	p. 203	Human Boatman of the Order of the Scavian Guard
Ar'yana Marrek	p. 265	A spy, accomplished human Illusionist, and daughter of the one of the rulers of the city of Marrek
Azim Keel	p. 246	Pale-white *ghareez* known as "the Ice Magician"; Chief magician of Triumph and powerful Elementalist
Belit Shustal Syrtis	p. 191	Green faction supporter and a wizened veteran of the Theran war, formerly Admiral, but now Captain of the Mistral
The Body of Five	p. 256	Five prominent magicians commissioned with designing and running the Founding in Travar
Brazak Skar	p. 235	Human Axemaster with knowledge of Theran defenses and activity around the fortress of Triumph
Darlon	p. 259	Inhabitant of the village of Farram; rumormonger and village idiot
Desti Denvis	p. 230	A *lahala* that abandoned her *niall* to lead the project of building new t'skrang river villages along Westhrall's Passage
Dokaros	p. 178	Village Elder of Mikanos on Lake Vors; beneficiary of Acharuss' raiding
Dorram	p. 251	An angry, ambitious, and cruel human; handles day-to-day Theran business in Servalen; adjutant to Telanis
Drak Windsearcher	p. 242	A Vasgothian troll Air Sailor; Captain of the Theran kila, the Righteous, and personal friend of General Nikar
Elbonius Tartakull	p. 172	Royal Theater of Throal troupe director who runs the Troubadour showboat, the *Quirinalia*
The Elite	p. 239	A Named group of adepts with a group True pattern; answer directly to General Nikar for special assignments
Ellainor	p. 217	Hinterland village elderwoman, who extols the virtues of the windlings of Glenwood Deep and their magical aid
Evon Tyrlath	p. 216	A noted scholar from Urupa with theories on the the mysterious House Henghyoke and its shivalahala
Fallan Pavelis	p. 194	Former Theran Overgovernor; retreated to Sky Point after the First Theran War, leaving K'tenshin to its enemies
Ferad	p. 177	Dangerous Warrior and Illusionist working for the Denairastas
Gammalon Toolika	p. 185	Chamberlain, and real political leader, of House Syrtis
Garlthik One-Eye	p. 170, p. 255	Ruthless ork Thief; ruler of Kratas, leader of the gang, the Force of the Eye, and supporter of House T'kambras
Gendel	p. 240	Human Scout; Spymaster, or *akarenti*, on the Triumph with nearly two dozen spies under him
Go'lan	p. 237	T'skrang airship commander; late comrade of General Nikar; died at the spells of House V'strimon Elementalists
Gradan Sharpaxe	p. 239	Dwarf Warrior from Barsaive; member of the Elite; brother of Larm
The Gray Ones	p. 254	A pair of Name-givers in gray cloaks; mythical figures said to have prophesied the regrowth of the Servos
Grimaud	p. 225	A faithful servant who tends Talmagore's house outside the Grove of Memory along the Pilgrimage Route
Griskoll	p. 179	Chief engineer on the Gorruus under Acharuss, and a Seventh Circle t'skrang Boatman
Hancar	p. 259	Retired dwarf Weaponsmith; owner of the Friendly Forge inn in Farram
Hodanticus	p. 229	Dwarf smuggler; rumored to run the tunnels from the Coil River up into the Throal mountains for a price
Iagen	p. 220	Pre-Scourge, famed Theran poet and resident of Parlainth

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Character Name	**Page Number**	**Description**
Illfaralek	p. 240	The Theran spymaster of Vivane; Also a General; Gendel answers to him also
Jedaiyen Westhrall	p. 214	Highly skilled captain of the warship *Astendar's Desire*, and the figurehead of House T'kambras
Kalieston	p. 190	Syrtis' Prince Kalieston, the questor of Upandal who died in an accident while building the huge Dreadnought
Kela Vorga	p. 260	Human female Warrior and questor of Lochost; opposed to Scavian gender roles; agitator for change
Kreesta	p. 200	A simple t'skrang fisherwoman, full of *jik'harra*, who became the current Shivalahala V'strimon
Kypros	p. 90, p. 237	Theran Overgovernor of Barsaive in Name, but cowers in Sky Point; envious of General Nikar and his influence
Landrial	p. 239	Elf Scout from Creana; member of the Elite
Larm Keenedge	p. 239	Dwarf Weaponsmith from Barsaive; member of the Elite; brother of Gradan
Lognar Devia	p. 255	Dwarf barge captain; son of the merchant Garrn Devia.
Loloish of Framling	p. 226	A common-born t'skrang and subject of a popular Troubadour's tale due to his love for the Shivalahala Syrtis
Lord Alderac Windspear	p. 256	Swordmaster and Magistrate of Travar; a natural mediator and shrewd negotiator
L'tskarr	p. 230	An experienced t'skrang Elementalist; oversees the city's platforms; important in local politics
Mabon Ardos	p. 262	An elf Beastmaster and questor of Dis; Triumph's slavemaster; treats his charges as if they were animals.
Masae Seorach	p. 232	A powerful, old elf; captains the *Mallornica*, the last elven sailing ship, and seeks a reversal for the Ritual of Thorns
Milos	p. 214	A powerful questor of Floranuus and a crew member aboard *Astendar's Desire*
M'jontass	p. 252	T'skrang adventurers; lost the rest of his group once to the man-eating plants of the Servos Jungle
Nikar Carinci	p. 236	Flamboyant and abrasive Theran general in charge of the fortress of Triumph; trained as a *k'stuulami* Cavalrymen
Niss Reeves	p. 256	"Sparkling Niss", elegant and charming, especially for a troll, is a Travarian magistrate, jeweler, and Weaponsmith
Nithagi	p. 184	Ancient t'skrang sculptor who made Nithagi's Door atop the Cliff City
Nonchurr	p. 197	Ork owner of the Smiling Crojen, a high-class tavern in the Floating City of House V'strimon
The Obsidimen of Zirabul	p. 184	Mysterious obsidimen who watch over the Cliff City of Syrtis; possibly the two elders of the Liferock there
Old Man of the Nets	p. 192	A legendary t'skrang hero and founder of House V'strimon; his ghost still comes to their aid in times of need
Omasu	p. 257	Wealthy, ruthless obsidiman; founder of the Overland Trading Company; leads the Liferock Rebellion
Omoo of Urupa	p. 194	An obsidiman Troubadour and visitor of Shivalahala V'strimon
Oortaal	p. 239	Ork Nethermancer from Vasgothia; member of the Elite
Patrochian	p. 188	Mother of Aemilius; now deceased, but a renowned t'skrang captain and true ally of Throal
Praylar Sightshifter	p. 239	Troll Illusionist from Vivane; member of the Elite
Qulbas	p. 199	Wealthy human questor of Vestrial, exploits other people's weaknesses for his own gain
Ramos of Travar	p. 252	A scholar of Travar; wrote a lexicon of the Cathan language
Rowan Daggertree	p. 259	Retired human adventurer; once visited the abandoned river villages on the Iontos, but won't speak of them now

SERPENT RIVER CHARACTER INDEX TABLE

Character Name	Page Number	Description
Sagramon Steeltoe	p. 255	One of Garlthik's best lieutenants, a dwarf now in charge of the port town of Daiche on the Tylon
Sevastos	p. 260	A hermit near the Mist Swamps and Badlands, this t'skrang Elementalist studies various magical oddities
Shaido of the Wavram	p. 182	Syrtisian Admiral who won the Battle of Sejanus in 1502 TH
Shen Denlikiyan	p. 227	Legendary t'skrang engineer and advisor to Syrtisian *nialls* during the War Against the Elves
Shirala	p. 199	An Almarran Wind-dancer who flew to the Floating City during the Scourge to request refuge for her community
Shivalahala Henghyoke	p. 215	Reputedly a powerful Illusionist, little else is known of her, even if she truly exists
Shivalahala Ishkarat	p. 176	Reigning from the Citadel of House Ishkarat, the former Fortress Island in Lake Vors, little else is known of her
Shivalahala K'tenshin	p. 207	A formidable Warrior, she personally heads the War College and longs for K'tenshin's lost glory
Shivalahala Syrtis	p. 185	Young, prepubescent spiritual leader of House Syrtis, known as the "Prophetess" and for her mental ailments
Shivalahala T'kambras	p. 213	A t'skrang Troubadour of great power; sang a ghost song that still echoes in the cataracts of Daiche Canyon
Shivalahala V'strimon	p. 201	An Elementalist of monumental talent and a questor of Jaspree, this former fisherwoman leads House V'strimon.
S'hondla	p. 197	T'skrang owner of the Golden Reed, a high-class tavern in the Floating City of House V'strimon
Solen Ogani	p. 241	Human Air Sailor from Talea; Captain of the Theran kila, the *Defiant*; a loyal, natural leader
S'rakar	p. 199	T'skrang basketmaker and complusive gambler in the Floating City of House V'strimon
Synopae of Kralipur	p. 186	Legendary mother of House Syrtis, as wise as she was beautiful; became the lover of the Dragon of the Moon, Syrtis
Talmagore	p. 225	A Wizard who disappeared into the Grove of Memory several years ago after trying to exploit its abilities
T'char	p. 244	Second-in-command in Triumph, strategos T'char oversees the Griffin Riders
Telanis Unkuren	p. 251	A fat old dwarf; highest-ranking Theran official in Servalen
Theormaz	p. 215	Independent t'skrang river pirate
T'kradio Dharm	p. 187	Former Chamberlain of House Syrtis; he established the Honor Guard
T'kraidos	p. 191	Chosen by the Blue fraction controlled High Chamber of Syrtis as the latest Admiral to replace Belit
Valarin	p. 251	The conniving, opportunistic spokesman of Servalen, an aging elf; governs by the force of his mercenary bands
V'ranna of the Many Baskets	p. 192	Wife of the Old Man of the Nets and unparalleled basket maker
Westhrall	p. 194	A somewhat arrogant hero of the Theran War that settled in the Floating City to raise his daughter, Jedaiyen
Xoros Honeyed-tongue	p. 256	Mellow Travarian magistrate, an ork controlling a large number of smithies
Yagal Trona	p. 260	Human leader of the Scavian Guard; longing for power; opposed to Kela's attacks on Scavian culture
Zsombol Vak	p. 211	T'skrang Wizard of House K'tenshin

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Information alone does not empower a Name-giver.
The act of finding information is the key.

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •



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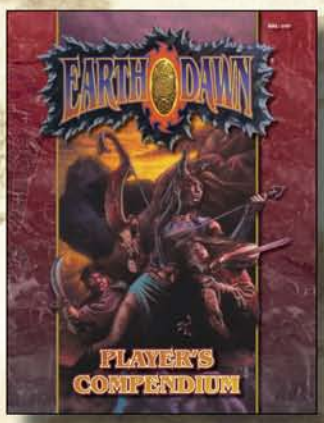
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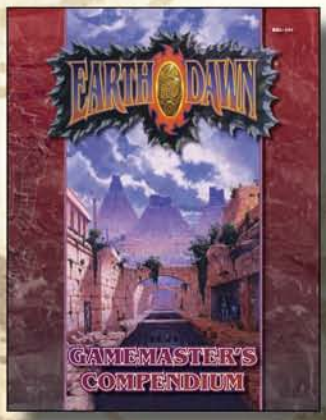
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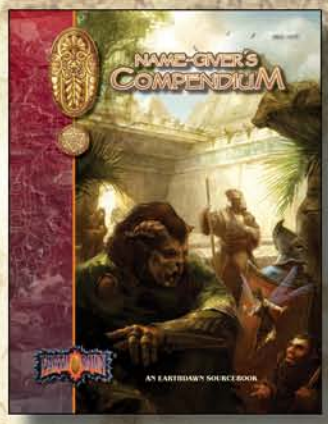
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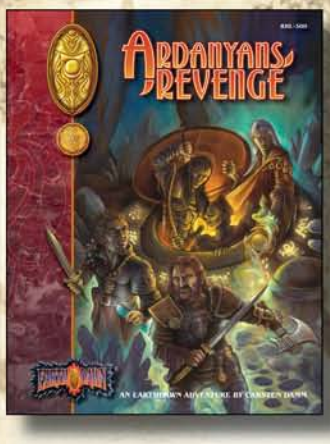




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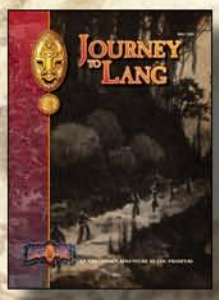
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